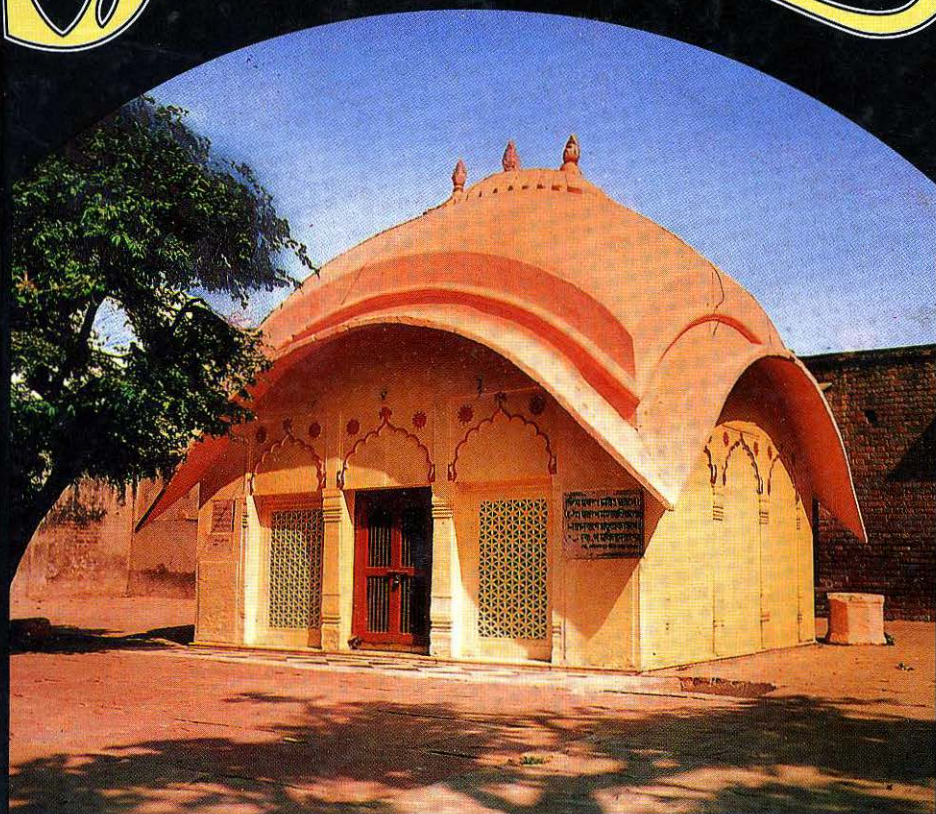


GAUDIYA VAISNAVA

SAMADHIS



IN VRINDAVANA

MAHANIDHI SWAMI

Sri-Sri Gandharvika-Giridhari Jayatah!
Sri Guru and Gauranga Jayate!

**The Gaudiya Vaisnava Samadhis
in
Vrndavana**

Mahanidhi Swami

Other books by the author:

- *Seeing Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in Jagannatha Puri*
- *Prabhupada at Radha Damodara*
- *Appreciating Sri Vrndavana Dhama.*

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DEDICATION

The Gaudiya Vaisnava Samadhis in Vrndavana is dedicated to my beloved spiritual master His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Founder-Acarya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

*Srila Prabhupada is always absorbed
In the perfect samadhi of Krishna consciousness.
His mind and heart
His thoughts, words, and deeds
Forever concentrated on one point---
Serving the lotus feet of Radha-Govinda.
He taught the world to enter samadhi
And taste the eternal bliss of the soul
Surrendered to God in service
By constantly chanting Hare Krishna.*

INVOCATION

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmīlitam yena tasmai śrī-guruve namaḥ*

I was born in the darkest ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torch of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him.

*namo om viṣṇu-padaya kṛṣṇa-presthaya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedanta-svamin iti namine
namaste sarasvate deve gaura-vani-pracarine
nirvīśa-sunyavadi-pāscate-deśa-tārine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvami. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanya and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*vṛndāvane ramana-reti-prasiddha-bhumau
tatrāpi rādhā-syāmasundara-supada-mule
jñānam param parama-kṛṣṇa-sudharmity uktam
dantas tu deva prabhupāda namo namas te*

In the supreme holy land of Sri Vrndavana, in Ramana Reti at the lotus feet of Sri-Sri Radha-Syamasundara, you are preaching the highest perfection of knowledge about the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna, who is the fountainhead of religion. O master of the senses, O my lord, Srila Prabhupada, let me offer my obeisances unto you.

*vande 'ham śrī-guroḥ śrī-yuta-pada-kṛmālam śrī-gurūn vaiṣṇavāṁś ca
śrī-rūpam sāgrajātam saha-gaṇa-raghunāthānvitam tam sa-jīvam
sādvaitam sāvadhūtam parijana-sahitam kṛṣṇa-caitanya-devam
śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pādān saha-gaṇa-lalitā-śrī-viśākhānvitāṁś ca*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master and to all the Vaisnavas. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of Srila Rupa Gosvami, Sri Sanatana Gosvami, Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami, Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami, Gopala Bhatta Gosvami, and Sri Jiva Gosvami. I offer my respectful obeisances to Lord Sri Krishna Caitanya, Lord Nityananda, Sri Advaita Acarya, Gadadhara, Srivasa, and all Their eternal associates. I offer my respectful obeisances to the lotus feet Srimati Radharani and Sri Krishna, and all Their associates beginning with Sri Lalita and Sri Visakha-*sakhis*.

*vāñchā-kalpatarubhyaś ca kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānām pāvanebhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto all the Vaisnava devotees of the Lord. They are desire trees and oceans of mercy, who purify the fallen souls and fulfill all their desires.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityananda, Sri Advaita, Gadadhara, Srivasa and all the others in the line of devotion.

*Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare*

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Whatever little service we've done is only possible by the blessings of Srila Prabhupada, our eternal spiritual master. Sri Krishna, the ever-blissful Lord of Vrndavana, appeared before us in a variety of Deity forms to continually inspire the production of this book. Sri-Sri Radha-Damodara; Lord Jagannatha; and the ISKCON Deities of Radha-Syamasundara in Vrndavana, Radha-Madhava in Sridhama Mayapur, and Radha-Partha Sarathi in New Delhi gave us strength and shelter during our travels.

The following devotees helped in many ways. Remembering them, we pray for their mercy. We sincerely thank and offer our prostrated obeisances to Sripad Puri Maharaja, H.H. Harikesa Swami, H. H. Jayapataka Swami, H.H. Gopal Krishna Goswami, H.H. Subhaga Swami. Padmanabha Goswami, Syama Lal, Prof. N.C. Bansel, Gopal Candra Ghosh. Pundarika Vidyanidhi Dasa, Bhakta Rupa Dasa, Panca Ratna Dasa, Brghupati Dasa, Aravinda Dasa, Trikalajna Dasa, Doyarama Dasa, Satyanarayana Dasa, Pada Sevanam Dasa, Maha-Vishnu Dasa, Sudarsana Dasa, Govinda Dasa, Jambavan Dasa, Jiva Gosvami Dasa.

Sriman Bhakta Dasa, our beloved godbrother and friend, has very kindly contributed for printing this book. We sincerely thank him and pray to Srila Prabhupada, to all the previous acaryas, and to our worshipable Deities Sri-Sri Radha-Giridhari that they will bless Sriman Bhakta Dasa with pure devotion.

Introduction

The associates of Lord Sri Krishna accompany Him whenever He descends from the spiritual realm to the material world. They help Lord Krishna reestablish the principles of religion and please the Lord by their loving exchanges of spiritual mellows or *rasas*. Fifty centuries ago, the intimate servants, friends, parents, and conjugal lovers of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, came down from Goloka Vrndavana to appear in Bharata-bhumi (India) in the simple cow-herding village of Vraja.

As a nation may establish an embassy in a foreign country, Lord Sri Krishna brought down His eternal spiritual home of Vrndavana and placed it within India, ninety miles southeast of New Delhi. Although the French embassy stands in New Delhi, for example, it is not subject to the laws of India. Similarly, according to our material vision, Krishna's eternal spiritual abode appears to occupy part of India, but factually Vrndavana exists transcendently beyond all the laws of the material world.

Lord Sri Krishna appears in this world to show the conditioned souls His joyful pastimes with His liberated loving associates in the spiritual world. Sri Krishna's divine pastimes attract the conditioned souls suffering in this world. As a result, they stop their sinful activities and begin to serve the Supreme Lord.

Five hundred years ago Lord Sri Krishna again appeared on earth. He came as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the Golden Avatara, to propagate the congregational chanting of the Hare Krishna maha-mantra---*Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare*---the universal dharma for the age of Kali.

The cowherd boyfriends and girlfriends who sported with Sri Krishna in Vrndavana dhama became students and brahmins in Sri Navadvipa dhama to associate with Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Krishna's *sakhis* Lalita and Visakha, for example, became Svarupa Damodara Gosvami and Ramananda Raya---Sri Caitanya's most intimate associates. Sri Rupa-manjari and Sri Labanga-manjari became Sri Rupa Gosvami and Sri Sanatana Gosvami. Together

they relished the immortal nectar of Hari Nama and spread the *sankirtana* movement.

Desiring to give Radha-Krishna *prema bhakti* to every living entity, Lord Caitanya empowered the six Gosvamis of Vrndavana. They in turn compiled books about *bhakti* and trained many followers in the science of pure devotion to Radha and Krishna.

Sri Sanatana Gosvami explained *sambandha tattva* and the two paths of *sadhana bhakti*--*vaidhi* and *raganuga*. The "rasacarya" Sri Rupa Gosvami revealed the intimate secrets the loving exchanges between Radha and Krishna and Their spontaneous loving servants. By his brilliant scholarship and penetrating research through all the *Vedas*, Sri Jiva Gosvami conclusively proved the preeminence of Gaudiya Vaisnavism. He also proved the super-excellent position of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna. Sri Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami taught the height of material renunciation by relishing the deepest spiritual attachment for Radha and Krishna. Sustaining himself with only a few drops of buttermilk every other day, he remained absorbed in spiritual ecstasy, living on the banks of Radha-kunda at Giri-Govardhana, Vrndavana.

In *Sri Caitanya's Teachings*, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura explains the role of Sri Krishna Caitanya and His merciful associates:

"The unprejudiced study of the life of Sri Krishna Caitanya will help us in the fullest measure to understand the actual meaning of the *gopis* love for Radha and Krishna in Vrndavana. The esoteric reason for this is that Sri Krishna Caitanya is Sri Krishna Himself. And the associates of Sri Krishna Caitanya are the same as the *gopis*, manjaris, and other servitors of Sri Krishna in Vraja. The activities of Sri Krishna Caitanya and his associates are also identical with, and yet different from the pastimes of Sri Krishna in Vraja.

"They can show themselves to us if they choose to do so. Appearing as self-realized souls, the eternal associates of Sri Krishna Caitanya come down to this material world. And they act in such a way that they will not be misunderstood by the conditioned souls."

Although these devotees eternally participate in Radha-Krishna's most confidential pastimes in Goloka Vrndavana, they came down to earth just five-hundred years ago. Acting as gurus and *sadhana bhaktas* with their words, actions, and writing, they taught spiritual life to thousands. But now one may ask, that since they have all returned to the spiritual world, how and where can we get their mercy? In *Prarthana* Thakura Mahasaya Narottama Dasa expresses the desperation a devotee feels in separation from Lord Gauranga's eternal associates:

*kāhā mora svarūpa rūpa kāhā sanātan
 kāhā dāsa raghunātha patita-pāvan
 kāhā mora bhāṭṭa-juga kāhā kavirāja
 eka-kāle kothā gelā gorā naṭa-rāj
 se-saba saṅgira saṅge je koilo bilās
 se-saṅga nā pāiyā kānde narottama dās*

"Where are my Svarupa Damodara and Sri Rupa Gosvami? Where is Sanatana? Where is Dasa Raghunatha, the deliverer of the fallen? Where are my Raghunatha Bhatta and Gopala Bhatta? And where is Krishna Dasa Kaviraja? Where did Gauranga Mahaprabhu, the king of dancers suddenly go? Being separated from their loving association and the blissful pastimes of Mahaprabhu, Narottama Dasa can only cry."

Indeed, separation from the Lord and His devotees creates such intense feelings in pure devotees like Narottama Dasa Thakura. But fortunately for us, by the transcendental arrangement of Lord Caitanya, we can still obtain their mercy.

The associates of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu are oceans of compassion even sending the waves of their mercy to help the suffering conditioned souls. This mercy enlightens the consciousness with pure spiritual knowledge, and enlivens the heart with blissful spiritual emotions. Riding the waves of their mercy, a conditioned soul quickly crosses the dark sea of repeated birth and death, and arrives on the brilliant shore of the spiritual world. There he begins diving and surfacing in the transcendental nectar ocean of Radha and Krishna's ecstatic loving service in Sri Vrndavana-dhama.

One will receive the mercy of the Gosvamis and the compassionate followers of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu by obtaining their association. That association is available in their books, in the books describing their activities, in the line of their followers, and in their *samadhis* sitting in Vrndavana.

Unlike the common men in India who are burned and forgotten at death, the great devotees of Lord Caitanya are buried and remembered, served and worshiped. Their spiritualized bodies are lovingly placed in the sacred earth of Vrndavana near Krishna's temples or *lila sthanas* (places of Radha-Krishna's pastimes). Stone structures of simple or ornate design called *samadhi* mandirs, or just *samadhis*, mark the place where these exalted devotees eternally reside. The *samadhi* mandirs act as focal points for faithful devotees to connect with the spiritual mercy, blessings, and inspiration continually emanating from these self-realized souls in *samadhi*.

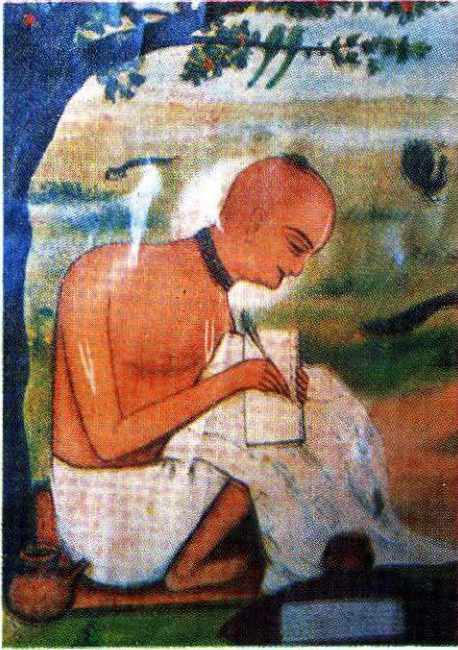
By visiting the *samadhis*, offering obeisances, circumambulating them, offering prayers of submission, and articles of worship such as sweets, incense, ghee lamp, flowers, and Yamuna water a sincere devotee will receive mercy from these eternal associates of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Since liberated souls are beyond the limitations of time and space, they sometimes appear before a devotee to personally guide him on the path back home, back to Godhead.

There are many such incidences in Gaudiya Vaisnava history. Not only history, but the words of the previous *acaryas* prove the power of Vaisnavas in *samadhis*. As previously quoted, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura said, "The eternal associates of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu can show themselves to us if they choose to do so."

The Gaudiya Vaisnava Samadhis in Vrndavana explains the meaning, history, and significance of *samadhis*. With its many Vaisnava biographies, directions, photographs, and instructions on how to approach and worship the *samadhis* the book functions both as a guidebook for visiting Vrndavana's *samadhis*, and as handbook for advancing in Krishna consciousness. Those who can't visit the *samadhis* can also use the book to read about the



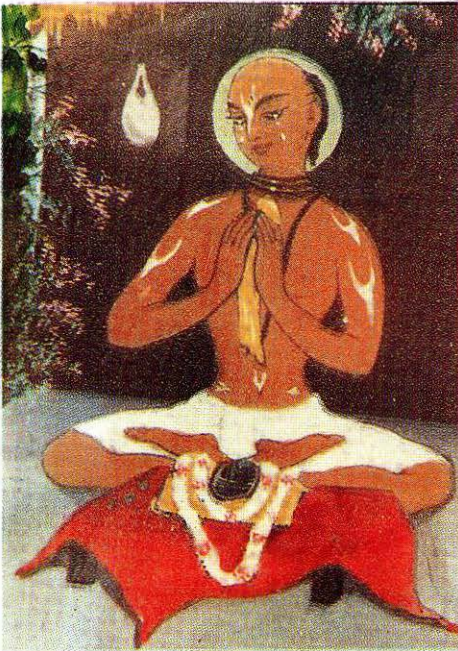
*His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
Founder-Acarya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness*



Rupa Gosvami



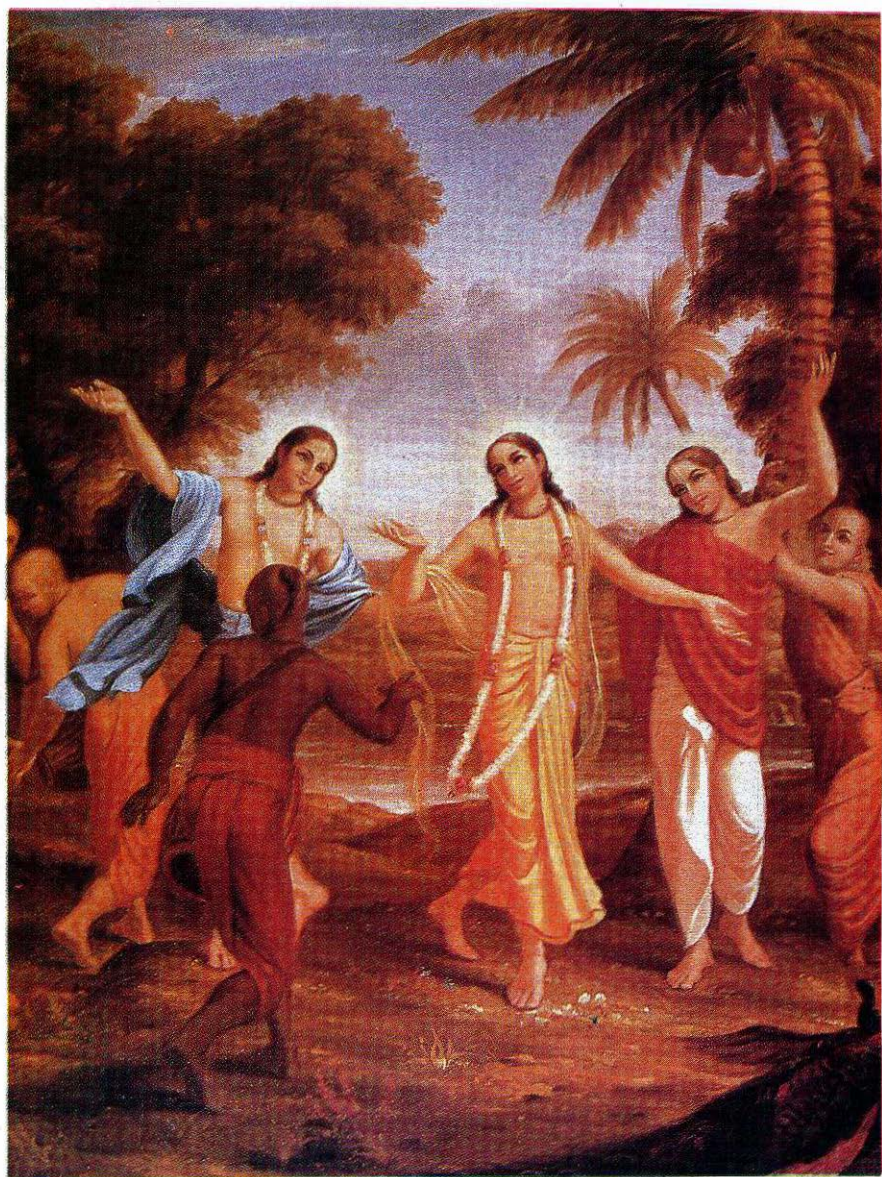
Sri Radha serves Raghunatha Dasa



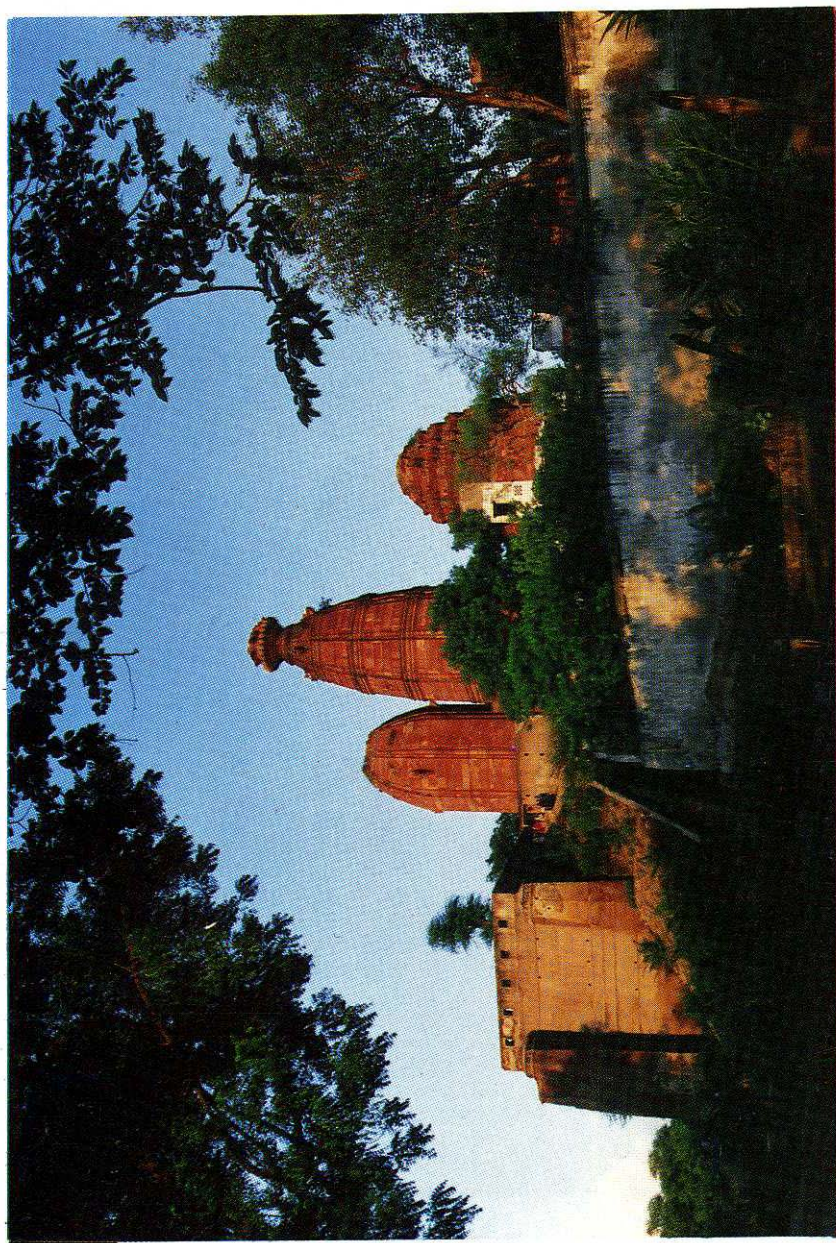
Gopala Bhatta Gosvami



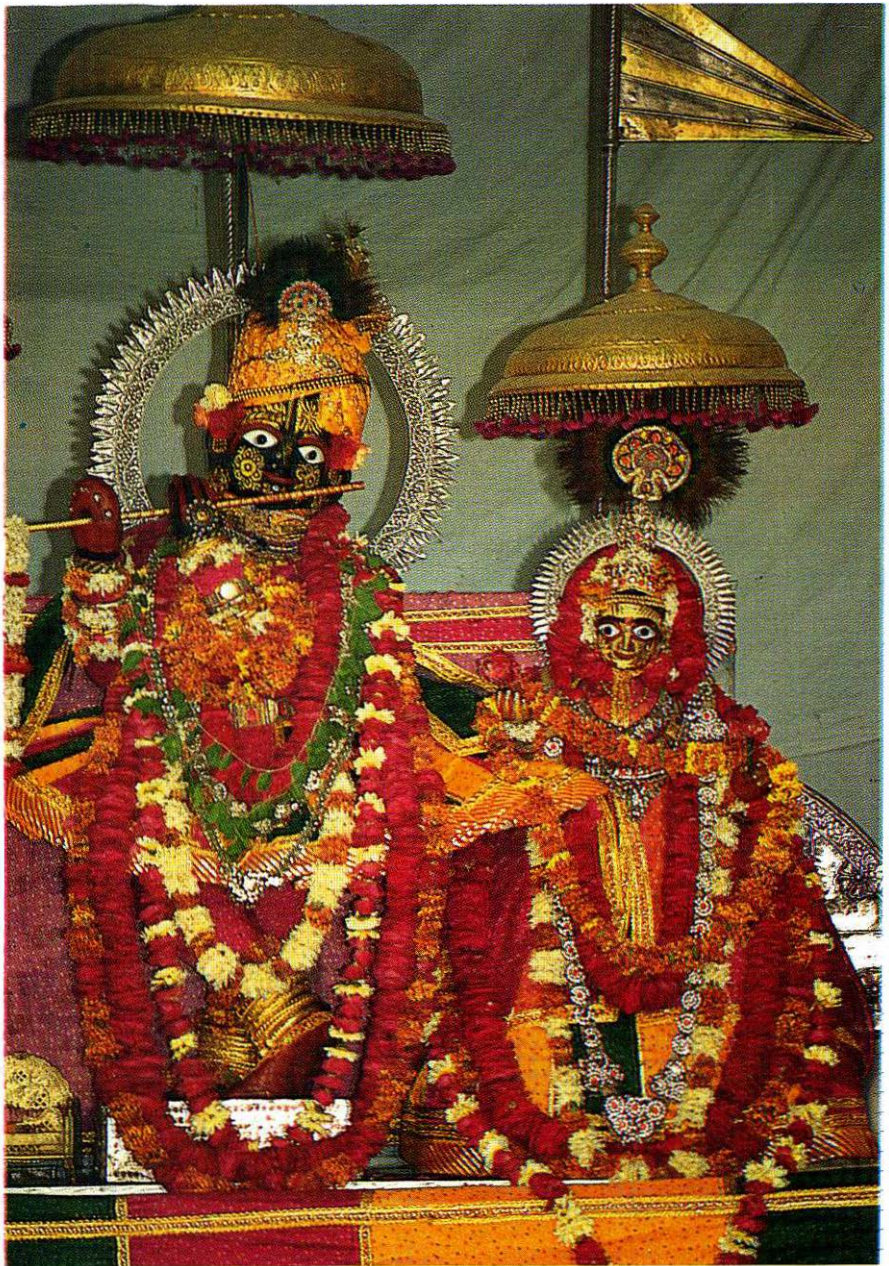
Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami



Gaura Nitai, Navadvipa



Madana Mohana Temple



Radha Govindaji, Jaipur



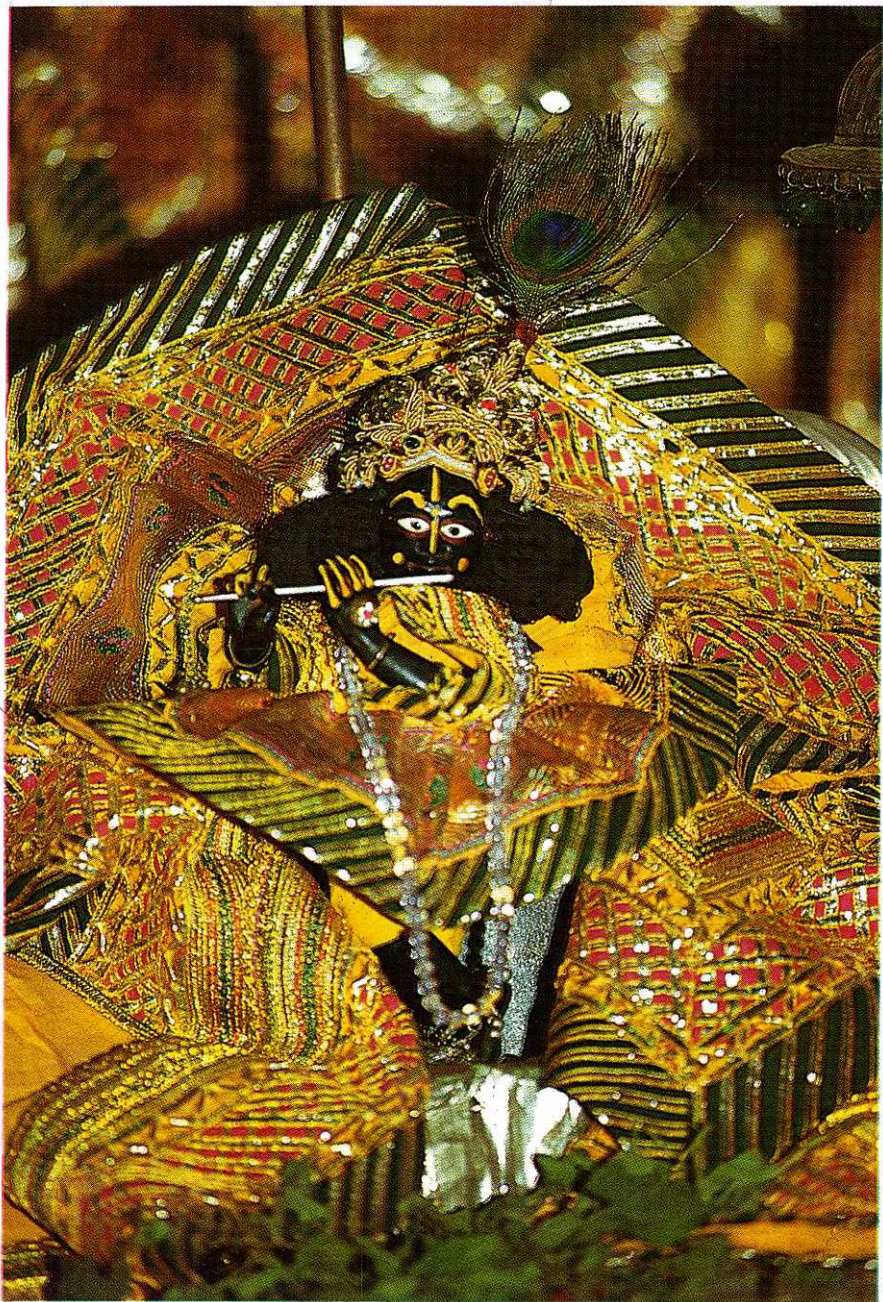
Radha Gopinatha, Jaipur



Radha Ramana Deity



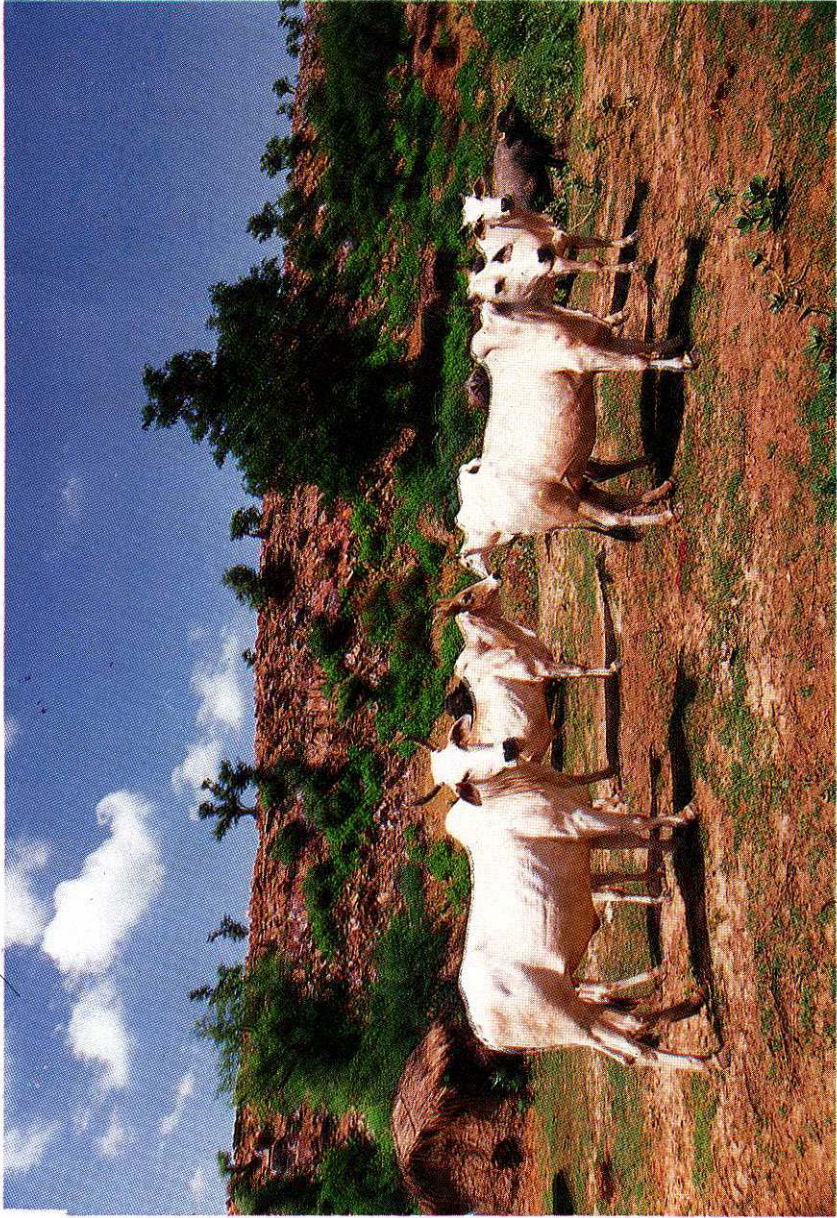
The 64 Mahantans



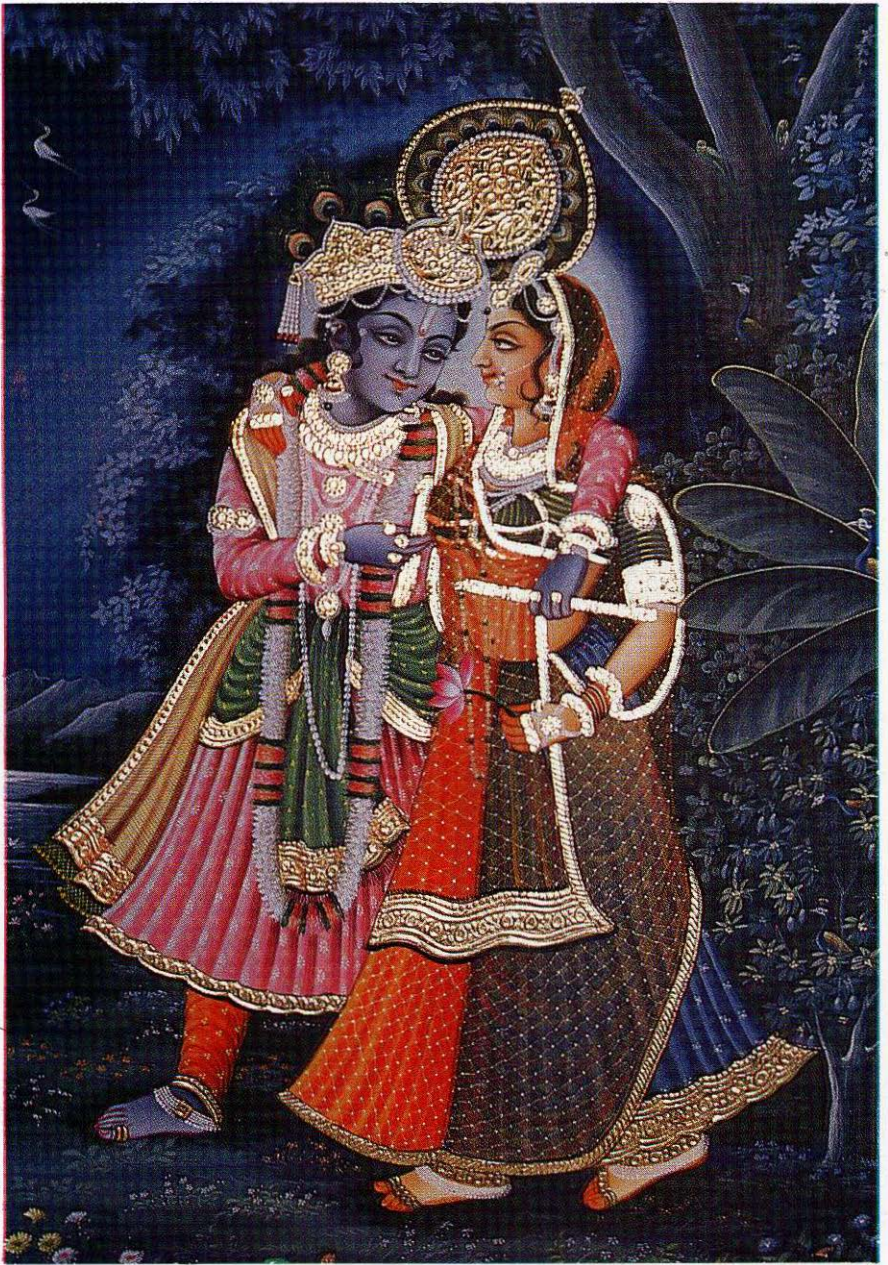
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Radha Vinoda Deities, Jaipur



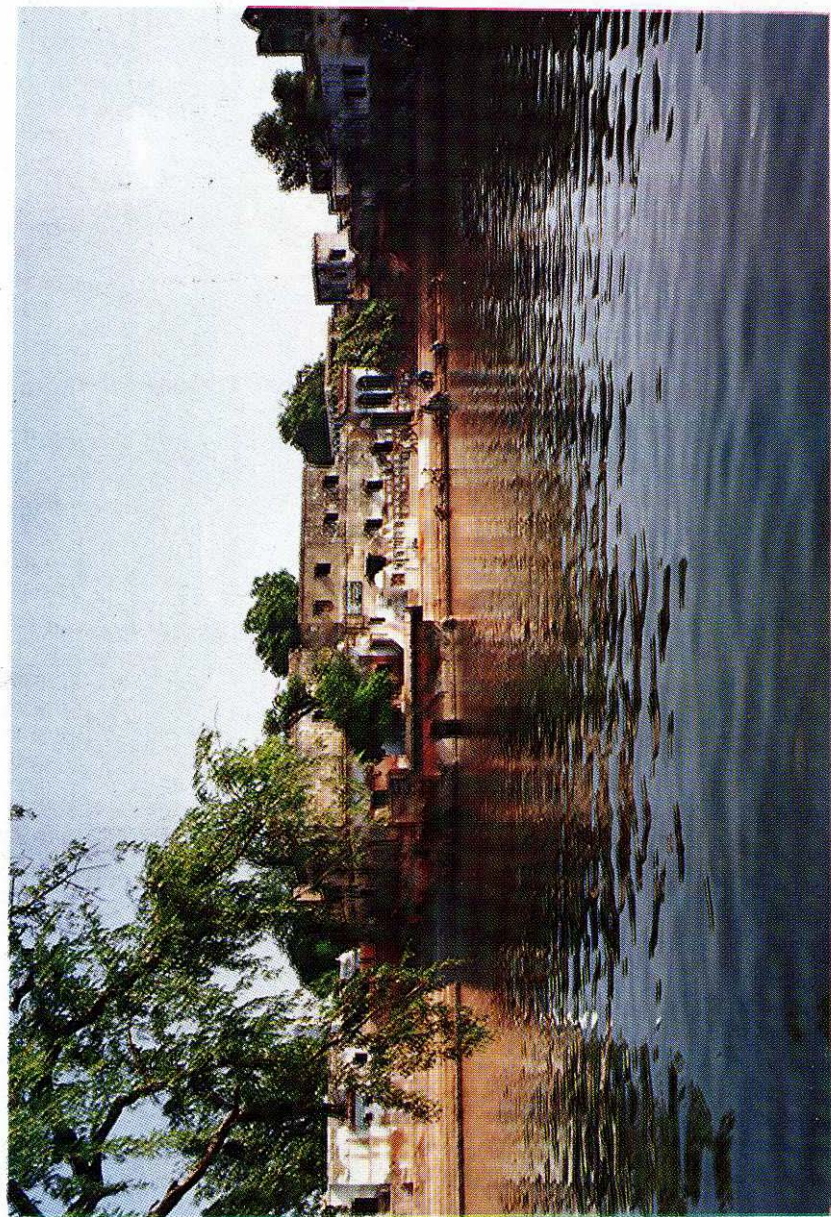
Girraja Govardhana



Radha Madhava Rasa Lila



Yamuna Devi



Radha Kunda



Radha Syamasundara Deities, ISKCON Vrindavana



Samadhi Mandir of Srila Prabhupada

lives and teachings of Lord Caitanya's eternal associates whenever observing their *tirobhava* (disappearance day) or *avirbhava* (appearance day).

Remembering the Supreme Lord Krishna and His pure devotees is a powerful form of devotional service called *smaranam*. Hence, a devotee will make spiritual advancement simply by remembering and praying for the mercy of the departed Vaisnavas. The mercy of the Vaisnavas is absolutely essential in order to attain the goal of human life---eternal residence in Sri Vrndavana-dhama, and the spontaneous loving service of the lotus feet of Sri-Sri Gandharvika-Giridhari (Radha-Krishna). In *Gitavali*, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura emphasizes the connection between remembering the Vaisnavas and attaining residence in Vrndavana:

smara gosthi-saha karnapura, sena sivananda
ajasra smara, smara re
gosthi-saha karnapur
smara rupanuga sadhu-jana bhajan-ananda
braje bas jadi cao re
rupanuga sadhu smara

"You should remember Srila Kavi Karnapura and all his family members, who are all sincere servants of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. You should also remember the father of Kavi Karnapura, Sivananda Sena. Always remember all those Vaisnavas who strictly follow the path of Srila Rupa Gosvami, and who are absorbed in *bhajana*. If you actually want residence in the land of Vraja, then you must remember all the Vaisnavas who are followers of Srila Rupa Gosvami."

Members of ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) will appreciate that *The Gaudiya Vaisnava Samadhis in Vrndavana* contains biographies of all the Vaisnavas that are listed in the society's yearly Vaisnava calendar. The author sincerely hopes that this book will help the devotees receive the boundless mercy of Lord Caitanya's eternal associates. Then one can quickly attain eternal residence in Sri Vrndavana-dhama to selflessly serve the sweet Divine Couple, Sri-Sri Radha-Syamasundara.

*vancha-kalpa tarubhyas ca krpa sindhu bhya eva ca
patitanam pavanebhyo vaisnavebhyo namo namah*

" I offer my humble obeisances to all the Vaisnava devotees of the Lord. They are transcendental desire trees fulfilling everyone's desires. Indeed, they are oceans of mercy for purifying the fallen souls." (*Sri Vaisnava Pranama*)

Chapter One

SAMADHIS

PURPOSE, DEFINITION, PHILOSOPHY

The word *samadhi* means complete concentration of the mind on the Supreme Lord. The *Nirukti* (Vedic dictionary) says, *samyag adhiyate'smin atma-tattva-yathatmyam*, "one is in *samadhi* when the mind is completely fixed in understanding the truth of the self." Patanjali's *Yoga-sutras* list *samadhi* as the last of the eight progressive stages of yoga: (1) *yama* (2) *niyama* (3) *asana* (4) *pranayama* (5) *pratyahara* (6) *dharana* (7) *dhyana* (8) *samadhi*.

Lord Sri Krishna tells Uddhava that He Himself is the object of *samadhi* in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (ll.16.24), *yoganam atma samrodho*: "Among the progressive states of yoga, I am the final stage, *samadhi*, where the soul is completely free from illusion."

Completely free from illusion means that one has realized the Brahman, Paramatma, and Bhagavan features of the Absolute Truth. At this highest perfectional stage of self realization, or *samadhi*, one understands that he is the eternal servant of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, and his only duty is to work in Krishna consciousness.

In the *samadhi* of Krishna consciousness a person experiences ecstasy by concentrating all the activities of his mind and senses upon the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord. Whether awake or asleep the devotee constantly thinks of Sri Krishna's name, form, qualities, abode, and pastimes. Thus, *samadhi* is a state of consciousness, wherein the devotee always fixes his mind on Krishna by meditation and devotional service. He doesn't forget the Lord

for even a moment. The *gopis* of Vrndavana showed the perfection of *samadhi* by their constant absorption in thoughts of Krishna and His pastimes.

Besides being an active state of mental and physical absorption in Krishna's service, *samadhi* is a state of consciousness one can achieve at the time of death. Lord Sri Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-gita* (8.5): *anta kale ca mam eva*, "Anyone who remembers Me at the time of death will immediately attain My nature without a doubt." A devotee, who is fixed in Krishna and His service while living, will be fixed in remembering Krishna while dying. Thus, a lifetime of *samadhi* in Krishna consciousness ends in success. At the critical moment of death, when all the bodily functions become drastically disturbed, a sincere devotee will remember Sri Krishna in his innermost consciousness. This will save him from falling down into material existence.

When death arrives an accomplished Vaisnava enters a trance of meditation (*samadhi*) on the Supreme Lord. Detaching himself from the material body, he attains the supreme consciousness. Therefore, a perfected devotee doesn't die in the ordinary sense but he "goes into *samadhi*." Whereas, the common man dies miserably due to excessive attachment to his material body. The Yamadutas, agents of death, drag him to hell for judgement, punishment, and rebirth to suffer again in another material body.

Purpose of Samadhis

Cremation, the last *samskara* (Vedic rites of purification for the soul), is performed for most people in India, and sometimes even for animals. Fire, being totally pure, burns up the impurities of a dead body and severs the soul's inordinate attachment to it. When *ksatriyas* (warriors) would kill certain animals, such as a tiger, they would cremate the tiger's body as a *samskara* to free that soul from attachment to the tiger body .

The seventh canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam* describes the story of the celebrated King Suyajna of Usinara. After the king fell in battle, his queens cried in lamentation over his dead body. They refused to cremate him as was customary. According to the Vedic

system, if a person dies in the daytime he must be burned or buried by sunset. If one dies at night the funeral ceremony must be completed before sunrise.

Because of the king's attachment to his body and the queen's refusal to cremate him, he became a ghost. Finally, after hearing philosophical instructions from Yamaraja, who appeared disguised as a boy, the queens burned the king's body. Upon cremation, King Suyajna left the ghostly plane and went to the heavenly planets. The act of cremation helps the soul evolve his spiritual consciousness by cutting his attachments to the material body, family, home, and country.

According to another Vedic injunction however, the body of a saintly person should not be cremated because it has become pure from a lifetime of spiritual absorption. His body and his remnants become a kind of sacred "*prasadam*" to be honored in a special place. For example, although Benares is famous for its burning ghats, Mayavadi *sannyasis* who die there are never burned. They are consecrated into the holy Ganges river.

Vaisnava *sannyasi's* bodies are buried in the transcendental dust of Vrndavana. Srila Prabhupada once said, "If you cultivate spiritual knowledge in large quantities then your body is no longer material---it becomes spiritualized, *cin moya*. Therefore, the body of a great saintly person is not burned. It is buried in *samadhi* because a Vaisnava's body is *cin moya*."

Although the soul of a pure Gaudiya Vaisnava enters Radha-Madhava's *nitya nikunja-lila*, the body remains here within his *samadhi*. A disciple feels that his spiritual master is personally present, sitting within the *samadhi* in his *cin moya deha* (spiritualized body).

Vishnu temples and Vaisnava *samadhis* are built for the same purpose. They increase our remembrance and service of the Supreme Lord Krishna and His pure devotees. By respectfully visiting the *samadhis* and showing the proper behavior one makes spiritual advancement. Like the Deity, the Vaisnava's body remains permanently installed to receive regular worship in the *samadhi* mandir. The *samadhi* keeps that personality within our immediate proximity. Worship will always go on here. Now and

in the future, people can conveniently worship the Vaisnava in this *samadhi*.

Personal things such as the Vaisnava's beads, clothes, or shoes can vanish or disappear from public view. The *samadhi*, however, stands as a permanent reminder of his presence, life and teachings. Built in memory of a spiritually powerful devotee, a *samadhi* proclaims, "Here lies a Vaisnava saint who is so pure and so devoted that Lord Krishna Himself never forgets him." The Supreme Lord confirms this in *Srimad Bhagavatam* (9.4.68): *sadhavo hridayam mahyam, sadhunam hridayas-tvaham, mad anyate na jananti, naham tebhyo managapi*, "My pure devotees are always in My heart, and I am always in their hearts. My devotees know nothing other than Me, and I know nothing other than them."

Temples and *samadhis* serve a vital function for cultivating *bhakti* where *sadhana* and *upasana* (worship) are essential. Devotion flourishes simply by visiting them. Reminding devotees of the greatness and sacrifice of a particular Vaisnava, the *samadhis* inspire and impel them to also achieve perfection in devotional service.

Historically, advanced Vaisnavas have done their *bhajana*, and they still do, near the *samadhis* of *mahabhagavata* Vaisnavas like Sri Rupa Gosvami, Sri Sanatana Gosvami, Sri Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami, Sri Jiva Gosvami, Sri Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami, Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami, Sri Lokanatha Gosvami, Sri Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura and others. Totally immersed in thoughts of these eternal associates of Sri-Sri Radha-Govinda, devotees will do *bhajana* beside their *samadhis*, and receive great impetus to eternally love, serve, and surrender to Radha-Damodara.

Chapter Two

HISTORY OF SAMADHIS

Research scholars say that *samadhis* began with the Egyptian pyramids and their "mummies," and that *samadhis* didn't exist in the original Vedic culture. After the ancient Egyptians the practice of making "*samadhis*" spread to the Muslim countries. The Christians followed by burying their dead in coffins. In India, *samadhis* first appeared as the Buddhist stupas. Later, the Vaisnavas adopted the practice to entomb elevated saints.

The first Vaisnava *samadhi* was made about one-thousand years ago for Sri Ramanujacarya, the *acarya* of the Sri Sampradaya. Before the fifteenth century, however, most Vaisnavas were simply cremated. Generally, the Ramanuja *sampradaya* doesn't build *samadhis*. Although not officially recognized, some orders of the Nimbarka and Ramanandi *sampradayas* give *pushpa* (flower) *samadhis* to their saints. Haridasa Swami, who discovered the Bankhibihari Deity and was a follower of the Nimbarka sect, has his *samadhi* in Nidhuvana, Vrndavana. To some extent the Vallabha *sampradaya* also has *samadhis*. Coming in the line of Sripad Madhvacarya, Sri Madhavendra Puri has his *samadhi* near the Deity of Ksira-cora Gopinatha in Remuna, Orissa. Madhavendra Puri was the spiritual master of Sri Advaita Acarya and Isvara Puri, the spiritual master of Lord Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

The importance of Vaisnava *samadhis* greatly increased during and after the time of Lord Caitanya (1486-1534). The first Gaudiya *samadhi* was a *pushpa samadhi* made from Lord Gauranga's beautiful hair, which was shaved off when the Lord took *sannyasa*. Located in Katva (West Bengal), it is called the *Kesh* (hair) *samadhi*. The second *samadhi*, also in Katva, is that of the liberated rogues Jagai and Madhai. Standing in Mayapur (Navadvipa) is the third *samadhi* which was built for the Chand Kazi. By personally

placing His devotee, Sri Haridasa Thakura, in *samadhi* in Jagannatha Puri Lord Caitanya firmly established the practice of building *samadhis* within the Gaudiya *sampradaya*. Sri Krishna Dasa Kaviraja Gosvami describes this transcendental pastime in chapter eleven of the *Caitanya-caritamrta Antya-lila*.

While looking at the sweet lotus face of Lord Gauranga and chanting *Sri Krishna Caitanya, Sri Krishna Caitanya, Sri Krishna Caitanya*, Haridasa Thakura left his body. The sky vibrated with the thunderous sound of *Hari* and *Krishna* chanted by the devotees. Overcome with feelings of *prema*, Lord Caitanya picked up Haridasa's body and began to dance. Then amidst a roaring *kirtana* and ecstatic dancing the body of Haridasa Thakura was set on a pallanquin and carried to the seaside.

While bathing the body of Haridasa in the ocean Sri Caitanya said, "From now on, this ocean has become a great place of pilgrimage." After placing Lord Jagannatha's *maha-prasadam* (food, cloth, sandal paste, and silken ropes) on Haridasa's body Lord Caitanya and the devotees buried him in the beach. With His beautiful hands Lord Gaura Raya covered the body with sand while chanting *Hari bol! Hari bol!* The *samadhi* site was marked with a platform and surrounded by a strong protective fence. Filling the universe with the holy name of Hari, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His devotees chanted and danced exuberantly while circumambulating the *samadhi* of Sri Haridasa Thakura.

One can still visit the *samadhi* of Haridasa Thakura in Jagannatha Puri. Every year on the date of *Ananta-caturdasi* (September) the Vaisnavas hold a *tirobhava mahotsava* (disappearance celebration) to commemorate the passing away of Srila Haridasa Thakura. Lord Caitanya said, "If anyone comes here, chants Hare Krishna and dances, he will achieve the mercy of Krishna very soon."

Chapter Three

TYPES OF SAMADHIS

Basically, one finds three types of *samadhis*: full body, *pushpa* (flower), and *smṛti* (memory). Unique to the Gaudiya Vaisnavas is a fourth type called *grantha samadhi* which contains rare sacred manuscripts. The full body or standard *samadhi* holds the complete body of a realized Vaisnava within the sacred earth of a holy place like Vrndavana, Navadvipa, or Jagannatha Puri. During the sixteenth century, many Vaisnavas were burned and their ashes entombed to prevent desecration from marauding Moghuls. But if one died from a snake bite or an infectious disease such as smallpox, the body would be neither burned nor buried, but thrown respectfully in the holy Yamuna River.

Pushpa samadhis, the second most common, are made by taking flowers worn by the departed Vaisnava before his body is placed in *samadhi*. Those sanctified flowers are then buried in another holy place. A *samadhi* mandir is built to provide worship and remembrance of that pure Vaisnava.

Samadhis made from the ashes or bone of a Vaisnava also fall in the category of *pushpa samadhis*. Some ashes or bone from the burnt body are kept in a gold, silver, copper, or clay urn and deposited in the *samadhi* after performing Vedic rituals (*pratistha homa*).

Pushpa samadhis serve to increase the worship and memory of that departed Vaisnava among the devotees living in another holy dhama. For example, if the transcendental body of the devotee is entombed in Vrndavana, then a *pushpa samadhi* might be built in Sridhama Mayapur. Today in Vrndavana a magnificent, hand carved, pure white marble *samadhi* enshrines the transcendental body of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON. Srila Prabhupada's *pushpa samadhi* ornaments the bank of the Ganges in Sridhama Mayapur,

West Bengal. With its huge white marble dome (resembling the shape of the U.S. Capitol building), which is capped with a gigantic, glistening *kailas*, the *samadhi* is visible for miles around.

Smrti samadhis (memory *samadhis*), although not specifically mentioned in the *sastras*, have become a tradition. The word *smrti* means memory. A *smrti samadhi* preserves the memory of a great Vaisnava by enshrining some of his personal items. Objects used by a spiritually advanced soul are accepted as pure and worshipable. But the personal effects of an ordinary man are contaminated, and usually burned or thrown away after his death. The tradition of building *smrti samadhis* originated with the idea that any object associated with an elevated Vaisnava becomes surcharged with the spiritual energy of that person. Although it's generally thought that *smrti samadhis* sprang from tradition and not scripture; research proves otherwise. In the *Padma Purana*, Lord Siva tells Parvati: *aradhanam sarvesam, Vishnor aradhanam param, tasmāt parataram devī, tādīyanam samarcanam*, "O Devi, Of all forms of worship, Vishnu worship is the highest. But higher than that is the worship of (*tadiya*) all the things belonging to Vishnu."

The category of *tadiya* mentioned above includes Deity forms of Lord Vishnu, the spiritual master, the Vaisnavas, and all things used by them such as their *asanas*, *japa* beads, *sastras*, clothes, shoes, walking sticks, and so on. According to *Padma Purana*, these articles are worshipable by all living beings. Similarly, in *Caitanya-caritamṛta*, Krishna Dasa Kaviraja says that upon receiving a *bahirvasa* (outer garment) worn by Lord Caitanya, King Pratrāparudra (*kare vastera pujana*) began worshiping it exactly as he would worship the Lord. As the body of a Vaisnava is worshiped, his spiritually charged possessions can also be consecrated in the earth of a holy place. Then a *smrti samadhi* mandir is built to facilitate worship and remembrance. Within a *smrti samadhi* one may find practically anything connected with a Vaisnava including his hair, tooth, clothes, shoes, walking stick, eyeglasses, neck beads, finger rings, photograph, or earth from his birth place.

Near Sri Jiva Gosvami's *samadhi* in Radha-Damodara temple, there is a *justi samadhi* (stick *samadhi*) containing the walking stick of a Vaisnava. In olden times, while traveling on pilgrimage a

Vaisnava was sometimes attacked and eaten by a tiger. Since the body was gone, the disciples or relatives might establish a *smṛti samadhi* to commemorate the devotee. In Katva, West Bengal there is a *kesha samadhi* containing the transcendental hair of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu from shaving His head at His *sannyasa* initiation. In Vrndavana, the tooth of Sri Gadadhara Pandit receives regular worship in his *danta samadhi*.

Nama Samadhis

A sub-category of *smṛti samadhis* is the *nama samadhi*. Gaudiya Vaisnava philosophy explains that the *nama* (name) of God or His pure devotee contains the same potency as the person. Sri Rupa Gosvami describes this in *Sri Bhakti-rasamṛta-sindhu Purva-vibhagaga* (2.233), *nama cintamaniḥ kṛṣṇas, caitanya-rasa-vigraha, purno suddho nitya-mukto' bhinnatvan nama naminoh*, "The holy name of Krishna is a transcendental wish-fulfilling gem. It gives all spiritual benedictions, for the name is Krishna Himself. The name is the personification of divine *rasas* and the fountain-head of all pleasure. The holy name of Krishna is completely pure, transcendental and fully liberated. This is because there is no difference between the name of Krishna and Krishna Himself." Since there's no difference between the name of a transcendental Vaisnava and his body, one may build a *nama samadhi* to remember and worship that venerable Vaisnava. The *Padma Purana* mentions the practice of worshiping the name in relation to establishing a Deity of Vishnu. Yamaraja tells Dhumrakesh in the *Kartika-mahatyam* chapter: "A Deity of Lord Vishnu may be produced from and worshiped in eight different forms including stone, wood, earth, mud, metal, jewels, *the written word*, and in the mind." A *nama samadhi* consists of carving the Vaisnava's name in a block of granite or marble and placing that stone in a sacred place. In Vrndavana, near the Govindaji temple, there are over sixty-four such *nama samadhis* of Lord Caitanya's *nitya-parikaras* (eternal associates).

Grantha Samadhi

Not found in any other *sampradaya* and not found in any other place is the *grantha samadhi* in Vrndavana belonging to the Gaudiya *sampradaya*. Sealed within an iron safe or a stone box hidden under the sacred soil near Sanatana Gosvami's *samadhi* lies what may be the most intimate and esoteric *granthas* (scriptures) ever written. Rumors abound about these secret texts.

Sri Sanatana Gosvami, Sri Rupa Gosvami, and Sri Jiva Gosvami were the topmost Sanskrit scholars. They acutely studied all the *Vedas* such as the *Tantras*, *Samhitas*, and *Upanisads*. Some devotees believe that the Gosvamis, fearing that people in the future might misunderstand these confidential scriptures, hid them in this *grantha samadhi*.

However, having thoroughly researched this phenomena, Nrsingha Vallabha Gosvami and many learned *sadhus* in Vrndavana give a second explanation. From Vrndavana, Srinivasa Acarya, Syamananda Prabhu, and Narottama Dasa Thakura took the original copies of the Gosvami's manuscripts to distribute in Bengal and Orissa. There were no duplicates. Fortunately, Syamananda Prabhu made copies of the original manuscripts and sent them back to Vrndavana. At that time, Sri Jiva Gosvami, thinking it impossible to properly preserve those delicate and precious handwritten manuscripts, built the *grantha samadhi* to store the valuable works of Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana Gosvamis.

Differences in Potency

Do all types of *samadhis* have the same spiritual potency? Does a *samadhi* enshrining the transcendental body of a Vaisnava radiate more spiritual power than his *pushpa* or *nama samadhi*? Understanding the position of Sri Krishna's transcendental Deity forms will answer the questions.

There is no difference in spiritual potency between the originally installed Deity of Krishna and the *prati-bhu murti* that takes His place if the original Deity moves elsewhere. For example, when Rupa Gosvami's original Deity of Govindaji left Vrndavana to receive worship in Jaipur, a *prati-bhu murti* of

Govinda was installed in Vrndavana to receive the love offerings of the Vrajavasis. Although the original Deity may create a deeper impression, especially in the heart of a neophyte, ultimately, one shouldn't discriminate between these two absolutely spiritual forms of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna.

Similarly, at the highest level, all types of *samadhis* possess the same spiritual potency. Of course, seeing a difference, a neophyte devotee is less likely to commit an offense when visiting the original "full body" *samadhi* than at the *pushpa*, *smrti*, or *nama samadhis*. In *Caitanya Bhagavata*, Sri Haridasa Thakura states that chanting the name of a realized devotee gives more purity than chanting the names of Sri Krishna. Therefore, purification occurs not only by visiting the original full body *samadhi*, but also by honoring the Vaisnava's *nama samadhi*. By chanting his holy name one will receive unlimited spiritual purity. *Sri Srimad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada ki jai!*

Advanced devotees will perceive the same spiritual potency in all types of *samadhis*. And all *samadhis* help us to remember the example and precepts of the pure Vaisnavas. The pure devotees inspire us and all future generations of Vaisnavas to follow in their footsteps, and become pure devotees of Radha and Krishna.

Although there is a oneness in potency amongst the different types of *samadhis*, many authorities cite the following *sastric* story to prove a difference. The incredible potency of a brahmana's bones are described in the sixth canto of *Bhagavatam*. A brahmana named Kausika once protected his body by covering it with a mystic armor known as the *Narayana-kavaca*. This shield consists of mantras describing the various incarnations of Lord Krishna.

One day while sitting in the desert and chanting these mantras, Kausika gave up his body. Citraratha, the King of the Gandharvaloka, and his entourage of beautiful celestial women were once flying over the spot where the brahmana had died. Suddenly, for no apparent reason, Citraratha's airplane spun out of control and crashed. The sages informed the Gandharva King that he had offended the brahmana, Kausika, by inadvertently flying over the brahmana's spiritually surcharged bones! The bones of an ordinary man could never cause such a catastrophe.

This story shows the tremendous power of brahmana's bones, which had basically formed a "full body *samadhi*" in the middle of the desert. In summary, the brahmana, like all Gaudiya Vaisnavas, chanted the holy names of Lord Krishna (contained within the *Narayana-kavaca*). By doing this he attained a spiritually surcharged body and bones. The story also signifies that the body, bones, and ashes of an advanced devotee possess and emanate inconceivable spiritual power. The complete body of a Vaisnava becomes fully spiritualized because he serves Krishna with all the activities of his body, mind, and words.

As a piece of iron becomes electrically charged by continual contact with a magnet, similarly the body of a pure devotee becomes spiritually electrified due to his loving service connection with Radha and Krishna. After the Vaisnava disappears that spiritual power continues to radiate from his body (and bones). Therefore, many authorities contend that the spiritual potency found at the *samadhi* of the pure devotee's transcendental body surpasses that of the *pushpa*, *smrti*, or *nama samadhis*.

The author believes that at any time, at any place, and in unlimited ways a *nitya-siddha mahabhagavata* Vaisnava, who has entered Radha-Krishna's *nitya-Vraja-lila*, can bless, inspire, and instruct a sincere and faithful spiritual aspirant. The Supreme Lord Krishna invests His *kṛpa-sakti* (mercy potency) within His devotee. Without the devotee no one can receive the mercy of God. As rays of light expand from the radiant sun, the Lord's mercy expands as a living vibration from the heart of pure devotee who is saturated with love of God. The mercy vibrates in their hearts, in their thoughts, words, actions, in their bodies and in their bones. Therefore, one's consciousness becomes purified by any contact with a pure Vaisnava.

Eligibility For a Samadhi

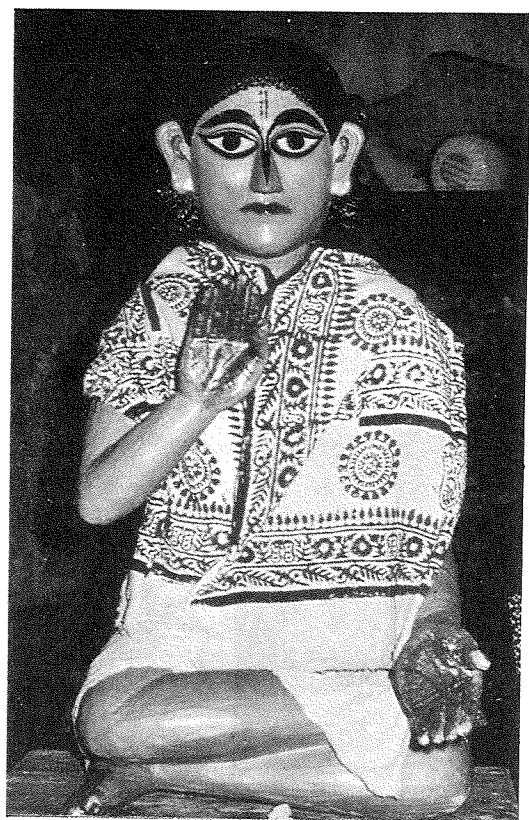
Citing the *Smṛti sastras*, Sri Sanatana Gosvami says in the *Hari Bhakti-vilasa* that Vaisnava *acaryas*, *sannyasis*, *babajis*, and *siddha purusas* may be given full body *samadhis*, but not *grhastha* Vaisnavas. However, sometimes the ashes of *grhastas* or *mahantas* are

put into *samadhis*. The body of a Vaisnava becomes purified by chanting Hari Nama and performing Krishna *bhajana*. The holy name doesn't discriminate based on a devotee's place of birth, caste, or gender.

Spiritually elevated Vaisnava ladies receive *samadhis*, but rarely the full body type. After cremation their ashes are sealed in a silver urn and placed in a *pushpa samadhi*. There are exceptions. Sadhu Mayi, a great female devotee of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, has a full body *samadhi* behind the Rangaji temple in Vrndavana.



Lord Caitanya carries Thakura Haridasa



Sri Isvara Puri



Baladeva Vidyabhusana

Chapter Four

THE LOCATION OF SAMADHIS

By tradition Gaudiya Vaisnavas build their *samadhis* in three transcendental places: Sri Vrndavana-dhama, Sri Mayapur-dhama, and Sri Ksetra-dhama (Jagannatha Puri). Within a holy dhama, such as Vrndavana, they build in specific areas like Radha-kunda, Seva-kunja, and near the temples of the six Gosvamis.

Many Vaisnavas die far away from the holy dhama. But their relatives bring their bodies, ashes, or personal items to Vrndavana in order to make their *samadhis*. Why is this done? Why don't they just build the *samadhi* in Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, New York, Paris, or London? The descendents believe, and it's a fact, that placing the name of their forefathers in the holy dhama is auspicious and beneficial. Generations of devotee pilgrims will see the *samadhi*, remember that beloved Vaisnava, and possibly even offer some *puja* or a prayer. The blessings of the Vaisnavas will surely help their forefathers.

Generally, the Vaisnava's *samadhi* is placed to the side or behind the temple, because a devotee can't accept worship in front of the Deity. If not near a temple, a *samadhi* is put where the Vaisnava had previously performed his *bhajana*. It is said that Sri Jiva Gosvami formerly did *bhajana* in exactly the same place where his *samadhi* now stands in the Radha-Damodara temple in Seva-kunja, Vrndavana. The *bhajana* places of Sri Bhugarbha Gosvami, Sri Lokanatha Gosvami, and Sri Prabodhananda Sarasvati Thakura became the site of their *samadhis*.

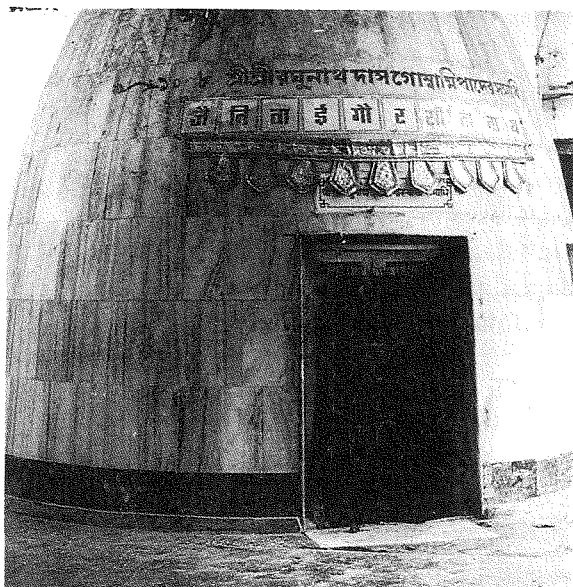
Most of the eternal associates of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and the prominent Gaudiya Vaisnava *acaryas* have *samadhis* in Vrndavana. They are located within six major areas, although some *samadhis* are located within different areas of *Vraja mandala*, such as Surya Kunda, Unchagoan, Jatipur, and Govardhana.



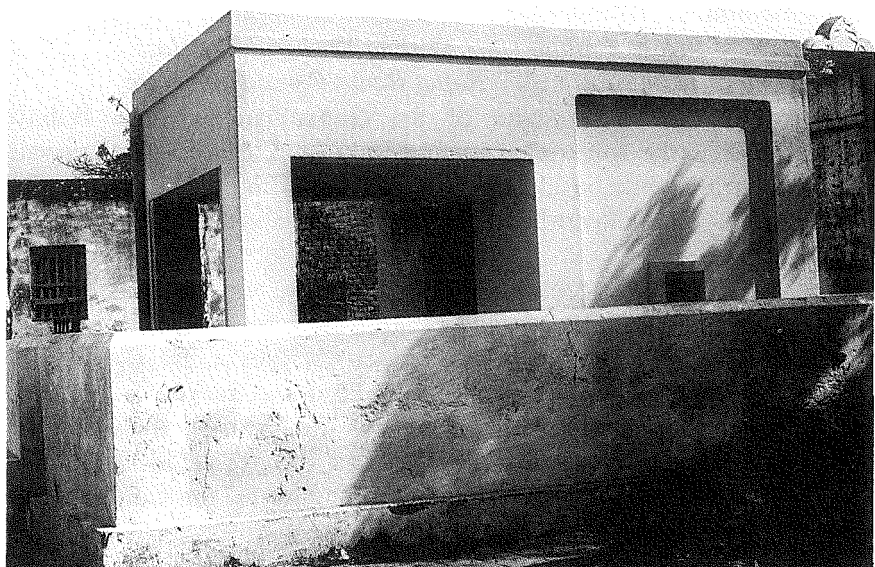
Pushpa Samadhi Bhaktivinoda Thakura



Samadhi Gaura Kishora Dasa B



Samadhi Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami



Samadhis: Raghunatha Bhatta and Dasa Gosvamis, Krishna Dasa Kaviraja

Six Major Samadhi Areas

- I. Radha-kunda Samadhis
- II. Sanatana Gosvami's Samadhi Sthali
- III. Jiva Gosvami's Samadhi Pitha
- IV. Gokulananda Mandir Samadhi Pitha
- V. Samadhis Around Municipal Vrndavana
- VI. Chosata (64) Mahanta Samadhi Pitha

I. Radha-kunda Samadhis (photo p. 15)

At Radha-kunda on the same day, but in different years, Srila Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami, Srila Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami, and Srila Krishna Dasa Kaviraja entered into Radha-Madhava's *nitya-lila*. To avoid desecration by Moghuls their divine bodies were burned and their ashes were placed in *samadhi* at Syama-kunda. Near the Radha-Gopinatha mandir overlooking Radha-kunda, another individual *samadhi* was built for Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami. Here, devotees perform *akhanda* (twenty-four hours non-stop) maha-mantra *kirtana* for the pleasure of Sri-Sri Radha-Gopinatha and Srila Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami.

*Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare*

The *pushpa samadhi* of Sri Gaurakishora Dasa Babaji Maharaja, the spiritual master of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, stands beside the Radha-Kunja-Bihari Gaudiya Matha temple on the Govardhana *parikrama marga* just before it reaches Radha-kunda.

Just past the Radha-Gopinatha temple, on a dirt road on the left side of the Radha-kunda *parikrama marga*, stands the *bhajana kutir* built by Thakura Bhaktivinoda. Within it are the *pushpa samadhis* of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura and his son Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura. Across the dirt road and within an inaccessible compound lies the broken and neglected *samadhi* of Sri Narahari Sarakara, a most intimate eternal associate of Lord Gauranga-sundara.

II. Sanatana Gosvami's Samadhi Sthali (29)

This *samadhi* area is accessible from the Vrndavana *parikrama marg*a, or from a road running alongside the temple. It is located behind the original temple of Radha-Madana Mohana, and slightly down the hill. Here one finds the original *samadhi* of Sri Sanatana Gosvami, the *grantha samadhi*, and *pushpa samadhis* of Tapana Mishra and Candrasekhara, and many more. This *samadhi* compound, which is the peaceful playground of parrots, is saturated with sublime spiritual vibrations.

On the corner of the road running alongside the temple and leading back to Sanatana Gosvami's *samadhi* is the *samadhi* of Sri Sura Dasa Madana Mohana Gosvami, a disciple of Sri Sanatana Gosvami. Resembling the shape of Madana Mohana's temple, it is usually covered in whitewash. *Bhakta-mala* describes that Sura Dasa ran away to Vrndavana after collecting lacs of rupees in taxes on behalf of Emperor Akbar. He spent the money on *sadhu seva* (serving devotees).

His *bhajana* was song writing and humble service. When Vaisnavas visited the temple he would watch their wooden shoes to prevent the monkeys from stealing them. To receive the blessings of the devotees he would eat the dust from their feet remaining on their shoes. Gaudiyas regularly sing the prayers of Sura Dasa: *Sri Govinda mukharavinda niraki mana vicarou, candra koti, bhanu koti, koti madana varunaou*, "Just see the beauty of the lotus face of Sri Govinda, which is more effulgent than millions of suns and moons, and more attractive than millions of Kamadevas (Cupids)."

III. Sri Jiva Gosvami's Samadhi Pitha (35)

Within the compound of the Radha Damodara temple in Seva Kunja, Vrndavana are the *samadhis* of Sri Rupa Gosvami, Sri Jiva Gosvami, Sri Bhugarbha Gosvami, King Birhambhir of Vishnupura, Krishna Dasa brahmacari (a disciple of Sanatana Gosvami and Radha Damodara's *pujari*), and Sri Bhaktisiddhanta

Sarasvati Thakura. However, some claim that the *samadhi* of Krishna Dasa brahmachari actually belongs to Krishna Dasa Kaviraja. In either case, we worship both because these devotees were full of Radha-Krishna *prema*, and they were expert in distributing love of Godhead to the conditioned souls.

King Birhambhir, a leader of *dacoits* (thieves) and the powerful Malla king of Vana Vishnupura (Bengal), stole the trunk of books that Srinivasa, Syamananda, and Narottama Dasa were bringing to Bengal. King Birhambhir thought the trunk was full of valuable jewels. Indeed, it was filled with the priceless gems of the Gosvamis *granthas* (scriptures), which were destined for distribution in Bengal and Orissa. King Birhambhir eventually surrendered the *sastras* and took initiation from Srinivasa Acarya. He dedicated himself and his entire kingdom, which he renamed as Vishnupura, to the service of the Vaisnavas. Because of his lavish patronage Gaudiya Vaisnava art, culture, and religion flourished without interference in Vishnupura. His *pushpa samadhi* is located near Sri Jiva Gosvami's.

IV. Sri Gokulananda Mandir Samadhi Pitha (96)

Sri Lokanatha Gosvami, often called the seventh Gosvami of Vrndavana, did his *bhajana*, initiated Sri Narottama Dasa Thakura, and eventually entered *samadhi* in this same courtyard beside the Radha-Gokulananda mandir. The *samadhis* of Narottama Dasa Thakura, Sri Visvanatha Cakravarti, Sri Ganga Narayana Cakravarti and Krsnadeva Sarvabhauma (Visvanatha's disciple who accompanied Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana to Jaipur for defending the Gaudiya's right to worship Govindaji), are here too. A garland, kaupins, cloth, and *mala* form the contents of Narottama Dasa's *pushpa samadhi*.

Sometimes *samadhis* are moved. In Vrndavana, Visvanatha Cakravartipada did his *bhajana* near Radha-Govindaji's Yogapitha in an area called Patel Pura or Visvanatha Kunja. His *samadhi* was first placed here. In 1951, Visvanatha's *samadhi* was moved to Radha-Gokulananda temple.

According to Sri Gopalacandra Ghosh, a leading Gaudiya Vaisnava historian, today what we call the *bhajana kutir* of Rupa Gosvami, located opposite his *samadhi* at Radha-Damodara, was originally the full *samadhi* of Srinivasa Acarya.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, "Rupa Gosvami is My soul, and My *avesha murti* will appear in the form of Srinivasa to fulfill My desire to spread the message of Krishna consciousness." The name *Srinivasa* means the abode of Srimati Radharani. Because of Mahaprabhu's words, the Vaisnavas at the time of Srinivasa's disappearance thought that his *samadhi* should be kept near Sri Rupa Gosvami's *samadhi*. But when Hemalata Thakurani, the daughter of Srinivasa, came to Vrndavana she moved his *samadhi* to Dhira Samira, beside the *samadhi* of Srinivasa's close friend Ramacandra Kaviraja.

V. Samadhis Around Municipal Vrndavana

(1) Kaliya Ghat---Sri Prabodhananda Sarasvati Thakura's *samadhi* is located near the Kadamba tree that Sri Krishna jumped off to vanquish Kaliya asura. Just beyond the tree, and behind a small white Siva linga mandir one will find his well kept *samadhi*. (112)

(2) Radha Syamasundara Mandir---On the east side of the main road running off Loi Bazaar and past the temples of Radha-Syamasundara and Radha Damodara, and standing behind a row of shops is the *pushpa samadhi* of Sri Syamananda Prabhu. The *samadhi* of Rasikananda Prabhu, a prominent disciple, is on the left side of Syamananda's. While studying under Sri Jiva Gosvami at the Radha-Damodara temple, Syamananda lived here. One day Srimati Radharani personally appeared to give Syamananda the special tilaka mark which now adorns the foreheads of his followers.

(3) Radha Ramana Mandir---After entering the Radha Ramana temple compound from the street, turn left and walk fifty meters. There sits Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami's original *samadhi*, and many smaller ones of the previous *sevants* (priests) of Radha Ramanaji. (47)

(4) Keshi Ghat---Returning to the street from Gopala Bhatta's *samadhi*, turn right and follow the road around to the right, walk a few doors past the Vamsi-Gopala temple (where Srila Prabhupada once stayed). Turn left under the red sandstone entrance topped with two fish and find the *danta* (tooth) *samadhi* of Sri Gadadhara Pandit.

Gadadhara Pandit could never fulfill his desire to live in Vrndavana because Lord Gaurasundara ordered him to remain in Jagannatha Puri as a *ksetra sannyasi* and worship the Deity of Tota-Gopinatha. Nayananda Prabhu, his disciple, satisfied his wish by bringing Gadadhara Pandit's transcendental tooth to Vrndavana and making a *samadhi*. When Sri Gadadhara Pandit was leaving this world he asked Nayananda Prabhu to preserve his handwritten copy of *Bhagavad-gita*, which had one verse penned by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and to worship his Gopinatha Deity. Incapable of bearing a moments separation from Lord Sri Krishna, Gadadhara Pandit used to carry this small Deity of Gopinatha around his neck. The *samadhi* of Nayananda Prabhu is the small one to the right of Gadadhara Pandit's *samadhi*. Srila Thakura Bhaktivinoda, his son Sri Lalita Prasada, many *siddha rasika* Vaisnavas, and countless followers of Gadadhara Pandit have worshiped this sacred place. (47)

(5) Dhira Samira Area---The full *samadhis* of Srinivasa Acarya and Sri Ramacandra Kaviraja, and the *pushpa samadhis* of Hemalata Thakurani stand within one room inside a temple compound. This temple is on the corner of the main road running from Gopinatha Bazaar to Gopisvara Mahadeva temple, and a road leading down to the Yamuna. The area is called Dhira Samira Kunja. Previously, Srinivasa and Ramacandra lived here performing Krishna *bhajana*. (photos page 144)

Gauridasa Pandit's *samadhi* is nearby on the same side of the street leading to the Yamuna, and within the temple compound of Sri-Sri Syama-Raya, his worshipable Deities.(47)

Sri Gopala Guru Gosvami's most unusual *samadhi* is directly across the street, up an inclined cement walkway, through many doors, and tucked away deep inside the temple of Sri-Sri Radhakanta.

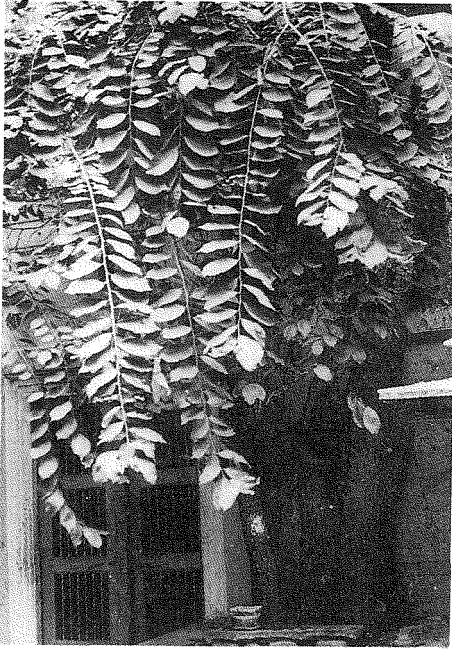


Samadhis: Right: Padmavati, Left: Jayadeva Gosvami

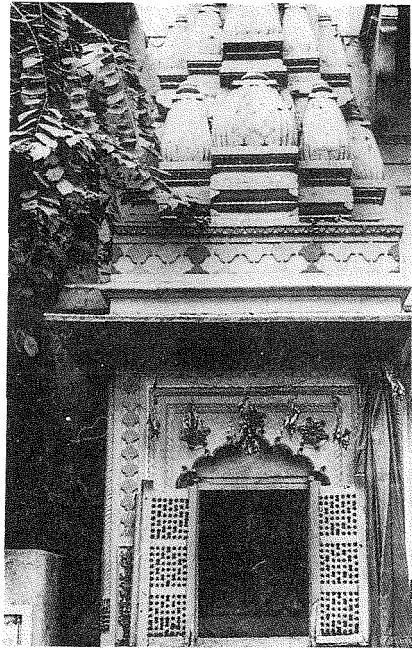


Samadhis of the Eight Kavirajas:

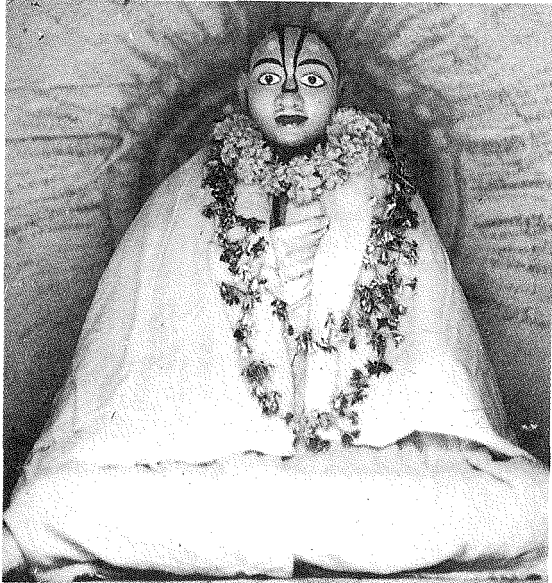
Far Left: Krishna Dasa, Behind Right Svarupa Damodara



Bakula tree



Samadhi Gopala Guru Gosvami



His samadhi murti

Two weeks after Gopala Guru's disappearance in Jagannatha Puri, the devotees in Vrndavana heard the news and honored him with a second disappearance ceremony. Suddenly, in the middle of the ceremony, before the vision of all the Vaisnavas, Gopala Guru Gosvami appeared sitting under the Bakula tree in the temple courtyard. Completely amazed, the Vaisnavas asked Gopala Guru, "Maharaja, how can you be here?" He replied, "In my *sakhi-svarupa* (spiritual body of a gopi) I am here in Vrndavana-dhama eternally serving the lotus feet of Radha and Krishna in Vamsivata." (19)

(6) Radha-Gopinatha Temple- The full *samadhi* of Sri Madhupandit Gosvami is located inside the temple on the right side which exits on Gopinatha Bazaar. Sri Gadadhara Pandit initiated Madhupandit Gosvami and Paramananda Bhattacharya. Upon discovering the Deity of Gopinatha in Vamsivata, Paramananda presented Him to Madhupandit, who later built the Radha-Gopinatha mandir. (page 112)

(7) Gopinatha Bazaar--- The *samadhi* of Sri Bilvamangala Thakura stands on the opposite side of the street, and 50 meters south of the famous Deity of Amia Nimai (Sri Caitanya) on route to the Rangaji temple. It is said that Bilvamangala did *bhajana* nearby on the banks of Brahma-kunda. *Krishna-karnamrta*, Bilvamangala's most famous work, was relished daily by Sriman Mahaprabhu during Gambhira lila in Puri. Krishna Dasa Kaviraja has written a wonderful commentary on this work. (photo 112)

VI. Chousata (64) Mahanta Samadhi Pitha (page 21)

Facing the entrance to the South Indian temple of Sri Rangaji, walk south (to your right) 200 meters straight down the wide road running to Mathura. Keeping the magnificent red sandstone temple of Govindaji on your right, turn left on the next street. 200 meters down this road you'll see two wooden doors within a boundary wall. This is the entrance to the Chousata Samadhi Pitha (64 Samadhis Area). Some authorities list 64 devotees as Lord Caitanya's most confidential associates. Since these devotees and

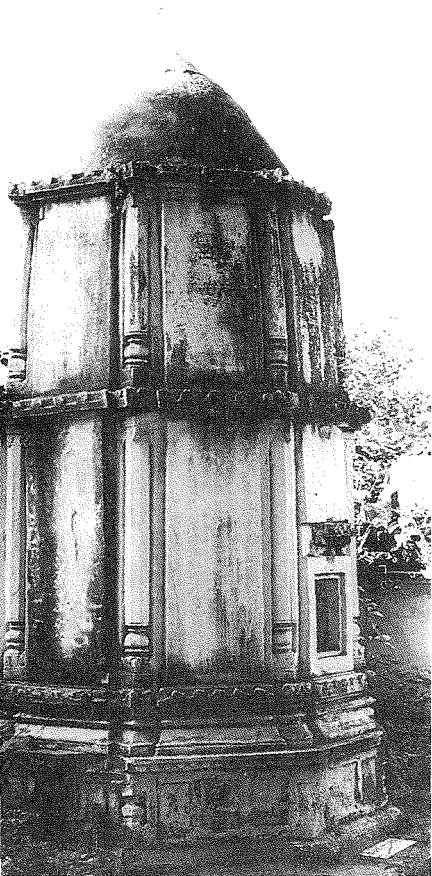
others have *samadhis* here, the area is called the 64 Samadhis area. (see appendix for list of 64 *mahantas*)

In Dvapara yuga, Sri Krishna enacted a wonderful transcendental pastime here. The *Padma Purana* says that once when Krishna was playing on the banks of the Yamuna at Yamuna Pulina, one of the gopas became thirsty. Wandering over here, Krishna dug a well with his flute and served crystal clear, cool sweet water to His beloved cowherd boyfriend. This place became a pilgrimage site known as Venu Kupa, well dug by a flute.

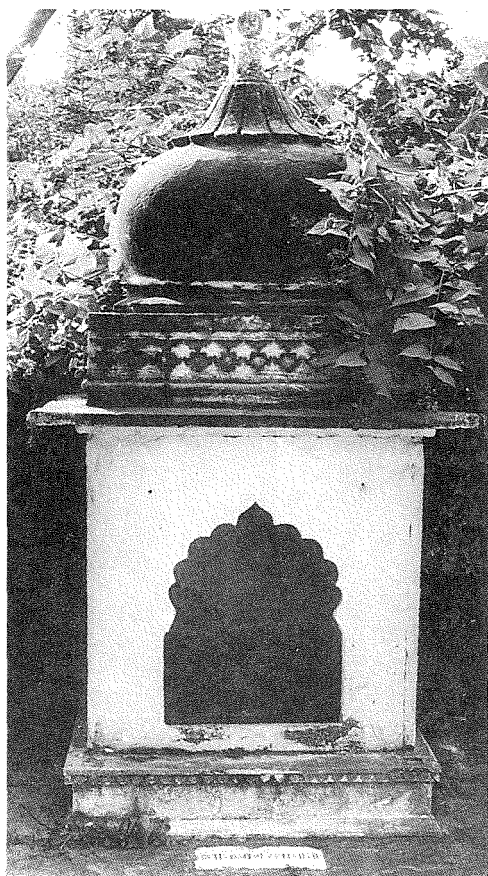
The Bengali edition of *Bhakta-mala* says that Sri Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami, Kasisvara Pandit Gosvami, and Subuddhi Raya did *bhajana* here. Many Gaudiya Vaisnavas would come here to associate with these *nitya parikaras* (intimate, eternal associates of Lord Gauracandra). They would chant Hari Nama and discuss the nectarean pastimes of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu and Radha-Govinda.

Samadhis of these three *mahabhagavatas* were established here after their disappearance. *Bhakta-mala* says that the *samadhis* of Srila Kasisvara Pandit Gosvami and Sri Subuddhi Raya are original and contain their complete bodies. Sri Jiva Gosvami himself, who was managing this area on behalf of the Radha-Govindaji temple, established the supreme significance of this area by making a *samadhi* for Srila Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami. He did this by bringing some of Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami's ashes from Radha-kunda, where his second *samadhi* stands. Venu Kupa, now part of Rangaji's gardens, stands in the Northeast corner of the 64 samadhis area just beyond the boundary wall. Venu Kupa contains supremely sanctified water called *amṛta jala* (nectar water). On special occasions such as Krishna Janmastami, the *pujaris* bathe Govindaji with this water. Local Vrajavasis purify their newborn sons with a splash of this *amṛta jala*.

Throughout Vraja mandala there are about two hundred *samadhis* of the eternal associates of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Although this fact is difficult to prove, some authorities claim that only twenty of these are "original *samadhis*." Original means that they contain the full transcendental bodies of Lord Caitanya's



Samadhi Jiya Gosvami



Samadhi Lokanatha Gosvami



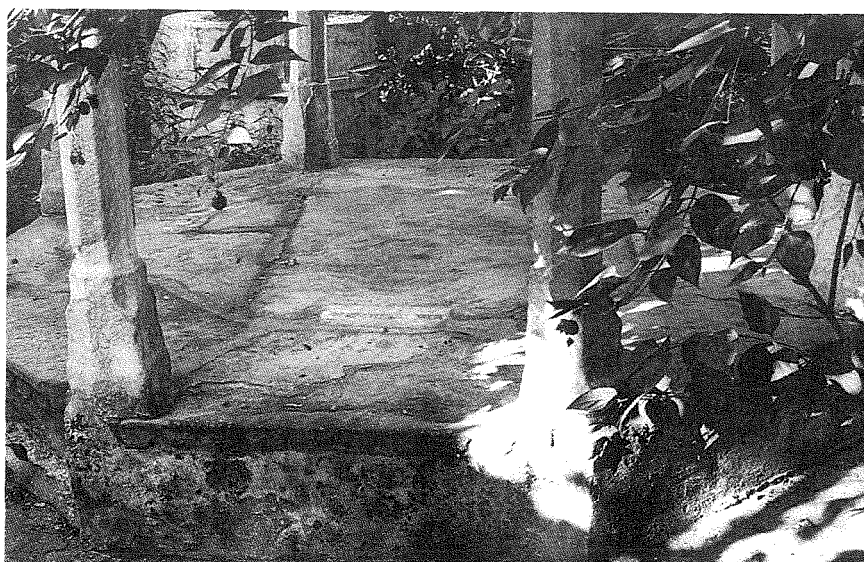
Samadhi Kavi Karnapura & brothers



64 Samadhis Area Entrance



*Left: Samadhis Abhirama Gopala,
Right: Sundarananda Thakura*



Samadhi Paramayyasa Dasa

eternal associates. Authorities give the following list of original *samadhis* in Vrndavana (some contain ashes):

Original Samadhis in Vrndavana

Sanatana Gosvami
 Rupa Gosvami
 Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami
 Jiva Gosvami
 Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami
 Gopala Bhatta Gosvami
 Lokanatha Gosvami
 Bhugarbha Gosvami
 Kasisvara Pandit Gosvami
 Prabodhananda Sarasvati Gosvami
 Gauri Dasa Pandit
 Krishna Dasa Kaviraja Gosvami
 Subuddhi Raya
 Madhupandit Gosvami
 Srinivasa Acarya
 Ramacandra Kaviraja
 Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura

The *samadhis* of Srila Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami, Kasisvara Pandit, and Subuddhi Raya were the first three established in the Chousata Mahanta Samadhi Pitha. Beginning about one-hundred and fifty years ago, the Govindaji temple authorities began developing the area by adding more *samadhis*. Most of these were *pushpa*, *smrti*, or *nama samadhis*. Devotees brought earth from the birth places of the Vaisnava poets Sri Vidyapati Dasa and Sri Candidasa to make their *samadhis* here.

The Gaudiya *acaryas* list 64 most prominent devotees amongst the unlimited number of Lord Caitanaya's eternal associates. (see Appendix for list) This place is called the 64 Samadhis Area because all of these sixty-four devotees are here. However, the majority of these eternally blissful servants of Lord Gauranga are honored in *nama samadhis*. Unfortunately, due to negligent

management--- tall grass, sticker bushes, dense foliage, and a proliferation of trees now hide many of these *samadhis*.

A Call in the Age of Kali

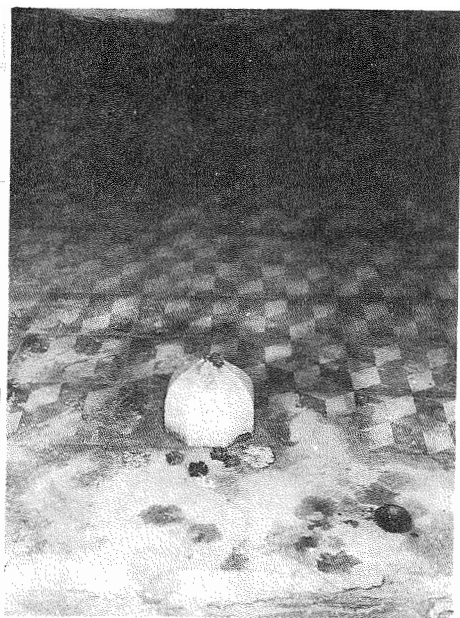
Kali Yuga---the age of decay, deception, and degradation--- has hit Vrndavana. During recent years theives have repeatedly looted the 64 *samadhis* area. They have totally stripped the decorative red stone facing, domes, and cakras that once ornamented the *samadhis* of the six Gosvamis. The ornately carved, red stone dome (resembling Madana Mohanaji's temple) above Sri Sanatana Gosvami's *samadhi* has "vanished." Instead of seeing *samadhis* that once looked like replicas of the beautiful temples of Govindaji and Madana Mohana, one now sees bare limestone shells coated with black soot from air pollution. In one case, an entire *samadhi*---red stone cakra, dome, limestone shell, and every single rupee-a-piece red brick---was completely ripped off. Where an elegant red sandstone *samadhi* mandir once stood, today stands a one-foot high foundation wall, surrounding the most sacred place of Srila Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami's *samadhi*!

It is our fervent hope that some noble and charitable Vaisnavas will become inspired to restore the dignity to these most important spiritual edifices. By repairing and restoring them they will definitely receive the blessings of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His eternal associates, the six Gosvamis of Vrndavana.

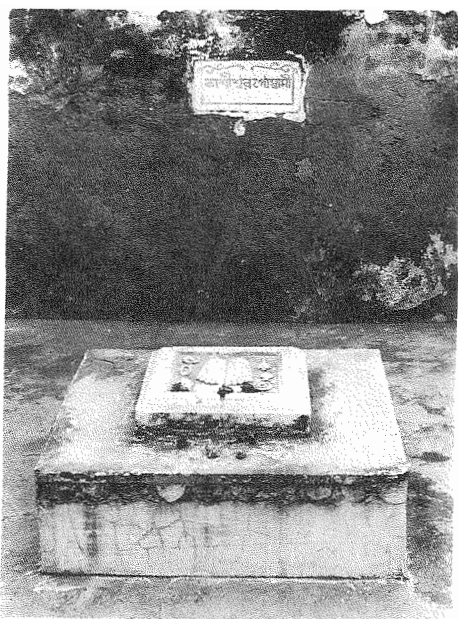
The Importance of Visiting The 64 Samadhis Area

Everyone appreciates the significance of this *samadhi* area, but very few visit. Main line Gaudiya groups ignore it for reasons already stated, and because they oppose the philosophy of the local caretakers. Vrajavasis rarely come here, although they do visit Venu Kupa. They prefer to visit the Gosvami's original *samadhis* located at the temples of Radha-Madana-Mohana, Radha-Gopinatha, Radha-ramana, Radha-Damodara, and Radha-Gokulananda.

Nevertheless, it's a transcendental place of Krishna *lila* surcharged with spiritual energy. It serves a useful purpose. Vaisnava



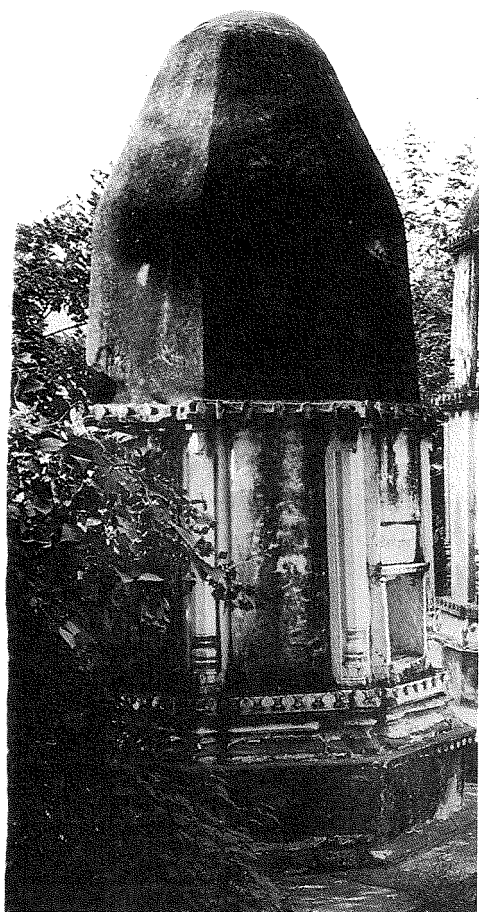
Samadhi Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami



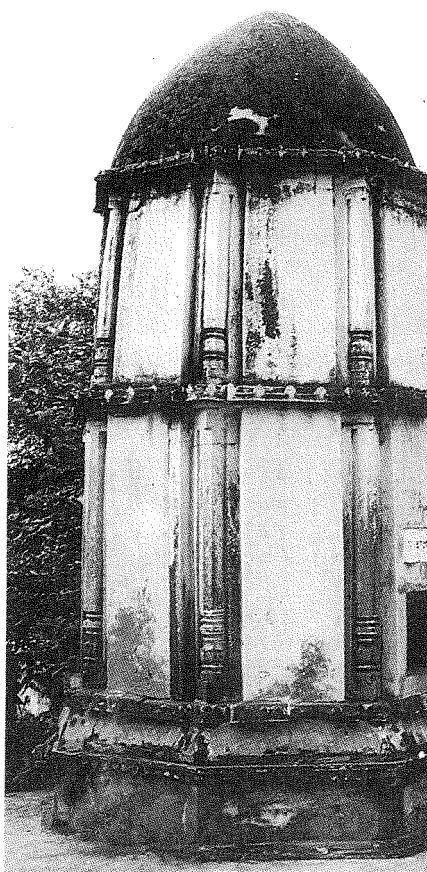
Samadhi Kasisvara Pandit



Samadhi Subuddhi Raya



Samadhi Rupa Gosvami



Samadhi Sanatana Gosvami

pilgrims staying briefly in Vrndavana town may easily visit the 64 Samadhis Area. In one place they can worship, pray to, remember, and chant the names of the most intimate followers of Lord Caitanya and get their blessings.

One becomes purified of material contamination and attains love of Godhead by chanting the holy names of Lord Sri Krishna and Sri Krishna Caitanya. Because the Lord and His pure devotees are non-different, one also becomes free from sinful reactions and spiritually elevated by chanting the names of Lord Caitanya's loving associates. Srila Krishna Dasa Kaviraja confirms this in *Caitanya-caritamṛta* *Adi* 12.9, *yan-saba smarane pai caitanya-carana, yan-saba-smarane haya vanchita purana*, "Simply by remembering the names of Lord Gauranga's eternal associates, one gets the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and all of his desires become fulfilled."

One should not minimize the Chosata Mahanta Samadhi Pitha because of its dismal and deteriorated appearance. Nor should one overlook it because it has mostly *nama samadhis*. The *acaryas* and the *sastras* explain that transcendental energy emanates equally from the name, form, qualities, and pastimes of the Supreme Lord Krishna and His eternally liberated pure devotees.

Therefore, we encourage Gaudiya Vaisnavas to regularly visit this area, especially on the disappearance days of these pure devotees. Spiritual reciprocation with the Lord and His devotees depends upon our state of consciousness. By approaching these *samadhis* with full faith, submission, and sincere devotion a devotee will definitely receive spiritual strength and encouragement from these most merciful Vaisnavas.

Samadhis Around Vraja Mandala

(1) Madhusudana Dasa Babaji--- the guru of Srila Jagannatha Dasa Babaji, has a *samadhi* at Surya-kunda, about three kilometers north of Radha-kunda. In Vrndavana *nitya-lila* Radha-Syamasundara come here everyday at about 3:00 p.m. to enjoy Their hilarious "Surya-puja" pastimes.

(2) Siddha Krishna Dasa Baba---the *bhajana* guru of Siddha Sri Madhusudana Dasa Babaji, wrote many books about practicing advanced devotional service. His *samadhi* is at Manasi Ganga in Govardhana.

(3) Narayana Bhatta Gosvami--- was a disciple of Sri Krishna Dasa Brahmachari, coming in the line of Gadadhara Pandit. By moving everywhere in Vrndavana and writing the *Vraja-bhakti-vilasa*, he became famous as the Vraja mandala *acarya*. He appeared in Unchagoan, the village of Srimati Lalita-sakhi and his *samadhi* is also there.



Narottama Dasa Thakura

Chapter Five

VISITING THE SAMADHIS

The Grave Yard

When a person dies in a Christian country his complete body is sealed in a coffin and buried in a graveyard or cemetery. Every town has one; either small family plots or vast cemeteries with acres and acres of sprawling lawns. The individual graves are marked with tombstones standing in measured distances from one another. They look like giant marble dominoes signifying the futility of material life; how one soul is following the other in the endless cycle of birth and death (*samsara cakra*).

A material existence without spiritual practices means simply to live, to die, and to be buried in the family graveyard. "My great-grandfather followed this path, my grandfather followed him, and my father followed too---one after the other."

The *Mahabharata* says that once Yamaraja asked Maharaja Yudhisthira, "What is the most amazing thing in this world?" Maharaja Yudhisthira replied, "The most amazing thing is that at every moment one can see that his friends, his fathers, and his relatives have died, but he is thinking, 'I shall live forever.'"

I was about seven years old when I first visited the family cemetery plot to have "*darsana*" of Mac, my brother who had died of leukemia twelve years before. My parents cried as they recounted his glories. They said, "The good Lord must have had some purpose for taking away Mac at the tender age of four. Now we should all offer a silent prayer to God on his behalf."

The solemn and serious moment that followed stretched into eternity. The atmosphere was eerie. I prayed to God to not snatch me too. I felt anxious to get out of there as soon as possible, never to return. Visiting the cemetery incited within me a fear of death, anxiety about life, and despair for the future.

The cemeteries or graveyards of the Christian countries are negative environments full of ghosts and ignorance, sorrow and attachment. Due to intense bodily attachment, a departed soul sometimes takes a ghostly(subtle) form to hover about its dead material body buried in the ground. A ghost exists in a perpetual state of anger and frustration because he has no physical material body to satisfy his desires. Scores of ghosts fly around graveyards frightening and harassing visitors, especially at night.

In the minds of many Christians, the word cemetery or graveyard conjures up images of ghosts, evil spirits, witches, black cats, and so on. Or as one person said, "A graveyard is a creepy place full of wierd, scary vibes." In other words, a cemetery is a place to avoid.

Mrytu Mahal

Every year thousands of tourists go to Agra, India to see the Taj Mahal, one of the "seven wonders of the world." No doubt, the building qualifies as an architectural marvel, but it's generally seen as a dead palace for a dead body. What impression does one receive from visiting this tomb built by a king to honor his deceased queen?

The effect of seeing the Taj Mahal lasts no longer than the snap of a camera's shutter, or the passing of a few frames of video film. The experience moves not the heart, nor stirs the soul. After coming 10,000 miles just to see it, one tourist quipped, "Boy! I wonder, Is this really one of the seven wonders of the world?"

Visiting the *samadhis* of the eternal associates of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is a totally different experience than seeing cemeteries or mausoleums. Unlike graveyards which are abodes of bad vibes, ignorance, and evil spirits, a *samadhi pitha* (place with many *samadhis*) overflows with pure goodness, uplifting spiritual energy, and the comforting association of benign Vaisnavas absorbed in transcendence. In other words, a *samadhi pitha* is an auspicious, most desirable and beautiful place to visit again and again.

Darsana Stories

Vaisnava *acaryas* explain that the *siddha purusas* (perfectly liberated souls) have two spiritual forms. Within the *samadhis* they exist in a *cin moya deha* (spiritualized body). Simultaneously, in the transcendental realm of Goloka Vrndavana they have a second spiritual form to eternally serve the Divine Couple Sri-Sri Radha-Giridhari. The presence of a Vaisnava within his *samadhi* resembles the presence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, in His *arca vigraha*, Deity form.

The *arca vigraha* of Sri Krishna reciprocates with the devotee according to the degree of his *sraddha*, *seva*, and *puja* (faith, service, worship). The six Gosvamis of Vrndavana, being completely pure, could personally talk with their beloved Deities of Damodara, Govindaji, Madan Mohana, Radha-ramana, and Giridhari. The Deity of Saksi-Gopala once stepped off the altar in Vrndavana and walked to Orissa (2,000 kms. away) in order to testify on behalf of His pure devotee. In the same way, from within their *samadhi* mandirs, the eternal associates of Lord Caitanya will reciprocate with a devotee's faith, service, and worship. Also, from receiving years and years of worship the place becomes saturated with devotional energy.

Although we bury the body of a departed Vaisnava, he still remains sitting there. Often, *siddha* saints, such as the six Gosvamis, give some indication to prove their presence within the *samadhis*. Shortly after his cremation, Raghunatha Dasa appeared to Sri Jiva Gosvami. He instructed Sri Jiva Gosvami to place his ashes in a *samadhi* at the Radha-Gopinatha temple beside Radha-kunda.

"Once Sri Radha Krishna Dasaji, a Vaisnava scholar and previous *mahanta* of Radha-kunda, told me (Gopalchandra Ghosh), 'Gopalaji, one day we were very much in anxiety about some property dealings concerning Radha-kunda. During this time I had a most unusual experience. At midnight, while I was chanting *japa* in my *kutir* by the side of Radha-kunda, I saw one *sadhu* in *babaji* dress coming out from inside of Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami's *samadhi* mandir.

'After bathing in Radha-kunda he looked directly at me, smiling ever so slightly. Then he entered the *samadhi* and vanished. Overwhelmed, I paid my *dandavats*. While lying before the entrance to Sri Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami's *samadhi*, I heard someone say to me from inside the *samadhi*, "Don't worry, everything will turn out correctly. Just always chant Radharani's name, and if you're doing this work for Her service then you will get victory. And if you think, 'this is my property, I am the *mahanta*,' and claim ownership, then you can't stay in Vrndavana.'" "

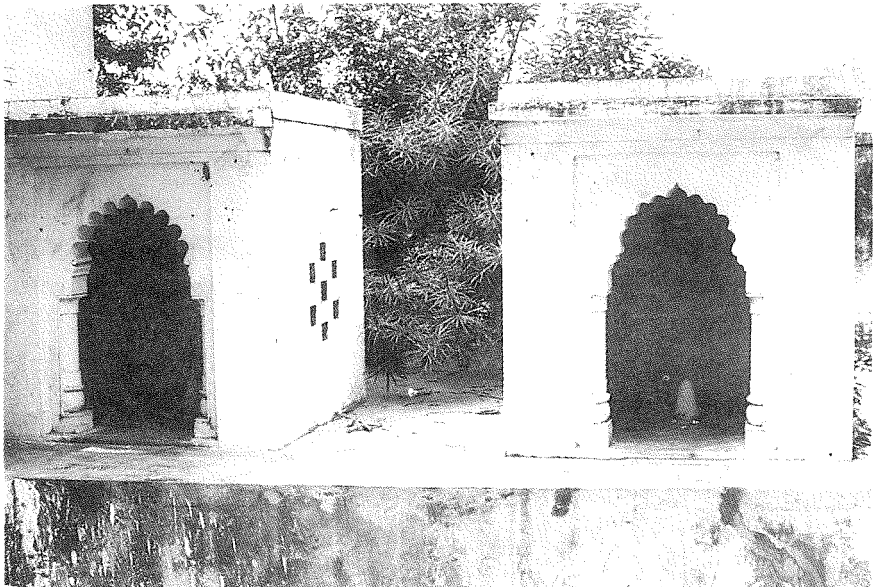
Behind Radha Madana-Mohana temple, and off the *parikrama marga* is a place called Javatri Kunja. An old Surya temple graces that kunja. *Bhakta-mala* says that Radhika and the *gopis* would come here and pluck java(red) flowers for worshiping Surya-deva and Yamuna-devi. Kishora Dasa baba, a scholar of Vrndavana, purchased this area and built a *bhajana kutir* here. Once at midnight while chanting *japa*, he saw a tall older man dressed in *babaji* cloth carrying a stick and a clay water pot. He was chanting very attentively and emitting a brilliant effulgence. After paying obeisances, Kishora Dasa asked, "Could you be Sanatana Gosvami?" The Babaji just smiled, said "Hari bol," and disappeared. To this day, Kishora Dasa feels that he definitely saw Sri Sanatana Gosvami.

Gauranga Dasa Babaji, a famous *siddha mahatma* of Vrndavana, repeatedly gave proof of his existence in his *samadhi*. Several times since his departure he has appeared to the devotees who stay in the ashram beside his *samadhi*. One night the members of the 24 hour *kirtana* party fell asleep. At exactly the same time, the *samadhi pujari* sleeping in the ashram had a dream. He saw Gauranga Dasa Baba choking and gasping for air. Startled, the *pujari* awoke, and rushed to the *samadhi* to wake the sleeping *kirtana* men and continue the Hari-Nama. The *pujari* realized that his guru had appeared to teach him that he was indeed living within his *samadhi*. He felt choked up when the *kirtana* party stopped chanting the holy name because the holy name was his food---his life---his breath.

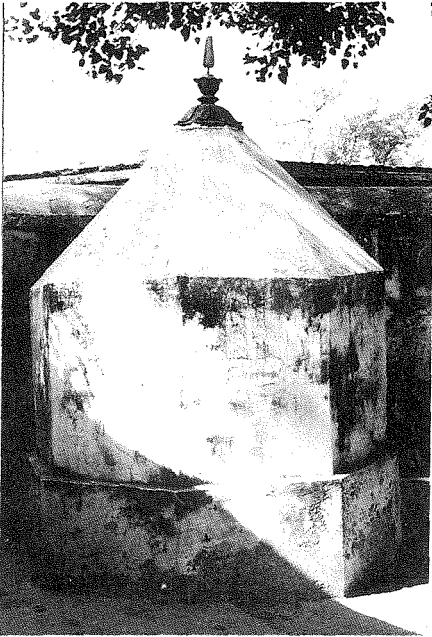
A disciple and former personal servant of Srila Prabhupada said that Srila Rupa Gosvami once appeared to Srila Prabhupada



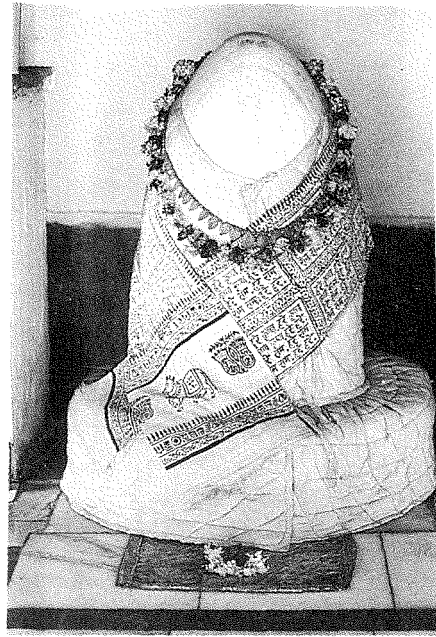
Samadhi Sanatana Gosvami



Samadhis: Left: Tapana Mishra, Right: Candrasekhara Acarya



Grantha Samadhi



Samadhi Murti Sanatana Gosvami

while he was staying at the Radha-Damodara temple in Vrndavana. Before coming to America in 1965, Srila Prabhupada lived here as a renounced *sannyasi* chanting Hari Nama, praying to Radha-Damodara and the Gosvamis, and translating the *Srimad Bhagavatam* into English. One day while honoring *mahaprasadam*, Srila Prabhupada was looking out of the window at the *samadhi* of Sri Rupa Gosvami. Suddenly, Sri Rupa Gosvami appeared before Srila Prabhupada and spoke these most encouraging words:

"Maharaja, don't worry about anything. Go ahead and travel to the West and preach. Just preach the message of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and the chanting of Hare Krishna. You'll be successful. I guarantee because I will be right with you all the time."

How To Approach the Samadhis--- Union in Separation

In Vrndavana, the practice of visiting the *samadhis* of Lord Caitanya's eternal associates, offering worship, obeisances, and selected prayers has been going on continually for the last five-hundred years. The *Bhakti-ratnakar* describes that before traveling to Navadvipa, Srinivasa Acarya took *darsana* of Vrndavana's Deities (Govindaji, Gopinatha, Madana Mohana, Radha Vinoda, Radha Damodara, and Sri Sankara Gopisvara Mahadeva). He also visited the *samadhis* of Sri Sanatana Gosvami, Sri Rupa Gosvami, Sri Kasisvara Pandit, and Sri Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami, the only major ones at that time. Sri Jiva Gosvami, Sri Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami, Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami, Sri Lokanatha Gosvami, Sri Bhugarbha Gosvami, Madhupandit Gosvami, and Sri Krishna Dasa Kaviraja were all still manifest in Vrndavana. Before leaving Vrndavana, Srinivasa Acarya fell in the dust of their lotus feet and begged for mercy.

To summarize, a *samadhi* is a spiritual place where one can contact the association of a pure devotee of Radha and Krishna. In one form the pure Vaisnava remains within his *samadhi* in order to give mercy to faithful and sincere devotees. *Samadhis* play an important part in Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's pastime of distributing mercy to the fallen souls in Kali-yuga. Anyone, qualified

qualified or not, can easily come to the *samadhis* and take their benevolent association.

We must come to the platform of appreciating that here (at the *samadhi*) 'I can actually get the association of a pure devotee.' No one is excluded. For example, during Srila Prabhupada's presence, some disciples hesitated to take his association due to feeling shy or too distant. Although wanting to, they never spoke directly to Srila Prabhupada or intimately associated with him. But now, Srila Prabhupada is freely and fully giving himself to everyone. Anyone can visit his *samadhis* in Vrndavana or Mayapur and receive his simply wonderful association.

One should approach Srila Prabhupada's or any *samadhi* with an attitude of surrender. Of course, feeling awe and reverence, one offers *dandavats* (full prostrated obeisances). Literally, the word *dandavat* means full obeisances offered with eight limbs: two arms, two legs, two knees, chest, head, eyes, *the mind*, and the power of speech (prayers).

A disciple's awe and reverence shouldn't be in the "Vaikuntha mood," where awe and reverence are too strong. A disciple feels reverence in the sense of respect, but he maintains a friendly attitude and understanding toward his spiritual master. Narada Muni explains the loving relationship between guru and disciple in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (7.12.1), *acaran dasavan nico, gurau sudrdha sauhrdah*: "A disciple should be humble and obedient, and he should have an attitude of firm friendship for the spiritual master."

We should think that the pure devotees still live here. They hear our prayers of submission, and they will shower their mercy upon us if we are sincere and deserving. With a humble mood and a pure devotional attitude we should observe all proper behavior. The eternal associates of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu are actually there in their *samadhis*. Imagine if that Vaisnava was still manifest in this world? What would you do or how would you feel if you walked into his room, and found him sitting quietly in a meditative posture absorbed in deep concentration on the pastimes of Radha-Syamasundara? This is exactly the same experience of meeting a liberated Vaisnava in his *samadhi* mandir!

The reciprocation depends upon one's *bhava* (feelings) and his *nistha* (staunch faith). Spiritual feelings can carry our minds to that pure liberated devotee. However, without faith one will not perceive anything at the *samadhi*. Similarly, without faith one can't receive any reciprocation when taking *darsana* of the Deity of Krishna.

While visiting a *samadhi* one feels a strong sense of communion with that departed Vaisnava. He receives direct inspiration and enthusiasm within his heart. But at the same time, one experiences profound lamentation and separation from that eternal resident of Vrndavana. There is union in separation. Indeed, all *samadhis* are places where faithful devotees feel happiness through directly associating with the blissful pure devotees. But simultaneously, one feels sadness in their separation.

By seriously cultivating that intense feeling of separation we will eventually meet Lord Gauranga's eternal associates and forever serve their lotus feet. Separation prepares the heart for meeting. A sincere devotee tries to feel the separation for Lord Gauranga and His eternal associates that Sri Narottama Dasa Thakura describes in his song, *Ye anilo prema dhana*. (see appendix)

Gaudiya Vaisnava history shows that the traditional activity of visiting *samadhis* produces profound transcendental emotions within advanced devotees. *Sri Bhakti-ratnakar* describes two such visits by Sri Jahnava Mata, the wife of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, and Srinivasa Acarya.

After seeing Vrndavana and before returning to Navadvipa, Sri Jahnava Mata bid farewell to all the Vrajavasi Vaisnavas. Then she visited all the major temples--- Govindaji, Gopinatha, Madana Mohana, Radha Vinoda, Radha-Damodara, and Radha Ramana. Also, she offered prayers to Gopisvara Mahadeva (Lord Siva) and Srimati Vrnda-devi. When Ma Jahnava Devi saw the four *samadhis* of Sri Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami, Kasisvara Pandit, Sri Sanatana Gosvami, and Sri Rupa Gosvami her heart broke. Feeling deep sorrow, she cried a Ganges river of tears. Her ecstasy heightened when she saw the *samadhi* of Sri Gauridasa Pandit.

Upon arriving in Jagannatha Puri, Srinivasa Acarya quickly ran to the *samadhi* of Thakura Haridasa. Immediately he fell down to offer prayers and obeisancēs, and almost went unconscious. The assembled devotees pacified him with sweet loving words. Hearing about Srinivasa Acarya's lamentation at the *samadhi* of Śrīla Haridasa Thakura melts the heart.

Prayers at the Samadhis

When visiting a *samadhi* one must offer *vandanam* (prayers—one of the nine limbs of *bhakti*). Love of Krishna expands in nine forms which connect a loving soul with his beloved Lord. Through *vandanam yoga* (connecting with God thru prayer) a devotee connects with the Supreme Lord Krishna or with the pure Vaisnava in *samadhi*.

Why pray? Praying shows our gratitude to Lord Krishna for mercifully giving us Vaisnava *sadhu sangā*. Sometimes one mistakenly thinks that prayers are meant only for God, and not for His pure devotee servants. However, the greatest demigod and the best of the Vaisnavas, Mahadeva Lord Siva, states that Vaisnava worship surpasses Vishnu worship. In the *Adi Purana*, Sri Krishna tells Arjuna that He doesn't accept those who only worship Him.

*Ye me bhakta-janah partha/ ne me bhakta ca te janah
mad bhaktanam ca ye bhaktas/ te me bhaktama matah*

"Those who directly worship Me are not real devotees. Real devotees are those who are devoted to My devotees."

Śrīla Prabhupada used to say, "If you love me than love my dog." How genuine one's love for his master must be if he can love the master's dog? In this verse Krishna gives the clue to success in devotional service. Worship of the Vaisnavas is first and foremost, because they alone can lift us up to the lotus feet of Radha and Krishna.

Praying to the Vaisnavas pleases Krishna, purifies the heart, and attracts the attention of the Lord. After adopting the life of Krishna consciousness, one naturally becomes repentant for his past sinful activities. A repentant mentality is most conducive for spiritual advancement because "sinful desires burn up in the fire

of repentance." Lord Krishna deposits His *krpa sakti* (mercy potency) within the pure heart of the Vaisnava. Being an ocean of mercy, the Vaisnava will surely rescue the repentant devotee desperately trying to escape the clutches of Maya.

Praying works. Krishna always responds to His devotee's call. This point is proven in the *Gajendra moksa lila* of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Srila Prabhupada always instructed us to pray to Krishna, and submit our confidential problems and desires. The all-merciful Lord will patiently hear our prayers and respond accordingly.

What should we pray for? "The only thing worth praying for is that our mind may be more and more attracted towards Lord Sri Krishna. We don't want riches or followers, nor do we desire to be saved from the misery of birth and death. We do not pray either for the cure of disease or for liberation. Rather, we approach the great souls and say, 'May you bless us that our minds may be directed to Krishna.' " (Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura)

The Mood of Prayer

Prayer reaches Krishna only when we surrender. Surrender means to be desperate. When we realize clearly our helpless position in this dangerous material world, we will pray sincerely and surrender absolutely to Sri Krishna.

There are many types of prayers from the selfish Christian variety, "God give us bread" to the distressed old lady who dropped her sticks. Answering her prayers, the Lord offered her a boon. The old lady asked, "Oh Lord, please just pick up the bundle of sticks and put them on my head?" Prayers should be pure. The prayers of Sri Krishna Caitanya and the Gaudiya *acaryas* perfectly present the proper mood and aspiration for all Krishna *bhaktas*. In *Siksastaka*, Lord Caitanya teaches us to simply cry and pray that the Lord will accept us: *Ayi nanda tanuja kinkaram patitam mam visame bhavambudhau*.

Authorized Prayers

Sucaka kirtans (a biography in *kirtana*) are beautifully arranged prayers containing many verses glorifying the life and teachings of the *acaryas*. They are composed by a guru's leading disciples and usually sung during the *tirobhava mahotsava* (disappearance day festival) of the *acarya*. Other shorter prayers of glorification extend from five to twelve slokas such as Sri Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami's *Sri Rupa Gosvami Astakam*, Kavi Karnapur's *Gopala Bhatta Gosvami Pancakam*, and Sri Jiva Gosvami's *Krishna Dasa Kaviraja Astakam*. See appendix for Sri Rasikananda's *Bhagavatastakam*, and *sucaka kirtans* of the six Gosvamis.

Most devotees recite standard prayers composed by the previous *acaryas*. However, offering prayers is like chanting, in that there are no hard and fast rules for praying. Pour out your heart and beg for mercy. Here are a few samples of standard prayers. In *Sankalpa-kalpa-druma*, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura prays to Sri Rupa Gosvami: "Oh hey Sri Rupa-manjari, Your mind is always colorfully decorated with the mellows of Radha Govinda's sporting pastimes. I anticipate with determination that I will someday receive a drop of your mercy. Your mercy stands supreme over everything else in attaining my desire."

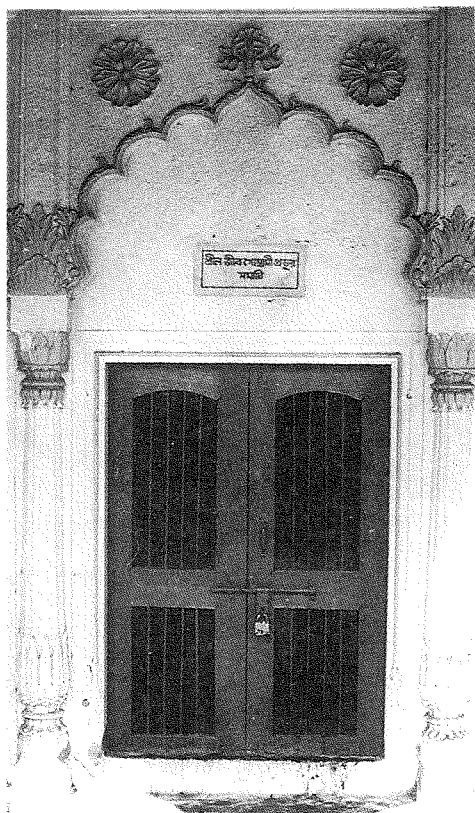
In *Sri Caitanya's Teachings*, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura mentions Madhavendra Puri's prayer to Lord Krishna:

"I have indulged numerous times in every form of wickedness by yielding to lust and other passions. But yet, these passions spare no pity on me. O Lord of the Yadus, Krishna, now I am giving them up. Realizing the truth, I surrender myself unto Your protection, which alone can save me from all fear. May You please engage me fully in Your service."

Srila Saccidananda Bhaktivinoda Thakura offers this prayer: "This is my only desire, O Lord, and I submit it at Your lotus feet. Please awaken in my heart constant unmotivated devotion to You. Let the same attachment that I now have for material affairs be transferred to attachment for Your holy feet. I pray that my love for You may remain undisturbed both in misfortune and prosperity. Day after day may my love for You increase by the



Samadhi Bhugarbha Gosvami



Samadhi Sri Jiva Gosvami



Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura



His samadhi



Sri Jiva Gosvami's Samadhi Pitha

power and influence of the holy name. May I live in heaven or hell, as a bird or beast, but may devotion to You always remain in the heart of Bhaktivinoda."

Composing Prayers

The prayers quoted above can also be offered to the pure Vaisnavas whose interest is non-different from the Lord's. If a devotee wants to compose his own prayers, he should follow the guidelines given by Srila Prabhupada. The language of the prayer, or the conception being conveyed, should not be cheap. Use words full of feeling, especially chosen, and very nicely arranged. The teachings, activities, and contributions of the devotee being glorified will form the subject of your prayer. And finally, your *bhakti* will carry the prayer to the lotus feet of Lord Krishna and the pure devotee.

In *Sri Caitanya Bhagavata*, Srila Vrndavana Dasa Thakura quotes Lord Caitanya, "A devotee's prayers of love for Krishna have nothing to do with the rules of grammar, and they don't depend on them. Krishna is interested only in the love in such prayers. They are dear to Krishna in any case, whether they are grammatically correct or not."

Sri Krishna and His eternal associates accept prayers from devotees who follow the principles of devotional service. They will surely appreciate those sincere prayers offered with love and affection. To glorify the Vaisnavas one can chant authorized prayers, compose his own, or repeat those quoted here and in the Appendix.

(1) "My dear pure devotee of Krishna, please bless me and give me the shelter of your holy feet. Please keep my mind always pure and forever fixed at the lotus feet of Radha-Krishna. I shall live in Vrndavana, or outside, but may my mind always be attracted to Sri Vrndavana-dhama. In my mind may I always remember Your names, qualities, teachings, and pastimes.

(2) "Oh Vaisnava Thakura! I am helpless without any shelter or protection. Please accept me at your lotus feet. Please bless me

with the divine service of the servants of the servants of Radha-Syamasundara."

(3) "Oh my Lord and master, my guardian and guide. Please reveal within me what is the Absolute Truth? Who am I? Where am I going? What is the goal of my life? How can I reach there? I don't know how to escape this miserable life. Please help me. I want your service and nothing else. I am very much tired of my present situation. I can't tolerate it any longer. Please pick me up."

Qualification to Receive Benefits

How does one become qualified to receive blessings from the saints in *samadhi*? If you are attached to a particular saint, if you surrender to him inwardly, and if you love him---he reciprocates. *Diksa* or no *diksa* (initiation) it doesn't matter. Stories abound of *mahabhagavatas* giving blessings without distinction. They only want the devotee to be genuine.

As previously stated, the mercy of the Vaisnava flows into a heart made receptive by *nistha* and *bhava* (firm faith and devotion-al fervor). Visiting a *sadhu*, temple, or a *samadhi* brings piety and elevates the soul. But without *nistha* and *bhava* one can't gain the guru's grace by coming to his *samadhi*.

Both Radha-Krishna temples and Vaisnava *samadhis* exist for all classes of devotees from the acolyte to the adept. The neophyte can't perceive Krishna's presence without the temple, whereas the advanced devotee sees Krishna everywhere. To make spiritual progress the lower order devotee absolutely must visit the temple. But when the elevated devotee comes to the temple he thoroughly relishes the sweet *darsana* of Sri-Sri Radha-Madhava.

Both classes of devotees benefit from visiting the temple, but the experience differs. Similarly, the neophyte devotee may not qualify to see or speak directly with the Vaisnava saint in a *samadhi*. Nevertheless, to advance spiritually he should dutifully and faithfully visit and serve the *samadhis* of Sri Caitanya Deva's eternal associates.

Serve The Dust

Usually, neophyte devotees can't perceive much at a *samadhi*. But, just by being there they can receive the greatest benefit. Sri Krishna Dasa Kaviraja shows an easy way to attain the highest treasure of Krishna *prema* in *Caitanya-caritamrta Antya* 16.60-61, *bhakta-pada-dhuli ara bhakta-pada-jala, bhakta-bhukta-avasesa-tina maha bala/ ei tina-seva haite phukariya kaya, punah punah sarva-sastre phukariya kaya*, "The dust of the feet of a devotee, the water that has washed the feet of a devotee, and the remnants of food left by a devotee are three very powerful substances. By rendering service to these three one attains the supreme goal of ecstatic love for Krishna. In all the revealed scriptures this is loudly declared again and again."

Prahlada Maharaja glorifies the Vaisnava *pada dhuli* (foot dust) in *Srimad Bhagavatam* (7.5.32), "Unless they rub on their bodies the dust of the lotus feet of a Vaisnava completely free from all sins, persons attached to material sense gratification can't be attached to the lotus feet of the Lord." When returning from Gaya, Lord Gauranga Mahaprabhu stopped in Kumarahatta, West Bengal, at the birth place of His spiritual master Sri Isvara Puri. Collecting some dust, Lord Caitanya declared, "This dust is My life and soul." Everyday Lord Gauranga would eat a pinch of this dust taken from the birth place of Sri Isvara Puri.

The Vaisnava's foot dust possesses tremendous spiritual power. Anyone can receive its benefits by collecting and eating it, serving it by rubbing the dust on his body, or rolling in it at the *samadhis*. The foot dust of the advanced Vrajavasi Vaisnavas, who are doing *parikrama*, mixes with the foot dust remnants of the *mahabhagavatas* in *samadhi* to produce a rich blend of transcendental mercy awaiting all takers at the *samadhi* mandirs.

Places of Inspiration

As the appearance and disappearance days of the pure devotees are special times for prayers and celebrations, the *samadhis* are special places for increasing our inspiration and faith. For example, at Narottama Dasa Thakura's *samadhi* we sing

Gurvastaka and pray for that realization about our guru to manifest within us. Remembering the accomplishments of the particular Vaisnava in *samadhi* inspires us to surrender more, increases the quality and quantity of our service, and solidifies our determination to attain the lotus feet of Radha-Gokulananda in this lifetime.

One can easily visit a temple and see the Deity of Sri Krishna. Similarly, *samadhis* give disciples and future followers an easy way to connect with a Vaisnava's spiritual energy. *Smaranam* (remembrance) of the Vaisnava expands greatly when visiting his *samadhi*. Lord Sri Krishna explains the benefits of remembering Him (or Krishna's pure devotee) in the *Gopala-tapani Upanisad*:

"By remembering Me, one who is impure becomes pure. By remembering Me, one who follows no vows becomes a strict follower of vows. By remembering Me, one who has studied no Vedic mantras becomes an expert knower of the *Vedas*."

Actually, many Vrndavana pandits admit that by worshiping and doing *puja* at the Gosvami's *samadhis* (such as Sri Sanatana Gosvami, Sri Rupa Gosvami, Sri Jiva Gosvami, Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami, and others) they definitely received special mercy to enter and deeply understand the *Vedas* and the Gosvami's *granthas* (books).

Samadhis Reform Japa

In the material world there are auspicious and inauspicious times, places, and circumstances (*kala, desha, patra*). The predominance of a particular mode of nature determines the quality of any environment. For example, a brothel overflows with *tamo-guna* (ignorance), a city pulsates with passion (*rajo-guna*), and the country generates goodness (*sattva-guna*). But Krishna's temple is saturated with pure goodness (*visuddha sattva*), the pure, peaceful, and blissful atmosphere of Vaikuntha. Since goodness enhances spiritual practices, living in the country can help one fix his mind on God and advance spiritually. The *Vedas* list auspicious locations such as near sacred trees (Tulasi, Banyan, Peepul, Kadamba), beside holy rivers (Ganga, Yamuna), temples and

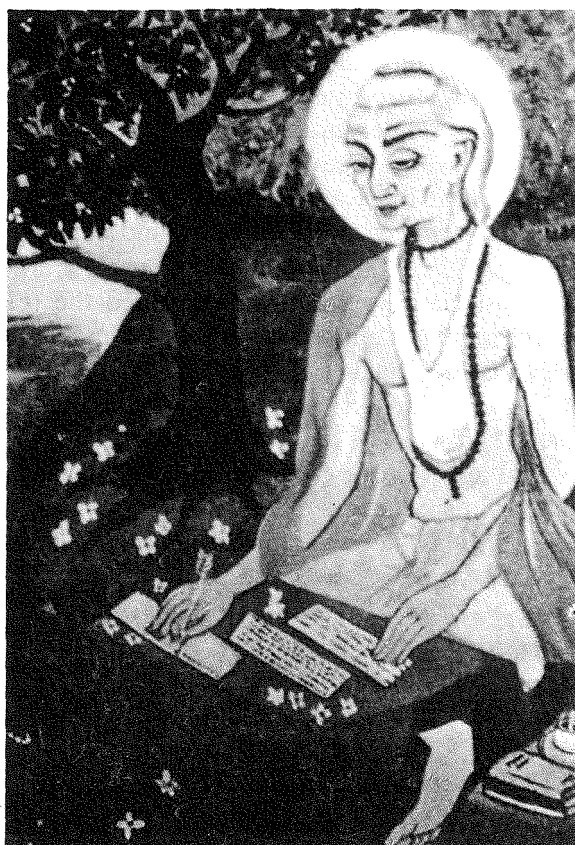
samadhis. In *Upadesamrta*, Sri Rupa Gosvami says that there are gradations even within the absolute spiritual energy of the Supreme Lord Krishna. "Mathura is superior to Vaikuntha, Vrndavana excels Mathura, Govardhana Hill surpasses Vrndavana, and Sri Radha-kunda reigns supreme above all." Being *cintamani*, every grain of sand in Vrndavana has its distinct divine characteristics. Yet, Vamsi Vat means more than the general bank of the Yamuna. The *acaryas* proclaim that devotional activities performed within the holy dhama (Vrndavana, Mayapur) produce one hundred times the result of those actions done elsewhere.

Since Sri Krishna cherishes His devotee so dearly, doing *bhajana* (nine forms of devotional service) near that devotee's *samadhi* brings one immense spiritual gain. Charged with spiritual vibrations, the *samadhi* of Krishna's pure devotee emits transcendental energy and encouragement. Therefore, doing *bhajana* here makes one spiritually strong, just as chanting Hare Krishna before *tulasi*-devi gives one immeasurable spiritual benefit. During *Kartika* month in Vrndavana, many elevated saints sit near Sri Rupa Gosvami's *samadhi* at the Radha-Damodara temple. They pray, chant *japa*, *kirtana*, *bhajans*, and recite *stutis* and *stotras* (verses and prayers).

One Vrajavasi Gaudiya Vaisnava explained the relationship between visiting *samadhis* and chanting the holy name. "Whenever I visit the *samadhi* of Thakura Haridasa in Puri, I just automatically begin chanting Hare Krishna. The holy name just pours out. Srila Haridasa Thakura is such a significant and magnanimous personality that even stone-hearted people can immediately receive his mercy. Of course, it's the same everywhere. Wherever you go and visit a *samadhi*, you definitely get the direct association of a great Vaisnava, a great devotee. The intimate association with a pure devotee Vaisnava increases the quality of your *japa*, your reading, and your praying."



The Six Gosvamis of Vrindavana



Krishna Dasa Kaviraja

Chapter Six

WORSHIP AND FESTIVALS

Avirbhava Equals Tirobhava

Philosophically, the *avirbhava* (appearance day) and *tirobhava* (disappearance day) of a pure Vaisnava are the same. The *acarya's* appearance and disappearance is not like the ordinary person's birth and death. The existence of a Vaisnava compares with the visibility of the sun. The sun shining in the clear blue sky represents the devotee's living amongst us in his *prakṛta rūpa* (visible form). His disappearance from this world resembles the sun being hidden behind the clouds. He disappears in one place and appears in another. Therefore, a *tirobhava* simultaneously creates an *avirbhava*. When a pure Vaisnava leaves his *prakṛta rūpa*, he receives an *aprakṛta rūpa* (spiritual body or *cit deha*) to eternally serve Radha-Syamasundara in Goloka Vrndavana. Here it appears as a *tirobhava* but in the spiritual world it is an *avirbhava*. The pure devotee disappears from our vision, only to appear before the vision of Radha-Syamasundara in the Sri Vrndavana-dhama.

Whether living in the material or the spiritual world, the pure devotee always engages in the selfless loving service of Radha and Krishna. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura states that a Vaisnava exists eternally packed up with the Lord in transcendental sound vibration.

*He reasons ill who tells that Vaisnavas die
When thou art living still in sound!
The Vaisnavas die to live, and living try
To spread the Holy Name around.*

In the material world the Vaisnava passes his days chanting *Nitai-Gauranga* and *Hare Krishna*, dancing, and honoring *prasadam*. He does the same in the spiritual world. Once upon a

time a sage gave different kinds of blessings to different types of people. He blessed a prince, *raja-putra ciram jiva*, "You are the king's son, you should live forever." Then the sage blessed a Vaisnava, *sadhavo jiva va mara va*, "You can live or die, as you choose." Since royal families are prone to illicit sense enjoyment, the sage blessed the prince to live forever. Because after death the prince would go to hell to pay for his sins. However, the Vaisnava could live or die because either way he continues the same activity--- blissfully serving the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna.

The Tirobhava Ceremony

After his disappearance the Vaisnava's body is put in the *padma asana* (sitting cross-legged). His right hand is folded in the *Vaisnava mudra* (held to the heart as if chanting on *japa* beads). A second position is both palms touching and held to the chest in the classical *namaste* pose. Mayavadis shape their hand in the *dhyana mudra*, or they rest both palms up on the knees.

Devotees bathe the body with Yamuna water (*abhiseka*). Priests write different mantras on the Vaisnava's body with *gopi candana*. The choice of mantras depends upon the particular bhava of that devotee. Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami says to write the following mantra on the chest and arms of Gaudiya Vaisnava *sannyasis* in his *Samskara-dipika* (verse 45): *Om klim srim hrim srim lavana mrid yuji bhumi svabhre svaha*, "Covering this body with clay and salt, we now offer it to the earth."

After applying tilak and sandal paste to the Vaisnava's forehead, he's dressed in new cloth, and *tulasi* leaves are put in his hand. Then *arotika* is performed, and a number of articles are offered such as copies of the *Srimad Bhagavatam* and *Bhagavad-gita*, *tulasi* neckbeads, *japa mala*, *karatalas*, Deity *prasadam*, *kamandalu* (water pot), begging bowl, and walking stick (if he used one). These articles are consecrated into the earth along with the spiritual body.

In the same sitting posture the body is lowered into the earth. The hole should be one foot deeper than the height of the person.

After sprinkling tumeric over the body, the entire body is covered with huge quantities of salt. The *samadhi* site will be marked with a slightly raised mound of earth. A simple or grand *samadhi* mandir may be built later to honor and provide worship for that departed Vaisnava.

On January 1, 1937 Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, entered the eternal pastimes of Sri-Sri Gandharvika-Giridhari. His biography describes the *tirobhava* ceremony:

"After Om Vishnupada (108) Sri Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Maharaja Prabhupada's disappearance pastime, his transcendental body was worshiped with scented oil, flowers, and sandal paste. Then his spiritual body was brought before the Deities in the Sri Sarasvati Auditorial Hall (in Calcutta) and decorated with flowers, garlands, and cloth. There the appropriate worship and *arotika* was performed.

"Then Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura's body was brought by train to the Yogapitha in Sridhama Mayapur, where a tremendous *kirtana* was held for the whole night. The work of the *samadhi* was immediately begun by the *sannyasis*, *babajis*, *brahmacaris*, *grhastas*, and *vanaprasthas* who had all taken shelter at his lotus feet. At the end of the night the *samadhi* mantras were written on his body according to the directions of the *Samskara Dipika* by Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami.

"His spiritual body was then brought to the *samadhi* site and placed on a throne of white marble. His feet were anointed with aguru and sandalwood paste. The flowers offered to his feet were collected (to make *pushpa samadhi*). Flower garlands were offered around his neck. His favorite *bhajans* were sung: *Sri Rupa-manjari*, *Svananda-sukhada-kunja manohara*, and *Yasomati-nandana*. Then, chanting *ye anilo prema dhana*, the devotees circumambulated the *samadhi* site four times. The *samadhi* was covered with earth, marked with the sign of Gaudiya Vaisnava tilak, covered with flower garlands, and *tulasi* plants were sown on all sides. A fire sacrifice, *bhoga* offering, and an *arotika* were performed. There were readings from the Disappearance of Srila Haridasa Thakura,

and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura's poems from the end of his *Anubhasya*.

"Thus, the *acarya* sun, as he had been called by his father Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, passed from earthly vision and entered the eternal pastimes of the Lord."

Daily Worship at the Samadhis

The Gaudiya Vaisnava *sampradaya* accepts that the guru fully represents the Supreme Lord Krishna (*saksad dharitvena samasta sastrair*). Therefore, they worship guru and Govinda together with the same enthusiasm. Besides being an incarnation of Sri Krishna's spiritual power and therefore fully capable of representing the Supreme Lord, the guru exists eternally as a dear companion of both Radha-Govinda and Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu (*kintu prabhor yah priya eva tasya*).

Although the Supreme Lord Krishna and His pure devotee exist on the same level, according to *vidhi marga* (path of rules), the guru's *samadhi* should be separate from but near Krishna's temple. Vrndavana's main temples passed a law that a *pujari* can't do the *samadhi puja*, and then reenter the main temple of Radha-Krishna. A separate *pujari* must perform the worship in the *samadhi*. The Radha Ramana temple Goswamis must bathe after they offer *puja* inside Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami's *samadhi* on his *tirobhava*.

Establishing any type of *samadhi* (full body, *pushpa*, *smrti*) for a departed Vaisnava means that that person actually resides there. Because he's there, the temple will appoint separate *pujaris* to perform the worship. Generally, Gaudiya Vaisnava *babajis*, *sanyasis*, or *brahmacaris* do the worship.

Puja means a living attitude. With that mood the *pujaris* render warm and personal service to the Vaisnavas in their *samadhis*. Services include cooking and offering *bhoga* (food) and water, *arotika*, and providing his *japa mala* and *Srimad Bhagavatam*, complete with bookstand for easy reading. *Pujaris* make seasonal adjustments in the worship. During winter, they bathe the *samadhi* with warm Yamuna water and cover with a heavy wool blanket. In

the summer, they offer a cool bath, drinking water, and an electric fan. Through their humble service attitude the *samadhi* caretakers preserve the transcendental message and transmit the mood of that liberated Vaisnava. A true bhakta serves the *samadhi* with the same depth of devotion with which he serves the Deity of Krishna.

There are two methods of Vaisnava worship in the *samadhis*. Either he receives Deity maha-prasada, or items prepared by his own *pujaris*. In the first system, all items are first offered to the presiding Radha-Krishna Deities in the main temple. Then the Lord's foodstuffs, cloth, water, candana, and other remnants go to the Vaisnava as Krishna's *maha-prasadam*. Previously, the Madana Mohana *pujaris* used to bring *maha-prasadam pera* (milk sweet) and a pot of water down the street to Sri Sanatana Gosvami's *samadhi*. But today, "due to inconvenience," the temple Gosvamis have asked the *babajis* living at the *samadhi* site to prepare the food, offer it to their personal Deities, and then give that *maha-prasadam* to Sri Sanatana Gosvami.

Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami's Samadhi Puja

In Vrndavana, the Radha Ramana temple management committee maintains the highest standard of worship at the *samadhi* of Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami. Living next to his *samadhi*, a crew of Gaudiya Vaisnava *babajis* attentively and lovingly serve him throughout the day. Daily they chant first-class *bhajans* and *kir-tans*, and recite the *Srimad Bhagavatam* for his pleasure. Twice a day, (noon *raja bhoga* & evening) they offer him full plates of Radha Ramana's *maha-prasadam*. They also offer him fresh cool drinking water in a clay *kamandalu* (water pot with a spout). In a separate kitchen, the caretakers prepare five more *bhoga* offerings for Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami. Five *arotikas* follow the food offerings. Directly after the evening *arotika*, Radha Ramanaji's *pujari* gives the Lord's maha flower garland to the *samadhi pujari* for Gopala Bhatta.

Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami also receives worship inside of Radha Ramanaji's temple. At *raja bhoga*, the *pujaris* offer three plates: One for Radha Ramana and the Salagrama *silas*, one for

Srimati Radharani, and one for Gopala Bhatta. Sri Padmanabha Goswami, a *pujari* of Radha Ramana, explains why: "We feel that Gopala Bhatta Gosvami is personally there inside of Radha Ramanaji's temple. He's present in the remnants of the wooden asana that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu had personally sent here from Jagannatha Puri as a gift for Gopala Bhatta Gosvami."

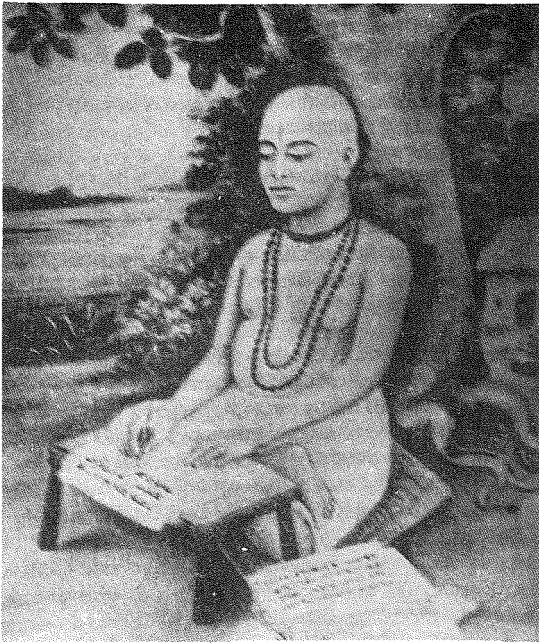
In Vrndavana, at the magnificent *samadhi* of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, ISKCON (The International Society for Krishna Consciousness) devotees offer first class worship full of devotion. The *puja* standard closely resembles Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami's. Srila Prabhupada instructed disciples to learn proper *puja* procedures from the Radha Ramana temple.

Besides the daily *puja* and the yearly *tirobhava mahotsava* (disappearance day festival), there are other festivals held at the *samadhis*. Upon taking initiation into the Gaudiya Vaisnava family line of *rupanugas* (followers of Sri Rupa Gosvami), a new disciple may sponsor a special *utsava* (festival). For example, at Rupa Gosvami's *samadhi*, he could arrange for Hari Nama *sankirtana* and *Bhagavata katha*, offer an opulent feast to Sri Rupa Gosvami, and then distribute it to all the Vrajavasi Vaisnavas.

Tirobhava Mahotsava (yearly disappearance celebration)

Like the sun, the Vaisnavas are always present. But on account of our faulty perception they seem to "disappear." Hari Sauri Dasa reports that Srila Prabhupada told disciples to fast until noon on both the appearance and disappearance days of our predecessor *acaryas*. If possible, do the same for the six Gosvamis, Krishna Dasa Kaviraja, Narottama Dasa Thakura, Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, and others. Spiritually, a Vaisnava's appearance and disappearance day are equal.

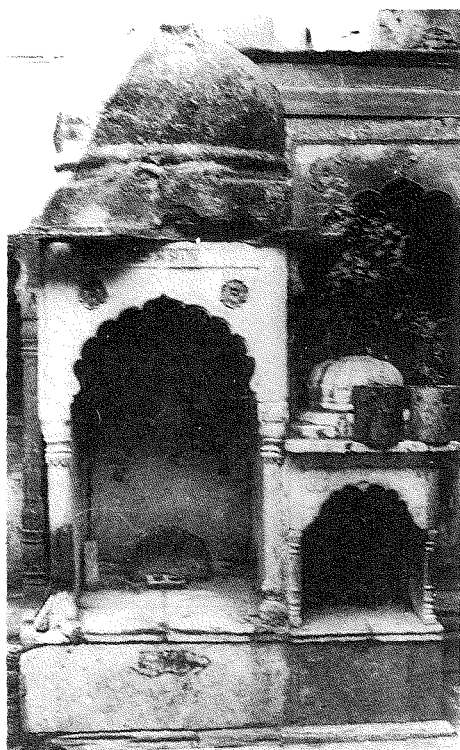
Although Srila Prabhupada wanted both days to be observed, Gaudiya Vaisnavas traditionally only celebrate the *tirobhava* (disappearance day). The festival honors that pure Vaisnava who attained a *manjari svarupa* (spiritual form of a maidservant), and entered the eternal service of Radha-Gopinatha within the pleasure groves of Sri Vrndavana-dhama. "Celebrate the *avirbhava*



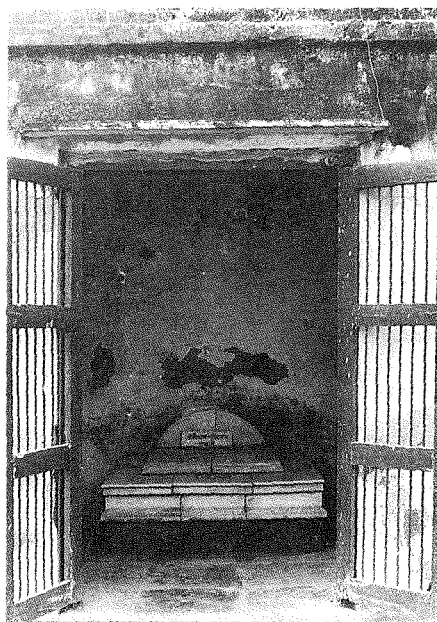
Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami



His samadhi



*Samadhis: Gadadhara Pandit's tooth,
Right: Nayananda Thakura*



Samadhi Gauri Dasa Pandit

(appearance day) of Vishnu (Krishna) and the *tirobhava* (disappearance day) of the Vaisnava," say the Gaudiyas. Of course, the more one worships the devotees, the more one makes advancement. But elaborate ceremonies are usually held on the disappearance day.

Why "worship the *avirbhava* of Vishnu and the *tirobhava* of the Vaisnava?" Immediately upon appearing on earth, the Vishnu avatars such as the Dasa Avatars (Matsya, Vamana, Nrsimha, Rama) act to bless, instruct, and protect everyone. They bring peace and prosperity to the world. Therefore, the appearance day of Lord Vishnu and His many forms is honored.

When a Vaisnava first appears in this world he doesn't show any greatness or make any contribution. After some years he begins to manifest his spiritual power. The karma (activities) of the Vaisnava far outweigh his *janma* (birth). A Vaisnava's life of pure devotion and spreading Krishna consciousness is honored with a *mahotsava*. This is a grand festival of flowers, *kirtana*, *puja*, poetry, *prasadam*, and a procession.

Sri Padmanabha Goswami explains the reason for celebrating a Vaisnava's *tirobhava*:

"When a devotee takes birth he has not really done anything yet. After his death everyone knows what great work he did. So we celebrate this time. At that time the Vaisnava enters Radha-Krishna's *nitya-lila* and that's a great cause for celebration. According to Gaudiya Vaisnava philosophy, we believe that the departed Vaisnava joins the *lila* of Radha and Krishna and the *asta-sakhis* (eight intimate *gopis*) as a servant of the servant of the servant---the mood of *gopi bhava*. Just inside our altar of Radha Ramanaji, we worship Gopala Bhatta Goswami in his eternal form as Guna-manjari, serving the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani."

Standard Gaudiya Vaisnava texts don't give any prayers for singing on the appearance day of a pure devotee. But they mention hundreds of *stavas*, *stutis*, and *sucaks* (varieties of mantras and *bhajans*) to sing on the disappearance day. Most Gaudiya Vaisnava *panjikas* (yearly calendars) list only the disappearance days of the Vaisnava *acaryas*.

How to Observe a Tirobhava

On the *tirobhava* (disappearance day) of a pure Vaisnava a devotee should visit his *samadhi*. Then he should offer obeisances, circumambulation, *arotika*, songs, prayers, and Deity *maha-prasadam* or *bhoga* sweets. In *Vaisnavism*, Srila Thakura Bhaktivinoda gives the following translation to *Sri Vaisnava Pranama, vanca kalpa tarubhyas ca krpa sindhu...*

"Let us kiss over and over again the holy feet of the devotees of Krishna who are like purpose trees, yielding the fruit of all our devotional desires. They are oceans of kindness and purifiers of the fallen."

Since Vaisnavas are always pleased with *maha-prasadam*, you may first offer the flower garland, fruit, and milk sweets to the temple Deity. Then take Radha-Damodara's *maha-prasadam* and offer it to Sri Rupa Gosvami in his *samadhi*. On the *tirobhava* of Sri Jiva Gosvami, follow the same procedure, but take Sri Rupa Gosvami's remnants and give them as *maha-maha-prasadam* to Sri Jiva Gosvami in his *samadhi*.

Sucaka Kirtans (a biography in song) are special *kirtans* full of verses glorifying the life and teachings of the departed Vaisnava saint. Sung on the *tirobhava*, these beautiful prayers sometimes go on for two or three hours. (See Appendix for *sucaka* and other *kirtans*)

A *tirobhava mahotsava* consists of extra *pujas* in the *samadhi*, *abhiseka*, *kirtans*, new dresses, reading of praises, singing *sucaks*, and a *bhoga* offering. The standard *tirobhava* offering is *malpua*, "a cake with *rasa*." *Malpua* somewhat resembles a pancake fried in ghee and soaked in sugar water. Served with yogurt and *subji*, *malpua* is a Vraja area tradition. In olden days, *malpua* was the standard *samadhi* offering for a *tirobhava mahotsava*. But today, thrifty temples have substituted the cheap dry *laddhu* for the more costly, mouth-watering *malpua*.

All the six Gosvamis, except Sri Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami, receive substantial *bhoga* offerings during their *tirobhava mahotsavas*. At Radha-kunda, devotees respect Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami's mood of strict renunciation by daily offering him (in-

side his *samadhi*) only buttermilk, *maha Tulasi* leaves and water from Radha-Gopinatha. But on his divine disappearance day they prepare a full feast and place it just outside his *samadhi*.

The *tirobhava mahotsava* is a three day festival. It begins the day before the Vaisnava's disappearance day with a non-stop twenty-four hour Hare Krishna maha-mantra *kirtan*. The first day is called the *Adhi vasa*, when devotees sing different *padas* and *bhajans* (songs) inviting Radha and Krishna, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the Panca-Tattva, Lord Gauranga's eternal associates, and all the Guru-Tattva to attend the disappearance ceremony of Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami. (cited as an example)

On day two, the actual disappearance day (*tirobhava tithi*), devotees worship Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami in his *samadhi* and observe a full fast. The Goswami *mahants* of Vrndavana's seven major temples will offer individual worship at the *samadhi*. In the morning, the Brahmana men, of every Goswami family serving Radha Ramanaji, will offer *puja*, *arotika*, garlands, and *pranams* at Gopala Bhatta Gosvami's *samadhi*.

In the evening, the brahmana's wives must take *darsana* of Gopala Bhatta Gosvami. They offer whole coconuts in the *samadhi* and pray, "Please protect and maintain our family, and increase our number of male members." Why males? Because only men can serve the Deity of Radha Ramanaji. This particular practice of the ladies is traditional only at Radha Ramana temple. *Sri Hari-Nama nagar sankirtana*, joyous dancing, and *maha-prasadam* fill the third and final day of the festival.

Any devotee, even if he has no money or materials, can sincerely worship the pure devotee on his *tirobhava*. The following pastime shows a pure and simple way to do it.

Once on Sri Sanatana Gosvami's *tirobhava*, Sri Gaura Kishora Dasa Babaji Maharaja said, "This afternoon we shall have a great festival, a *tirobhava mahotsava*, to honor the holy day of the passing of Srila Sanatana Gosvami."

His servant Bihari replied, "But Babaji Maharaja, you are totally renounced and have nothing. Where will you get the things needed for a festival?"

"We don't need anything," explained Babaji Maharaja, "We may fast and chant the holy name of Krishna. And in this humble way, we shall enjoy a great festival."



Sri Caitanya's Sankirtan party

Chapter Seven

VAISNAVA BIOGRAPHIES

This chapter contains brief biographies of eighty-three eternal associates of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Gaudiya Vaisnava *acaryas*, and a few prominent Vaisnava *acaryas* such as Sri Ramanujacarya, Sri Madhvacarya, and Sri Nimbarkacarya. Here, ISKCON members will find glorification of all the Vaisnavas listed in the society's yearly calendar. The activities and teachings of these most elevated transcendental personalities could fill many volumes. But the author has selected particular events which impart essential spiritual lessons for advancing in Krishna consciousness. Specific details about birth date and place, family lineage, and educational background are not given.

Most of Sri Caitanya's eternal associates who had participated in His pastimes appeared between 1420-1600 A.D. in either Sridhama Mayapur or Navadvipa Mandala. Dates and biographical data, however, are given when necessary to clarify an *acarya's* position within the *guru parampara*.

Devotees visiting Vrndavana may read these biographies at the Vaisnava's *samadhis*. Outside of Vrndavana, they may celebrate the *tirobhava* of the pure devotees by reading about them in their homes or temples. Hearing the exemplary spiritual activities of liberated souls purifies one of material contamination. The divine association of *mahabhagavata* Vaisnavas elevates the consciousness. One feels inspired to attain the perfectional stage of life---pure love for Radha and Krishna. The best way to serve the previous *acaryas* is to study and follow their lives and teachings.

The Vaisnava's ocean of mercy awaits to inundate the sincere devotee. May we always remember the pure devotees of Radha-Govinda, worship them in their *samadhis*, and pray for their causeless mercy. A devotee treads the path of mercy. And only by

the mercy of the Vaisnavas will we ever hope to attain the eternal loving service of the servants of Radha-Giridhari within the blissful pleasure groves of Sri Vrndavana-dhama.

Alphabetically listed, the biographies contain accurate information taken from authorized Gaudiya Vaisnava texts. To avoid unnecessary repetition of book titles within the text, the reference works are listed in the Appendix. The names given within the first set of () seen in the beginning of the text are second names of the Vaisnava being glorified.

The second set of () at the end of each entry indicates the pages containing directions to and photos of that Vaisnava's *samadhi*. The first number tells the page of the book where you will find verbal directions to that *samadhi*; the second number tells the page containing a photograph of the Vaisnava's *samadhi*. (16, 74) for example, means on page 16 you will find verbal directions to help you find the *samadhi*, and page 74 has a photograph of the *samadhi*. Page 108 A,B contains two maps showing many *samadhis*.

Ananta Koti Vaisnava Vrnda ki jai!

His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada appeared in a family of pure Gaudiya Vaisnavas in 1896 in Calcutta. From early childhood he showed signs of pure devotion to Lord Sri Krishna. At the tender age of five, he single-handedly organized a neighborhood Ratha-yatra festival to glorify Lord Jagannatha. He authentically decorated a small cart to resemble the Lord's colossal chariot in Puri. Besides leading the *kirtana* party, he organized cooking and *prasadam* distribution. With his enthusiasm and ecstatic love for Lord Krishna he engaged the community in chanting: *Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare*.

Unlike other children his age who would waste their time playing, Srila Prabhupada preferred to visit the local Radha-

Krishna temple. For hours together, he would lovingly gaze upon the transcendental forms of Radha-Govindaji, absorbing Their divine blessings and beautiful *darsana*. In his youth, Maharaja Pariksit used to dress a Deity of Krishna. Similarly, from his childhood, Srila Prabhupada also began worshiping small Deities of Radha and Krishna. He quickly mastered the traditional beats and *ragas* on *mrdanga* and harmonium. With pure devotion Srila Prabhupada would sing sweet devotional *bhajans* to please Radha-Govindaji.

At twenty-six, he met his eternal spiritual master Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura (Founder-Acarya of Gaudiya Math). At their first meeting, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura gave Srila Prabhupada a divine command: "Go to the West and spread Krishna consciousness in the English language." In full faith Srila Prabhupada embraced the order as his life and soul. After realizing his guru's teachings, he started writing and distributing *Back to Godhead*, an English language magazine on the science of Krishna consciousness. Although begun in 1944 in a small way, *Back to Godhead* now circulates worldwide in over fifty languages.

Srila Prabhupada, like all pure Vaisnavas, showed immense compassion for the suffering conditioned souls. Although they are rotting in the materialistic life of ignorance, the stubborn conditioned souls insist that they "have no time for spiritual life." Neither their indifference, nor the sizzling summer heat of Delhi could keep Srila Prabhupada from distributing the cooling balm of Krishna consciousness. Once while selling *Back to Godhead* he collapsed on the street from heat stroke. Yet he remained fixed in his determination to please his spiritual master.

He took *sannyasa* in 1959 after retiring from household life. Taking shelter of Vrndavana, he rented a *bhajana kutir* in the Radha-Damodara temple where he absorbed the association of Sri Rupa and Sri Jiva Gosvamis. Srila Prabhupada spent the next six years performing intensive Krishna *bhajana*. Regularly, he bathed in Yamuna, and took *darsana* of Madana Mohana, Govindaji, Gopinatha, and Radha Ramana. He prayed for the mercy of the six Gosvamis and continued writing and printing. During

bhajana he would receive blessings, inspiration, and direct guidance from the all-merciful Sri Rupa Gosvami.

At this time, he began his life's main literary work, an English translation with commentary of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. For Srila Prabhupada it was more of a devotional outpouring than a mere translation from esoteric Sanskrit to understandable English. Gaudiya Vaisnava history reveals that some advanced devotees would begin crying in spiritual happiness while reading the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Smearing the ink on the pages, their tears would make the lines illegible. Similarly, Srila Prabhupada once said that his *Srimad Bhagavatam* commentaries are actually expressions of his "devotional ecstasies." Working alone, Srila Prabhupada wrote, begged money to print, and personally hauled the paper to publish the first three volumes of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Recollecting these times, he once said humbly to his disciples:

"I did not know anything about writing. But my spiritual master told me to spread Lord Krishna's glories in English. So this is what I tried to do, following in the steps of my Guru Maharaja. He was such a transcendental aristocrat. I had no great personal qualifications. I just tried to follow his instructions."

Other disciples of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura tried unsuccessfully to preach Krishna consciousness in English-speaking Europe. Srila Prabhupada, however, had full faith in his guru and Krishna's name. Fearless as Abhimanyu, he brought Krishna consciousness to the world's most powerful country, America. Besides speaking English and being a "super power," America was leading the world in the sinful activities of meat eating, illicit sex, gambling, intoxication. If Americans would take up Krishna consciousness, thought Srila Prabhupada, then surely it would spread to "every town and village," as Lord Caitanya predicted five-hundred years ago. After all, "What's a glorious victory without a glorious fight," which Srila Prabhupada would sometimes say.

At the age of seventy, armed with *karatals* and a crate of *Bhagavatams*, Srila Prabhupada set off to America in 1965 on the steamship "Jaladutta." During the arduous forty-day sea journey the ship met heavy storms. For two consecutive nights, he had

severe heart attacks which almost killed him. On the third night, Lord Krishna appeared to Srila Prabhupada in a dream. The Supreme Lord Himself was pulling the ship to America, encouraging Srila Prabhupada and giving him all protection. Srila Prabhupada penned this prayer upon reaching New York City:

"My dear Lord Krishna, You are so kind upon this useless soul, but I do not know why You have brought me here. Now You can do whatever You like with me. How shall I make them understand the message of Krishna consciousness? I am very unfortunate, unqualified, and most fallen. Therefore, I am seeking Your benediction so I can convince them. For I am powerless to do so on my own.

"O Lord, I am like a puppet in Your hands. So if You have brought me here to dance, then make me dance, make me dance. O Lord, make me dance as You like."

In Manhattan, Srila Prabhupada struggled through the icy cold snowbound winter of 1965. He continued writing and occasionally selling a few *Bhagavatams*. But for one year nothing really happened. Gradually, a few yoga students began attending his classes on *Bhagavad-gita*. The word spread that an "Indian swami was in town teaching a unique yoga method: chanting Hare Krishna." After his room was robbed, he moved into a small storefront apartment at 26 Second Avenue in the Lower East Side.

In nearby Tompkins Square Park, Srila Prabhupada led the first public chanting of Hare Krishna in the Western world. On July 13, 1966, he founded ISKCON (The International Society for Krishna Consciousness) and initiated a dozen disciples. To receive initiation disciples must promise to give up all forms of illicit sex, meat eating, intoxication, and gambling. Srila Prabhupada was well on his way to realizing his mission.

Under Srila Prabhupada's pure guidance the Krishna consciousness movement quickly flourished. Within months ISKCON Radha-Krishna temples opened in New York, San Francisco, Boston, Los Angeles, Montreal, and London. In the 1970's, he traveled around the world fourteen times, establishing 108 Radha-Krishna temples in all the major cities of the Americas, Europe, Africa,

India, Asia, and Australia. He initiated a total of five thousand sincere disciples from different nationalities.

He opened ashrams and pure vegetarian "Govinda's" restaurants. On every continent he started Vedic *gurukulas* and *goshallas*. Srila Prabhupada was the first spiritual master to introduce both elegant Deity worship of Radha and Krishna and the annual Ratha-yatra festival of Lord Jagannatha in the western countries. ISKCON's Jagannatha Ratha-yatra festivals, complete with three beautiful wooden carts carrying Lord Jagannatha, Lord Baladeva, and Lady Subhadra, a thunderous *sankirtana* procession, and massive *prasadam* distribution, take place every year in over two-hundred cities worldwide.

Though constantly traveling and preaching to priests, princes, politicians, philosophers, scientists, and his disciples, Srila Prabhupada kept translating the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. He wrote over eighty books about Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *The Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, *Nectar of Devotion*, *The Science of Self-Realization*, and English translations with commentaries on *Srimad Bhagavatam*, *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, *Isopanisad*, *Upadesamrta*, *Narada Bhakti-sutras*, *Mukunda mala-stotra*, and *Caitanya Caritamrta* are some of his works. Prabhupada's books have been translated into fifty languages such as French, German, Italian, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Japanese, Swahili, Hindi, Bengali. Almost a billion copies have been distributed worldwide.

In only eleven years, between the ages of seventy and eighty-one, Srila Prabhupada accomplished his mission. He credited his phenomenal success to personal effort, an unshakeable faith in his spiritual master and the holy names of Lord Sri Krishna. He was not an ordinary person. Srila Prabhupada was personally chosen and empowered by the Supreme Lord to spread Krishna consciousness and chanting Hare Krishna all over the world.

In Vrndavana, during the auspicious month of *Kartika* in 1977 on November 14, while surrounded by loving disciples singing their hearts out in *kirtana*, Srila Prabhupada chanted Hare Krishna and entered the eternal pastimes of Radha-Syamasundara. To this day ISKCON keeps growing through cooperation and strict following of Srila Prabhupada's pure example and perfect instruc-

tions. As one of the world's most dynamic religious and cultural movements, ISKCON has more than three-hundred temples on five continents. In former communist Russia, fifty ISKCON temples serve the people of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States). Srila Prabhupada's *samadhi* is in Vrndavana at the ISKCON Krishna-Balarama Mandir. The photograph is on the back cover.

*Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare*

Sri Abhirama Gopala Thakura

Previously, Abhirama Gopala Thakura (Sri Rama Dasa) was one of the *dvadasa gopalas* (12 cowherd boys) who descended with Lord Balarama. (See appendix for listing of the *dvadasa gopalas*) In *Gaura-lila* he was an intimate devotee of Sri Nityananda Prabhu.

One day while overwhelmed in the ecstasy of *sakhya rasa* (loving friendship), Abhirama wanted to play a flute like a cowherd boy. After searching the forest he found a log which sixteen men couldn't move. Astounding everyone, Abhirama grabbed the log, made it into a flute, and played it. In the mood of a cowherd boy Abhirama Gopala carried a bull whip named Jaya Mangala. Anyone who touched it became infused with Krishna *prema*. It's said Srinivasa Acarya received pure love of Krishna in this way.

Abhirama Gopala was a powerful *acarya* of Gaudiya Vaisnavism. Atheists and blasphemers would flee in terror upon seeing him. He was Lord Nityananda's most vigorous preacher. Learned in all the scriptures, he also excelled in music, song, dance. Abhirama used his home for preaching and serving Vaisnava pilgrims, not for sleeping. His house resounded with *kirtana* and Krishna *katha*, and was often visited by pure devotees. His *samadhi* is in 64 Samadhis Area. (108, 21)

Sri Akincana Krishna Dasa Babaji Maharaja

"Srila Prabhupada said that Krishna Dasa Babaji was *akincana* (free from all material attachments and possessions) and a *paramahansa* (a swan-like pure devotee). He was attached only to chanting the holy name of Krishna. Born in E. Bengal, he began Krishna consciousness in college, joined the Gaudiya Math, and took initiation from Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura.

"His sole engagement in the temple was chanting Hare Krishna day and night. His Godbrothers, however, complained to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura. He told them his chanting was fine and that they should encourage him. He further said that they should place one newspaper ad, inviting all sincere men who were willing to chant Krishna's name all day and night to join the Gaudiya Math. A few men came, chanted, and left. But Krishna Dasa remained steady in his chanting. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati ordered his men to provide all facility to the babaji.

"Continually chanting Hare Krishna, Krishna Dasa Babaji began wandering all over India, especially in Mayapur and Vrndavana. He was fond of repeating the last instruction of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, 'Always chant Hare Krishna and offer obeisances to the Lord.' Before singing, which he liked, he would always glorify the previous *acaryas*.

"While he was performing *kirtana* at Srila Prabhupada's *sannyasa* initiation in Mathura, Srila Prabhupada told him to chant more. At that time, Krishna Dasa realized that Srila Prabhupada would lead a worldwide Hare Krishna movement. When remembering Srila Prabhupada, Krishna Dasa would often tell us:

'Your spiritual master is the greatest spiritual master who has ever existed, more than any other spiritual master. More miracles, more work than anyone before. Why? Because no other spiritual master was such a great servant of the holy name. And because he took the holy name all over the world.'

"Krishna Dasa would never accept any honor or gifts. Although he would accept *maha-prasadam* garlands, and then immediately remove them. Near the end of his life, a reputable doctor examined his heart with a stethoscope. The surprised doc-

tor and several other witnesses heard the most incredible and unbelievable sound. Instead of hearing the normal heartbeat, lub-dub lub-dub lub-dub, they heard the maha-mantra vibrating from within Krishna Dasa Babaji's heart, *Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare*. On this day of his divine disappearance, we should pray to Krishna Dasa Babaji Maharaja for the blessings of attraction for chanting the holy name of Krishna." (B.B. Govinda Maharaja memoirs)

Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Dasa, a disciple of Srila Prabhupada and an acquaintance of Krishna Dasa Babaji Maharaja, gives this account:

"Krishna Dasa Babaji Maharaja was a close friend of Srila Prabhupada and a great well-wisher of his disciples. Whenever we would ask him questions, his usual answer was *Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare*. Although highly educated and fluent in both English and Bengali, he mostly just kept chanting Hare Krishna. When a devotee would offer him obeisances and ask, 'Krishna Dasa, please give me your mercy?' Babaji Maharaja would reply, 'No, you please give me your mercy. I need it more.'

"He was always absorbed in hearing and chanting Krishna's holy names. He had no disciples. Being dear to all devotees of the Lord, he was warmly received wherever he traveled. He was always jolly. Regardless of what was happening, he would respond by saying, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, and chuckle slightly or laugh.

"Despite his old age and seemingly frail body, whenever he picked up a *mrdanga* to glorify Krishna he would play the drum with masterful expertise. He would sing with intense devotional concentration, his voice expressing his deep inner feelings of love for Krishna. He would wander around Vraja mandala visiting the places of Krishna's pastimes. He would sit down at one and chant Krishna's glories with tears of ecstatic love in his eyes.

"We brought him to Pavana Sarovara in Nandagrama to spend his last days absorbed in *bhajana*. When we asked him for any last

instruction, he just laughed and said, 'My only instruction is to chant Hare Krishna. That's all there is.'

In a small song book, in which he kept notes, Krishna Dasa Babaji made this last entry before leaving this world:

'Chanting the holy name of Krishna is the true nectar. The Holy Name is like honey. *Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.*' His *samadhi* is in Nandagrama at Pavana Sarovara within the Gaudiya Math temple at Sri Sanatana Gosvami's *bhajana* sthali.

Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana

Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana (Sri Govinda Dasa) appeared in the 1600's near Remuna, Orissa. In his youth, he mastered Sanskrit grammar, poetry, and logic. After carefully studying the commentaries of Sankara and Madhva he took initiation in the *Tattva-vadi* disciplic succession of Sripad Madhvacarya. Baladeva Vidyabhusana became a *dig vijaya pandit* (conqueror of all opponents) and began visiting the holy places. Wherever he went he defeated the local sages, scholars, and *sannyasis*.

In Jagannatha Puri, he learned the superexcellent philosophy of Sri Krishna Caitanya from Sri Radha-Damodara Gosvami, and took initiation after converting to Gaudiya Vaisnavism. In Vrndavana, he studied *Srimad Bhagavatam* under Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura and worshiped Radha-Syamasundara.

In 1706 A.D. Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura sent him to Gulta (near Jaipur, Rajasthan) to uphold the credibility of Mahaprabhu's movement. The local Ramanandis (a branch of Sri Vaisnavas) were claiming that the Bengali Vaisnavas had no right to worship Govindaji because they had no commentary on the *Vedanta-sutra*.

Lord Govindaji Himself directly revealed the *Govinda-bhasya* (a Vaisnava commentary on *Vedanta*) to Baladeva Vidyabhusana. Using it, Baladeva solidly established Gaudiya Vaisnavism as an independent philosophy. He also reinstated the Bengali Vaisnavas in Govindaji's service in Jaipura. *Govinda-bhasya* is the only *bhakti* commentary on *Vedanta-sutra*.

Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana was a *niskincana-parama bhagavata*, fully-renounced topmost devotee of Lord Krishna. His more than twenty-four books and commentaries have helped thousands of Vaisnavas understand the sublime philosophy of Krishna consciousness and the intimate writings of the six Gosvamis. Since he was devoid of false prestige, he never wrote about his birth, parents, lineage, personal life. According to Sri Bhaktivinoda Thakura in *Navadvipa-dhama mahatyam*, in Caitanya lila Baladeva Vidyabhusana is Sri Gopinatha Acarya, the brother-in-law of Sri Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya. In Vraja he serves as Sri Radha's eternal maidservant Ratnavali Devi. (His photo p. 14)

Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, the guru of Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, appeared in Sri Ksetra Dhama (Jagannatha Puri) on 6 February 1874 as the son of Srila Saccidananda Bhaktivinoda Thakura. In his childhood he quickly mastered the *Vedas*, memorized the *Bhagavad-gita*, and relished his father's philosophical works. He became known as "The Living Encyclopedia" for his vast knowledge.

He preached convincingly against casteism and philosophical deviations from Gaudiya Vaisnavism. He tried to unite the four Vaisnava *sampradayas* by publishing their teachings. Srila Sarasvati Thakura earned the title Nrisimha Guru for his fearless and powerful delivery of the Vaisnava *siddhanta*. Mayavadis would cross the street to avoid confronting the "lion guru." Besides being a courageous preacher, he was ornamented with all divine qualities and full of ecstatic love of God. He established 64 Gaudiya Math temples in India and centers in Burma, England, Germany.

Srila Sarasvati Thakura excavated Lord Caitanya's appearance place at the Yogapitha in Sridhama Mayapur, despite heavy opposition from the money-hungry caste Goswamis of Navadvipa. He built a beautiful Gaudiya Math temple there.

His three "*Brhat-mrdangas*" (printing presses) in Madras, Calcutta, Krishna-nagara used to pump out books, magazines, and newspapers to spread the message of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu.

When asked why he printed a daily spiritual newspaper entitled *Nadia Prakash*, Srila Sarasvati Thakura replied, "If an insignificant city can produce five daily newspapers, then why can't we publish a newspaper every second about the eternal, ever-fresh transcendental activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His unlimited spiritual planet, Goloka Vrndavana?"

Apart from his father's writings, he published many authorized *sastras*: *Bhagavad-gita*, *Srimad Bhagavatam*, *Caitanya Bhagavata*, *Caitanya Mangala*, *Prema-bhakti-candrika*, and his favorite book *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta*. He predicted that foreigners would learn Bengali to relish the nectar left by Srila Krishna Dasa Kaviraja in the *Caitanya-caritamrta*.

He introduced many innovations to expand preaching. All over India he staged free theistic exhibits and dioramas depicting the pastimes of Sri Krishna and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Employing the latest technology, he even had animated dolls. To commemorate the many holy places visited by Lord Caitanya he installed marble impressions of the Lord's lotus feet. Breaking tradition, he let his *sannyasis* wear tailored kurtas and overcoats, ride in cars and motor-boats, and carry Mahaprabhu's message across the sea to Europe.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati's revolutionary preaching ideas sprang from the *sastric* principle of *yukta-vairagya* set forth by the *rasa acarya*, Srila Rupa Gosvami. Being an eternally liberated soul, Srila Sarasvati Thakura knew how to perfectly engage Maya (the illusory energy) in the service of Lord Krishna.

Following Srila Thakura Bhaktivinoda's footsteps, he preached *daivi varnashrama* to harmonize society and provide spiritual fulfillment for all. Advocating the teachings of Sri Rupa and Sri Raghunatha Dasa Gosvamis, he taught the science of devotional service, and showed thousands how to attain pure love for Sri-Sri Gandharvika-Giridhari (Radha-Krishna).

Aside from his phenomenal preaching success in India, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura's greatest contribution was

Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, whom he initiated and inspired to distribute Krishna consciousness all over the world. When Srila Prabhupada was asked to describe his spiritual master Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, he said, "What can I say? He was a Vaikuntha man."

In Radha-Govinda's eternal pastimes in Goloka Vrndavana, Srila Sarasvati Thakura serves as Nayana-mani manjari. His *pushpa samadhis* are at Radha-kunda and Radha Damodara. (16,35)

Sri Bhaktivinoda Thakura

Sri Saccidananda Bhaktivinoda Thakura appeared in 1838 in a wealthy family in the Nadia district, West Bengal. He revealed that he is an eternal associate of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu by his extraordinary preaching activities and prolific writing. Living as a *mahabhagavata* Vaisnava, he stayed in the *grhasta* ashram until the last few years of his life. Then he renounced everything, accepted babaji, and entered *samadhi*, totally absorbed in the loving service of Gaura-Gadadhara and Radha-Madhava.

"He had a responsible government position as the District Magistrate (high court judge), maintained a Krishna conscious family, and wrote almost one hundred books on Krishna consciousness. At the same time, he served the Supreme Lord in so many ways. That is the beauty of his life. After a full day of government service he would sleep four hours, get up at midnight and write until morning. That was his daily program." (Srila Prabhupada)

Thakura Bhaktivinoda took Vaisnava *diksa* from Sri Vipin-vihari Gosvami in the line of Sri Jahnava Mata. Afterwards, he received spiritual inspiration and direction from Srila Jagannatha Dasa Babaji. Holding an exalted government post, vast erudition, and spiritual accomplishment never disturbed Bhaktivinoda Thakura. He remained prideless, always humble, friendly to all. Charity seekers at his home always left happy and satisfied. A well-wisher to everyone, he never kept grudges, even with opponents to his preaching. In fact, he never spoke a word that would hurt another's feelings.

"The Thakura was always courageous and acted for everyone's welfare. Keeping personal needs to a minimum, he led the simplest of lives," said one pandit. In the following entry from *Saranagati*, Srila Bhaktivinoda, who had all pure divine qualities, takes the role of a conditioned soul to teach us how to advance in Krishna consciousness:

"You should always absorb your mind in attentively chanting Krishna's glories. By performing Krishna *kirtana* you'll gain mastery over the mind. Give up all false pride. Always think yourself to be worthless, destitute, lower and more humble than straw in the street. Practice forgiveness like the tree. Giving up all violence toward other living beings, you should maintain them. Throughout your life you should never give anxiety to others. But do good to them, make them happy, and forget about your own happiness.

"Thus when you become a pious good soul by possessing all good qualities, you should give up desires for fame and honor. And just make your heart humble. Knowing that Lord Sri Krishna lives within all living beings, you should respect and honor everyone at all times. You will attain virtue by being humble, merciful, respecting others, and renouncing desires for fame and honor. In such a state, you should sing the glories of the Supreme Lord. Weeping, Bhaktivinoda submits his prayer at the lotus feet of the Lord. 'O Lord, when will You give me such qualities as these?' "

Always anxious to use every moment in loving service of Krishna, he followed a strict austere daily schedule:

8-10	P.M.	Rest (two hours)
10-4	A.M.	Write
4-4:30	A.M.	Rest
4:30-7	A.M.	Chant Japa
7-7:30		Correspondence
7:30-9:30		Study <i>sastras</i>
9:30-10		Bath, <i>prasadam</i> (half-liter milk, fruit, 2 chapatis)
10-1	P.M.	Court Duties
1-2	P.M.	Refresh at home
2-5	P.M.	Court Duties

5-7 P.M. Translate Sanskrit *sastras* to Bengali
 7-8 P.M. Bath, *prasadam* (half-liter milk, rice, 2chapatis)

Summary Daily Schedule:

Sleep	3 hours
Write	8.5 hours
Japa,study	4.5 hours
Work	6 hours

Srinivasa Acarya praises the six Gosvamis of Vrndavana, *nana-sastra-vicaranaika-nipunau sad-dharma samsthakapau, lokanam hita karinau ...* "The six Gosvamis deeply studied all the *sastras* in order to establish eternal religious principles for the benefit of everyone." Similarly, Thakura Bhaktivinoda made unlimited preaching contributions to help humanity. And for this he's known as the "Seventh Gosvami."

Biographers list three major preaching achievements of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura:

(1) Wrote 100 authorized spiritual books. (2) Discovered appearance place of Lord Caitanya. (3) Introduced preaching innovations.

Besides books (in Bengali, Oriya, English) reviving and explaining Mahaprabhu's message, he wrote hundreds of poems and songs full of spiritual sentiments and *sastric siddhanta* (philosophical conclusions).

"His writings have made the sacred teachings of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu fully available to every modern reader. And they are presented in a form which carries irresistible conviction and devotion," said a late disciple of Thakura Bhaktivinoda.

Sri Krishna-samhita, Kalyana Kalpa-taru, Sri Caitanya-siksamrta, Sri Navadvipa-dhama mahatmyam, Jaiva Dharma, Sri Harinama-cintamani, Bhajana-rahasya, Gita-mala, Gitavalli, Saranagati, and commentaries on *Bhagavad-gita* and *Caitanya-caritamrta* are some of his works. The following quote comes from Thakura Bhaktivinoda's *Gitavali*:

"He who has failed to carefully worship the lotus feet of Sri Radhika, which are the abodes of all auspiciousness. He who has not taken shelter in the transcendental abode of Vrndavana, which is decorated with the lotus flower named Radha. He who in this life has not associated with the devotees of Radhika, who are full of wisdom and love for Radhika. How will such a person ever feel the bliss of bathing in the ocean of Lord Syamasundara's sublime mellows?

"Please understand this most attentively. Sri Radhika is the teacher of *madhurya rasa* (mellows of conjugal love). Radha-Madhava *madhurya prema* is meant to be discussed and meditated upon. He who cherishes the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani obtains the lotus feet of Madhava, which are priceless jewels. Without taking shelter of Radha's lotus feet one can never meet Krishna. The Vedic scriptures declare that Krishna is the property of the maidservants of Sri Radha. Give up wife, sons, friends, wealth, followers, speculative knowledge, all materialistic actions. Just become absorbed in the sweetness of serving the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani. This is Bhaktivinoda's solemn declaration."

During the last five-hundred years, the original appearance place of Lord Caitanya had vanished under the indomitable Ganges River. In 1888, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura revealed Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's *janmasthan* at the Yogapitha in Sridhama Mayapur. Srila Jagannatha Dasa Babaji Maharaja, a famous *siddha* saint, and *paramahansa rasika* Vaisnava, confirmed the Thakura's discovery. This most auspicious event delighted the Gaudiya Vaisnavas from Gaura-mandala to Vraja-bhumi. He established the worship of Lord Gauranga and Srimati Vishnupriya at Yogapitha.

In the mood of innovation, in 1896 he sent to universities around the world a book of slokas, *Sri Gauranga-lila smarana* which had a forty-seven page English introduction: "Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu: His Life and Precepts." This act rose from a keen desire to spread Lord Caitanya's teachings in the Western countries.

Bhaktivinoda Thakura made three predictions concerning a person and a phenomena: "A personality will soon appear," wrote

Bhaktivinoda Thakura, "and he will travel all over the world to spread the teachings of Lord Caitanya."

His second prediction: "Very soon the chanting of Hari-Nama *sankirtana* will be spread all over the world. Oh, when will that day come when people from America, England, France, Germany, Russia will take up *karatal*s and *mrdangas* and chant Hare Krishna in their towns?"

The third prediction: "When will that day come when the fair-skinned foreigners will come to Sri Mayapur-dhama and join with the Bengali Vaisnavas to chant, *Jaya Sacinandana*, *Jaya Sacinandana*. When will that day be? "

Srila Prabhupada said it's spiritually significant that he himself appeared in 1896, the same year Bhaktivinoda Thakura sent his book overseas. The will of Lord Caitanya, the desire of Thakura Bhaktivinoda, and the mercy of Srila Sarasvati Thakura empowered Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada to spread Sri Caitanya's teachings and the chanting of Hare Krishna all over the world. Prabhupada fulfilled the Thakura's three predictions!

Devoid of pride, full of humility, radiant with pure love for Radha-Govinda, Srila Prabhupada gave all credit to the previous *acaryas*. "We should take it," said Srila Prabhupada, "that Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura was the origin of the Krishna Consciousness Movement (ISKCON) in its pure form."

In 1986, just one-hundred years after Bhaktivinoda Thakura's third prediction, three-thousand "fair skinned devotees" from America, England, France, Germany, Russia, and fifty other countries gathered at the ISKCON Mayapura Chandrodaya Mandir in Sridhama Mayapur. They joined one thousand "Bengali Vaisnavas" to rock the universe by chanting *Jaya Sacinandana*, *Jaya Sacinandana*, *Jaya Sacinandana*, *Gaura-Hari*. Srila Saccidananda Bhaktivinoda Thakura ki jai!

In 1914, on the *tirobhava tithi* (disappearance day) of Sri Gadadhara Pandit (the incarnation of Sri Radha), Thakura Bhaktivinoda entered the eternal pastimes of Gaura-Gadadhara and Radha-Madhava. In Godrumadvipa (Navadvipa) Sri-Sri Gaura-Gadadhara, the worshipable Deities of Thakura Bhaktivinoda, await to bless any visitors to Svananda-sukhada-kunj. In Rādhā-

Madhava's *nitya-vraja lila* Bhaktivinoda Thakura takes the form of Kamala-manjari to serve Srimati Radharani. His *pushpa samadhi* is in his *bhajana kutir* at Radha-kunda. (16,15)

Sri Bhavananda Raya

Sri Bhavananda Raya dedicated himself and His entire family of five sons (Ramananda Raya, Gopinatha, Vaninatha, Kalanidhi, Sudhanidhi) to the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Once the Lord happily embraced him saying, "Bhavananda, you are Pandu. And your five sons are the five Pandavas. I consider your sons to be like My relatives. These five brothers are all My eternal servants life after life."

An ideal father, Bhavananda led his sons on the path of liberation from repeated birth and death. He fully engaged them in pure devotional service of Radha Giridhari's combined form of beauty, love, and mercy --- Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu.

His *nama samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area. (108)

Sri Bhugarbha Gosvami

A disciple of Sri Gadadhara Pandit, Sri Bhugarbha Gosvami shared an intimate friendship with Sri Lokanatha Gosvami. Inspired by Lord Caitanya, they were the first and most senior devotees to settle in Vrndavana. Before the arrival of Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana Gosvamis they tried to uncover the lost holy places of Radha-Govindaji.

Unlike the aggressive approach of modern scientists to discover the unknown, Bhugarbha and Lokanatha Gosvamis found Sri Krishna's pastime forests by the humble method of surrender. They simply wandered around Vrndavana calling out the names of her twelve forests, "Bhandiravan, Kamyavan, Mahavan, Talavan ..." And Srimati Vrnda Devi (the maintainer of the forests and an expansion of Krishna's pastime potency) revealed the exact location of each and every forest.

It is told that to avoid material distractions Bhugarbha would perform his *bhajana* underground. So, he received the name Bhugarbha (*bhu* means earth, *garbha* means cave, womb, hidden

place) He is Prema-manjari or Bhadra Rekhika in Radha Gopinatha's *nitya-nikunja lila*. His *samadhi* stands near Sri Rupa Gosvami's in the Radha Damodara temple courtyard. (17,35)

Sri Bilvamangala Thakura

Although born in a South Indian brahmana family, Sri Bilvamangala Thakura fell down with a prostitute named Cintamani, who ultimately satisfied his deepest desire. He became attached and rabid with lust. Even immediately after performing the *śrad-dha* rituals for his deceased father he ran to enjoy her. A raging storm and tossing waves could not deter him. In lustful delusion, he held a corpse to cross a turbulent river. Finding the gate locked, he scaled the wall by grabbing a cobra, which he foolishly saw as a rope.

Seeing Bilvamangala soaking wet, burning with desire, totally exhausted, Cintamani advised him, "You're so much attached to this lowly bag of flesh and bones. Better you become attached to serving the blissful Lord Govinda. Go to Vrndavana and there you will find complete satisfaction and eternal happiness."

On the way to Vrndavana Bilvamangala's material desires seized him. He lusted after a brahmana's wife. Ashamed of his polluted desires, he gouged out his eyes with the lady's hairpin. Blind Bilvamangala was determined not to be distracted from the spiritual path by any material object.

Receiving *diksa* from Somagiri, he got the name Lilasuka for his expertise in describing the *madhurya lila* of Radha and Krishna. He felt so much ecstasy from singing about Govinda's pastimes and playing his vina that millions of sense objects became insignificant.

In Vrndavana, Sri Krishna would personally give Bilvamangala *prasadam* and lead him to a safe resting place. At first Lilasuka didn't know the identity of this sweet Vrajavasi boy. Then one day Bihari Lal played his captivating flute for the blind man. Suddenly, Bilvamangala became mad with desire to behold the beautiful sweet form of Syamasundara. Realizing that this "Vrajavasi boy" was actually the Lord of his life and the love of his heart, he

reached out to touch Krishna. Playful Gopala touched Bilvamangala's hand, laughed lovingly, and ran away. Sighing, Bilvamangala said, "You can run away from my hand, but You can never leave my heart."

Lilasuka wrote many verses and songs full of Krishna *prema*. *Krishna-karnamrta*, his most famous work, was one of the first authentic books to reveal the supreme position of Srimati Radharani in Sri Krishna's Vrndavana *madhurya lila*. The later writings of the six Gosvamis, Ramananda Raya, Prabodhananda Sarasvati, Krishna Dasa Kaviraja, Visvanatha Cakravarti, and Bhaktivinoda Thakura expanded this idea. They developed the concept of exclusively serving and worshiping Srimati Radharani--the Queen of Vrndavana and the supreme controller of even Krishna Himself.

Srila Thakura Bhaktivinoda writes in *Saranagati*: "By serving the lotus feet of Sri Radha, the daughter of Vrsabhanu, I will become a maidservant of one of the *gopis* in Vraja. I will always try to bring happiness to Sri Radha. Within my heart, I know that Radha's pleasure is Krishna's source of joy. Therefore, I never desire to abandon Radha's lotus feet for Krishna's solitary company. The *sakhis* are my best friends and teachers about the love uniting Radha and Krishna. As one of their maidservants, I will serve Radha's lotus feet, which fulfill all desires. I myself am partial. I always support Radhika. There may be some who live apart from Her. Let them live as they prefer. But I will always remain fixed at the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani."

Krishna-karnamrta is an extremely exalted scripture meant for the most advanced devotees. But the most merciful Krishna Dasa Kaviraja wrote *Sarangarangada*. This commentary helps devotees savor the sublime nectar of *Krishna-karnamrta*. Simply by reading it one will become attracted to Radha-Govinda's Vraja *lila*. His *samadhi* is in Gopinatha Bazaar. (21,112)

Sri Biracandra Prabhu

Sri Biracandra Prabhu (Biracandra Gosvami) was the son of Lord Nityananda's second wife Vasudha Devi, and the disciple of Sri Jahnava Devi. "He was an incarnation of Ksirodakasayi Vish-

nu. He is non-different from Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, in that he is Vishnu-tattva, God Himself," said Kavi Karnapura.

"After Sri Nityananda Prabhu, who is the topmost branch of Lord Caitanya's indestructible tree of eternal love of Godhead, the greatest branch is Biracandra Prabhu. Although he 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. It is by the glorious mercy of Sri Biracandra that people all over the world can chant the names of Caitanya and Nityananda. I therefore take shelter of the lotus feet of Sri Biracandra Prabhu." (*Sri Caitanya-caritamrta*)

"When Biracandra Prabhu visited Vrndavana, everyone came out to see him. They were delighted to have his *darsana*. Everyone was overwhelmed by seeing the ecstatic devotion exhibited by Biracandra Prabhu. He took *darsana* of Madana Mohana, Radha-Govinda, Radha-Gopinatha. On the order of Sri Jahnava Devi he toured Vraja Mandala. During his extensive pilgrimage he showed many amazing and wonderful manifestations of divine love." (*Bhakti-ratnakar*) His *pushpa samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area. (21.)

Sri Candrasekhara Acarya

Sri Candrasekhara Acarya (Acaryaratna) lived in Navadvipa near the house of Sri Nimai Pandit, his nephew. Since Candrasekhara had no children, he accepted Nimai Pandit as his own and often entertained the Lord within his home. After the disappearance of Sri Jagannatha Mishra, Acaryaratna served as Gauranga's guardian and father. Sri Gaurasundara would regularly hold *kirtans* and once enacted a play in Candrasekhara's house. Dressed as Sri Laksmi Devi, Lord Caitanya played the part so expertly that even Mother Saci couldn't recognize Him.

Overcome with intense pangs of separation, Candrasekhara fell down on the ground when he heard Lord Gauranga's plan to

take *sannyasa*. "Are You going to plunge Nadia into darkness by going away?" he asked the Lord.

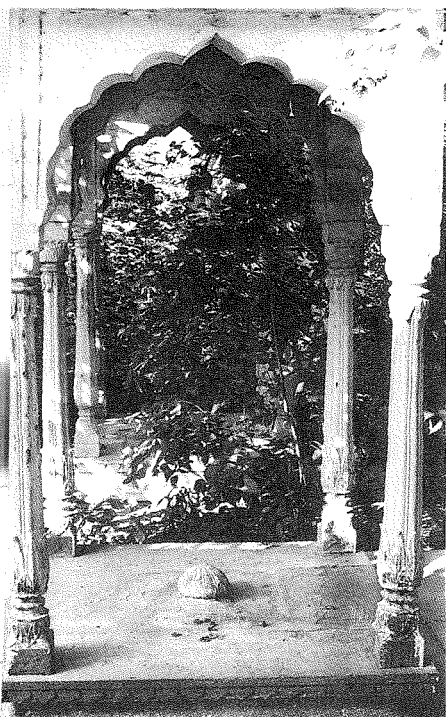
With tears spilling out of His lotus eyes Lord Gauranga embraced him and replied, "Acaryaratna, although I may accept *sannyasa*, I will forever remain bound within the temple of your heart. Please be patient, for you must assist in My *sannyasa* ceremony."

Sri Candrasekhara was one of the main branches of Sri Caitanya's *sankirtana* movement. From the beginning of Sri Caitanya's Navadvipa *lila* he and his innumerable disciples faithfully served the Lord. In Sridhama Mayapur, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura established the headquarters of Sri Caitanya Matha at the site of Candrasekhara Acarya's original home. His *samadhi* is behind the Madana Mohana temple and next to Sanatana Gosvami's *samadhi*. He is Subhadra or Candra-deva (moon god) in Krishna's divine pastimes. (17,29)

Sri Devananda Pandit

Living in Kuliya during Sri Caitanya's pastimes, Sri Devananda Pandit gave professional readings of *Srimad Bhagavatam* tainted with Mayavada philosophy. One day Srivasa Pandit heard his *Bhagavata-katha*, began crying, and fell to the ground. Becoming disturbed by this display, the foolish disciples of Devananda threw Srivasa out of the assembly. By silently observing this misbehavior of his disciples Devananda committed the *hati-mata aparadha*, the mad elephant offense of blaspheming a pure devotee of Lord Caitanya.

Later, by the mercy of Vakresvara Pandit, an intimate devotee of Sri Gaura Raya, Devananda understood the divinity of Sri Krishna Caitanya and surrendered to Him. The Lord pardoned his offense and blessed him with *bhakti*. He serves in Krishna *lila* as Bhaguri Muni.



Samadhi Kamalakra Pippalai



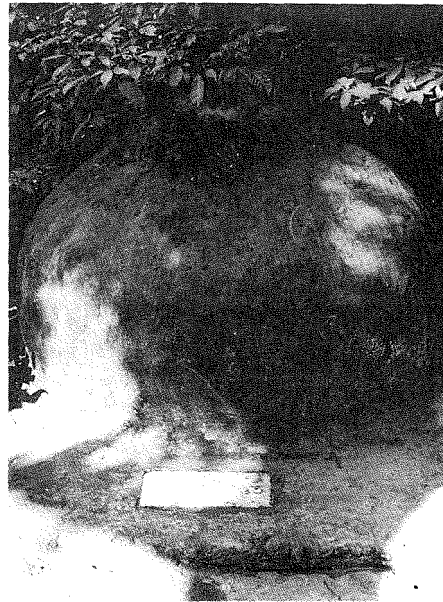
Samadhi Mahesh Pandit



Samadhi Sridhara (Kholaveca)



Samadhi Ramananda Raya



Samadhi Dhananjaya Pandit

Sri Dhananjaya Pandit

Sri Caitanya Bhagavata describes Dhananjaya Pandit as *vilak-sana mahanta*, "having all the characteristics of a great personality." He took part in Lord Gauracandra's Navadvipa *kir-tana* pastimes before moving to Vrndavana on Mahaprabhu's order.

Carrying only a kamandalu--but remaining absorbed in love of Sri Krishna and Sri Caitanya--he traveled widely and preached. He established Deities of Gaura-Nitai, Sri Gopinatha, and Damodara. In *Vraja lila* he is is Vasudama, one of Lord Balarama's *dvadasa gopals*. His *samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area. (21,74)

Sri Gadadhara Dasa Gosvami

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu has basically two groups of associates. One group such as the *dvadasa gopals* (Abhirama Gopala, Gauridasa Pandit, Dhananjaya and others) serve Sri Nityananda Prabhu in the mood of *sakhya rasa* (friendship). The second group always stay merged in the mellow of *madhurya rasa* (conjugal love).

Sri Gadadhara Gosvami is a united form of Candrakanti gopi (an expansion of Radharani's effulgence) and Purnananda (an expansion of Lord Balarama's dear girlfriend). Thus, Gadadhara Dasa was an associate of both Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Sri Nityananda Prabhu. Krishna Dasa Kaviraja describes Lord Caitanya as *radha-bhava-dyuti suvalita*, "characterized by the emotions and bodily luster of Srimati Radharani." Gadadhara Dasa is this *dyuti*, luster. Gadadhara Dasa is sometimes called "the personification of Sri Radhika's divine effulgence."

While traveling with Lord Nityananda Gadadhara would sometimes become absorbed in *madhurya prema* and begin acting and speaking like a *Vraja gopi*. Putting a clay pot of Ganges water on his head, as if he were a *gopi*, he would call out, "Who wants to buy milk? Who wants to buy yogurt?"

As one of Lord Nityananda's chief preachers in Bengal Gadadhara Dasa delivered countless sinners, atheists, and *yauvanas*.

Once while tasting Krishna *prema* he began dancing madly and chanting Krishna's holy names outside the Kazi's mansion. The irate Muslim magistrate stormed out of his house to chastize him for "disturbing the peace." But beholding the dazzlingly attractive form of Gadadhara Dasa, the Kazi became stunned and dropped his anger.

Gadadhara affectionately embraced the Kazi and said, "Gaura-Nityananda have appeared to deliver everyone 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 of Hari," replied the Kazi.

Hearing the Kazi inadvertently chant the holy name filled Gadadhara with happiness. He said, "Why tomorrow? You have already chanted today. And this powerful name of Hari will destroy your sins and purify your existence." From that day on the Kazi took shelter of Sri Gadadhara Dasa Gosvami. His *samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area.

Sri Gadadhara Pandit

Sri Gaurahari had so much affection for Sri Gadadhara Pandit that He couldn't be without him for a moment. He appeared a year after Lord Caitanya. Gadai and Nimai were inseparable as childhood playmates. Peaceful, renounced, serious, self-composed, fond of solitude Gadadhara proved quite a contrast to his bosom friend Gaura Raya, who was fickle, unsteady, and whimsical. In Ganga Dasa Pandit's *tol* (school) Nimai Pandit regularly teased Gadadhara by challenging him with illogical questions.

Sri Kavi Karnapura states that in Vraja *lila* Gadadhara Pandit is the daughter of King Vrsabhanu--Srimati Radharani. Gadadhara Pandit served as Lord Gaura's chief assistant during His Navadvipa-*lila*. Sri-Sri Radha Krishna in Vrndavana appear as Gaura-Gadadhara to perform pastimes in Navadvipa in the forest groves beside the Ganges.

"No one can describe the characteristics and ecstatic love of Gadadhara Pandit. Therefore another name for Sri Caitanya

Mahaprabhu is Gadadhara Prananaatha, "the life and soul of Gadadhara Pandit." (*Caitanya-caritamṛta*)

One day while wandering along the bank of the Ganges, Gaurasundara entered a forest grove and sat in a meditative mood. Soon he became enraptured remembering His Vrndavana pastimes. To enhance the Lord's mood, Mukunda Datta began singing sweet songs in *purva raga*. Sri Gadadhara made a garland of fragrant forest flowers and lovingly placed it around the Lord's beautiful neck. As Sri Radha used to dress Damodara in Vrndavana, similarly, Gadadhara would adorn the radiant form of Lord Gauranga. He would also decorate Lord Caitanya's bed and bedroom with sweet smelling flowers. Everyday he would make sandalwood paste to rub on Sri Caitanya's transcendental body.

Gaura-Gadadhara sat on the root of a tree, serving as a raised dais. Sri Nityananda Prabhu sat on Lord Caitanya's right. Srivasa Pandit decorated them with flowers. Sri Advaita Acarya offered *arotika*. Narahari waved a *camara*. Suklambhara offered candana and Murari Gupta sang the Lord's glories. Vijay, Mukunda, Purusottama, Madhava and Vasudeva Ghosh sang a variety of songs in different *ragas*. In this way, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu performed His *Nadia lila*.

Gadadhara Pandit also took the renounced order of life and went to Jagannatha Puri to be with Lord Caitanya. Accepting *ksetra sanniyasa* (a renunciate who never leaves the dhama), he served the Deity of Tota-Gopinatha with full love and devotion. Regularly, Sri Krishna Caitanya came to relish Sri Gadadhara's *rasika* reading of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Lord Caitanya concluded His manifest pastimes by entering the Deity of Tota-Gopinatha.

Although Gadadhara Pandit was barely forty-eight when the Lord departed, he quickly became old because of the intense anguish he felt in separation from his beloved Lord Gaurasundara. He couldn't stretch his arms to offer a garland to his Deity. Understanding His servant's difficulty, Sri Tota-Gopinatha sat down to facilitate Gadadhara's loving service. To this day, Sri Tota-Gopinatha is the only sitting Deity of Krishna.

According to some authorities, a short time after Lord Caitanya's disappearance Sri Gadadhara Pandit joined His eter-

nal pastimes by entering his beloved Deity of Tota-Gopinatha. His *danta* (tooth) *samadhi* stands near the Vamsi Gopala temple in Vrndavana. (19,47)

Sri Gangamata Gosvamini

From her childhood Princess Sachi devi, the daughter of King Naresh Narayana of Bengal, showed unalloyed devotion to Lord Sri Krishna. She even refused to marry on account of her genuine attachment to Krishna. After her father's demise she ruled the kingdom. But she soon renounced it to find a bona fide spiritual master.

Princess Sachi devi met Sri Haridasa Pandit, a leading guru in Vrndavana, and began performing devout *bhajana* to Govindaji. Although she became frail from undereating, she would always sleep on the Yamuna's sandy bank, and rise before sunrise to clean Govindaji's temple. Daily she would hear *Bhagavata-katha*, see Govindaji's *arotika*, circumambulate Radha-Syamasundara's *lila sthanas* (pastime places) such as Vamisivata, Seva Kunja, Nidhu vana, Rasa Sthali.

Receiving encouragement from Sri Haridasa Pandit, Sachi devi completely dropped her false ego, put on rags, and went house-to-house in Vraja begging alms. The Vrajavasis were astonished by her severe renunciation. Taking her guru's suggestion, she went to Radha-kunda to associate with Sri Laksmipriya devi dasi, a dear disciple of Sri Haridasa.

Following Thakura Haridasa's perfect example, Laksmipriya devi daily chanted 300,000 names (192 rounds) of Krishna. Everyday the two ladies would circumambulate Govardhana Hill and worship Krishna.

On her guru's order, Sachi devi went to the home of Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya in Jagannatha Puri. Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya and most of Lord Gauranga-sundara's eternal associates had already returned to Goloka Vrndavana. Sachi devi restored Sarvabhauma's house, and established first-class worship of Sri Shyama Raya, a Deity given to her by a Jaipur brahmana. Everyday she lectured on *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Her classes became

popular attracting eager listeners from miles around. Many people, including brahmanas and King Mukunda Deva, took initiation from Sachi devi.

In *Sri Navadvipa Dhama Parikrama*, Sripad B.V. Narayana Maharaja explains how Sachi devi got the name "Gangamata."

"On the day of Ganga Sagara Mela, Sachi devi, who was residing in Jagannatha Puri, desired to bathe in the Ganges. That night the Ganges flowed from the lotus feet of Lord Jagannatha and came to Sachi's ashrama. Entering Ganga Devi's waters, Sachi floated to the lotus feet of Jagannatha Swami inside the temple.

"After unlocking the doors the next morning the *pujaris* were surprised to find her inside the temple. Thinking she was a thief, they immediately put Sachi devi in jail. Seeing this mistake, Lord Jagannatha appeared simultaneously in a dream to both the Puri King and the head *pujari*. The Lord ordered them to release Sachi devi dasi and take initiation from her. From then on she became famous as Gangamata Gosvamini."

Sri Ganga Narayana Cakravarti

When Sri Ganga Narayana Cakravarti, a renowned brahmana, took initiation from Sri Narottama Dasa Thakura the *smarta* brahmanas became outraged. They complained to King Narasimha that the "audacious *sudra*," Narottama Dasa, had brazenly initiated a brahmana into the fold of Gaudiya Vaisnavism. The king, the *smartas*, and the *dig vijaya pandit* (world class scholar) went to challenge and conquer the "upstart" Narottama Dasa.

Krishna's devotees peacefully tolerate all insults and abuses to themselves. But they strike like fire against offenders to their beloved guru or worshipable Lord Krishna.

Ganga Narayana Cakravarti and Ramacandra Kaviraja felt disturbed upon hearing of the imminent attack against their gurudeva.

Disguising themselves as a potter and a *pan walla* (betel nut vendor), they opened shops in a neighboring village. Upon arriving there, the *smartas* sent their students to buy by pan and clay pots for cooking. Both the potter (Ramacandra Kaviraja) and the

pan walla (Ganga Narayana) spoke pure Sanskrit with the students. Soon an argument stirred the ethers. The *smartas*, King Narasimha and Sri Rupa Narayana (the *dig vijaya pandit*) joined the furious debate. The two "*wallas*" quickly silenced the opposition. When he understood they were Narottama Dasa's disciples, the King told the *smarta pandits*, "If you can't even defeat these two common ordinary disciples of Narottama Dasa Thakura, how will you ever defeat Narottama Dasa himself?"

Humiliated, the pandits headed home. That night in a dream Durga Devi told King Narasimha and the *dig vijaya pandit*, "Take initiation from Narottama Dasa Thakura, or else I'll cut off your heads." The next day they surrendered and received Radha-Krishna *mantra diksa* from Narottama Dasa Thakura.

The *samadhi* of Ganga Narayana Cakravarti's is next to Narottama Dasa Thakura's *samadhi* in the Radha-Gokulananda temple courtyard. (96)

Sri Gaura Kishora Dasa Babaji Maharaja

In 1849, Srila Gaura Kishora Dasa Babaji left *grhastha* life after the death of his wife. He moved to Vrndavana and took initiation from Sri Bhagavata Dasa Babaji, a disciple of Sri Jagannatha Dasa Babaji. For over thirty years Gaura Kishora Dasa stayed in Vrndavana performing *bhajana* under the trees at Giri-Govardhana, Nandagrama, Varsana, Radha-kunda, Surya-kunda, Raval, Gokula.

Sitting in seclusion, he chanted 200,000 names of Krishna every day (128 rounds of *japa*). He felt painful separation from Radha-Govinda and cried profusely. As he wandered through the *dvadasa vana* (12 forests) of Vraja, he would loudly chant the holy names in a deep voice full of lamentation. He would also relish the following bhajan:

kothay go prema-mayi radhe radhe!
radhe radhe go jaya radhe radhe!
dekha diya prana rakho radhe radhe!
tomar kangal tomay dake radhe radhe!
radhe vrndavana-vilasini radhe radhe!

radhe kanu-mano-mohini radhe radhe!
radhe astha-sakhir siromani radhe radhe!
radhe vrsabhanu-nandini radhe radhe!

"O Radhe Radhe! Where are You, O Goddess of ecstatic love?
 O Radhe Radhe! All glories to You, O Radhe Radhe!

O Radhe Radhe! Please show Yourself to me and thereby
 maintain my life. Your most despicable fallen servant calls out to
 You, O Radhe Radhe!

O Radhe! Oh artful enjoyer of Vrndavana. O Radhe Radhe!
 O Radhe! Oh enchantress of Kanu's (Krishna) mind. O Radhe
 Radhe!

O Radhe! Oh crest jewel of Your eight main girlfriends. O
 Radhe Radhe! O Radhe! Oh delightful daughter of Maharaja
 Vrsabhanu. O Radhe Radhe!"

Srila Babaji Maharaja's mood of renunciation was unparal-
 leled. Sometimes he ate mud from the banks of Radha-kunda or
 the Yamuna. Other times he took *madhukari* from the Vrajavasis.
Madhukari is a babaji's daily practice of begging a little food from
 one to seven houses, just as a bee collects a drop of honey from
 each flower. He saw all the Vrajavasis (residents of Vrndavana)
 as being the direct personal associates of Radha and Krishna. As
 a result of this vision, he would pay respects to every person, cow,
 animal, bird, tree, creeper, insect, ant in the holy dhama.

While staying in Varsana he made a flower garland everyday
 for Rai and Kanu (Radha-Krishna). After thirty years of rendering
 intimate services to Radha and Krishna in Vrndavana, Babaji felt
 inspired by the Divine Couple to see Sri Navadvipa Dhama. He
 visited all the *lila sthanas* of Lord Gauranga in Gaura Mandala. In
 Navadvipa, he used to sing one *bhajana* which means, "By receiv-
 ing Nitai's mercy one gets Gauranga's mercy, which makes one
 eligible for Krishna *prema*. With Krishna *prema* one can attain the
 service of Srimati Radharani and the *gopis*."

Gaura Kishora Dasa Babaji was the embodied form of Sri
 Rupa-Raghunatha's renunciation. Completely detached, he would
 wash discarded cloth to cover his body. He drank from a rejected
 clay pot. Parched rice mixed with Ganges water or simply some
 mud from Ganga's bank sustained his life.

He carried two books written by Sri Narottama Dasa Thakura; *Prarthana*, *Prema-bhakti-candrika*. On *Ekadasi* he didn't eat or drink a drop of water. Recognizing him to be a *mahabhagavata*, many tried to serve, but he never accepted.

Regularly, he associated with and heard *Srimad Bhagavatam* from Srila Thakura Bhaktivinoda in Svananda sukhada kunja in Godrumadvipa. Constantly absorbed in *bhajana*, Srila Babaji Maharaja had no desire to make disciples. On the request of Bhaktivinoda Thakura, however, he reconsidered. Upon seeing the true humility and deep attachment of Thakura Bhaktivinoda's son for *bhajana*, Srila Gaurakishora Dasa Babaji accepted one disciple--Sri Varsabhanavi-dayita Dasa (Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura).

To keep mundane people from approaching him for material boons he once resided in the lavatories at the Kuliya Dharmashalla (in Koladvipa) for six months. When public officials came offering to build him a proper *bhajana kutir*, Babaji Maharaja locked himself inside and said he already had one. He believed that associating with materialistic people was much worse than the smell of stool in the latrine.

Gaura Kishora Dasa Babaji advised a Calcutta doctor who wanted to open a free health clinic in Navadvipa Dhama: "If you really want to live in Navadvipa Dhama, then give up your desire to run a free clinic for healing sense enjoyers. If you want to render substantial service, then renounce everything except what promotes Hari *bhajana*. All other kinds of duties and services simply bind one to the ghastly cycle of karmic reactions."

Babaji Maharaja spoke gravely to a newly married man: "A Vaisnava wife is extremely rare and difficult to find in this world. If one has the good fortune of having one, he should see it as a benediction from Krishna. The wife worships the husband as her lord and master. Similarly, the husband should worship the wife because she is Krishna dasi, a servant of Krishna. In this way, the husband can protect his devotional enthusiasm by not considering his wife to be his maidservant, but she is always the maidservant of Krishna."

"One who wants *bhojana* (eating palatably) will spoil his *bhajana*," was a favorite quote of Srila Babaji Maharaja. In other words, eating here and there simply to gratify the tongue (*bhojana*) destroys any attempts to worship Krishna (*bhajana*). Once a devotee ate some festival *prasadam* in his *bhajana kutir*. Babaji Maharaja would not speak to him for three days. On the fourth day he said, "You accepted "festival *prasadam*" given by low class harlots and beautiful women. Because you took food without considering its origin your *bhajana* is useless."

The essence of Srila Gaura Kishora Dasa Babaji's instructions: "The Divine Name of Krishna offers the one and only shelter. One should never try to remember Radha-Damodara's transcendental pastimes by artificial methods. Constant chanting of the Divine Names will purify the heart. By chanting Hari Nama the syllables of the maha-mantra (*Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare*) will gradually reveal the spiritual form, qualities, pastimes of Sri Krishna. Then you will realize your own eternal spiritual form, service, and the eleven particulars of your spiritual identity."

In pursuance of Babaji Maharaja's statement, "drag my dead body through the streets of Navadvipa," a group of so-called advanced devotees proposed to commit the said sacrilege. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, however, challenged them: "According to *sastra*, one who has had carnal association with a loose woman within the last twenty-four hours is contaminated, and therefore not qualified to touch my Guru Maharaja." Hearing this bold statement, the black-hearted brahmanas made a hasty retreat.

On 19 November 1915, Srila Gaura Kishora Dasa Babaji Maharaja joined the eternal blissful pastimes of Gandharvika-Giridhari. His beloved disciple, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, established his *samadhi* on the banks of Sri Caitanya Matha's Radha-kunda, near Lord Caitanya's Yogapitha in Sridhama Mayapur.

In Vraja *lila* he serves Srimati Radharani as Guna-manjari. His *pushpa samadhi* stands besides the Radha-Kunja Bihari Gaudiya Matha near Radha-kunda. (16,15)

Sri Gauridasa Pandit

"Gauridasa Pandit, the emblem of the most elevated devotional service in love of Godhead, had the greatest potency to receive and deliver such love. Making Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityananda the Lords of his life, Gauridasa Pandit sacrificed everything for the service of Lord Nityananda." (*Caitanya-caritamṛta*)

Before taking *sannyasa*, Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityananda visited Gauridasa Pandit in Ambika Kalna. Fearing their impending separation, Gauridasa cried and begged the Lord to stay longer. Mahaprabhu made life-like neem wood Deities of Gaura-Nitai to console his loving servant. "Gauridasa, My *murti* form is as good as I am," said Lord Gauranga, "We will forever remain in your home to accept your service."

Gauridasa Pandit worshiped Gaura Nitai in many intimate ways--talking sweetly to Them, cooking a variety of tasty foods, discussing *sastra* with Them, attending to Their every need throughout the day. Even when old and feeble, Gauridasa ceaselessly served his worshipable Lords Sri-Sri Gaura-Nitai.

Although poor, he desired to decorate Gaura-Nitai with costly beautiful ornaments. Knowing his mind, Gaura-Nityananda lavishly adorned Themselves. Beholding Their exquisite beauty Gauridasa became astonished. "Where did They get these ornaments?" he thought. Sri-Sri Gaura-Nitai would often enact such transcendental pastimes in the home of Their pure devotee, Sri Gauridasa Pandit.

One time, Caitanya Dasa, Gauridasa's foremost disciple, organized a huge *sankirtana* festival on the bank of the Ganges. Enraptured by the *kirtana*, Gauridasa's Deities jumped off the altar and joined the devotees in chanting and dancing. Discovering the Deities missing from the temple, Gauridasa grabbed a stick and ran to catch Gaura-Nitai. Seeing his angry mood, Gaura-Nitai vanished. At that moment, Gauridasa watched in amazement to see Gaura-Nitai enter the heart (*hrdaya*) of Caitanya Dasa. Gauridasa embraced his beloved disciple, bathed him with tears, and said, "You are most fortunate. From today your name will be Hrdaya Caitanya, one who holds Sri Caitanya within his heart."

Since then Gaura-Nitai's *darsana* at Gauridasa Pandit's temple is offered in many brief intervals like Banke-bihariji in Vrndavana. To keep Gaura-Nitai from jumping off the altar, the *pujaris* open and quickly close the curtain throughout the *darsana* time.

While doing *bhajana* in Dhira Samira Kunja in Vrndavana, Gauridasa Pandit entered the eternal *go carana lila* (cowherding pastimes) of Krishna-Balarama. In Vraja he is Subala, a *dvadasa gopala*. His *samadhi* is within the Shyama-Raya temple compound in Dhira Samira, Vrndavana. (20,47)

Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami

Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami (the son of a Vyenkata Bhatta, a Sri Vaisnava brahmana) appeared in Sri Rangam, South India. Lord Caitanya once stayed four months in his home, and converted the family to Gaudiya Vaisnavism. A mere boy at this time, Gopala personally served the Lord. Sri Caitanya treated him affectionately giving His remnants and blessings to become an *acarya*.

During His four month stay, Lord Caitanya developed a close friendship with Vyenkata Bhatta, which Krishna Dasa Kaviraja describes as "*sakhya rasa*." Freely conversing with each other, they would often laugh and joke together. One day in a humorous mood Lord Caitanya asked Vyenkata:

"Why does your worshipable goddess of fortune, Sri Laksmidevi, abandon the happiness of Vaikuntha and her service to Her Lord Narayana? Why does she go to Vrndavana and perform severe austerities to attain the association of My Lord Gopala, the cowherd boy of Vraja?"

"I can't understand these mysteries," said Vyenkata, "but You, being the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, can surely enlighten me."

"Lord Krishna has one unique quality," said Lord Gauranga, "He attracts the hearts of everyone with His personal conjugal love (*madhurya*). Lord Narayana only has sixty transcendental qualities but Sri Krishna has sixty-four. And all of them are saturated with His unique quality of *madhurya* (honey sweetness). The Supreme

Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, attracts the mind of Laksmidevi. But Lord Narayana can never attract the minds of the Vraja *gopis*.

"In Vraja *lila*, Krishna, disguised as Lord Narayana, once appeared before the *gopis* who were searching for Krishna. Seeing Lord Narayana the *gopis* said, 'O Lord Narayana, *pranams*. Where did Krishna go, did You see?' By following the *gopis*, who spontaneously love Krishna without awareness of His Godhood, one can attain Krishna. The *Srutis* worshiped Krishna in the ecstasy of the *gopis*. Following in their footsteps, they received gopi's bodies to join Krishna in the *rasa* dance. Laksmi, however, wanted to enjoy Krishna but retain Her spiritual form as Laksmidevi. Without following the *gopis*'s footsteps no one can attain Krishna."

After receiving initiation from Sri Prabodhananda Sarasvati, Gopala Bhatta came to Vrndavana and became a dear friend of Sri Rupa and Sanatana Gosvamis. He did *bhajana* in Vrndavana for forty-five years, mostly at Radha-kunda.

On pilgrimage he obtained twelve Salagrama *silas*. Later the Damodara *sila* manifested Himself as the beautiful Radha Ramana Deity. Since 1542, Radha Ramanaji has been worshiped with pure devotion following precise *sastric* rituals.

Lord Caitanya ordered Gopala Bhatta to write a book to check the spread of pseudo-loving *rasas* and negligence to *vaidhi bhakti*. In corroboration with Sri Sanatana Gosvami he compiled the *Hari-bhakti-vilasa*, the authorized book explaining the ritual and devotional practices of the Gaudiya Vaisnava *sampradaya*. He also wrote *Sat-kriya-dipika* and the outline for Sri Jiva Gosvami's *Sat Sandarbhas*.

He eternally serves Srimati Radharani as one of Her *asta manjaris*, Guna-manjari. His *samadhi* is within Radha Ramanaji's temple compound behind the appearance place of the Deity. Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami initiated Gopinatha (Pujari Gosvami), a lifelong *brahmacari* who served Radha Ramanaji for his whole life. Gopala Bhatta Gosvami initiated Srinivasa Acarya and many other stalwart Vaisnavas. (19,47)

Sri Gopala Guru Gosvami

As a young boy, Gopala came to the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Sri Vakresvara Pandit trained and initiated him. Lord Caitanya loved Gopala and often joked with him. Once Mahaprabhu humorously called the boy "guru." The name stuck and he became known as Gopala Guru Gosvami.

By studying under Sri Svarupa Damodara Gosvami and Sri Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami he became expert in *rasa tattva* (the science of Radha-Govinda's loving mellows). He enlightened Sri Dhyana Candra Gosvami, his disciple, in the same. Dhyana Candra's books explain in detail how to worship Gauranga and Radha-Govinda in *raganuga bhakti*.

Gopala Guru lived with and served his guru, Sri Vakresvara Pandit, in Jagannatha Puri in Kasi Mishra's house, where Lord Caitanya previously stayed. Beside the Gambhira, he established a temple for worshipping Sri-Sri Radha-Kanta. His unusual *samadhi* in Vrndavana is in the Dhira Samira area.(20,19)

Sri Govinda Ghosh

Sri Govinda Ghosh was known for his sweet *kirtans* at the annual Jagannatha Ratha-Yatra festival. He and his two brothers, Vasudeva and Madhava, are eternal associates of Sri Caitanya and Sri Nityananda. The Lord would immediately begin dancing whenever the Ghosh brothers would sing. The Ghosh brothers preached throughout their lives with music and song.

Since he had no children, Govinda wondered who would perform his funeral rites. Sri Gopinatha, Govinda Ghosh's Deity, appeared in a dream promising that He Himself would do everything. Still today, the Gopinatha Deity arranges for the *tirobhava mahotsava* (disappearance day festival) of His pure devotee, Govinda Ghosh.

As Kalavati-*sakhi*, Govinda Ghosh sings sweetly for Radha-Govindaji in Goloka Vrndavana. His *samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area.

Sri Haridasa Thakura

As Prahlada Maharaja appeared in a family of demons and Hanuman appeared as a monkey, Sri Haridasa Thakura appeared amongst the lower caste. Haridasa had a handsome form with all aristocratic features. Highly intellectual, he won all debates in Sanskrit and philosophy. Yet, he never lost his temper. In his youth, he became famous for his extreme devotion and ascetism. Though born in a Muslim family, when he became a Vaisnava, even brahmanas would eagerly smear their bodies with the dust of his feet.

The Supreme Lord Anantadeva Himself praises Haridasa Thakura, "Even Lord Brahma and Lord Siva always desire to associate with such devotees as Haridasa. And the demigods desire to touch the transcendental body of Haridasa. Simply by saying his name, Haridasa, one will be promoted to Krishna's abode." (*Caitanya Bhagavata*)

Navadvipa was full of gross materialists and Kali worshipers guided by *smarta* brahmanas before Mahaprabhu began His *sankirtana* movement. The *smartas* forbid loud chanting by the Vaisnavas on the plea that "it might awaken Lord Vishnu, who would become angry and curse Navadvipa with a famine." But it was Haridasa's habit to loudly chant Hare Krishna while wandering along the Ganges bank. Every day before taking his one and only meal he would finish 192 rounds (300,000 holy names of Krishna).

One time a rascal brahmana challenged Haridasa Thakura. The brahmana said that the proper method is to chant Hare Krishna silently within one's mind. Quoting the *Vedas*, *Srimad Bhagavatam*, and *Naradiya Purana*, Haridasa conclusively proved that loud chanting of Krishna's names gives one-hundred times more result than silent chanting. *Yan-nama grhann akhilan, srotrn atmanam eva ca, sadyah punati...* "Anyone who chants Your name purifies all who hear his chanting, as well as himself." (*Srimad Bhagavatam* 10.34.17) Haridasa concluded with, "Which is better-to feed yourself, or to feed yourself and simultaneously feed a thousand others?"

Some people mistakenly think, "Since Haridasa Thakura always chanted Hare Krishna he wasn't relishing the mellows of Radha-Madhava's pastimes." Krishna's name is a wish-fulfilling gem (*nama cintamani*) and the very embodiment of *rasa* (*rasa vighraha*). So, by purely chanting the holy names Haridasa Thakura definitely tasted the transcendental mellows of loving devotion to Radha-Madhava. Haridasa Thakura, the connoisseur of the holy name, taught everyone how to enter the *rasa sastras* through the door of Mahaprabhu's mercy, received by purely and constantly chanting the holy names of Krishna.

Feeling threatened by Haridasa Thakura's conversion to Vaisnavism, the Muslim ruler arrested him. To enlighten the Kazi Haridasa said, "All living entities in creation are inspired by the Lord in the heart to act in different ways. People of different religions praise the Lord's holy names and qualities according to the view of their scriptures. The Supreme Lord accepts everyone's mood. If anyone shows malice towards another's religion he actually shows malice to the Lord Himself, who is worshiped by that religion. Since God is one, that person becomes envious of the same Supreme Lord that he himself is worshiping."

The governor grasped these words, but the Kazi (the local ruler) insisted that Haridasa make a choice: "Either give up your belief or die."

Haridasa replied firmly, "If my body is hacked to pieces and even if I am killed--still I will keep chanting Hare Krishna."

The infuriated Kazi ordered Haridasa Thakura publicly whipped to death. He was brutally beaten, dragged through twenty-two markets, and thrown in the Ganges. Absorbed in remembering Lord Hari, he miraculously survived by God's grace. The Kazi, the brahmanas, and his rivals ran to Haridasa. They gave Haridasa Thakura an enthusiastic welcome and begged forgiveness for their offenses. He forgave them and blessed them with devotion. Haridasa thought the ordeal was fit punishment for his having heard Vaisnava blasphemy from the mouth of the Kazi.

Prema-vilasa says Haridasa took *diksa* from Sri Advaita Acarya. Haridasa Thakura exerted immense influence from the start of Sri Caitanya's *sankirtana* movement. Teaming up with

Lord Nityananda, he spread Krishna consciousness in Bengal. When Haridasa Thakura came to Jagannatha Puri Lord Caitanya gave him a room in the garden next to His. Every day the Lord sent prasadam to Haridasa. They also met regularly to discuss Krishna-*katha*.

While seeing Lord Caitanya's lotus face, holding His feet upon his chest, and chanting Sri Krishna Caitanya, Haridasa left the world. Lord Caitanya personally carried the body of Haridasa to the sea. And with His own hands buried him in the sand. Then Mahaprabhu begged alms for a festival to honor Haridasa Thakura's departure. Lord Caitanya paid tribute to His pure devotee:

"Let us all sing the glories of Haridasa Thakura. Haridasa was the crest-jewel of the world. By his death the earth has lost its treasure. Out of His great mercy Krishna had given Me his association. And now He has taken him away. When Haridasa himself wished to leave the world I could not hold him back. Just like Bhismadeva, Haridasa gave up his life at his own will." (*Caitanya-caritamrta Antya* 11.93-98.)

The *samadhi* of Haridasa Thakura is located by the sea in Jagannatha Puri. (See photo p. 13)

Sri Harinamacarya Srila Thakura Haridasa ki jai!
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

Sri Hemalata Thakurani

Sri Hemalata Thakurani, the daughter of Srinivasa Acarya, was a pure devotee of Lord Krishna and Lord Caitanya. She lived in Gaura mandala and initiated many disciples. Yadunandana Dasa, her disciple, wrote *Sri Karnanandana* and other Vaisnava books. Her *samadhi* is in Dhira Samira Kunja, next to her father's. (20,144)

Sri Isvara Puri

Receiving the seed of Krishna *prema* from Madhavendra Puri, Sri Isvara Puri became the spiritual master of Sri Caitanya

Mahaprabhu. Madhavendra Puri couldn't move at the end of his life. So doing all humble services, Isvara Puri even cleaned up his stool and urine. Isvara Puri helped his guru to remember Sri Krishna by always chanting Hare Krishna and telling Radha-Krishna's pastimes. Pleasing Madhavendra Puri by these menial acts, Isvara Puri received the treasure of Krishna-*prema* from his spiritual master.

Sri Isvara Puri again showed exemplary humility, the ornament of a true Vaisnava, when he first met Sri Advaita Acarya. Finding Advaita Prabhu busy serving His Deity, Isvara Puri sat down patiently and shyly. Although he was a Vaisnava *sannyasi*, Isvara Puri introduced himself with, "I am a *sudra* of the lowest class."

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the guru for the whole universe, honored Isvara Puri by taking initiation from him. One day Isvara Puri came to Lord Caitanya's house. The Lord personally cooked and lovingly served His spiritual master. After *prasadam* Lord Caitanya rubbed sandalwood paste on Isvara Puri and offered a fragrant flower garland. By His own example Sri Caitanya showed how to properly worship and serve the *guru-parampara*.

Once while passing through Sri Isvara Puri's birth place Lord Gauranga became filled with rapture. Taking some dust the Lord said, "This dust is My life and soul." His *samadhi* stands in the 64 Samadhis Area. (21,14)

Sri Jagadish Pandit

"Jagadish Pandit was the savior of the world. He was a monsoon cloud of Krishna *prema*, pouring showers of mercy upon everyone." (*Caitanya-caritamrta*)

Jagadish Pandit and his brother, Mahesh, lived near Jagannatha Mishra in Sridhama Mayapur. One Ekadasi day baby Nimai was crying constantly. He stopped after taking *maha-prasadam* rice in Jagadish Pandit's home. Then Nimai performed a miracle. Jagadish Pandit swooned in ecstasy upon seeing baby Gauranga manifest a beautiful form with a monsoon cloud blue complexion, shining like lightning, and adorned with a shimmering peacock feather.

After moving to Sri Ksetra Dhama (Jagannatha Puri), Lord Gauracandra asked Jagadish to come help spread the Hari Nama *sankirtana* movement. Taking Lord Jagannatha's permission, Jagadish Pandit took a Deity of Jagannatha back to Nadia to worship in his village of Yashora.

In Krishna's *nitya-lila* Jagadish Pandit serves as the dancer Candrahasa, or a *naga-patni* (wife of Kaliya).

Sri Jagannatha Dasa Babaji

Siddha Jagannatha Dasa Babaji Maharaja lived for one-hundred forty-four years. He took *diksa* from Sri Madhusudana Dasa Babaji and did *bhajana* for many year at Surya Kunda in Vrndavana. Thakura Bhaktivinoda received valuable instructions on pure devotional service from Jagannatha Dasa Babaji.

His practice was to live six months in Sri Navadvipa dhama and six in Vraja mandala. "During his time," said Thakura Bhaktivinoda, "Sri Jagannatha Dasa Babaji was the most advanced *rasika* Vaisnava in Gaura and Vraja mandalas, and Purusottam Ksetra (Jagannatha Puri)." Bhaktivinoda Thakura gave him the title Sarvabhauma, the chief of the Vaisnavas.

At one hundred twenty-five years old his body appeared bent like a semi-circle. His eyelids hung over his eyes like heavy stage curtains. Standing on either side, two disciples would lift his droopy eyelids so he could offer *tulasi* manjaris to his Deity of Sri Giriraja Govardhana.

Since Jagannatha Dasa Babaji could barely walk, Bihari, his Vrajavasi servant, used to carry him on his shoulders. But whenever there was a Nama *kirtana* Jagannatha Dasa Babaji would bolt out of his basket and leap four feet into the air. In great ecstasy he would begin to sing and dance. He performed vigorous *bhajana* despite physical limitations.

He was fond of chanting loudly in both *japa* and *kirtana*. During *kirtana* he would sing: *Nitai ki nama enechi re! Ki nama enechi re! Ki nama diteche re!* "O Lord Nityananda, what a wonderful name You have brought. O Nitai, what a wonderful name You have given." After chanting almost the whole night, the next morn-

ing he would offer 1,108 *dandavats* to the Deities. He was always enthusiastic to serve the Vaisnavas.

He lived as an ascetic following a strict diet and the yearly *Caturmasya* (four month fast). The first month he ate only four bananas in the evening; second month only guavas; third month only whey; fourth month only boiled banana flowers without salt.

Once he begged a *roti* (flat bread) from a Vrndavana street sweeper. Hearing about this, the leading men of Vrndavana said to Jagannatha Dasa Babaji, "Baba, you are the crest jewel of Vraja. It pains us to hear anyone criticizing you. But now everyone is talking against you. They are saying, 'Baba's gone mad. If he defies the age old traditions what will happen to society.'"

Babaji Maharaja replied, "You are all learned people. Don't you know the importance of the dust of Vrndavana? It is so surcharged with Krishna *prema* that even Lord Brahma desires to become a particle of *Vraja raja* (dust of Vrndavana). Therefore, isn't a Vrndavana sweeper who is constantly serving the dust, breathing it, rolling in it, and bathing in it more pure than anyone else?" Silence filled the air indicating everyone's acceptance of Babaji Maharaja's reply.

While living in Navadvipa dhama Jagannatha Dasa Babaji showed deep respect toward all residents. Even when some puppies ate from his plate he didn't protest. Bihari, his servant, became disgusted to see dogs devouring his guru's *prasadam* and he drove them away. Jagannatha Dasa Babaji scolded Bihari, "These puppies are residents of the holy dhama. They are not ordinary living entities. I will not eat until they come back to share the *maha-prasadam* from my plate."

At the age of one hundred forty-two he couldn't see or walk. To confirm his findings Thakura Bhaktivinoda requested Jagannatha Dasa to see Lord Caitanya's appearance place. Intoxicated with Gauranga *prema*, Jagannatha Dasa Babaji lept high in the air and began chanting and dancing at the discovery of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's Yogapitha. "Out of compassion for all the conditioned souls Jagannatha Dasa Babaji transferred his power of *bhajana*, knowledge of the *sastras*, and *prema bhakti* directly into

the heart of Bhaktivinoda Thakura," said Sripad B.V. Narayana Maharaja.

Jagannatha Dasa Babaji had many disciples. He often gave the following instructions:

(1) "You must avoid women, men who associate with women, or with a man who in any way associates with a man who associates with a woman.

(2) "To realize the supreme goal of life you must repeat Harinama regularly and steadfastly. Steadiness is so important that it must be maintained even at the cost of one's life

(3) "Never forget Gaura who is more merciful and benevolent than Krishna. Krishna is like a just ruler who takes into account your offenses in His administration of justice. Gaura does not take your offenses into account. Whereas, Krishna is more interested in the dispensation of justice, Gaura is more interested in the distribution of mercy. From this point of view, *Gaura-kirtana* is more useful than *Krishna-kirtana*. *Gaura-kirtana* means: *Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityananda, Sri Advaita, Gadadhara, Srivasadi, Gaura bhakta vrnda*.

(4) "Krishna is the *avatara* of Dvapara-yuga. Gaura is the Kali-yuga *avatara*. We should sing the name and glories of the *avatara* in whose age we live; just as in a kingdom we praise the ruling king." *jaya saci-nandana gaura hari, jaya saci-nandana gaura hari*.

The Sonar Gauranga temple in Gopala Bagh, Vrndavana houses Gaura-Nitai Deities once worshiped in Surya-kunda by Sri Jagannatha Dasa Babaji. In Krishna *lila* he serves as Rasika-manjari.

Jahnava Mata

Sri Nityananda's two wives, Sri Vasudha and Sri Jahnava Devi, are expansions of Lord Balarama's eternal consorts Varuni and Revati.

After the disappearance of the Panca-tattva and many of Lord Caitanaya's eternal associates, a huge *sankirtana* festival was held in Kheturi on Gaura-Purnima. Thousands of Lord

Gauranga's followers such as Narottama, Syamananda, Srinivasa, Vrndavana Dasa, Murari Caitanya, Paramesvara, and Miniketana Rama attended the first Kheturi Sankirtana Mahotsava.

They celebrated Gauranga's appearance day with thunderous chanting, exuberant dancing, tasty *prasadam*. Six sets of beautiful Deities were installed. Sri Jahnava Mata cooked a matchless feast and personally served all the Vaisnavas. During Narottama Dasa Thakura's *prema nama kirtana*, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Nityananda Prabhu, and all Their associates suddenly appeared to the delight of all.

Ma Jahnava, an affectionate name given by the devotees, traveled throughout Gaura and Vraja mandalas. Wherever she went the Gaura *bhaktas* happily greeted and served her. Known as *Nityananda-svarupini*, Jahnava Devi overflowed with *prema bhakti*. She delivered many atheists and sinners by her compassionate preaching.

Srila Thakura Bhaktivinoda offers this prayer to Jahnava Mata in *Kalyana-kalpa-taru*: "O Jahnava Devi! By the power of your divine qualities, be merciful to this servant of yours. Dispel this illusion which torments me. And relieve me of material existence. Let me take shelter at your lotus feet. You are *Nityananda-sakti*, the divine energy of Lord Nityananda Himself. You are the guru of Krishna *bhakti*. Be merciful to me and grant me the shade of your lotus feet, which are like a desire tree. You have delivered countless abominable sinners. Please deliver me in the same way. Today, praying for your mercy, this lowly sinner falls at your holy feet."

It is said that Sri Jahvana Devi left this world by entering the Deity of Gopinatha in Vrndavana.

Sri Jayadeva Gosvami

Three hundred years before the appearance of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Jayadeva Gosvami served as the court pandita of Sri Laksmana Sena, King of Bengal. Jayadeva and Padmavati (his wife and an expert dancer) used to worship Lord Sri Krishna with single-minded devotion. After some time, he left the opulent royal

life to live peacefully in a grass hut in Champahatti, Navadvipa. Here Jayadeva wrote *Gita Govinda*.

One day while working on *Gita Govinda* Jayadeva felt inspired to write, "Krishna bows down to touch the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani." Jayadeva was hesitant to say something which might diminish Lord Krishna's position as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

He went to refresh himself with a Ganges bath before honoring Radha-Madhava's *maha-prasadam*. In his absence, Krishna Himself, disguised as Jayadeva, wrote a line in the *Gita Govinda*: *dehi pada pallavam udaram*. The Lord also accepted *prasadam* from Padmavati. Upon returning, Jayadeva was astonished to see the line. Understanding the mystery, Jayadeva cried in spiritual joy and said, "Padmavati, we are most fortunate. Sri Krishna Himself has written the line, *dehi pada pallavam udaram*, and taken *prasadam* from your hand."

Gita Govinda expresses the intense feelings of separation that Sri Radhika felt before the *rasa* dance. It also describes the most intimate pastimes of Radha-Syamasundara. During Lord Caitanya's *Gambhira lila* in Jagannatha Puri, He would thoroughly relish hearing the *Gita Govinda* sung daily by Svarupa Damodara and Mukunda.

The author Jayadeva Gosvami describes *Gita Govinda*: "Whatever is delightful in varieties of music, whatever is graceful in fine strains of poetry, and whatever is exquisite in the sweet art of love--let the happy and wise learn from the songs of Jayadeva."

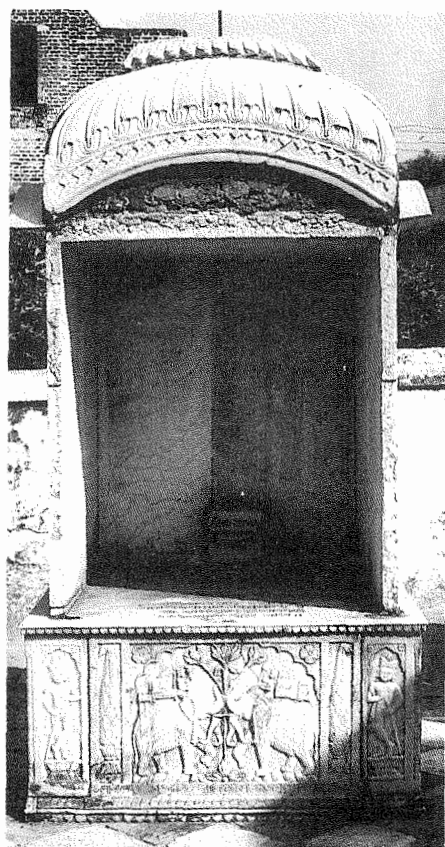
After finishing *Gita Govinda* Jayadeva visited Vrndavana and then lived his last in Jagannatha Puri. He introduced daily reading of *Gita Govinda* in the temple for the pleasure of Lord Jagannatha. His *samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area. (21,19)

Sri Jiva Gosvami

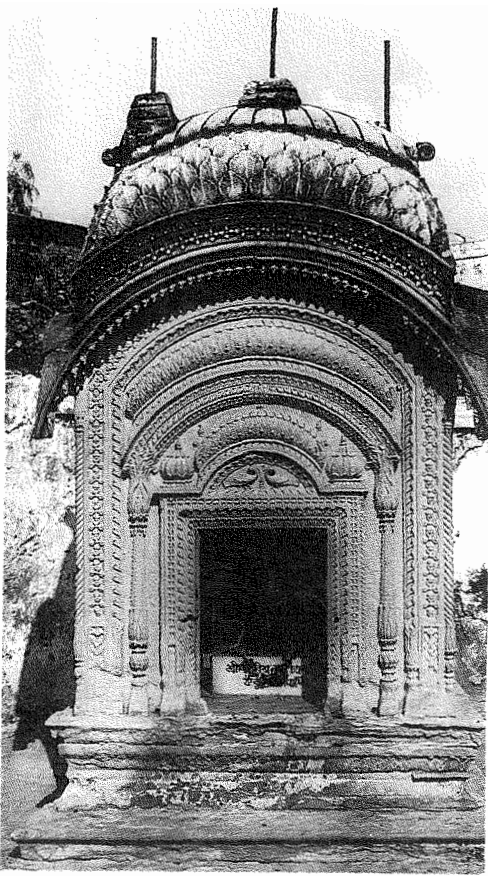
Appearing as the nephew of Sri Rupa and Sanatana Gosvamis, Sri Jiva Gosvami displayed all the charming features of a *mahapurusa* (divine person). He had lotus eyes, a high nose and



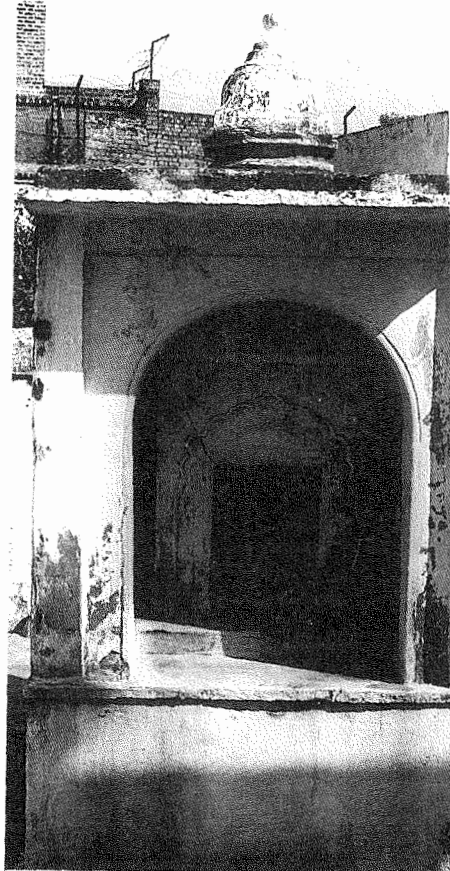
Samadhi Lokanatha Gosvami



Samadhi Narottama Dasa Thakura



Samadhi Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura



Samadhi Ganga Narayana Cakravarti

forehead, broad chest, long arms, and a radiant golden body.

In his boyhood he made a Deity of Krishna-Balarama. Expressing his pure devotion, he would often cry while worshipping Them. After offering clothes, candana, flowers, ornaments, and tasty sweets to Krishna-Balarama he would take some and give *maha-prasadam* to his playmates. From the beginning Jiva showed his kindness to other *jivas* (living entities). Jiva was so much attached to Krishna-Balarama that at bedtime he would embrace his Deities and fall asleep. His parents thought he was only playing. But the villagers rejoiced to see Jiva's love for Krishna-Balarama.

In school he quickly mastered Sanskrit grammar, poetry, logic, philosophy. *Srimad Bhagavatam* gave life to his life. Krishna-*katha* filled him with happiness. No one dared to speak to him about anything but Krishna. He toured Navadvipa-dhama with Sri Nityananda Prabhu, studied Sanskrit in Benares, and then resided in Vrndavana. After humbly serving Sri Rupa Gosvami by washing his feet, preparing his manuscripts, and editing his books he received *diksa*.

Once the aging Vaisnava, Vallabhacarya, gave critical advice to Sri Rupa Gosvami on his writing. Although much younger than the venerable Vallabha, Sri Jiva brazenly spoke in defense of his guru. Sri Rupa Gosvami scolded Sri Jiva telling him to leave Vrndavana. Living in an abandoned crocodile hole in Nanda Ghat (45 minutes from Sri Rupa's *bhajana kutir*), Sri Jiva Gosvami began fasting. He subsisted on wheat flour, which he begged, mixed with Yamuna water. Seeing his strict self-denial, Sanatana Gosvami brought him back to the service of Sri Rupa Gosvami.

Srila Prabhupada once commented on this "guru-disciple pastime." "Sri Rupa Gosvami cast out Jiva Gosvami to teach us, the devotees of today, a lesson. It was not done to teach or punish Sri Jiva Gosvami, who is a perfectly liberated, eternal associate of Lord Krishna. Rupa Gosvami sent Jiva Gosvami out of Vrndavana to teach all *jivas* what he wrote in *Upadesamrta: vaco vegam man-sah krodah vegam, jihva vegam...* At all times, a devotee should control his tongue, his speech, and always remain humble, *trnad api sunicena*."

After the disappearance of Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana Gosvamis, Sri Jiva Gosvami became the Gaudiya *Sampradayacarya* to guide all Vaisnavas in Navadvipa, Vrndavana, Jagannatha Puri. Although he was the undisputed leader, he always acted as a humble servant of all the *jivas*. Whenever Bengali Vaisnavas visited Vrndavana he would lovingly receive them, arrange for prasadam and comfortable rooms, and even guide them on Vraja mandala *parikrama*.

A superexcellent Sanskrit scholar, Sri Jiva Gosvami would compose Sanskrit verses in his mind and write them down without changing anything. Write them down means he used a metal stylus to permanently etch them in palm leaves. This inscription method left no room for erasing, editing, rewriting, or running a spell-check. Yet, each verse was a priceless gem of perfect meter, rhythm, poetry, and meaning. He was the greatest philosopher in all of Indian history. Contemporary Sankritists call him the greatest scholar who ever lived.

Sri Jiva Gosvami was the youngest but most prolific writer among the Gosvamis. He wrote an astounding half million Sanskrit verses (about 25 books). His books prove that Sri Caitanya's philosophy gives the essence of Vedic wisdom and the perfection of religion. *Gopala Campu*, *Sat Sandarbhas*, and *Hari Nama-vyakarana* are three of his most famous works. The *Sandarbhhas* firmly establish the transcendental truths of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. They also confirm that Lord Sri Krishna is the Supreme Absolute Truth (*svayam bhagavan*), the cause of everything and the source of all *avataras*. Anyone who faithfully reads these books will become a devotee of Krishna.

Satyanarayana Dasa, a Gaudiya Vaisnava Sanskrit scholar who is presently translating the *Sandarbhhas* into English for ISKCON BBT (Bhaktivedanta Book Trust) gives this explanation of Jiva Gosvami's name: "Actually, Sri Jiva Gosvami's name *jiva* is very interesting when considered in light of the *Bhagavata* verse: *ahastani saasthanam apadani catus padam...jivo jivasya jivanam*, "Animals without hands are food for those with hands, those without feet are food for the four-legged...everywhere one *jiva* (living entity) is food for another." Another meaning of *jiva* is,

"one who gives life to others." So the spiritual knowledge given by Jiva Gosvami in his twenty-five books gives life to all the devotees.

"Another name of Jiva is *jivakah*, "one who makes the *jivas* (living beings) emit ecstatic sounds." Sri Jiva Gosvami did this by supplying the esoteric meaning of the *Srimad Bhagavatam* through his *Bhagavata* commentaries and the *Sat Sandarbhas*. One who expands the nature of the *jiva*, his relationship with the Lord, the process to achieve the goal, and the ultimate purpose of life is *jivakah* or *jiva*."

The following quote comes from Sri Jiva Gosvami's nectarean *Gopala Campu*, which describes the playful Vrndavana pastimes of Radha Damodara. "From Govardhana Hill a large form of Govardhana manifested. All the Vrajavasis along with Krishna Himself then offered obeisances to that towering form. As Sri Krishna stood by with folded hands, that great personality Govardhana bellowed, 'I shall eat all your offerings.' He ate and drank water by emptying all the kundas around the hill. While eating all the preparations made by the Vrajavasis with his right hand, he snapped the fingers on his left hand. The cowherd men ran out of the way when Govardhana stretched out His hands to take more and called out, *Aniyor! Aniyor! Aniyor!* 'bring more, bring more, bring more.' " At the request of Acaryarani Jahnavadevi Thakurani, Sri Jiva Gosvami had Srinivasa Acarya, Narottama Dasa Thakura, Syamananda Prabhu take the Gosvami's writings from Vrndavana to Bengal. They translated them into Bengali and distributed them throughout Bengal and Orissa. They also preached extensively and initiated hundreds of devotees. In 1542, Sri Jiva Gosvami established the worship Sri-Sri Radha-Damodara in Seva Kunja, Vrndavana. His *samadhi* stands in the temple compound. Sri Jiva Gosvami is Vilasa-manjari in Radha-Damodara's *nitya Vrndavana lila*. (17,35)

Sri Kaliya Krishna Dasa

"One will surely attain Sri Caitanya and Sri Nityananda simply by remembering Kaliya Krishna Dasa." (*Caitanya Bhagavata*) Completely devoted to Lord Nityananda, Kaliya Krishna Dasa

knew nothing but the lotus feet of Nitai. He left his body while doing *bhajana* in Vrndavana. In *Vraja lila* he is Labanga, a cowherd boyfriend of Krishna-Balarama.

Sri Kamalakara Pippalai

"Kamakara Pippalai, one of the *dvadasa gopalas*, was known to the world as a miracle of love of God. Appreciating his enthusiasm for preaching, Lord Nityananda made him the "*sankirtana* leader" of the Saptagrama preaching center." (*Caitanya-caritamrta*) He is Mahabala *sakha* in Krishna-Balarama's Vrndavana pastimes. His *samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area. (21,74)

Sri Kasisvara Pandit

Sri Isvara Puri sent his disciples, Govinda and Kasisvara Pandit, to Jagannatha Puri to humbly serve Lord Caitanya. Reluctant to accept service from His Godbrothers, Sri Caitanya finally agreed since it was His guru's wish. Named Kalavati and Sasi-rekha in *Vraja lila*, Govinda and Kasisvara bring Yamuna water to Lord Sri Krishna. Kasisvara Pandit, who was strong and powerfully built, used to walk before Lord Caitanya keeping the crowds from touching Him. And after *kirtans* he would serve *prasadam* to all the devotees.

Sri Gaurasundara asked Kasisvara to move to Vrndavana for worshipping Sri Rupa Gosvami's Deity of Govindaji. Fearing separation from Lord Caitanya, Kasisvara said, "My Lord, if I must give up Your association my heart will split in two." Out of compassion for His devotee Lord Gauracandra gave him a Deity of Himself that was so perfectly formed it exactly resembled the Lord. "Gaura-Govinda," the Deity's name, is a golden form of Krishna playing flute. Then Kasisvara Pandit happily went to Vrndavana to serve Gaura-Govinda and Govindaji.

Sri Sadhana Dipika says, "I worship Sri Kasisvara Pandit whose power of love and devotion brought Sri Caitanya to Western India as a Deity." Today the original Deities of Gaura-Govinda and

Govindaji are lovingly adored by thousands of devotees in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

Kasivara Pandit's original *samadhi* is in 64 Samadhis Area.(21,23)

Sri Kavi Karnapura Gosvami

Sivananda Sena had three sons (Caitanya Dasa, Sri Rama Dasa, Kavi Karnapura) Before Kavi Karnapura appeared, Lord Caitanya gave him the name "Puri Dasa." Sivananda Sena brought Puri Dasa to meet Lord Caitanya in Jagannatha Puri. Sivananda induced his infant son to offer *dandavats* to the Lord. Suddenly, in great ecstasy, the baby grabbed Gauranga's foot and sucked the Lord's lotus petal toe. Voicing their approval, the assembled devotees chanted Hari! Hari!

At age seven, Kavi Karnapura received *nama mantra* directly from Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Ordered and empowered by the Lord, the boy instantly composed a wonderfully sweet, poetic Sanskrit verse. Everyone present felt deeply moved and satisfied with his recitation.

Understanding that the boy had received Lord Caitanya's mercy, Sri Svarupa Damodara said: "Since this boy's poetry pleases the heart, and completely fills the ears with nectar, his name will be "Kavi Karnapura." (kavi means poetry; karna-ear; purna-full).

At the age of sixteen, Kavi Karnapura started his prolific writing career by producing *Caitanya-carita-mahakavya*, a masterpiece of transcendental *sringara rasa* poetry. Kavi Karnapura defines *rasa*: "That dearest sentiment which is tasted in a purified heart, absolutely purged of all worldiness by contacting *suddha-sattva* (pure transcendental goodness). That which is the fountainhead of that striking, varied, charming sweetness, and is way beyond the realm of thought is *rasa*."

He also wrote *Caitanya-candrodaya-nataka*, *Gaura and Radha Krishna gannodesh dipikas*, *Alankara Kaustubha*, *Ananda Vrndavana Campu*. His *samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area. (21,21)

Sri Kholaveca Sridhara

Although poor, living in a broken down hut with holes in the roof, and drinking water from a cracked iron pot, Sridhara Pandit (Kholaveca Sridhara) had the fortune of Mahaprabhu's affection. He would stay up at night chanting Hare Krishna. The neighbors thought because of poverty he had hunger pains and couldn't sleep. Everyday Nimai Pandit would buy banana--fruits, roots, stalks, flowers; gourds, and pumpkins from Kholaveca Sridhara. A sweet love quarrel would ensue because Nimai paid only half the quoted price.

"If You don't like my prices," said Sridhara, "then please buy Your banana flowers somewhere else." Then taking the banana flowers, Mahaprabhu would just walk away without paying a *paisa*.

Sridhara would snatch them back and chide the Lord, "I'm just a poor old brahmana. And whatever little profit comes we use to worship Ganga Devi." Finally, Sridhara agreed to give Nimai Pandit some banana flowers everyday without charge.

Kholaveca Sridhara serves Krishna-Balarama in Vraja dhama as Kusumasava *sakha*. His *samadhi* is located in the 64 Samadhis Area. (21,74)

Sri Krishna Dasa Kaviraja Gosvami

Appearing near Katva, Krishna Dasa Kaviraja left for Vrndavana after Lord Nityananda told him in a dream: *are are krishnadasa, na karaha bhaya, vrndavana yaha tanha, sarva larya haya*, "O my dear Krishnadasa, do not be afraid. Go to Vrndavana. For there you will attain all things." (*Caitanya-caritamrta Adi* 5.195)

Krishna Dasa took *diksa* from Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami. He lived a renounced life at Syama-kunda near Manasa Pavana Ghat, Radharani's midday bathing place.

Sri Jiva Gosvami, as per his custom of giving titles of honor to qualified devotees, gave Krishna Dasa the title Kaviraja (the king of poets) for his poetic masterpiece *Govinda-lilamrta*. Sri Narot-

tama Dasa Thakura wrote in *Prarthana*: "Krishna Dasa Kaviraja, who composed the *Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta*, is the connoisseur among devotees. His *Govinda-lilamṛta* moves stones to tears, but alas, my mind is not attracted to it."

During Krishna Dasa's time, all the Vaisnavas would gather at Govindaji's temple to hear Sri Haridasa Pandit read *Sri Caitanya Bhagavata*. The devotees were eager to hear about Lord Gauranga's later pastimes, so they asked Krishna Dasa Kaviraja to write them. Krishna Dasa prayed to Madana Mohana for ability and blessings. The Deity's flower garland fell down, indicating divine sanction.

Krishna Dasa Kaviraja's *Caitanya-caritamṛta* is the most accurate, authentic, and philosophical biography of Lord Caitanya. Every line is full of infinite humility, enthusiasm, and devotion for Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Sri Nityananda Prabhu. Krishna Dasa had the wonderful power of speaking without offending, even when rebuking his opponents.

He had vast knowledge in all Vedic scriptures. His books show his skill in the *Srutis*, *Smritis*, *Nyaya*, *Jyotir sastra*, and the culinary arts. Although he was an erudite scholar, a strict ascetic, a *paramahansa rasika* Vaisnava, Krishna Dasa writes about himself, "I am deaf, dumb, wholly illiterate, worldly-minded, and lower than a worm in stool." His personal humility automatically attracts the heart of any reader of *Caitanya-caritamṛta*.

Krishna Dasa Kaviraja was a living example of "humbler than a blade of grass, more tolerant than a tree." A devotee will advance spiritually and understand Sri Caitanya's teachings on Radha-Krishna *prema bhakti* by reading *Caitanya-caritamṛta*.

By associating with Sri Krishna Dasa Kaviraja, an eternally liberated associate of Lord Caitanya, one will develop the Vaisnava qualities of humility, innocence, integrity, equanimity, gentleness, purity, selflessness, patience, kindness, gravity, freedom from material desires, mild temperament, control over the six passions, friendliness, honoring all beings, being silent, expert, poetic, and absolute surrender to Sri Krishna.

In Vraja *lila* Krishna Dasa Kaviraja is Kasturi-manjari, one of the eight most intimate maidservants of Srimati Radharani. His

samadhi is at Radha-kunda, and at the Radha-Damodara temple according to some. (16,15,42)

Sri Locana Dasa Thakura

Sri Locana Dasa Thakura was a disciple of Sri Narahari Sarakara Thakura, a dearest associate of Lord Gaura Raya.

"My hope of hopes is to be near the lotus feet of Sri Narottama Dasa Thakura and serve him with my very life. The cherished desire of the fallen Locana Dasa is to be allowed, by Narahari's grace, to sing the glories of Lord Gauranga. My Lord is Sri Narahari Thakura, I am his servant. Bowing before him I beg for his service. This is my only aspiration." (Locana Dasa, *Caitanya Mangala*)

Locana Dasa Thakura wrote *Caitanya Mangala* which tells many pastimes of Lord Caitanya not revealed by Vrndavana Dasa Thakura or Krishna Dasa Kaviraja. He mentions an especially touching conversation Sri Gaurasundara had with Vishnupriya Devi the night before He took *sannyasa*. (See Vishnupriya's biography entry for the talk) Being a talented musician, Locana Dasa told Mahaprabhu's pastimes in beautiful poetry filled with fire and rhythm. Common people could easily understand the divine character of Sri Caitanya and awaken their religious feelings. As devotees regularly chant the Vedic epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, Gaudiya Vaisnava's still wander through Bengal reciting the *Caitanya Mangala*.

Locana Dasa Thakura also wrote many songs praising Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Nityananda Prabhu, and Gauridasa Pandit. Locana Dasa stresses that *raganuga bhaktas* must take shelter of Gadadhara Vrndavanisvari to attain Radha-Govinda *prema bhakti*. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura used to print and distribute Locana Dasa Thakura's *Sri Caitanya Mangala*. Srila Prabhupada was very fond of his *bhajans*. While singing *Parama Karuna* Srila Prabhupada would plunge into the ocean of Gauranga *prema*. Prabhupada wrote an extensive commentary on this *bhajana*. *Bhajo bhajo bhai, Caitanya Nitai, sudrdha visvasa kori...*"Locana Dasa asks everyone, 'My dear brother, just worship

Lord Caitanya and Nityananda with firm faith and conviction.' 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." His *samadhi* is in 64 Samadhis Area. (21)

Sri Lokanatha Gosvami

A personal associate of Lord Gauranga, fully absorbed in pure love, Sri Lokanatha Gosvami was the eldest of the Gosvamis living in Vraja-bhumi. He shunned name and fame so much that he asked Krishna Dasa Kaviraja to keep his name out of *Caitanya-caritamrta*.

His body and mind were completely attached to Vrndavana-dhama. The divine *lilas* of Radha-Vinoda played in his heart. His ears existed only to hear the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. "Anyone who reads the *Srimad Bhagavatam*," said Lokanatha Gosvami, "he is my friend."

Once Sri Krishna Himself appeared and gave Lokanatha a Deity of Radha-Vinoda. Lokanatha Gosvami carried his Deity all over Vraja in a cloth bag hung around his neck.

Although first rejecting, Lokanatha Gosvami finally accepted Narottama Dasa for initiation as his only disciple. He appreciated his genuine humility and determination to serve. Every night for one year Narottama Dasa secretly served his guru by carefully cleaning the field where Lokanatha Gosvami passed stool.

Lokanatha Gosvami's original Deities of Radha-Vinoda are now worshiped in Jaipur, Rajasthan. A *prati-bhu murti* (expanded form of the original Deity) of Radha-Vinoda adorns the altar at the Radha-Gokulananda temple in Vrndavana. The *samadhi* of Lokanatha Gosvami is the largest one in the temple courtyard. He serves Srimati Radharani as Manjuali-manjari in nitya Vrndavana *lila*.

*srimad radha vinodaika, seva sampat samanvitam
padmanabh atma jam srimal, lokanatha prabhu bhaje*

"I worship the lotus feet of Sri Lokanatha Gosvami Prabhu, the son of Sri Padmanabha. He is a storehouse of single-minded service to the lotus feet of Radha-Vinode." (Narottama Dasa Thakura) (21,96)

Sri Madhavendra Puri

Before Lord Caitanya appeared He sent His eternal associates like Sri Advaita Acarya, Sri Jagannatha Misra, Saci Mata, Madhavendra Puri, Isvari Puri to earth. Sri Madhavendra Puri took initiation from Sri Laksmipati Tirtha in the Madhvacarya *sampradaya*. He had many but Sri Advaita Acarya and Sri Isvara Puri were the chief disciples of Madhavendra Puri. In one way or another, all the Vaisnavas in Bengal and Ksetra mandala (Jagannatha Puri) were connected with Sri Madhavendra Puri. After Lord Caitanya came many of his disciples joined Mahaprabhu's *sankirtana* movement.

"Madhavendra Puri's body was completely full of divine love; so were his followers. He displayed uncommon love of God. Seeing a dark blue raincloud, he would fall down unconscious. Day and night he was intoxicated from drinking the ambrosia of Krishna *prema*." (Vrndavana Dasa Thakura)

After making an extensive pilgrimage of Bharata-bhumi (India) he passed his life in Vrndavana and Orissa. He began the restoration work of Vrndavana that Sri Rupa and Sanatana Gosvamis continued later. Wandering from grove to grove, remembering Radha-Krishna's sweet Vrndavana pastimes, Madhavendra Puri would faint in ecstasy.

In a dream, Sri Gopala ordered Madhavendra Puri to uncover a buried Gopala Deity and install Him atop Govardhana Hill. Madhavendra Puri celebrated Gopala's installation with an *annakuta* (grand festival offering a mountain of foodstuffs to Krishna). This *Annakuta* festival, also called Govardhana Puja, is one of the most important Vaisnava festivals in Vrndavana, in India, and around the world. The original Gopala Deity, known as Sri Nathaji, is now worshiped in Nathadvara, Rajasthan.

Madhavendra Puri introduced the conception of *madhurya bhava* (conjugal love) in the Madhvacarya *sampradaya*. Madhavendra Puri sowed the seed of *prema bhakti*. And Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu became the towering tree dropping honey sweet fruits of *prema* upon everyone. He also revealed *viraha bhava*, the mood of love relished in separation from God. His branch of the Madhva sect distinguished itself by this ecstatic love of God. It is known as the Madhva-Gaudiya *sampradaya*.

In Jagannatha Puri, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu showed an intense mood of *viraha bhava*. This increased unlimitedly when the Lord heard verses from *Srimad Bhagavatam* tenth canto, *Krishna Karnamrta*, *Gita Govinda*, *Padyavali*, and the love poems of Candidasa and Vidyapati. Mahaprabhu's *viraha* begins with a single verse spoken by Madhavendra Puri, His *param guru* (grand preceptor):

*ayi dina dayadra natha he
mathura natha kadavalokyase
hrdayam tvad aloka kataram
dayita bhramyati kim karoty aham*

"O compassionate Lord of the poor and humble! O Lord of Mathura! When shall I see You again? Without seeing You, My heart has become very much afflicted. Oh My beloved, I am overwhelmed. What shall I do now?" (*Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya 4.197*)

Sri Krishna Dasa Kaviraja says that as the diamond *kaustubha* jewel is the most precious amongst all rare valuable jewels, this *sloka* is the *rasa kavya* (the best verse in the entire treasury of *rasa* poetry). Actually, this verse was spoken by Srimati Radharani Herself. It was Radha's pathetic cry to Syamasundara, who had gone to Mathura leaving Her alone, desperate in Vrndavana. Radharani's mercy brought this same verse from the mouth of Madhavendra Puri.

Reciting even a few words of this *sloka* would tear open the door of Mahaprabhu's ecstatic love, making Him swoon in ecstasy falling unconscious. Feeling intense separation from Krishna, Madhavendra Puri constantly chanted this verse when departing this world.

Krishna Dasa Kaviraja says that with this verse Madhavendra Puri teaches devotees how to achieve Krishna *prema* by cultivating intense feelings of separation from Sri Krishna. Gaudiya Vaisnavas accept that this verse expresses the essence of the mood of separation.

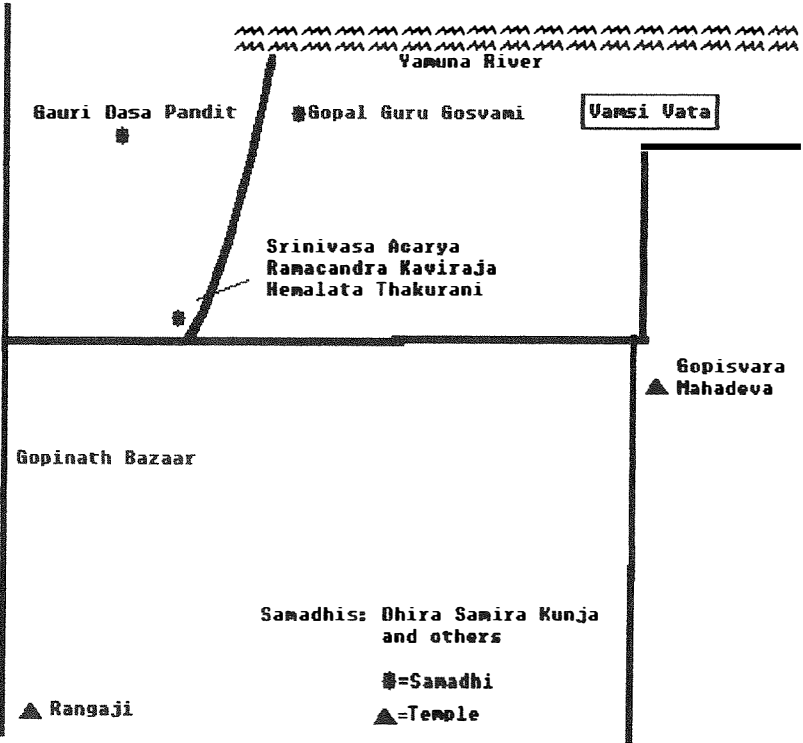
The Gaudiya *sampradaya* teaches that worship of Radha and Krishna in separation represents the highest level of devotional service. At this stage of realization the devotee feels completely "vacant in the world in the absence of Krishna." A moment without Madhava feels like a millenium. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu always swam in the ocean of *divyonmada mahabhava*, the maddened ecstatic emotions shown by Sri Radha in *Brahmar Gita (Srimad Bhagavatam 10.47)*. In this verse Madhavendra Puri discloses similar emotions. The Gaudiya Vaisnavas conclude that the monsoon shower of ecstatic love exhibited by Lord Gauranga during His manifest pastimes began with Madhavendra Puri. It then came through Isvara Puri, who played the role of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master.

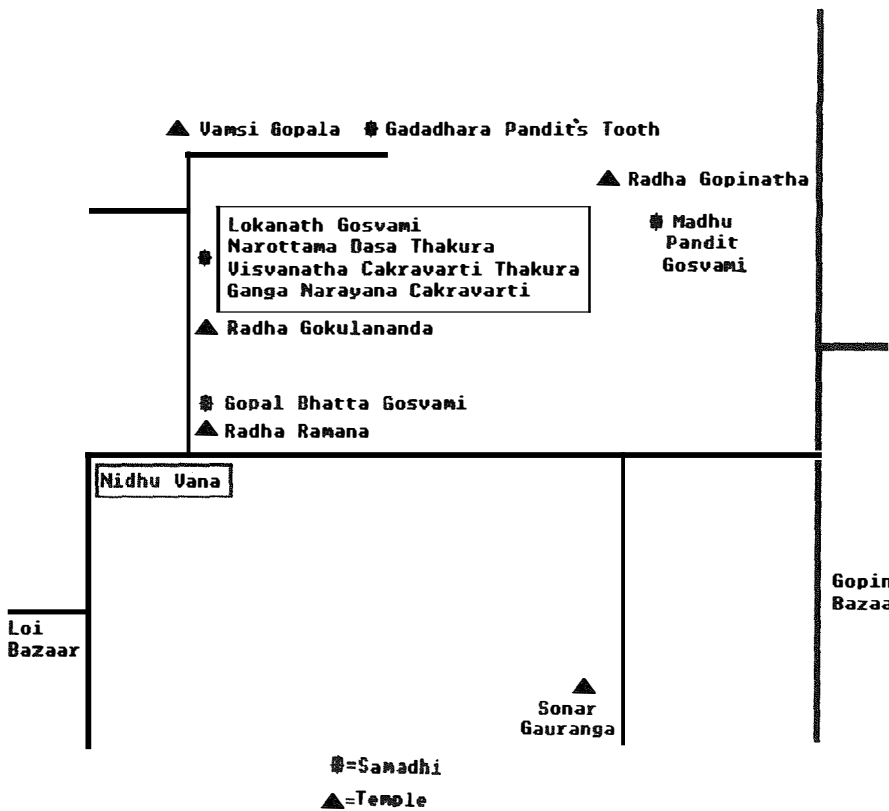
Madhavendra Puri's *samadhi* is in Remuna, Orissa near the temple of Ksira-cora Gopinatha.

Sri Madhupandit Gosvami

Vrajanabha, Lord Krishna's great-grandson, installed the original Gopinatha Deity in Vrndavana over five-thousand years ago. About five-hundred years ago, Paramananda Bhattacharya discovered the Deity in the earth at Vamsivata on the banks of the Yamuna. Madhupandit Gosvami, a disciple of Sri Gadadhara Pandit, worshiped the Gopinatha Deity.

Bhakti-ratnakar says that Sri Gopinathaji, who is an ocean of mercy, forever sports along the enchanting banks of the Yamuna at Vamsivata. His bodily luster steals the mind of whoever sees Him. When the soothing sweetness of Gopinathaji's charming form enters the heart it immediately extinguishes the burning fire of material existence. Now the original Gopinatha Deity stays in Jaipur, Rajasthan.





Madhupandit Gosvami blessed Srinivasa Acarya with Gopinatha's garland before Srinivasa, Narottama, and Syamananda took the bullock cart of Gosvami *granthas* from Vrndavana. In Goloka Vrndavana, Madhupandit Gosvami serves as Mandali-sakhi in the group of Campakalata-sakhi. The *samadhi* of Madhupandit Gosvami is on the right side of the entrance within the compound of the Radha-Gopinatha temple in Vrndavana. (21,112)

Sri Madhvacarya

Sri Madhvacarya appeared in 1238 A.D. near Udupi, Karnataka in South India. He was considered an incarnation of Vayu (wind god). He had an unusually strong physique and extraordinary intellectual power. Once a fierce Bengali tiger attacked Madhvacarya's *sannyasa* disciple, Satya Tirtha. Madhvacarya wrestled the tiger and sent him away with his tail between his legs. Madhvacarya took *diksa* at age five, *sannyasa* at twelve and left home. He appeared with a mission--to fight and defeat Sankara's Mayavada (impersonal) philosophy. By giving a pure interpretation of *Vedanta-sutra* he promoted pure theism. He named his innovative *sastric* explanation *dvaita-dvaita-vada* (pure dualism).

After Sankaracarya, who had previously toured India spreading impersonalism, Madhvacarya also traveled the length and breadth of India preaching personal theism and devotion to Lord Vishnu. He defeated innumerable Jains, Buddhists, Mayavadis, atheists, logicians, and agnostics.

With a hope of meeting Srila Vyasadeva himself Madhvacarya walked up the Himalayas. Vyasadeva gave him a Salagrama *sila* called Astamurti, approved his *Bhagavad-gita* commentary, and blessed Madhvacarya with deeper realizations of the *sastras*.

In Udupi, Madhvacarya installed a beautiful Deity of Gopala standing alone holding a cowherding stick. This Deity manifested from within a chunk of *gopi-candana* (sacred clay). He established eight *mathas* (temples) to lovingly serve "Udupi Krishna." The *sannyasi* leaders of each *matha* worship the Krishna Deity with a rigorous regimen of ceremonial ritual, punctuality, and impec-

cable personal conduct. Every *ekadasi* they observe *nirjala* (total fast all food and water).

The Gaudiya Vaisnava *sampradaya* originates with the Madhvas. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His followers thoroughly studied Madhva's works before compiling their philosophy. For the *Sat Sandarbhas* Sri Jiva Gosvami drew heavily from Madhva's writings. Jiva Gosvami found the Gaudiya philosophy of *acintya-bheda-abheda tattva* in Madhva's *Bhagavat-parya*. Sri Caitanya Himself visited Udupi, the seat of Madhva's sect. The Lord introduced Hari Nama sankirtana into their sect.

The Madhvas and Gaudiyas share many of the same philosophical points. Both consider it necessary to surrender to the lotus feet of the guru (*gurupadasraya*). In *Sutra Bhasya*, Madhvacarya cites the *Brihat Tantra* and *Mahasamhita* to show that a disciple may reject a "bogus guru" who proves to be useless. He may then accept another qualified self-realized person as his guru.

In *Prameya-ratnavalli*, Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana summarized the nine principles common to both Sri Caitanya's and Madhva's teachings. In *Vaisnava Siddhanta Mala*, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu ordered all Gaudiya Vaisnavas to carefully observe the nine instructions of truth given by Sri Madhvacarya through our guru *parampara*.

Sri Madhvacarya's Nine Teachings

- (1) Bhagavan Sri Krishna alone is the Supreme Absolute Truth, one without a second.
- (2) He is the object of knowledge in all the *Vedas*.
- (3) The universe is real, *satya*.
- (4) The differences between Isvara (God), Jiva (soul) and Matter are real.
- (5) Jiva souls are by nature the servants of the Supreme Lord Hari.
- (6) There are two categories of jivas; liberated and illusioned.

(7) Liberation (*moksa*) means attaining the lotus feet of Bhagavan Krishna, in other words, entering an eternal relationship of service to the Supreme Lord.

(8) Pure devotional service to Krishna is the only way to attain this liberation.

(9) The truth may be known by *pratyaksa* (direct perception), *anuman* (inference or logic), *sabda* (spiritual sound or Vedic authority).

Sri Madhvacarya serves as Madhavi-gopi in Radha-Govinda's eternal Vrndavana pleasure pastimes.

Sri Mahesh Pandit

"Sri Mahesh Pandit, the seventh of the twelve gopas, tasting Krishna *prema*, used to dance like a madman to the sound of a huge kettledrum." Especially dear to Sri Nityananda Prabhu, he traveled and preached with the Lord. He established Deities of Nitai-Gauranga, Radha Madana Mohana, Radha Govinda, Gopinatha.

In Vraja *lila* he serves Krishna-Balarama as the cowherd boy, Mahabahu. His *samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area. ()

Sri Mukunda Dasa

Sri Mukunda acted as the royal physician to Emperor Hussain Shah. Upon seeing a shimmering peacock fan waving before the king, he fell down in ecstasy. Seeing the peacock feathers flooded the pure heart of Mukunda with overwhelming memories of Lord Sri Krishna.

Sri Caitanya once jokingly asked Mukunda, "Who is the father and who is the son?"

Mukunda replied, "My son, Raghunandana, is actually the father because through him I have understood Krishna consciousness. Therefore, he is my real father."

Lord Caitanya confirmed his realization, "Yes, whoever give us Krishna-*bhakti* is our guru and our real father."

To expand the preaching in Sri Khanda, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu assigned different duties to the Sarakara family.

Mukunda Sarakara, working as a doctor already, was told to make money, follow the regulative principles, and increase his spiritual wealth. Narahari Sarakara Thakura was ordered to stay with the Lord's devotees and preach Krishna consciousness. Raghunandana, Mukunda's son, was asked to worship the family Deity of Sri Caitanya Deva. By this pastime Lord Gaurasundara teaches that by different activities everyone can engage in the service of Lord Krishna.

Mukunda Dasa serves Radha-Murlimanohara as Vrnda-devi in Vraja Gokula.

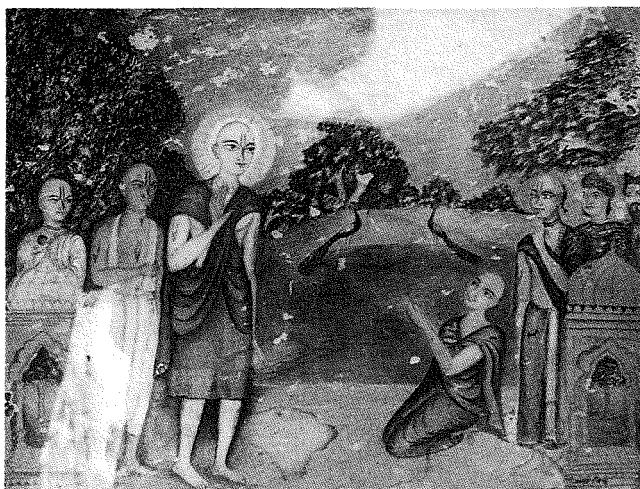
Sri Mukunda Datta

Sri Mukunda Datta was Sri Nimai Pandit's classmate at Ganga's Dasa's *tol* (school). Mukunda had a melodious voice and he knew the intricacies of musical meters and *ragas*. His sweet *kirtana* would please all the Vaisnavas at Navadvipa. Tuning in to Lord Gaura's heart, he would sing songs matching Lord Gauranga's feelings. Lord Caitanya took *sannyasa* amidst Mukunda's *kirtana*. He served Sri Caitanya in Puri as one of the Lord's humblest followers.

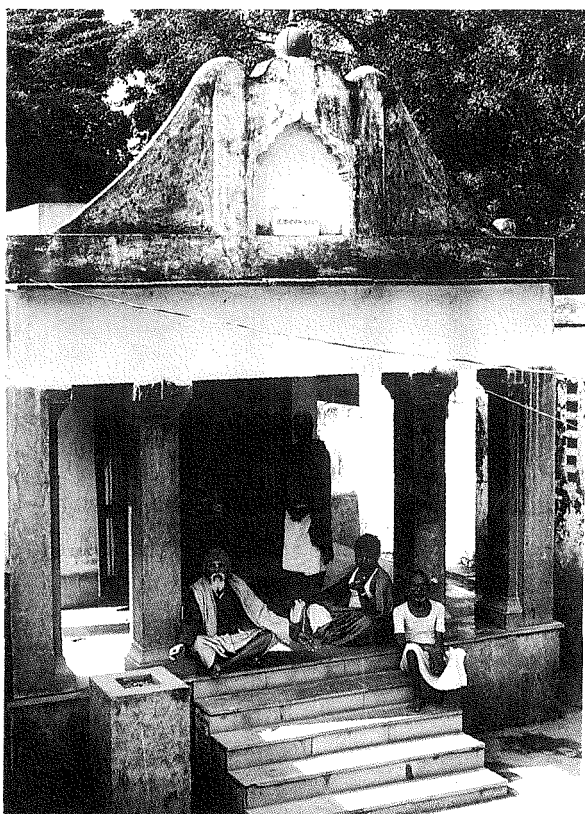
Once at the house of Srivasa Pandit Lord Caitanya blessed all the devotees except Mukunda. Mahaprabhu overlooked him because he had offended Bhakti Devi (who gives devotional service). Mukunda placed her on an equal level with karma, jnana, or even Mayavada philosophy whenever he talked to followers of those paths. Acting like a chameleon, Mukunda would glorify *bhakti* to *bhaktas*, and then debate useless mundane topics with karmis (nondevotees). And with Mayavadis he discussed impersonalism.

Mukunda chose suicide as atonement for his serious offense to Bhakti Devi. He asked Lord Caitanya if he would again receive His mercy in a future life. "You will receive My mercy," said Lord Caitanya, "after passing one million births."

Happy to know he would someday get Mahaprabhu's mercy, Mukunda jumped up and down shouting, "Only a million births, only a million births!"



Lord Caitanya meets Prabodhananda Sarasvati (kneeling)



Samadhi Prabodhanananda Sarasvati Thakura



Samadhi Madhupandit Gosvami



Samadhi Bilvamangala Thakura

Lord Caitanya's heart melted upon seeing Mukunda's devotion and determination. The Lord blessed and accepted Mukunda, "By your faith and conviction in My words all your offenses have been immediately destroyed."

In Krishna *lila* he is Madhukantha, a person with a honey sweet throat, a sweet singer. His *samadhi* is located within the 64 Samadhis Area. (21, 108)

Sri Murari Gupta

Sri Murari Gupta, a disciple of Sri Candrasekhara Acarya, possessed extraordinary humility. He had an intimate lifelong relationship with Lord Caitanya. Although senior in class, Murari would always lose in debates with Sri Nimai Pandit. During one heated argument they began pushing each other. The scuffle continued into the Ganges. They stirred up so much mud that ladies couldn't fill their pots and brahmanas couldn't bathe properly.

At the nightly *kirtans* in Srivasa Angam Murari Gupta pleased Gaurahari with melodious chanting of the *Bhagavata*. He would also sing and dance expertly. Murari Gupta served Sri Caitanya in all His Nadia *lilas*.

Lord Caitanya once tested Murari Gupta's attachment to his worshipable Lord Ramacandra. Lord Gaurasundara preached to Murari about the supreme sweetness and position of Vrajendrakumara (Krishna): "Murari, just worship Krishna and take shelter of Him. Nothing but His service can satisfy the mind." Although Murari Gupta became somewhat inclined toward Sri Krishna, the thought of losing Lord Ramacandra's association devastated him. That night he prayed to Lord Rama to take his life. He asked for this because he couldn't stop serving Rama, nor could he defy Sri Caitanya's request.

After crying all night Murari approached Lord Caitanya and said: "What should I do? I've sold my head to the lotus feet of Lord Ramacandra. But if I break Your order to worship Lord Sri Krishna, then what can I do?"

Smiling, Sri Gaura Raya replied, "All glories to Murari Gupta! You're so fixed in your worship that even My request couldn't turn

your mind. This is exactly the type of love and affection the servitor must have for the lotus feet of the Lord. Even if the Lord wants separation, a devotee cannot abandon the shelter of His lotus feet. Just to test your firm faith in your Lord I repeatedly asked you to change your worship from Lord Rama to Lord Krishna."

Congratulating Murari Gupta, the Lord continued, "You are the incarnation of Hanuman, the eternal servant of Lord Rama. Therefore, why should you give up your worship of Lord Rama?"

At another time, Lord Caitanya showed His form as Lord Ramacandra with Janaki, Laksmana, and a host of monkeys reciting hymns and prayers. Seeing himself amongst those monkeys in his original form as Hanuman, Murari Gupta fainted. In Katva, when Lord Caitanya took *sannyasa* Murari stood by weeping like a child. And when Sriman Mahaprabhu moved to Jagannatha Puri, Murari and his wife would come every year to relish the Lord's company.

Since he was born in a dynasty of Ayur Vedic doctors Murari Gupta practiced medicine. But his practice was unique in that he cured his patient's physical ailments and also freed them from the disease of material existence. He wrote the first biography of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, an important Sanskrit work entitled *Sri Caitanya Carita Mahakavya*. His *samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area.

Sri Narahari Cakravarti Thakura

Sri Narahari Cakravarti Thakura appeared in the late 1600's in West Bengal in a brahmana family. Jagannatha Vipra, his father, was a famous disciple of Sripad Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura. Narahari (Ghanasyama Dasa) was a disciple of Nrsimha Cakravarti in the line of Srinvasa Acarya.

From youth Narahari observed a vow of celibacy. All his activities were pure and saintly. He was always meek and humble, thinking himself a mischievous rascal. He used to say, "I am unfit for serving the Lord. I have no qualifications at all." Yet he was extremely learned in the arts of dancing, singing, playing musical

instruments. He knew the intricate science of using the musical arts to praise the Lord and His associates.

He was well-versed in the *bhakti-sastras* and in performing various kinds of devotional service. Being personally chosen by the Lord, Narahari became Radha-Govindaji's favorite cook in Vrndavana. He was known as *rasuya pujari* (the expert cook-priest) for mastering the art of making palatable dishes for the Lord. Wherever he traveled he established real religious principles. The Vaisnavas always received him with great respect.

Fulfilling the desire of his father and the Supreme Lord, Narahari spent most of his life in the humble service of Govindaji. He ground sandalwood pulp, collected fire wood, cleaned the temple courtyard, picked *tulasi* leaves and *manjaris*, fanned Lord Govindaji from outside by pulling a rope.

Out of genuine humility he always kept himself at a distance. He did the service of ten men. The temple *pujaris* would plead with him not to do such lowly service. Insisting, Narahari said, "I am most fallen. I have no right. It is really merciful of you all to let me render whatever service I can." Narahari passed his days deeply absorbed in devotional service. He would always show respect to everyone he met. Seeing Narahari's behavior, the Vrajavasis always spoke about his good qualities.

Narahari Cakravarti Thakura was always satisfied to remain in the humble service of Govindaji. He cooked for the Lord well into his seventies. He simultaneously wrote many books about the Gosvamis and the lives of the Gaudiya Acaryas such as *Narottama-vilasa*, *Namamrta-samudra*, *Srinivasa-carita*, *Sanghita-sara-sangraha*, *Bhakti-ratnakar*, *Gaura-caritra-samudra*.

Sri Narahari Sarakara Thakura

"Before meeting Mahaprabhu Narahari had written many Sanskrit and Bengali songs about the *vraja rasa* of Radha-Giridhari. Later, he and Gadadhara Pandit always stayed with Lord Caitanya. Narahari used to please the Lord by waving a *camara* or peacock fan. Srila Thakura Bhaktivinoda's *Gaura-aroti* song glorifies this, *narahari adi kori camara dhulaya*.

Narahari Sarakara's family was the pride of the Vaisnavas. By their influence all the people in Sri Khanda became Vaisnavas. The entire village turned into a "branch of the desire tree of love of God." Since the time of Lord Gauracandra, Sri Khanda has been a preaching center for Gaudiya Vaisnavism. One day Sri Nityananda Prabhu came to Sri Khanda and asked Narahari, "All right, we know who you are. So where's the honey?" By his mystic power Narahari turned a pot of water into supersweet honey for the Lord's pleasure. Narahari serves Lord Syamasundara in *Vraja lila* as Madhumati, a *prana-sakhi* who supplies mouth-watering honey for Radha-Damodara and Their dear ones.

"Sri Narahari Sarakara's very being was saturated with Radha-Krishna *prema*. No one can fathom the depth of his devotion and pure love for Radha and Krishna. In *Vraja* he is Radha's dear *sakhi*, Madhumati (a storehouse of sweetness). And in *Gauranga lila* he is Narahari, a storehouse of Radha-Krishna *prema*." (*Sri Caitanya Mangala*)

Narahari Sarakara books *Padakalpataru* and *Krishna-bhajanamrta* include wonderful intimate songs praising Lord Gauranga and Sri Nityananda Prabhu. Sripad B.V. Narayana Maharaja said, "Narahari composed many ambrosial nectarean songs that overflow with the sweetest devotion."

In *Sri Krishna Bhajanamrtam*, Narahari teaches how to worship Sri Krishna and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Sri Locana Dasa Thakura and many others were disciples of Narahari Sarakara Thakura. Though not accessible, his samadhi is in Radha-kunda.

Sri Narayana Bhatta Gosvami

Narayana Bhatta Gosvami was a disciple of Sri Krishna Dasa Brahmachari, coming in the line of Gadadhara Pandit Gosvami. Narayana Bhatta was completely attached to *Vraja bhumi*. He saw no difference between the transcendental name, form, pastimes, and dhama of Vrndavana. He always relished the pastimes of Radha-Gopinatha in the association of *rasika* Vaisnavas.

Constantly, he wandered through the twelve forests of Vraja mandala. He uncovered many lost Deities and reestablished Their worship. He also revealed many of Radha-Syamasundara's pastime places. Quoting *Varaha Purana*, he compiled *Vraja-bhakti-vilasa*, a detailed guidebook of Vraja Mandala. In this book he reveals his identity as Narada Muni. For this and other books he is known by the Vrajavasis as the *Vrajacarya*. His *samadhi* is in Unchagoan, the village of Srimati Lalita-*sakhi*, located just near Srimati Radharani's palace in Varsana.

Sri Narottama Dasa Thakura

Appearing as the son of a king, Sri Narottama Dasa Thakura (Sri Thakura Mahasaya) showed all the bodily symptoms of a *mahapurusa* (an exalted divine person). He had long arms, a deep navel, golden-complexion, beautiful eyes shaped like the lotus petals. In school, he was a *sruti dhara* (able to memorize whatever he hears) Although he quickly mastered Sanskrit and the *Vedas*, he hankered to serve Krishna. He was a lifelong *brahmacari*.

By the mercy of the holy name Gaura-Nitai, Narottama became detached, left his opulent family, and ran to Vrndavana. He took *diksa* from Sri Lokanatha Gosvami and *siksa* in Gaudiya philosophy from Sri Jiva Gosvami.

When he arrived in Navadvipa-dhama all the devotees asked him about the health and activities of the Gosvamis in Vrndavana. They were eager to hear the news from Vrndavana. After visiting all of Gauranga's pastime places in Gaura Mandala, Narottama Dasa did the same in Sri Ksetra Dhama (Jagannatha Puri). Then he went to see the devotees and Sri Caitanya's pastime spots in Santipura, Sri Khanda, Kanthak Nagar, Ekacakra, and Kheturi Gram.

In Kheturi, Sri Narottama Dasa Thakura arranged the famous Kheturi Mahotsava. This was the first "Gaura-Purnima" festival to honor the divine appearance day of Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu. During the festival six Deities were installed: Sri Gauranga Deva, Sri Vallabhi Kanta, Sri Vraja Mohana, Sri Krishna, Sri Radha Kanta, Sri Radha Ramana.

With his sweet voice Narottama Dasa began a wonderful *kirtana*. His chanting filled the heavens, and brought down tears of *prema* from the eyes of the devotees, who were all sporting in the ocean of ecstasy. "In the midst of their *kirtana*, the munificent Sri Caitanya Himself and all His personal associates appeared and joined in the *sankirtana*. Like a flash of lightning in the midst of a mass of beautiful blue clouds, Sri Caitanya Himself appeared in the crowd of devotees through a divine manifestation." (*Bhaktiratnakar*)

"At that time, although Mahaprabhu had left this world years before, many different devotees saw Mahaprabhu in different ways. Those of Sri Navadvipa dhama saw Him more intimately as Nimaicandra or Visvambhara, as they knew Him during His youth. Those devotees were attracted to Mahaprabhu in *sakhya* and *vat-salya rasa*. The followers of the six Gosvamis, who only knew Mahaprabhu as a *sannyasi*, related to Him in the mood of *dasya rasa*. And hundreds of devotees also worshiped Lord Caitanya in an *aisvarya* mood of awe and reverence.

"This festival is considered a major achievement in Gaudiya Vaisnavism. Hundreds and hundreds of devotees were invited, including direct disciples of Mahaprabhu, Nityananda Prabhu, and Advaita Acarya. At this time, many differences existed in the interpretation of Gaudiya Vaisnavism. Acaryarani Jahnava Devi came from Kardaha with her entourage. Presiding over all the Vaisnavas, she resolved their diverse conclusions into one consistent Gaudiya Vaisnava philosophy.

"For the first time, the festival featured many *kirtana* styles which integrated the glorification of Lord Caitanya with the glorification of Lord Krishna and His pastimes. And because so many Vaisnavas were present at one place, it automatically made the Kheturi festival extraordinary. It also acted as an important step toward unifying all the Gaudiya Vaisnavas." (*Sri Navadvipa-dhama parikrama*)

Narottama Dasa Thakura wrote many devotional songs about the spiritual master, the devotees, devotional service, the six Gosvamis, Gaura-Nityananda and Radha-Krishna. Although composed with sweet melodies in simple Bengali language, Narot-

tama Dasa's songs give *sastric siddhanta* and devotional inspiration. Srila Prabhupada often sang these *bhajanas*. Considering them non-different from Vedic *sastra*, He quoted them in his *Bhagavatam* lectures. *Prarthana* and *Prema-bhakti-candrika* are Narottama's most famous works.

The following excerpt comes from *Prema-bhakti-candrika*: "Radha and Krishna are my goal in life and death, and They are the masters of my breath. Performing my *bhajana* only for Them, I rise and fall in the ocean of *prema*. I pray that I can always maintain this conception within my heart as my highest ideal.

"Let me serve the lotus feet of Radha-Govinda. Let my mind be filled with dedication to Their divine forms that defeat the beauty of Cupid and Rati. With a straw between my teeth I fall at Their divine feet and present my humble appeal: 'O Kishora-Kishori! O son of Nanda Maharaja--Syamasundara! And O daughter of King Vrsabhanu, Sri Radha. You enchant even Hari, and Your bodily complexion is the color of a golden lotus. O Krishna, with a bodily color like an *indranila* gem (blue jewel), Your beauty mocks Cupid.

'O topmost dancers--Sri Radha and Sri Krishna--please dance within my mind. O You whose beauty increases the charm of Your dazzling ornaments, day and night I only wish that I shall go on singing Your glories in great ecstasy.' "

Narottama Dasa serves Srimati Radhika as Camaka-manjari. His *samadhi* is in Radha Gokulananda's temple courtyard. (26,96)

Sri Nimbarkacarya

Accurate biographies are difficult to find, yet authorities agree that Sri Nimbarkacarya preached Krishna consciousness about three-hundred years before the advent of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

In *Navadvipa Dhama Mahatyam*, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says that Nimbarka had previously worshiped Lord Siva in Bilva Paksha, Rudradvipa (Navadvipa). Lord Siva appeared before Nimbarka instructing him to take initiation from the four Kumaras, who were meditating nearby. Nimbarka received Radha

Krishna mantra and continued living in Navadvipa. Following the teachings of the *Sanat-Kumara Samhita*, he worshiped Radha and Krishna with great love. Soon Radha and Krishna appeared before Nimbarka. Then the Divine Couple displayed Their unified form as Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu.

Lord Gauranga said, "Nimbarka, in the future when I begin My *sankirtana* movement I will personally preach the perfect transcendental philosophy of *acintya-bheda-abheda-tattva*. I will take the essence of the philosophies of Madhva, Ramanuja, Vishnuswami. From you, Nimbarka, I will take two important principles: (1) The necessity of taking shelter of Srimati Radharani. (2) The high esteem of the Vraja *gopis* love for Sri Krishna." Lord Gauranga disappeared after instructing Nimbarka. Shedding tears of ecstasy, Nimbarka left Navadvipa to begin his preaching mission. In Caitanya *lila*, Nimbarka appeared as Keshava Kasmiri and received love of Godhead directly from Nimai Pandit.

There are striking similarities between the Gaudiyas and Nimbarkas. The followers of Nimbarka accept the six forms of surrender, practice the nine limbs of *bhakti*, and believe in the *dasa mula* (ten cardinal points of Gaudiya philosophy). They also worship Radha and Krishna in Vrndavana. They worship Srimati Radharani as the topmost devotee, and they accept the *gopis* love for Krishna is supreme. With beads, *bhajans*, and *kirtans* the Nimbarkas chant their version of the maha-mantra: *Radhe Krishna Radhe Krishna Krishna Krishna Radhe Radhe, Radhe Syama Radhe Syama Syama Syama Radhe Radhe*.

In Vrndavana, about one mile from Govardhana, there is the village of Nimgaon, named after Nimbarkacarya, who lived there from childhood and later performed *bhajana* there. Many of Radha-Krishna's pastime places in Vrndavana are now maintained by the Nimbarka sect. In Mathura-Vrndavana, innumerable devotees follow Nimbarka's path of *bhakti*. The Srijji Mandir, just off Loi Bazaar in Vrndavana, serves as the center of Nimbarka *sampradaya*.

Sri Paramesvara Dasa Thakura

Paramesvara Dasa was completely surrendered to the lotus feet of Lord Nityananda. He was the Lord's constant companion. Srila Krishna Dasa Kaviraja says that anyone who remembers his name, Paramesvara Dasa, will easily attain love of Krishna.

Paramesvara Dasa also humbly served Sri Jahnava Mata. He accompanied the Deity of Radharani that Jahnava Mata sent to Vrndavana for Govindaji. In Krishna *lila*, Paramesvara Dasa is one of the *dvadasa gopalas* named Arjuna. His *samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area. Sri Paramesvara Dasa Thakura ki jai!

Sri Prabodhananda Sarasvati

After associating with Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in Sri Rangam, Sri Prabodhananda Sarasvati converted from Sri to Gaudiya Vaisnavism. Empowered by Sri Caitanya, he taught *Srimad Bhagavatam* and other devotional works to Gopala Bhatta Gosvami, his nephew. His eloquent speech would engadden everyone.

Good qualities and pure devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead ornamented his life. Even while sleeping he would remember Lord Caitanya. Prabodhananda Sarasvati was an extremely enthusiastic exponent of Sri Caitanya's doctrine and divinity.

*parama-vairagya-sneha murti manoram
maha-kavi gita vadya-nrtye anupam*

"Very austere and renounced, Prabodhananda Sarasvati overflowed with love for the devotees. His handsome form pleased the eyes. He was a learned poet and scholar. No one could compare with him in the arts of singing, dancing, and playing musical instruments." (*Bhakti-ratnakar*)

Leaving Sri Rangam, he lived a detached life in Sri Vrndavana as a fully dedicated servant of Radha-Govinda. He was a *rasika acarya*, perfect in describing the *nikunja-lilas* of Gandharvika-Giridhari. He glorifies Lord Caitanya, Radha-Krishna, Navadvipa, and Vrndavana with enlightened devotion. Prabodhananda Sarasvati's writings bless the beginner with *bhakti* and shower

rasika Vaisnavas with pure nectar. *Sangita Madhava*, *Navadvipa-sataka*, *Caitanya-candramrta*, *Radha-rasa-sudhanidhi*, *Vrndavana-mahimamrta* are some of his books.

Prabodhananda Sarasvati serves Sri Radha in Goloka Vrndavana as Tungavidya-gopi, one of Her *asta-sakhis*. His *samadh*i is behind Kaliya-ghat near the Kadamba tree of Krishna *lila*. (19,112)

Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi

A disciple of Sri Madhavendra Puri, Pundarika Vidyanidhi was Sri Gadadhara Pandit's guru, and an intimate friend of Svarupa Damodara.

Once in Jagannatha Puri, Pundarika Vidyanidhi met Svarupa Damodara after a long separation. In a joyful mood of friendship Pundarika and Svarupa wanted to take the dust from each other's feet. A scuffle began as they tried to simultaneously catch the feet of one another, but at the same time, avoid having their own feet caught. Both being quite strong, neither won. But Sri Gauranga enjoyed their sporting play and everyone laughed.

Pundarika Vidyanidhi has other names--Sri Vidyanidhi, Acaryanidhi, Bhaktyanidhi, and Premanidhi (given by Lord Caitanya). "Simply by hearing his name," said Sri Gaura, "the whole world becomes purified." Premanidhi's pure devotion caused Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to sometimes cry profusely and call out loudly, "Bop, (father) Pundarika! Pundarika is My father, My dearest friend. When will I see him again?" Pundarika Vidyanidhi is King Vrsabhanu, Sri Radha's father, in Vrndavana *lila*.

Continually floating in the sea of Krishna *prema*, Pundarika often showed ecstatic bodily symptoms of tears, horripilation, falling unconscious. "Whoever recites or hears the following narration of the meeting of Pundarika Vidyanidhi and Sri Gadadhara Pandit will receive the treasure of love of God." (*Sri Caitanya Bhagavata*)

When he first arrived in Navadvipa Pundarika Vidyanidhi disguised himself as a worldly sense enjoyer. Besides Mukunda,

nobody knew that Pundarika Vidyanidhi was pure a Vaisnava. "Today, I will introduce you to a most exceptional Vaisnava," said Mukunda, as he took Gadadhara Pandit to meet Pundarika Vidyanidhi.

They found Pundarika reclining on an opulent brass bed covered with red satin sheets, silk pillows, and topped with a three-tiered canopy. A gem-studded pan box stuffed with fragrant spices and betel nuts waited within arm's reach. Two shiny brass spittoons stood as silent sentries beside the bed. Seeing the mirror stained red from his chewing pan, Pundarika laughed heartily. Two servants cooled him with peacock fans.

Was this a Vaisnava or a prince wallowing in luxury wondered Gadadhara Pandit? Doubts arose in Gadadhara's mind about Pundarika's spiritual status. Reading his mind, Mukunda decided to reveal the highly exalted transcendental identity of Pundarika Vidyanidhi. Mukunda recited *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.6.35): "Always hankering to taste the blood of small children, Putana came to kill baby Krishna. However, because she offered her breast to the Supreme Lord Putana attained the greatest blessing of being accepted as a mother of Sri Krishna."

Hearing this verse totally transformed Pundarika Vidyanidhi. A Ganges river of tears flooded his eyes. Perspiration rained from his body, his hairs stood erect. He ripped off his embroidered silk shirt and wildly thrashed his legs about. Rolling on the ground, he wailed, "The Lord is infinitely merciful. Yet He deprives me of His mercy." His clothes, brass bed, fine bedsheets, mirror, spittoons, all his opulent trappings were ripped to shreds--smashed to bits. Ten men tried but couldn't restrain the force of Pundarika's ecstasy. The manifestations of Pundarika Vidyanidhi's pure love for Krishna competed with one another for some time. Finally, his spiritual emotions reached their peak and he lost external unconscious.

After witnessing this spectacular display of transcendental feelings Gadadhara Pandit realized his offense in misjudging Pundarika Vidyanidhi to be a materialistic devotee. To rectify his mistake he wanted to take initiation from Pundarika Vidyanidhi. Six hours later, Sri Pundarika returned to external consciousness. Now he seemed calm and composed. Happily he initiated Gadad-

hara Pandit. Pundarika Vidyanidhi is Srimati Radharani's father in Vraja pastimes. His *samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area.(21,)

Sri Purusottama Dasa Thakura

Sri Purusottama Dasa constantly meditated on and served the lotus feet of Lord Nityananda. Kanu Thakura, his son, was such an exalted devotee that Lord Krishna always lived in his body. When Kanu was five Ma Jahnava took him to Vrndavana. The Gosvamis joyously greeted him upon seeing his genuine devotion.

In Goloka Vrndavana, Purusottama Dasa Thakura serves Lord Balarama as a cowherd boy , *dvadasa gopala*. His *samadhi* is located in the 64 Samadhis Area. (21,)

Sri Raghunandana Thakura

Being called away on medical business, Mukunda Dasa once asked his young son, Raghunandana, to offer the *raja bhoga* to the family Deity of Gopinatha. Raghunandana prepared everything timely, carefully, and with great devotion. When he made the offering he remembered his father's order, "make sure the Deity eats." Ringing the bell the simple boy told the Gopinatha Deity, "Eat, eat!" Raghunandana began crying when he saw the untouched food remaining on the Deity's plate. He feared his father's anger for his inability to "make the Deity eat." Gopinatha couldn't resist the child's intense devotion. So the Lord ate everything on the plate, leaving no remnants.

Upon returning, Mukunda asked for Gopinatha's *maha-prasadam*. Raghunandana said the Deity ate everything. Astonished, Mukunda told his son to make the offering again. From a hidden place Mukunda watched in total amazement as Raghunandana offered a *laddhu* to Gopinatha. But the Lord only took half a *laddhu*. Mukunda understood that the Deity only took half because He was still full from eating the lunch offering. Choked with divine emotion in appreciation of his pure devotee son, Mukunda embraced Raghunandana.

Later in Jagannatha Puri, Lord Gauranga lovingly asked Mukunda Dasa, "Who is the father and who is the son?"

Mukunda replied, "Raghunandana is definitely my father. Because he has given me Krishna *bhakti* and showed me pure Krishna consciousness." In Krishna *lila*, Raghunandana is Kandarpa-manjari or Pradyumna (of the Catur-vyuha). His *samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area. (21, 108)

Sri Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami

By the order of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami remained a lifelong *brahmacari*. His service was constant chanting of Hare Krishna and reading *Srimad Bhagavatam*. In Jagannatha Puri, Raghunatha satisfied Lord Gauranga by his exceptional cooking and *kirtana* performances, which won him the title, *kirtana acarya*.

When he came to Vrndavana, the Vaisnavas (including Sri Rupa and Sanatana Gosvamis) would regularly listen to his singing of *Bhagavata* slokas in four tunes as sweet as a cuckoo. His recitation was unparalleled; even Vyasadeva enjoyed it. He fulfilled Lord Caitanya's order to preach the glories and peerless significance of the *grantha-rajya Srimad Bhagavatam*.

His tears of pure love for Radha-Govinda would wet the pages. Raghunatha Bhatta was so absorbed in Krishna-*katha* that he never heard or spoke worldly topics, what to speak of criticizing devotees. He believed that all Vaisnavas are sincerely serving the Lord according to their realization, and therefore one should overlook their faults.

Under his inspiration, a wealthy disciple built a gorgeous temple in Vrndavana for Sri-Sri Radha-Govindaji. Even after four-hundred and fifty years, this intricately hand-carved red stone temple remains the most beautiful temple in Vrndavana and all of Northern India. Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami faithfully served Govindaji for forty years

He was a scholar in all subjects, although he didn't write any books like the other Gosvamis. Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami learned everything simply by hearing *sastras*. Fearing that Muslims might desecrate Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami's sacred form, Sri Jiva Gosvami had his body burned. The ashes were placed in two

samadhis, one in Radha-kunda, another in the 64 Samadhis Area. In Radha-Govindaji's *nitya-lila* he serves as Rasa or Raga manjari, one of Sri Radha's *asta manjaris*. (16,21,15,23)

Sri Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami

Born in a dynasty of Vaisnavas, Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami was the only son of a wealthy landowner. As a boy, he received Haridasa Thakura's association and blessings. At fifteen he met Lord Caitanya. By the mercy of Lord Nityananda he renounced a beautiful wife and an opulent family. He ran to Jagannatha Puri to intimately serve Sri Gaura Raya and his *siksa guru* Svarupa Damodara Gosvami for sixteen years. Lord Gauranga gave His personal Govardhana *silā* and *gunja mala* to Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami.

Raghunatha Dasa couldn't live after Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu left this world. So, he came to Vrndavana to end his life by jumping off Govardhana Hill. Sri Rupa and Sanatana Gosvamis affectionately received him. They convinced him to live on and enlighten all the Vrajavasi Vaisnavas with Sriman Mahaprabhu's Puri pastimes. For three hours a day on the banks of Radha-kunda he spoke about Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Raghunatha Dasa did Radha-Krishna *bhajana* at Radha-kunda for forty years. He lived an austere life of pure devotion. Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami showed the standard of renunciation required to attain the eternal loving service of Radha-Giridhari in the *nitya nikunja lilas* at Radha-kunda. His perfect example enthuses all Gaudiya Vaisnavas to develop unalloyed pure love for Radha-Krishna.

Sri Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami's daily *bhajana* included: chanting 64 rounds *japa* (100,000 holy names); doing *manasi-seva* in his spiritual body; worshiping Govardhana *silā*; bathing thrice in Radha-kunda; offering one-thousand obeisances to Krishna; offering two-thousand to Vaisnavas and embracing them; resting ninety minutes, and some days not at all; Keep in mind however, when an eternal associate of the Lord externally rests, internally

he continues serving. He ate only one leaf cup (100 grams) of buttermilk daily.

Throughout his life he never ate anything for sense gratification. He took the bare minimum to keep body and soul together. It's said that after the disappearance of Lord Caitanya Raghunatha Dasa ate only fruit and milk. After Sri Sanatana Gosvampada left he existed on a leaf cup of buttermilk every day or two. And when Sri Rupa Gosvami entered *nitya-lila* Raghunatha gave up all eating and drinking! He was slowly burning in the fire of separation from the Lord and His loving servants. The Vrajavasis would cry upon seeing his weakened condition.

Sri Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami wrote three books; *Stavavalli* (contains *Manah Siksa*, *Vilapa-kusumanjali* and more), *Muktacarita*, *Dana Keli Cintamani*. In *Jaiva Dharma*, Srila Thakura Bhaktivinoda said, "Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami showed the esoteric method of engaging oneself in the loving service of Sri-Sri Radha-Krishna." Raghunatha Dasa wrote and taught that the divine service of Srimati Radharani in Vrndavana is the topmost spiritual perfection. For this he was known as the *prayojana acarya*, the teacher who reveals the highest fulfillment in life.

Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami clearly established the supremacy of Srimati Radharani. In *Vilapa-kusumanjali*, a collection of intimate prayers, he states that Sri Radha's service is the highest attainment. Feeling extreme impatience and hopelessness, due to separation from the "Queen of his life," he desperately prays for Radharani's service:

"My life is worthless. I will give it up without receiving Your mercy. Living in Radha-kunda and Vrndavana is meaningless to me. To say nothing of Vrndavana, even Krishna Himself is useless to me without You. O Srimati Radharani, You are the only object of my life. Please be merciful to me. Crying profusely in great lamentation, I hold Your lotus feet to my heart and beg for Your loving service. May this *Vilapa-kusumanjali* bring even the slightest satisfaction to You."

Srila Raghunatha Dasa serves Sri Radha as Rati-manjari in Sri Vrndavana-dhama. His *samadhi* is at Radha-kunda and the 64 Samadhis Area. (16,21,15,)

Sri Ramacandra Kaviraja

Ramacandra Kaviraja, the son of Sri Ciranjiva Sena (eternal associate of Lord Caitanya), appeared in Sri Khanda. "Ramacandara Kaviraja was especially earnest, beautiful, intelligent, energetic, and enthusiastic," said one biographer. Although married, Ramacandra and his wife, Ratanala, had no material attachments. They stayed fully engaged in the loving service of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. They had no children. With steadfast devotion he served his spiritual master, Srinivasa Acarya. In Vrndavana, Sri Jiva Gosvami gave him the title, *kaviraja*, "king of poets." He wrote the following beautiful verse:

*prakasila mahaprabhu hare krishna mantra
premera vadara kari barila samsara
andha avadhi yata kare parsa
bindhu na padila mukhe ramacandra dasa*

"Sriman Mahaprabhu is so kind that He manifests the nectar of the Hare Krishna mantra. The holy name will free all souls from the cycle of birth and death, from lower planets, from hell. The holy name will give one a taste of divine love for Radha-Madhava.

"Whether blind or dumb, anyone can drown in this flood of *prema*. In this way, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu has filled everyone with love of God. But Ramacandra Dasa is so unfortunate that he couldn't even taste a drop of that nectar."

Ramacandra Kaviraja was one of the eight kavirajas, famous poet disciples of Srinivasa Acarya. Ramacandra wrote *Smarana Darpana*, *Smarana Camatkara*, *Siddhanta Candrika*. He preached widely and initiated many disciples. Narottama Dasa Thakura and Ramacandra lived together as best friends. Narottama Dasa wrote, *doya kore sri acarya prabhu srinivasa, ramacandra sanga mage Narottama Dasa*, "O Srinivasa Acarya Prabhu, please give me your mercy. Narottama Dasa always prays for the association of Ramacandra Kaviraja."

In the form of Karna manjari, he serves Srimati Radharani in Vraja lila. His *samadhi* is in Dhira Samira Kunja next to Srinivasa Acarya. (20,144)

Sri Ramananda Raya

Before Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu met Ramananda Raya, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya told the Lord that no other devotee's knowledge of Radha-Krishna's *madhurya rasa* compares with Ramananda Raya's. Although Lord Caitanya was half the age of forty year old Ramananda when they met, the Lord said, "My dear Ramananda, both you and I are madmen and therefore we meet intimately on an equal level." Outwardly he acted as the Governor of Madras, but he was a poet, Sanskrit scholar, a dramatist well-versed in *rasa* literature, music, singing, dancing.

During their ten day meeting in Vidyanagara, Lord Gauranga and Ramananda Raya discussed all points of Krishna consciousness. Empowered by the Lord, Ramananda answered all questions posed by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Gaudiya Vaisnava *acaryas* have given lengthy discourses on, "Talks between the Lord and Ramananda Raya." (*Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya Ch.8*) These talks are called *Ramananda Samvagh*.

Ramananda Raya gave a series of answers to Lord Caitanya's first question, "How to attain the ultimate goal of life?" He began with *varnashrama-dharma*, and progressed to *karmarpana*, *karmatyaga*, *jnana-mishra-bhakti*, *Radha-bhakti*, *prema bhakti*, (*dasya*, *sakhya*, *vatsalya*, *madhurya prema*), and *Radha-prema*. He also described *Krishna-tattva*, *Radha-tattva*, *Radha-Krishna prema-tattva*, and finally *prema-vilasa vivarta*. Confirming that this was the highest goal of life, Lord Caitanya asked Ramananda how to attain it.

Ramananda Raya said, "Without adopting the mood of the *gopis* and following in their footsteps, one cannot enter the confidential pastimes of Radha-Krishna. There is no other way to achieve the service of Radha and Krishna within the pleasure groves of Vrndavana.

The *gopis* don't have any desires for their personal sense enjoyment. Their minds and bodies exist only for Krishna's enjoyment. If one is greedy to taste the nectar of *gopi-bhava* (spontaneous loving mood of the *gopis*), he will give up the world and the rituals of Vedic dharma to perform Krishna *bhajana*. One who worships

Sri Krishna on the path of *raganuga-bhakti* will attain Vrajendra-nandana in Vrndavana. However one cannot attain the blissful association of Krishna-candra in Vrndavana by merely following *vidhi-marga* (path of serving Krishna by regulative principles). Therefore, one should accept *gopi bhava* and always remember Radha-Krishna all day and night." (*Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya* 8.201-233)

After finishing his talk, Ramananda Raya saw something never seen before. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu revealed Himself as both Srimati Radharani and Sri Krishna. Seeing this, Ramananda fell unconscious in transcendental bliss.

In Jagannatha Puri, Srila Svarupa Damodara Gosvami, another topmost *rasika* Vaisnava, joined Ramananda Raya to intimately serve Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu. Together they helped Mahaprabhu taste the loving ecstasies of *madhurya rasa*. In His *Gambhira lila* Sri Caitanya would stay up all night enraptured in Srimati Radharani's mood of separation from Syamasundara. Singing his own songs and the poems of Vidyapati and Candidasa, Ramananda Raya would delight Lord Gauranga with his enchanting melodies. Krishna Dasa Kaviraja says that when Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu felt intense pains of separation from Sri Krishna, only Ramananda's talks about Krishna and Svarupa Damodara's sweet songs kept Him alive.

Ramananda Raya was the first person to reveal the deep varieties of *rasa* which Lord Caitanya privately savored within Himself. He saw Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu as the combined form of *Rasaraja-Mahabhava*. Rasaraja Sri Krishna and Mahabhava svarupini-Sri Radha now appeared in one beautiful dazzling form.

Lord Caitanya once said, "Although I am in the renounced order of life, still My mind is sometimes disturbed even upon seeing a wooden form of a woman. But Ramananda Raya is greater than Me. For he always remains undisturbed even when he touches a young woman." Of course, even in dreams, no one should attempt to imitate the extraordinary behavior of Sri Ramananda Raya. He was teaching young girls, the *devi-dasis*, to portray his *rasa*-laden dramas by dancing in the temple for Lord

Jagannatha's pleasure. He would also bathe, massage, and dress the bodies of the beautiful girls. In all of creation, only Ramananda Raya possesses this quality of total self-control and absolute detachment.

Upon meeting Bhavananda Raya, the father of Ramananda, Lord Gauranga said, "Indeed, you are "Pandu" and your five sons--Ramananda, Gopinatha, Vaninatha, Kalanidhi, Sudhanidhi--are the five Pandavas."

Although sometimes called "Arjuna," Ramananda Raya eternally serves Radha-Gopinatha as Lalita-*sakhi*. Some Gaudiyas say he is Visakha-*sakhi*. His *samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area (21,74)

Sri Ramanuja Acarya

Sri Ramanuja Acarya appeared in 1017 A.D. near Madras, South India in a family of Vedic scholars. Sri Vaisnavas say he was an incarnation of Laksmana. The word Ramanuja means "a follower of Rama." He received this name because Laksmana always follows and serves His brother Lord Ramacandra.

A boy of amazing wit, Ramanuja quickly learned Sanskrit, logic, and the *Vedas*. He took *diksa* and married at age sixteen. Ramanuja studied with a mayavadi guru, Yadava Prakash, to master mayavadi philosophy and defeat it. When the brilliant Ramanuja kept refuting his mayavadi arguments, Yadava Prakash tried to murder him. Unsuccessful, Yadava Prakash expelled Ramanuja from the ashram. Before leaving, Ramanuja completely defeated his guru's theory of oneness and no distinction:

Ramanuja explained, "While a certain unity can be seen in the inter-relatedness of all things, still everything within the universe has its own distinct reality. Pearls strung on a thread share unity; collectively they form an organic whole--a necklace. Still, each individual pearl has its own unique qualities. While spirit, matter, and God may be seen as one organic whole, each has its unique qualities. Therefore, Sankara's principle of absolute oneness can't stand. Rather, the principle of unity characterized by different qualities must be accepted."

Sometime later, Yadava Prakash met Kuresh, Ramanuja's student with a photographic memory. Quoting *Srutis*, the best of Vedic proof, Kuresh convinced him that brahman has transcendental form and qualities coming from the ultimate reality--the supreme Absolute Truth known as Lord Narayana.

Ramanuja initiated anyone regardless of caste. Using the *panca samskara* purification method, he turned *sudras* into brahmanas. He established that the position of a Vaisnava surpasses all social limitations and considerations. Identifying himself as a servant, Ramanuja taught the worship of the Vaisnavas. Several times envious brahmanas tried to poison Ramanuja.

To teach detachment to one disciple Ramanuja staged the following demonstration. He told the disciple to create confusion among the *sannyasis* by switching their clothes at the bathing ghat. When the *sannyasis*, who were big scholars and renunciates, started wearing each others clothes a big argument began. The disciple could plainly see that the "renunciates" were attached to some cloth.

Then Ramanuja sent the disciple to the home of his *grhastha* disciple, Dhanurdasa. Ramanuja engaged Dhanurdasa in the temple to ensure he wouldn't be home. Following Ramanuja's order, the disciple began stealing jewelry from Dhanurdasa's chaste wife, who was sleeping. After the disciple took the ornaments from one side of her body, she suddenly turned over. The startled disciple fled through the window. But he waited outside to witness the reaction of Dhanurdasa. Upon returning home Dhanurdasa talked with his wife.

"I'm worried that the temple needs money," said his wife.

"What makes you think that?" asked Dhanurdasa.

"Because while I slept one of the temple devotees came through the window and began stealing the jewelry from my body. To go that far, I think those poor saints must desperately need money."

"What did you do while he was stealing your jewelry?"

"I turned over, but he fled through the window."

"Why did you do that?" said Dhanurdasa.

"I didn't mean to scare him. I only turned over so that he could take the jewelry from the other side of my body as well."

Dhanurdasa rebuked his wife, "If you were not so affected by false ego, you would have given him all your jewels. Now what shall we do? We have failed miserably."

His wife lamented, "You're right. It is only my pride that kept me from surrendering everything. How will we ever make any advancement?"

Watching all this, Ramanuja's disciple was astonished at the humility and surrender of these *grhastha* devotees. Ramanuja explained the meaning of these two events: the *sannyasi's* clothes and the wife's jewels. The *sannyasis* were so attached to some ragged bits of cloth that they fought over it. But the *grhastas* were detached, even from costly jewels if they were needed for the Lord's service.

Ramanujacarya founded the Sri *sampradaya*, one of the four major Vaisnava *sampradayas* (Brahma, Sri, Kumara, Rudra). This *sampradaya* propounds the Vedanta philosophy of *visistadvaita-vada*, qualified monism. Gaudiya and Sri Vaisnavas share many teachings and practices. The Gaudiyas took Ramanuja's explanation of God and the *jiva* verbatim: "The principle of God is like a blazing fire, while the living soul or the *jiva* is like a spark--a small part of God."

Both accept three classes of *jivas*: eternally liberated, forever bound, freed by devotion and *sadhana*. Ramanuja taught serving God in Vaikuntha with awe and reverence in *dasya rasa* (mood of master and servant). Gaudiya Vaisnavas teach confidential service in *madhurya rasa* to Radha-Madhava within the groves of Vrndavana.

Ramanujacarya wrote many famous commentaries on the *Upanisads*, *Puranas*, *Bhagavad-gita*. *Sri Bhasya*, his commentary on *Vedanta*, presents a formidable challenge to Sankaracarya's impersonal commentary. To this day, the Sri Vaisnava disciplic succession from Ramanuja continues to uphold the traditions of deity worship and philosophy systemized by the founder. His *samadhi* is in Sri Rangam.

Sri Rasikananda Prabhu

Sri Rasikananda Prabhu (Rasika Murari) appeared as the son of a king. He became a perfect sage, Gaudiya Vaisnava scholar, *rasika* bhakta, and the most beloved disciple of Sri Syamananda Prabhu.

On Syamananda Prabhu's order, Rasikananda became the head pujari and served his guru's Deity of Govindaji with total dedication. His attentive loving service increased Govindaji's beauty and pleasure. Rasika Murari enchanted the devotees with his unprecedented Deity service. After firmly establishing Govindaji's worship, he accepted Syamananda's order to preach.

He traveled widely for forty years, influencing everyone with the message of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Rasikananda delivered everyone from pious royal families to Muslims, outcastes, agnostics, atheists, and even wild animals.

One time some mad elephants attacked Rasikananda. Calmly, he chanted "Gauranga, Gauranga, Krishna, Krishna" while sprinkling water on the rampaging beasts. The elephants immediately stopped charging, humbly bowed their heads, raised their trunks, and bellowed "Hare Krishna! Hare Krishna!"

At the time of leaving his body, Rasikananda began a powerful *kirtana*. Then he left this world by entering into the Ksira-cora Gopinatha Deity in Remuna, Orissa. Devastated in separation, his disciples dropped their *mrdangas*, *karatals*--and their bodies. The *pushpa samadhis* of all these pure devotees stand near the temple. Rasikananda Prabhu's *pushpa samadhi* stands next to Syamananda Prabhu's near the temple of Radha-Syamasundara. (19.)

Sri Rupa Gosvami

In 1517, Sri Rupa Gosvami and Sri Sanatana Gosvami, his elder brother, came to Vrndavana to fulfill four orders of Lord Caitanya's: (1) Uncover Sri Krishna's lost pastime places. (2) Install Deities, start *puja*. (3) Write *bhakti-sastras*. (4) Propagate the rules of *bhakti-yoga*.

Wearing only *kaupina* (loincloth) and *kantha* (patchwork quilt), Sri Rupa Gosvami lived a mendicant's life absorbed in hearing, chanting, writing about Radha-Govinda's sweet loving pastimes in Sri Vrndavana-dhama. More details of his conduct and character are mentioned in Sanatana Gosvami's biography.

Sri Rupa Gosvami wrote practical yet profound transcendental books. He established Sri-Sri Radha-Govindaji, the beloved Deities of the entire Gaudiya *sampradaya*. Through extensive Vedic research Sri Rupa Gosvami proved that Sri Caitanya's teachings present the highest philosophy and the perfection of religion.

Gaudiya Vaisnavas are known as *rupanugas*, followers of Sri Rupa Gosvami. Every *raganuga* devotee aspires to become a servant of the servant of the lotus feet of Sri Rupa Gosvami. Sri Narottama Dasa Thakura sings, *sri-rupa-manjari-pada, se more sampada, sei mor bhajana pujana*: "The feet of Sri Rupa-manjari (Rupa Gosvami's eternal form as Sri Radha's maidservant in Vraja) are my only wealth. They are the only object of my service and worship."

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu commissioned Sri Rupa Gosvami to write on the science of *rasa-tattva*. In *Caitanya-candrodaya*, Sri Kavi Karnapura says that Sri Rupa Gosvami is the form of true love and devotion. Sri Caitanya empowered him to explain His own love and devotion, and to propagate it to the world. Lord Caitanya manifested His own pastimes through Sri Rupa Gosvami. He received the title *bhakti-rasacarya* (guru of devotional mellows) for his devotional classics, *Bhakti-rasamrta sindhu*, *Ujjvala Nilamani*, *Lalita Madhava* and others. *Bhakti-rasamrta sindhu* gives the essence of all Vedic scriptures regarding the kingdom of *bhakti*. In great detail it explains how to advance in Krishna consciousness and attain *prema-bhakti*, pure unalloyed love for Radha-Govinda in Sri Vrndavana.

To understand the loving affairs of Radha and Krishna, says Narottama Dasa Thakura, you must serve the lotus feet of Sri Rupa Gosvami with intense eagerness. Serving means hearing (studying), chanting and strictly following the teachings of Sri Rupa Gosvami. Serving also means praying to, crying out to,

meditating upon, and dedicating your entire life to the lotus feet of Sri Rupa Gosvami (Sri Rupa-manjari). *Sadhana Dipika* states that those on the path of devotional service must always associate with Sri Rupa Gosvami's doctrines on *prema-bhakti*. By the grace of Sri Jiva Gosvami one can understand the transcendental truths of Rupa Gosvami's teachings.

The following quote shows the incredible potency of Sri Rupa Gosvami's transcendental writing:

"When Sri Rupa Gosvami would sit in his *bhajana kutir* at Ter Kadamba (Nandagram, Vrndavana), and write about the pangs of separation that Sri Radha and Sri Krishna felt for one another the leaves of the Kadamba tree would fall off; just like tears running down the face of someone in pain. And when Sri Rupa wrote about Radha and Krishna's ecstatic loving reunion, that overjoyed Kadamba tree immediately sprouted new leaves and blossoming flowers. By the mercy of a pure Vaisnava like Srila Rupa Gosvami this Kadamba tree could understand and appreciate the intimate and confidential subject matters which remain beyond our comprehension." (Sripad B.V. Narayana Maharaja)

Sri Rupa Gosvami established the Deities of Radha-Govinda in Vrndavana. *Bhakti-ratnakar* quotes one song from Srinivasa Acarya to describe the beauty of Rupa Gosvami's beloved Govindaji Deity: "Having seen the incomparable beauty of Sri Govinda, Sri Radhika begins describing it to Her *sakhis*: 'Who has sculptured that moon-like face and who has sculptured those two lotus eyes? Only My heart knows how I feel when I see Him. Who has shaped His earrings, cut carefully in gems? My mind is fixed on them. His nose pearl surrounded by a golden ring looks like a moon-like white flower surrounded by lightning, smiling from behind some blue clouds.

'His forehead is decorated with sandal tilaka and beautiful mind-enchanting designs. He shines within My heart. Yet My heart aches being incapable of beholding His beautiful face to My full satisfaction. If God had given Me the power I could continually enjoy His sweet voice. His arms are stronger than the trunks of elephants. My youthful body longs for the touch of His fingers. His

Srimad Bhagavatam from Me, always study it, and you will attain perfection."

In *Krishna-lila-stava*, Sri Sanatana Gosvami glorifies the *Srimad Bhagavatam*: "O holy *Bhagavata*, you are my only company, my only friend, and my guru. You are my greatest treasure and my personal saviour. You are the emblem of my highest fortune and the very form of ecstasy. I offer my obeisances unto you."

Forced to submit to the ruling Muslim government, Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana became ministers and lived at Ramakeli. But their real engagement was teaching *sastras* which they learned from Vidyavacaspati, brother of Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya. Pandits and brahmanas from all over India came to study under the two brothers. Sri Rupa and Sanatana were acclaimed as the "crest jewels of the Gaudiya Vaisnava scholars." After the Lord visited Ramakeli and freed them, they renounced everything for Lord Gauranga's service. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu ordered Sri Rupa and Sanatana Gosvamis to move to Vrndavana and perform four services: (1) Uncover Sri Krishna's pastime places. (2) Install Deities, arrange for Their *puja*. (3) Compile *bhakti* scriptures. (4) Propagate the rules of devotional life. "Entering Lord Caitanya's service, they resolutely gave up power, riches, and position to live in Vrndavana as humble beggars absorbed in *bhajana*. One cannot properly perform Krishna *bhajana* until one renounces all attachments both internally and externally, and adopts a life of simplicity and humility." (*Sri Vraja Mandala Parikrama*).

They traveled extensively through Vraja mandala discovering many *lila sthanas* of Radha-Madhava. Having no fixed residence, they would catch a few winks of sleep (no more than one and a-half hours per day) under a tree or bush. Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana Gosvamis spent all their time writing, discussing Krishna's pastimes, and chanting Krishna's holy names.

To maintain himself Sanatana would beg some wheat flour, roll it into a ball by adding a touch of Yamuna water, and drop it in smoldering coals to cook. He would offer this *bati* (salt-free, baked bread ball) to his Deity of Madana Mohana. Giving up all kinds of material enjoyment, the Gosvamis accepted the poorest

way of life as mendicants. They ate just enough to maintain their bodies.

The Radha-Madana Mohana mandir established by Sanatana Gosvami was the first one opened in Vrndavana by the six Gosvamis. Described as "the personal extension of the body of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu," Sri Sanatana is the ideal spiritual master because he gives one shelter at the lotus feet of Madana Mohana. The three Vrndavana Deities (Madana Mohana, Govindaji and Gopinatha) are the life and soul of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The Deity of Madana Mohana has the specific quality of helping the neophyte devotees understand their eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna.

"Madana Mohana" means Krishna who is so indescribably beautiful that He even attracts Cupid, Kamadeva. Sanatana Gosvami is the *sambandha acarya* who gives us knowledge of our proper relationship with Krishna, And his Deity, Madana Mohana, helps us overcome our attraction for material sense gratification (Cupid) and fix our minds on devotional service.

Sri Sanatana Gosvami spent forty-three years wandering from village to village in Vrndavana. The Vrajavasis would affectionately care for him treating him like their father. With patience and concern he listened to their problems. Then he would please all the villagers by his preaching and practical advice on everything from increasing crop yields to solving family quarrels.

"Renouncing all worldly pleasures, Sanatana Gosvami was humble, detached, always absorbed in study. Mahaprabhu often said that Sanatana Gosvami was His favorite devotee. As an ocean of love and mercy, Sanatana excelled all other devotees in his compassion toward the suffering souls." (*Bhakti-ratnakar*)

In his last years, he left his beloved Deity of Madana Mohana with Krishna Dasa brahmachari, his disciple. He did *bhajana* on the banks of Manasi Ganga next to Cakalesvara Mahadeva at Govardhana. Daily he walked the twenty-four mile parikrama (original longer route) of Govardhana Hill. Although he was sixty-five years old, he kept his daily vow of offering 1,008 obeisances to Govardhana Hill and to any Vaisnava whom he met.

Understanding the difficulty of His pure devotee, Sri Madana Mohana appeared one day and said, "Baba! you are too old. Don't take so much trouble to walk around Govardhana Hill everyday."

Sanatana replied, "This is one of the daily activities of my *bhajana*: I must maintain it."

"Since you are old," said Madana Mohana, "you may now give up this vow."

Starting to walk again, Sanatana replied, "I will never give up my religious principles."

Sanatana Gosvami's firm determination to complete his daily devotional vow pleased Sri Madana Mohana (Krishna). But in the loving dealings between the Lord and His pure devotee, Krishna's desire to please His devotee often defeats the devotee's desire to please Him. So out of loving compassion for His devotee, Sri Krishna stood on a large flat stone (Govardhana *sila*) taken from Giriraja. He played His irresistible flute. The Govardhana *sila* melted in ecstasy, capturing the impression of Krishna's lotus feet.

Presenting this to Sanatana, Krishna said, "If you circumambulate this *sila* everyday it will be the same as going around Govardhana Hill everyday. You will keep your vow intact and not compromise your religious principles." Seeing that Giriraja Himself (Sri Krishna) had given the *sila*, Sanatana Gosvami gratefully accepted. One can still see that Govardhana *sila* in the Radha Damodara temple.

Sri Bhaktivinoda Thakura said in *Jaiva Dharma*: "Sanatana Gosvami was empowered to explain the esoteric aspects of Krishna's manifest and unimanifest Vraja *lilas*." Sanatana Gosvami made a significant literary contribution to the Gaudya *sampradaya* with his *Hari-bhakti-vilasa*, *Bhrad-Bhagavatamrta*, and *Bhrad-Vaisnava-tosani*.

In the form of Labanga manjari Sanatana Gosvami serves Srimati Visakha-*sakhi* in Radha-Madhava's *nitya nikunja-lila*. Sanatana Gosvami's *samadhi* is behind Radha Madana Mohana's temple.(17,29)

Sri Saranga Thakura

An important branch of the Sri Caitanya tree, Sri Saranga Thakura (Saranga Murari) lived in Mamagacchi, Modadrumadvipa (Navadvipa). Staying under a Bakula tree, Saranga Thakura worked hard every day to please his worshipable Deity. Singlehandedly, he would collect fruits, vegetables and firewood. He would also beg rice, cook, bathe, dress, and feed his Lord. After a full day of Deity service Saranga would cross the Ganges River to join Mahaprabhu's Hari-Nama *sankirtana* party in Mayapur.

During one visit, Lord Gauranga noticed that Saranga's beloved Bakula tree was drying up and almost dead. Lord Caitanya embraced the tree with His beautiful golden arms. Completely rejuvenated, the tree burst forth with green leaves and fresh super fragrant flowers. To this day, devotees of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu worship this special *kalpa vrksa* tree of Sri Dhama Mayapur. Some devotees collect small pieces of wood, which occasionally fall off, and make neckbeads or worship it.

Saranga Thakura vowed to never initiate disciples despite Lord Caitanya's insistence. One day he relented and decided to initiate the first person he saw. While bathing in the Ganges he brushed against a floating corpse. Suddenly it sprang to life. Stunned, the man slowly identified himself and bowed down to Saranga Thakura who had just miraculously renewed his life. After giving him *mantra diksa*, Saranga Thakura became famous as "Saranga Murari Thakura," because the disciple's previous name was Murari.

In *Vraja lila* Saranga serves Radha-Gopinatha as *Nandimukhi-sakhi*. By taking a forty five minute riksaw ride from downtown Navadvipa, you can still see the Deities of Saranga Thakura and the *kalpa vrksa* Bakula tree.

Sri Sita Devi

Sita Thakurani lived in Santipura as the eternal wife of Sri Advaita Acarya Prabhu. She was always absorbed in *vatsalya-prema* (paternal love) for Sri Gaurasundara. Just after Sri Caitanya's appearance, Sita Thakurani came to Mayapur. She

brought a basket full of dresses, ornaments, silken children's clothes, jeweled necklaces, and tiger nails set in gold. To worship the golden baby she also brought auspicious articles such as fresh grass, tumeric, *kum kum*, sandalwood. The wonderful name "Nimai" was given to the Lord by Sita Thakurani.

In Krishna *lila*, Sita Thakurani is Yogamaya or also Paur-namasi. At Krishna's birth ceremony she gave many instructions about child care to Nanda and Yasoda. Similarly, in Gaura *lila* Sita Devi would often help Sacimata nurture baby Nimai. Sita Devi and Saci Mata were of one mind; their life and soul was Nimai. Because of Sita Devi's pure parental love, Saci Mata often chose her as the first person to worship Nimai Pandit during any auspicious ceremony.

Later Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Sri Nityananda Prabhu often came to Santipur to visit Advaita Acarya and Sita Thakurani. They would collect all the neighbors and hold an uproarious festival of Krishna *nama-lila kirtana* extending late into the night. When Lord Caitanya moved to Jagannatha Puri Advaita Prabhu and Sita Devi would regularly visit Him.

Sita would cook Mahaprabhu's favorite foods and offer lunch to the Lord. Sita Devi loved Lord Caitanya as a son and He loved her as His mother.

Sri Sivananda Sena

Every year one month before *caturmasya* (four month period of the rainy season) Sivananda Sena would lead a party of two hundred devotees from Bengal to Jagannatha Puri to attend the annual Ratha-Yatra festival. He would pay for everyone's food, tolls, ferries, and lodging. He personally arranged for their comfort.

Sivananda Sena showed Vaisnava compassion for all living entities, be they man or beast. When a stray dog joined the party Sivananda Sena fed the dog and even paid his boat fare. When the dog disappeared one day Sivananda sent 200 men to search for him. Upon arriving in Puri, they saw Lord Caitanya throwing coconut pulp to the dog. The dog became purified of all material

contamination by eating the *maha-prasadam* remnants of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Not seeing the dog the next day, Sivananda Sena understood that the dog had attained liberation by the mercy of Lord Caitanya.

Observing *catumasya* in Puri, Sivananda and the devotees would regularly bathe in Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's blissful association. Sivananda used all his possessions in the service of Krishna and the Vaisnavas. His entire family and servants were ardent followers of Lord Gauranga.

Kavi Karnapura, the son of Sivananda Sena, says in *Gaura-ganodesh-dipika*: "Sivananda Sena is the embodiment of love of Sri Caitanya Deva. And in Krishna *lila* he is Vira gopi, Srimati Radharani's messenger." In one *bhajana* Devakinandana Dasa glorifies him, "I bow down to Sivananda Sena, who is full of divine love. His caste, life, and wealth are the two lotus feet of Sri Gaura Raya." His *samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area. (21,108)

Srinivasa Acarya

After witnessing Lord Gauranga's *sannyasa* ceremony at Katva, Caitanya Dasa and his pregnant wife visited Lord Caitanya in Jagannatha Puri. "Soon your wife will give birth to a son named 'Srinivasa' said Lord Caitanya, "and through Srinivasa all the *bhakti sastras* of Rupa and Sanatana will be distributed."

When his father left this world Srinivasa visited the remaining associates of Lord Gauranga in Katva, Navadvipa, Jagannatha Puri. They blessed Srinivasa and gave him valuable instructions for spiritual advancement. Seeing his absorption in Gauranga *prema*, they knew he was "an embodiment of *Gaura-sakti*, the energy of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu."

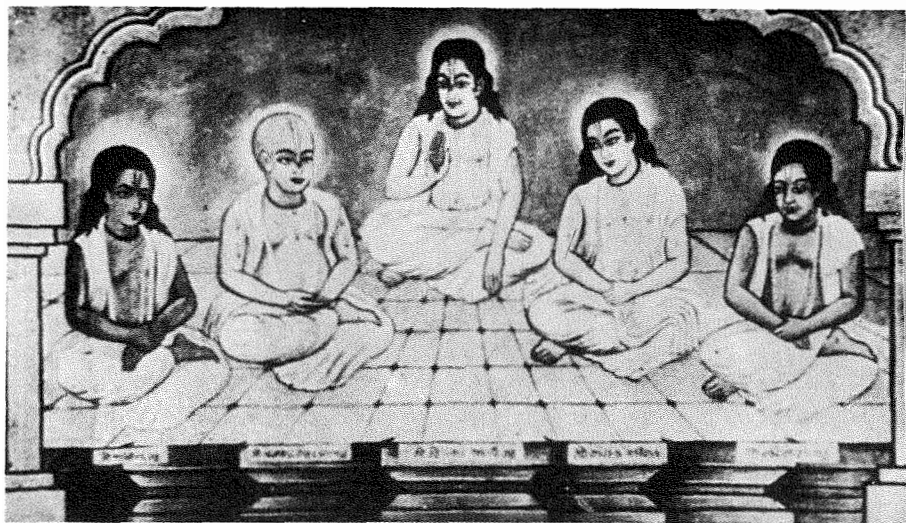
He came to Vrndavana, toured the twelve forests, and took *diksa* from Gopala Bhatta Gosvami. Sri Jiva Gosvami taught him the complete philosophy of Gaudiya Vaisnavism. Acknowledging his vast learning, Sri Jiva gave Srinivasa the title "Acarya."

Accepting Sri Jiva's order, Srinivasa and his two friends Syamananda Prabhu and Narottama Dasa Thakura pioneered the first transcendental book distribution party. Vrajabasi Sankirtana

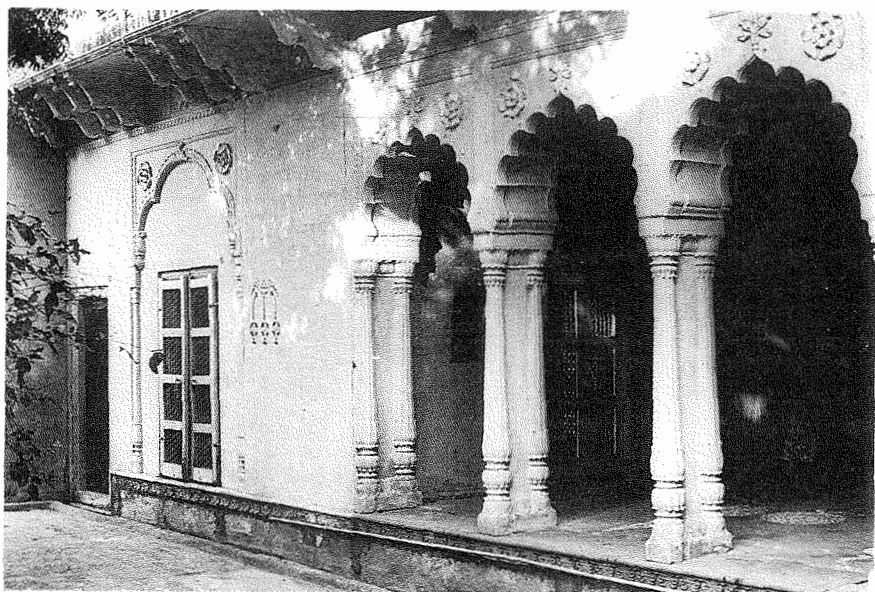


श्री श्रीनिवास आचार्य प्रभु कुंज
जंगमेश्वर रोड, मुन्दाबन
श्री श्रीनिवास आचार्य प्रभु कुंज
हमदनगर ४३१५, मुन्दाबन

Samadhi Entrance: Srinivasa, Ramacandra, Hemalata



Left to Right: Syamananda, Narottama Dasa, Srinivasa, RamacandraKaviraja, Rasikananda



Samadhis: Srinivasa Acarya, Ramacandra Kaviraja, Hemalata Thakurani

Party ki jai! They took a bullock cart of the Gosvami's devotional writings from Vrndavana and passed them out all over Bengal and Orissa.

Srinivasa Acarya initiated many disciples (Ramacandra Kaviraja and others), wrote songs full of *bhakti* (*Sad Gosvami-as-takam*), and introduced a special *kirtana* style. When leading *kirtana* he would sometimes lose his voice from chanting so long.

Besides his external activities of preaching and writing, Srinivasa Acarya practised intensive *raganuga bhajana*. *Raganuga bhajana* is the spontaneous internal worship of Radha and Krishna based on the mood and sentiments of the eternal residents of Sri Vrndavana dhama, such as the *gopis*. While doing *manasi seva* (service to Radha-Krishna within one's mind in a mentally conceived spiritual form) he would often bring tangible paraphernalia from these meditations back with him upon returning to external consciousness. Once Srinivasa sat Lord Gauranga on a jeweled throne within his mind. Then he worshiped the Lord with a golden handled *camara* whisk and a five flower garland. Pleased with his service, Gaura Raya offered the garland back to Srinivasa, who then immediately awoke and lost the meditation. A surprised Srinivasa found the sweetest flower garland he ever smelled hanging around his neck when he returned to external consciousness.

Another time Srinivasa was in his *siddha svarupa* as Mani-manjari watching Srimati Radharani, Sri Krishna, and the *gopis* in *Holi lila* (joyfully throwing colored powders and dyes on each other). The *gopis* told Mani-manjari to supply colors to Radhika and side with them in their "war" against Syama. The earth shook from Their furious battle. Srinivasa's meditation abruptly broke. His body was completely covered from head to toe with fragrant and exotic rainbow colored powders imported from the spiritual world. *Holi lila ki jai!* Srinivasa Acarya's *samadhi* is in the Dhira Samira samadhis area. (20,144)

Srivasa Pandit

Srivasa Pandit, fifth member of the Panca-tattva, *Sri Krishna Caitanya*, *Prabhu Nityananda*, *Sri Advaita*, *Gadadhara*, *Srivasadi*,

Gaura Bhakta Vrnda lived in Navadvipa before the advent of Lord Caitanya. Srivasa lead his brothers Sri Rama, Sri Nidhi, and Sripati in their devotional lives of singing Krishna's names, worshipping the Lord, and bathing thrice daily in the Ganges.

Meeting with Sri Advaita Acarya Prabhu, they studied *Bhagavatam* and prayed for an incarnation of the Supreme Lord. Why did they pray? Because only an *avatara* of Krishna could reestablish Vaisnavism among the staunch atheists, logicians, and proud pandits harassing Nadia at that time.

Malini, wife of Srivasa, was a constant friend of Saci Devi. She served Nimai as a nurse. When Lord Visvambhara appeared, the hearts of all the devotees were filled with parental affection (*vat-salya bhava*). Gauracandra loved Malini and Srivasa as a second mother and father.

Srivasa Angam was located two hundred yards north of Nimai's *bari* (house). Srivasa Pandit's palatial home had large comfortable rooms, a high protective boundary wall, and lush densely foliated gardens and groves. Everynight Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu and His dearest friends would enjoy ecstatic *kirtans* here and taste the mellows of Vrndavana.

Here, the raging Muslim Kazi broke the sacred *mrdanga* in his foolish attempt to stop Sri Krishna's Sankirtana Movement. Henceforward, Srivasa Angam was known as Khol Banga Danga (place where the *mrdanga* was broken).

The Kazi passed an ordinance prohibiting *sankirtana*. Violators would be converted to the Muslim faith and lose their property. Although most Nadia *vasis* (residents of Navadvipa) panicked over this, Srivasa Pandit laughed at the fanatical law.

Within Srivasa Angam Lord Gauranga-sundara showed His divine form to all His eternal associates. The house of Srivasa Pandit served as the headquarters of Gauranga's Sankirtana Movement. The daily *Bhagavatam* classes, nightly *kirtans*, and many confidential Vraja pastimes of Lord Gaura Raya ocured here.

Srivasa Pandit and Sri Advaita Acarya, the learned chiefs of the brahmana community, dedicated all their energy to the Lord's Hari-Nama Sankirtana Movement. They surrendered their

bodies, minds, homes, friends, family, and all possessions to Lord Gaura's service. They knew no other gods or goddesses. Srivasa Pandit maintained his family, not because they were his relatives, but because they were Sri Caitanya's loving servants.

Srivasa Pandit represents the marginal living entity (*tatastha jiva*). The devotees headed by Srivasa are described as Lord Caitanya's smaller limbs (His face, eyes, hands, disc, other weapons) They all took part in Sri Gaurasundara's pastimes. With them Lord Gauranga spread the *sankirtana* movement. Srivasa Pandit is Narada Muni, an inter-galactic preacher and constant associate of the Lord. His *samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area. (21, 108)

Sri Subuddhi Raya

One time the Moghul King Hussain Shah took water from his pot and sprinkled it on Subuddhi Raya. According to strict Hindu law this act destroyed Subuddhi Raya's social standing. A *smarta* brahmana advised Subuddhi to atone by drinking boiling ghee, which in effect meant suicide. Receiving Mahaprabhu's shelter, Subuddhi Raya moved to Sri Vrndavana dhama.

He was a *rasika* Vaisnava. His colleagues were Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami, Kasivara Pandit, and other Vrndavana devotees. In Krishna *lila* he is Guna-chuda or Subhanana. His original *samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area. (21,23)

Sri Sundarananda Thakura

Sundarananda Thakura was an ocean of Krishna *prema*. As Sri Nityananda Prabhu's chief associate and intimate servant he enjoyed many transcendental pastimes. Together they relished the pastimes of Vrndavana.

He was a *naistika brahmacari* (lifelong celibate). In Mahesh-pura he established Deities of Radha-Vallabha. In Vraja *lila* he is Sudama, one of the twelve cowherd boys. His personal Deity of Radha-Kalachandji is worshiped in the Radha-Govinda temple in Vrndavana, and his *samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area. (21,21)

Sri Svarupa Damodara Gosvami

One of the closest associates of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Purusottama Acarya (Svarupa) knew exactly the heart of Sri Krishna Caitanya. Glorifying him as "the storehouse of all devotional mellows," Lord Caitanya added the word Damodara to his name.

Svarupa Damodara revealed to the world the innermost emotions of Sri Caitanya's mood of Radharani feeling separation from Krishna. Sensing Lord Gauranga's moods, Svarupa Damodara would perform *kirtana* to enhance the Lord's internal sentiments. To soothe Lord Caitanya's love pangs in *viraha bhava* he would sing songs from *Gita-Govinda*, *Krishna Karnamrta*, and the love poems of Candidasa and Vidyapati.

Throughout the day and night Svarupa Damodara and Ramananda Raya stayed near Sri Caitanya in order to nourish His pastimes. "He is one of the three and one-half most intimate devotees of Lord Caitanya (Ramananda Raya, Sikhi Mahiti, Madhavi Devi)." Just as Lalita and Visakha are Radharani's dearest *gopis*, Svarupa Damodara (*Visakha-sakhi*) and Ramananda Raya (*Lalita-sakhi*) are Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's most confidential associates.

Svarupa Damodara was the "guardian of the Gaudiya devotees." So whenever a devotee misbehaved Lord Gaurasundara would say, "Svarupa, your Gaudiya did such and such." Svarupa Damodara would personally check for grammatical or philosophical flaws in any newly written verse, song, or book before giving it to Lord Caitanya for approval.

Krishna Dasa Kaviraja used Svarupa Damodara's *Karcha* (memoirs of Sri Caitanya's life) to compile the *Caitanya-caritamrta*. Svarupa Damodara Gosvami also wrote *Sangita-Damodara*, a book of music. His *samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area. (21,108)

Sri Syamananda Prabhu

Feeling very sad (*dukhi*) over losing several children before his birth, his parents named him Dukhi Krishna Dasa. Upon taking

diksa from Hrdaya Caitanya he became known as Krishna Dasa. In Vrndavana, he joined Narottama Dasa Thakura and Srinivasa Acarya to study the Gosvami *granthas* under Sri Jiva Gosvami.

Many "ankle bell stories" describe how Krishna Dasa received Radharani's mercy, the name Syamananda, and his unique tilaka mark. Sripad B.V. Narayana Maharaja gives this account in *Navadvipa Dhama Parikrama*:

"While living in Vrndavana, Krishna Dasa regularly swept the streets before dawn. He performed this humble service so that the Vaisnavas would not hurt their feet while walking to the temples. One morning he found a captivatingly beautiful golden ankle bracelet. When Lalita and Visakha-*sakhis* asked for the bracelet Krishna Dasa said he would only give it to the original owner.

"Blindfolding Krishna Dasa, the *gopis* brought him to Srimati Radhika. She allowed him to put the bracelet on Her ankle. But before fastening it, Krishna Dasa reverentially touched it to his forehead. This left a new tilaka mark which now distinguishes all of Syamananda's followers.

"Rejoicing over Krishna Dasa's transcendental fortune, Sri Jiva Gosvami awarded him the name Syamananda (one who pleases Srimati Radharani or the servant of Syamasundara Krishna. Sometime after Hrdaya Caitanya's disappearance, he reappeared in a dream telling Syamananda to preach. With the help of his foremost disciple, Rasikananda, Syamananda profusely spread the worship and service of Gaura-Nityananda all over Orissa." Twenty-four hour *kirtana* surrounds Syamananda's *pushpa samadhi* which is located on the opposite side of the street running between Radha-Syamasundara and Radha-Damodara temples in Vrndavana.

Sri Tapana Mishra

Tapana Mishra, father of Sri Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami, first met Lord Caitanya in East Bengal. The Lord was teaching Sanskrit there during His *grhastha lila*. Although Tapana Mishra was also a *pandit*, he couldn't ascertain the path of perfection. Sri Nimai Pandit enlightened him by saying, "Hari Nama *sankirtana* is

the only means to attain perfection in the age of Kali." *Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.*

During His *sannyasa lila* Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu met Tapana Mishra in Kasi (Varanasi), the capital of the mayavadis. The Lord gave more spiritual instructions and took *prasadam* in his home. At that time, Lord Caitanya told Raghunatha Bhatta not to neglect his parents since they were Vaisnavas. Raghunatha carefully served his devotee parents. After they left this world Raghunatha Bhatta went to Jagannatha Puri to associate with Lord Gauranga. Hearing about the disappearance of Raghunatha's parents, Lord Caitanya spoke in length about the devotion of Tapana Mishra and his wife.

His *samadhi* is located next to Sanatana Gosvami's *samadhi* behind Radha-Madan Mohana mandir. (17,29)

Sri Uddharana Datta Thakura

Uddharana Datta Thakura, a *dvadasa gopala*, lived in Saptagrama, a cluster of seven villges (Krishnapura, Nityanandapura, Vasudevapura, Sivapura, Bansabediya, Sahanagara, Saptagrama. Raised in luxury within a family of gold merchants, he later married and worked as a wealthy state minister. The place where he once held office is today called Uddharanapura in his honor.

Lord Nityananda would often stay in his home and accept food from his hand. Performing *prema nama sankirtana* in Saptagrama, Lord Nityananda delivered the entire community of bankers and gold merchants. Uddharana Datta said that Saptagrama is such a holy place that simply by seeing it one is freed from all sins. When he was twenty-six years old his wife suddenly died. He left everything to associate with Sri Nityananda Prabhu and preach the glories of Krishna's holy names.

He personally installed and worshiped Deities of Sad-bhuja Mahaprabhu, Sri Nityananda Prabhu, Gadadhara Pandit. He serves Lord Balarama as Subahu *sakha* in *Vraja lila*. His *samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area.

After glorifying Uddharana Datta Thakura as, "an exalted devotee of Lord Nityananda who worshiped Him in all ways," Krishna Dasa Kaviraja praises all of Sri Nityananda Prabhu's devotees: "No one can count the unlimited followers of Nityananda Prabhu. I have mentioned some of them simply for my own purification. As branches of Lord Nityananda's tree, these eternal associates are full of the ripened fruits of Krishna *prema*. They gave these fruits to everyone, flooding them with pure love of God. These devotees have unlimited strength to give eternal unalloyed love of Krishna. They can offer anyone Krishna *prema*," (21,108)

Sri Vakresvara Pandit

Once in the house of Srivasa Thakura Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu sang while Vakresvara Pandit danced in constant ecstasy for seventy-two hours. At that time Lord Caitanya said, "Vakresvara, I have only one wing like you, but if I had another certainly I could fly in the sky."

Expert at singing and dancing, Vakresvara Pandit always pleased Lord Caitanya with his service in the Navadvipa *sankirtana* parties (which he joined from the beginning), the dramas at Srivas Angam, and the yearly Ratha-yatra at Jagannatha Puri.

Vrndavana Dasa Thakura said, "To awaken the sleeping souls in the age of Kali Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to distribute the nectar of the holy name of Krishna. When He came the *khol* (*mrdanga*) and *karatal*s sounded like thundering clouds. Absorbed in moods of ecstatic love and shouting "Hari bol Hari bol," Sri Gauranga told everyone to chant the holy name of Krishna. Raising His golden arms to the sky, Lord Gaura Hari would dance in ecstasy. At that time, Vakresvara Pandit and others would dance with the Lord." (*Caitanya Bhagavata*)

By Vakresvara's blessings Devananda Pandit was freed from the Vaisnava *aparadha* he committed against Srivasa Pandit. Then Sri Caitanya accepted Devananda Pandit as one of His "own devotees." Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu commented on this incident, "Krishna has made His home in the heart of Vakresvara Pandit.

ly she worshiped Tulasi Devi, and observed vows of austerity such as bathing thrice daily in the Ganges.

Whenever she met Saci Mata at the Ganges Vishnupriya would humbly bow down at her feet. Saci Devi often thought that chaste beautiful Vishnupriya would make an ideal bride for her son Nimai. After Laxmipriya Devi, Lord Caitanya's first wife, "died in separation from the Lord," Nimai Pandit married Srimati Vishnupriya Devi. *Caitanya Mangala* and *Caitanya Bhagavata* give elaborate descriptions of this most auspicious wedding.

Buddhimanta Khan, a rich landowner, bore all expenses of the opulent royal wedding of the Divine Couple, Vishnupriya and Sri Nimai Pandit. All the people of Navadvipa and the neighboring villages came to the wedding. During the ceremony all eyes were on the Divine Couple, as if to devour the matchless beauty of Vishnupriya and Nimai Pandit.

The Vaisnavas sang Hari's glories. The brahmanas made a circle around the Lord and chanted the *Vedas*. A sea of joy flooded the four directions. Those who didn't drown simply floated in bliss. Besides the wedding, Vrndavana Dasa Thakura doesn't elaborate about Vishnupriya's pastimes.

In *Caitanya Mangala*, Locana Dasa Thakura tells pastimes not mentioned elsewhere. He narrates the especially touching last conversation Lord Gauranga had with Vishnupriya Devi the night before He took *sannyasa*:

"In a voice choked with emotion, Vishnupriya said, 'Tell me, O Pranatha (Lord of my life), is it true the rumor I heard that You will take *sannyasa* and leave me? If I lose Your association I might as well end my life by drinking poison.'

"Responding with gentle compassionate words, Sri Gaura Raya said, 'Vishnupriya, you are as dear to Me as life itself. There is no need to worry. Please hear what I am about to say; for it will help you. The only truth in this world is Bhagavan and the Vaisnavas. Everything else is illusion. Fathers, mothers, children, relationships between men and women are all illusory. Krishna is the master, the real husband of everyone. Don't lament, don't worry; your name is Vishnupriya. Therefore, fulfill the real meaning of Vishnupriya and always think of Krishna within your heart.'

"Then Sri Gaurasundara showed His four-armed form which helped Vishnupriya understand His absolute position. Seeing this vanquished Vishnupriya's grief and pain. She felt blissful. This vision and Mahaprabhu's instructions removed her bewilderment. But she kept the mentality of taking the Lord as her husband.

"Sobbing and falling at Lord Caitanya's feet, she said, 'I beg You to accept my humble submission. You are the most dear Lord of my life, my only wealth. Without You, without Your service I have nothing.'

"Lord Gauranga embraced Vishnupriya with His eyes. He gave her mercy with these words: 'I shall travel here and there. But wherever I go, I shall always remain at your place.'

"Understanding the supremely independent nature of Lord Gaura, Vishnupriya said, 'You must do what makes You happy my Lord. Let no one be an obstacle to Your divine mission.'" (*Caitanya Mangala*)

After Sri Nimai Pandit left Navadvipa, Vishnupriya adopted an austere and devoted life. She became as thin as the crescent moon before *Amavasya* (dark moon). Following a rigid *sadhana* (spiritual practice), she set aside one grain of rice for every round of Hare Krishna *japa* she chanted. In the evening, Vishnupriya Devi cooked these grains, offered them to her personal Deity of Mahaprabhu, and honored the remnants. Known today as Dhamesvara Mahaprabhu, Vishnupriya's gorgeous Deity of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu resides in Navadvipa city. Sriman Mahaprabhu receives regular worship and gives unlimited mercy.

Sri Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura

Appearing in 1638, Sri Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura (Hari Vallabha Dasa) came in the disciplic succession from Sri Narotama Dasa Thakura. Visvanatha took *diksa* from Sri Radha Ramana Cakravarti. Although married, Visvanatha was indifferent and soon renounced family life. He came to Vrndavana dhama and did Krishna *bhajana* at Radha-kunda.

He was known as "the crest jewel of the Vaisnavas" because of his pure devotion, scholarship, and realized perception of Radha

Gokulananda's intimate conjugal pastimes. Gaudiya authorities say that Sri Rupa Gosvami is *vag-devavatara* (an incarnation of the god of speech). And Gaudiya *acaryas*, especially among his direct disciples, believe that Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura is an incarnation of Sri Rupa Gosvami.

Among all Gaudiya Vaisnava *acaryas* only Visvanatha Cakravarti comes close to matching Srila Rupa Gosvami's profound realizations on the Absolute Truth. Visvanatha Cakravarti's name itself implies his position. Visvanatha means "He who reveals the jewel of devotion to Visvanatha (Sri Krishna, the Lord of the universe)." Cakravarti means "he who expands the *cakra* (circle) of *bhakti*."

Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura said, "Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura was the protector, guardian, and *acarya* during the middle period (1600-1700) of the historical development of Gaudiya Vaisnavism." The growth of Gaudiya Vaisnavism began with Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. It was later rejuvenated by Srila Thakura Bhaktivinoda, spread by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, and broadcast all over the world by Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON.

During his stay in Vrndavana, Visvanatha worshiped Deities of Radha Gokulananda and Sri Giriraja. His Govardhana *sila* was first worshiped by Lord Caitanya, then Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami, Krishna Dasa Kaviraja, Sri Mukunda Dasa, Srimati Krishna Priya Thakurani, and Visvanatha Cakravarti. Today this Giriraja Govardhana Deity resides in the Radha-Gokulananda temple in Vrndavana. Some claim the Govardhana *sila* is in "Bhagavat Nivas" in Ramana Reti near the ISKCON Krishna Balarama Mandir.

In a dream Lord Sri Krishna ordered Visvanatha to make commentaries on the Gosvami's books. Immediately, he started writing prolifically. Clouds would shield him from the sun whenever he sat to write. Once a torrential downpour flooded the area where Visvanatha was writing his *Bhagavata* commentaries. Miraculously, not a drop touched Visvanatha or his *Bhagavata* manuscript.

While compiling *Mantrartha Dipika* (explanation on Kama Gayatri), Visvanatha became perplexed. According to his exhaustive research which indicated twenty five, he couldn't substantiate why Krishna Dasa Kaviraja wrote in *Caitanya-caritamrta* that Kama Gayatri contains twenty-four and one-half syllables. And that these syllables correspond to the twenty-four and one-half moons present on Krishna's transcendental body.

In a dream Srimati Radhika instructed Visvanatha, "O Visvanatha, Please don't lament anymore. What Krishna Dasa Kaviraja wrote is true. He is also My confidential maidservant. And he knows everything about My most secret innermost moods. This Kama Gayatri is the mantra for worshiping Me. Indeed, I can be known by the syllables of this mantra. Without My mercy, no one can learn anything about the mystery of this mantra."

"The solution to the half syllable is found in the book *Var-nagama-bhasvadi*. Seeing this book, Krishna Dasa Kaviraja wrote as he did. The letter *ya* which is followed by the letter *vi* as in the words *kama devaya vidmahe* is considered to be a half syllable. This falls on Krishna's forehead because His forehead is shaped like the halo of a half moon. All the other letters of the mantra are full syllables and therefore full moons. Now wake up, check that book, and compile this evidence for everyone's benefit."

Instantly awaking, Visvanatha cried out in ecstasy--"Hey Radhe! Hey Radhe! Hey Radhe!" Having Radharani's *darsana* infused Visvanatha Cakravarti's writing with divine *sakti*. He felt that he had been accepted as one of Srimati Radharani's confidential maidservants. His writings reflected this realization.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura wrote over forty Sanskrit books on the science of pure devotion to Radha-Giridhari. He also made the sweetest, most highly realized *rasika tikas* (commentaries) on *Srimad Bhagavatam*, *Bhagavad-gita*, the works of Srila Rupa Gosvami, Kavi Karnapura, and Narottama Dasa Thakura.

Sri Krishna Bhavanamrta, *Madhurya kadambini*, *Vraja-riti cintamani*, *Camatkara Candrika*, *Svapna Vilasamrta*, *Sankalpa Kalpa Druma*, and others. The life and teachings of Srila Visvanatha Cakravartipada give happiness, inspiration, and transcendental wisdom to the entire Gaudiya Vaisnava *sampradaya*. We sincerely

pray that after thousands of births we will someday qualify to become a particle of dust under the shade of his lotus feet. Srila Visvanatha Cakravartipada ki jai!

In Krishna *lila* he serves Srimati Radhika as Vinoda-manjari. His *samadhi* is in the Radha Gokulananda temple courtyard. (96)

Srila Vrndavana Dasa Thakura

In her childhood, Narayani Devi, niece of Srivasa Pandit, became mad with love of God upon receiving the mercy of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu. Later she gave birth to Vrndavana Dasa, who was the last disciple of Sri Nityananda Prabhu. On his guru's order he wrote *Sri Caitanya Bhagavata*.

It is practically a law among Vaisnava writers like Sri Rupa Gosvami, Sri Sanatana Gosvami, Krishna Dasa Kāvīraja, and Vrndavana Dasa Thakura to always keep themselves in the background. They never mention anything about their family lineage or personal history. The authors of the best written and most relishable verses collected in Sri Rupa Gosvami's *Padyavali* remain unknown.

During the sixteenth century, entire books of exceptional transcendental prose and poetry were penned by prideless Vaisnavas preferring to remain anonymous. Feeling utmost humility, such Vaisnava writers express themselves only in relation to their preceptors. Krishna Dasa Kaviraja glorifies his gurus at the end of each chapter of *Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta: sri rupa raghunatha-pade yara asa, caitanya caritamṛta kahe krsnadasa*.

"Praying at the lotus feet of Sri Rupa and Sri Raghunatha, always desiring their mercy, I, Krishna Dasa, narrate *Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta*, following in their footsteps."

Srila Krishna Dasa Kaviraja Gosvami shows his supreme homage and gratitude by honoring Vrndavana Dasa Thakura with the appellation "Vyasa" in the *Caitanya-caritamṛta Antya* 20.82: "Vrndavana Dasa Thakura is Lord Nityananda's favorite devotee. And therefore he is the original Vyasadeva in describing the pastimes of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu." As Srila Vyasadeva told Sri

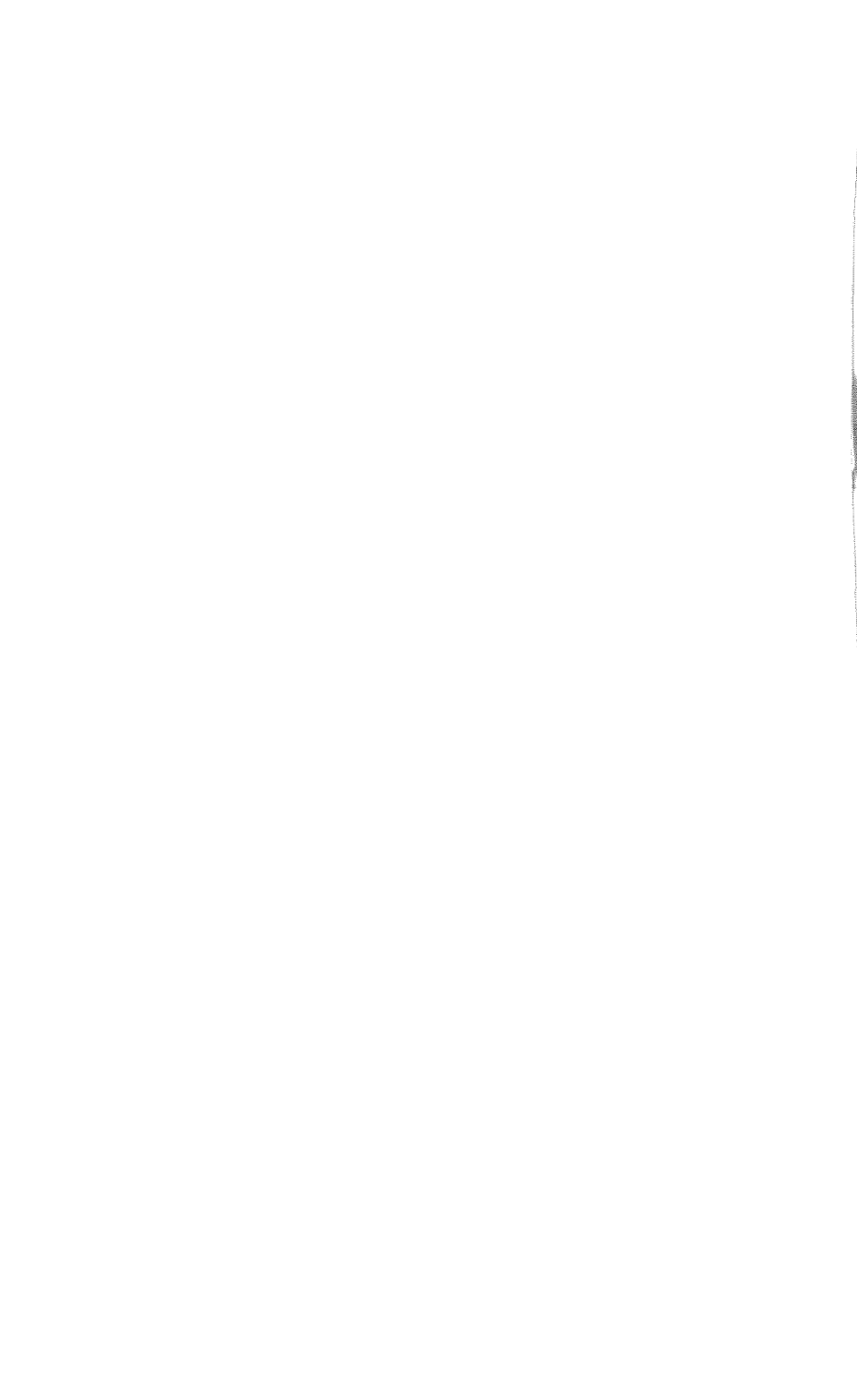
Krishna's pastimes in *Bhagavatam* and other *Puranas*, Srila Vrndavana Dasa Thakura described Caitanya *lila* in *Caitanya Bhagavata*.

The humble heart of Krishna Dasa Kaviraja pours out more praises of Vrndavana Dasa Thakura: "Hearing *Caitanya Bhagavata* destroys all misfortune. By reading *Caitanya Bhagavata* one will understand the glories of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityananda. And he will attain the highest perfection of knowledge---pure love of Krishna.

"Since such a wonderful book could not be written by a human being, it seems that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself has spoken it through the mouth of Srila Vrndavana Dasa Thakura. I offer millions of respectful obeisances to the lotus feet of Vrndavana Dasa Thakura. By compiling such a valuable book he has delivered everyone from the cycle of birth and death." (*Caitanya-caritamrta Adi* 8.33-42)

At Mamagacchi in Modadrumadvipa (Navadvipa), Vrndavana Dasa Thakura established Deities of Nitai-Gauranga and Sri Jagannatha Deva. He lived there as a celibate and worshiped his beloved Deities. Vrndavana Dasa Thakura had many disciples including Gopinatha Brahmachari, a descendent of Sri Kesava Bharati.

In Krishna's pastimes Vrndavana Dasa Thakura is Srila Vyasadeva. His *samadhi* is in the 64 Samadhis Area.



APPENDIX

Dvadasa Gopalas---The Twelve Cowherd Boys (from Krishna *lila* who descended in Kali-*yuga* as intimate servants and associates of Sri Nityananda Prabhu)

Names in Gaura Lila / Names in Krishna Lila

Abhirama Gopala	Sridama sakha
Sundarananda	Sudama"
Kamalakara Pippalai	Mahabala "
Gauridasa Pandit	Subala"
Paramesvara Dasa	Arjuna
Dhananjaya Pandit	Vasudama
Mahesh Pandit	Mahabahu
Purusottama Dasa	Stoka-Krishna
Kala Krishna Dasa	Lavanga
Purusottama Nagara	Dama
Uddharana Datta	Subahu
Sridhara (Kholaveca)	Kusumasava

Gaudiya Vaisnava Acarya Chronology

16th C. early	Sri Sanatana Gosvami, Sri Rupa Gosvami, Sri Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami, Gopala Bhatta Gosvami, Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami
16th C. late (1570-1610)	Sri Jiva Gosvami, Krishna Dasa Kaviraja
16th C.- 17th C.	Narottama Dasa Thakura, Srinivasa Acarya, Syamananda Prabhu
17th C. (1640-1730)	Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura
17th C.- 18th C. early	Baladeva Vidyabhusana
18th C. later	Madhusudana Dasa Babaji

19th C. early	Jagannatha Dasa Babaji
19th C.- 20th C.	Gaura Kishora Dasa Babaji Thakura Bhaktivinoda
20th C. early	Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura
20th C. later	A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Cousata Mahantas (Lord Caitanya's 64 most confidential devotees)

In Their Vrndavana *nitya madhurya lila* Radha and Krishna are served by loving devotees with different degrees of intimacy. Manjaris, for example, are sweet innocent girls who assist Srimati Radharani even when She's alone with Lord Syamasundara. Other servants keep some distance, and please the Divine Couple by collecting fruits, flowers, sandalwood and other items. Acaryas list eight topmost devotees of Radharani as the *asta-sakhis*: Lalita-sakhi, Visakha-sakhi, Ranga devi, Campakalata, Citra, Indulekha, Tungavidya, Sudevi. Each of these *gopis* has eight *gopis* serving under them. $8 \times 8 = 64$ very confidential associates.

When Radha and Krishna descend to this world as Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu these same 64 eternal associates take male forms to serve Lord Caitanya's *sankirtana* pastimes. As you will see, the number of the Lord's intimate associates exceeds 64, but authorities use the number 64 because this is an auspicious number. Slight variations appear in different listings of the 64 most intimate devotees. The devotees listed below, however, are most often mentioned. Most of these eternal associates of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu have *samadhis* in the 64 Samadhis Area in Vrndavana. See color photo in front of book.

The 64 Mahantas

The Panca-Tattva stand on a six-sided jeweled *simhasana* in the center of the Yogapitha at Sridham Mayapur, Navadvipa. 8 Mahantas surround them like petals of a lotus flower.

8 Mahantas, equal to Radha's *asta-sakhis*, and 8 group members:

1. Svarupa Damodara---Candrasekhara Acarya, Ratnagarbha Thakura, Sri Govinda, Sri Garuda Pandit, Sri Mukunda, Damodara Pandit, Krishna Dasa Thakura, Krishnananda Thakura.

2. Ramananda Raya---Madhava Acarya, Dvija Subhananda, Ramacandra Datta, Vasudeva Datta, Nandanacarya, Sankara Thakura, Sudarshan Thakura, Subuddhi Raya.

3. Govindananda Thakura---Sri Rama Pandit, Jagannatha Dasa, Jagadish Pandit, Sadasiva Kaviraja, Sri Mukunda Raya, Sri Mukundananda, Purandara Acarya, Narayana Vacaspati.

4. Ramananda Vasu---Paramananda Thakura, Ballava Thakura, Jagadish Thakura, Vanamali Dasa, Srikara Pandit, Srinatha Mishra, Lakhan Acarya, Purusottama Pandit.

5. Sivananda Sena---Sri Makaradvaja Datta, Raghunatha Datta, Sri Madhu Pandit, Vishnu Dasa Acarya, Purandara Mishra, Govinda Thakura, Paramananda Gupta, Balarama Dasa.

6. Govinda Ghosh---Kashi Mishra, Sikhi Mahiti, Sriman Pandit, Bada Haridasa, Kavicandra Thakura, Hiranyagarbha Thakura, Jagannatha Sena, Dvija Pitambar.

7. Madhava Ghosh (or Vakresvara Pandit)---Sri Makaradvaja Sena, Sri Vidhyavacaspati, Sri Govinda Thakura, Sri Kavi Karnapura, Sri Kanta Thakura, Madhava Pandit, Prabodhananda Sarasvati, Balabhadra Bhattacharya.

8. Vasudeva Ghosh---Raghava Pandit, Murari Caitanya, Makaradvaja Pandit, Kansari Sena, Sri Jiva Pandit, Sri Mukunda Kaviraja, Chota Haridasa, Kavicandra.

The Eight Gosvamis: Sri Rupa, Sri Sanatana, Sri Lokanatha, Sri Raghunatha Dasa, Sri Raghunatha Bhatta, Sri Jiva, Sri Gopala Bhatta, Krishna Dasa Kaviraja.

The Eight Kavirajas (including Sri Jahnava Devi): Govinda Kaviraja, Karnapura Kaviraja, Nrsimha Kaviraja, Bhagavan Kaviraja, Ballavikanta, Gopiramana, Gokula Kaviraja.

The Dvadasa Gopalas (twelve cowherd boys): Abhirama Gopala, Sundarananda, Dhananjaya, Gauridasa Pandit, Kamalakara Pippalai, Uddharana Datta Thakura, Mahesh Pandit, Purusottama Dasa, Nagar Purusottama, Paramesvara Dasa, Kholveca Sridhara, Kala Krishna Dasa.

The Four Gate Keepers: Mukunda Dasa, Saranga Thakura, Govinda Acarya, Vamsivadana Dasa.

TOTAL NUMBER OF ETERNAL ASSOCIATES LISTED: 104, although generally this list is called the 64 Mahants.

TIROBHAVA BHAJANS

Saparsada-bhagavad-viraha-janita-vilapa

Narottama Dasa Thakura

*ye anilo prema-dhana koruna pracur
 heno prabhu kotha gela acarya-thakur.
 kaha mora swarup rupa kaha sanatan
 kaha dasa raghunatha patita-pavan.
 kaha mora bhatta-juga kaha kaviraj
 eka-kale kotha gela gora nata-raj.
 pasane kutibo matha anale pasibo
 gauranga gunera nidhi kotha gele pabo.
 se-saba sangira sange je koilo bilas
 se-sanga na paiya kande narottama das.
 jai vaisnav thakur, jai vaisnav thakur,
 jai vaisnav thakur, jai vaisnav thakur.
 nitai gaura--hari bol, hari bol, hari bol, hari bol!*

"Srinivasa Acarya Thakura gave Krishna *prema* (pure love) to everyone. Oh, where has Prabhu gone now?

"Where are my Svarupa Damodara and Sri Rupa Gosvami? Where is Sanatana? Where is Dasa Raghunatha, the lifter of the fallen?

"Where are my Raghunatha Bhatta and Gopala Bhatta? And where is Krishna Dasa Kaviraja? Where did Gauranga Mahaprabhu, the king of dancers, suddenly go?

"I will crush my head with a rock and jump into a fire. Where will I find Lord Gauranga, the ocean of jewel-like qualities?

"Being separated from their loving association and the blissful pastimes of Mahaprabhu, Narottama Dasa can only cry."

Ohe! Vaisnava Thakura

Sri Thakura Bhaktivinoda

Ohe!

*vaisnava thakura, doyara sagara
e dase koruna kori.
diya pada-chaya, sodho he amaya,
tomara carana dhorī.
chaya bega domi, chaya dosa sodhi,
chaya guna deho dase.
chaya sat-sanga, deho he amare,
boshechi sangerā ase.
ekaki amara, nahi paya bala,
hari-nama-sankirtane.
tumi kṛpa kori, sraddha-bindhu diya,
deho kṛṣṇa-nama-dhane.
kṛṣṇa se tomara, kṛṣṇa dite paro,
tomara sti ache.
ami to kangala, kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa boli,
dhai tava pache pache.*

"O Vaisnava Thakura! O ocean of mercy. Please be merciful to your servant. Keep me sheltered under your lotus feet and purify my heart. With both hands I firmly grasp your lotus feet.

"Help me to control my mind, words, anger, tongue, stomach, genitals (six passions). Remove my tendency for overeating, sense gratification, attachment to material things, inability to follow the four regulative principles, impure habits, and useless idle talk (six bad qualities). Give me firm faith in *bhakti*, enthusiasm to practice

bhakti, a strong desire to attain *prema bhakti*, a favorable service attitude, appreciation of devotees, power to avoid materialistic people (the six qualities needed to make spiritual advancement). By your mercy may I always associate in public with devotees, invite devotees into my home, hear and chant about Krishna with devotees, receive *maha-prasadam* from a devotee's hand, and offer *maha-prasadam* to devotees (six ways to associate with devotees).

"Alone, I have no strength to chant the holy name of Lord Krishna. I need your mercy. Please give me a drop of faith so I can attain the treasure of Krishna's name.

"Krishna is yours. And you have the power to give Krishna to me. I am just a poor beggar running behind you chanting, "Krishna Krishna."

Srīla Prabhupāda Mahimāmṛta

Mahānidhi Swami

(sung to tune of *jaya radhe, jaya krishna, jaya vrndavana sri govinda, gopinatha, madana mohan*)

*jaya bāla līlā jaya, sankīrtan-vilāsa
jaya jaya nagar-kīrtan, gaura-prema-rāsa.*

*jaya jagannātha jaya, jaya ratha-yātrā
jaya jaya hare kṛṣṇa, jaya mahā-mantra.*

*jaya sarasvatī thākura, mahā-mukta-jana
dāsānudāsa jaya, caranāravindam.*

*srī bhaktivedānta jaya, ratna dvija-rāja
jaya bhāgavata jaya, bhakti-tikā-kavirāja.*

*jaya rādhā-dāmodara, srī jīva gosvami
sevā-kuñja jaya jaya, srī rūpa mañjari.*

*jaya śrīla prabhupāda, śrī vaiṣṇava thākura
jaya jaya jagat guru, jaya nitāi-gaur.*

*jaya bhagavad-gītā, jaya śāstra-pramāna
jaya jaya pracār-krpā, patita-pāvana.*

*jaya rādhā-kṛṣṇa-mandira, jaya sādhu-saṅga
śrī kṛṣṇa prasada jaya, ISKCON brhat mrdanga.*

*jaya śrī kiṣora jaya, jaya śrī kiṣorī
jaya hari-nāma jaya, jaya BBT.*

*jaya kṛṣṇa balarāma, jaya gopa-gana
śrīla prabhupāda jaya, jaya śrī iskcon.*

*jaya nitya-līlā jaya, jaya vrndāvana
śyāmā-śyāma-carana-seva, jaya govardhana.*

*jaya śuddha-nāma jaya, vraja-vāsa-āṣa
jaya guru-krpā jaya, dīna nitya-dāsa.*

Srila Prabhupada Mahimamrta translation

(1) All glories to Srila Prabhupada's childhood pastimes. All glories to his spreading the *sankirtan* movement of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. All glories to his chanting of Hare Krishna *kirtana* through the streets of Calcutta. All glories to his always relishing the mellow of pure love for Lord Caitanya.

(2) All glories to Lord Jagannatha. All glories to His blissful Ratha-yatra festival, which Srila Prabhupada began at the age of

five. All glories to the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*, which Srila Prabhupada chanted while leading Lord Jagannatha down Harrison Road in Calcutta.

(3) All glories to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, the greatest among liberated souls. All glories to his disciple, Abhay Caranaravinda, who fearlessly and humbly acted as a servant of the servant of the lotus feet of Sri Krishna.

(4) All glories to Srila Prabhupada, the crest jewel of all brahmanas, who was honored for his pure devotion and Vedic scholarship with the title Bhaktivedanta. All glories to the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. All glories to Srila Prabhupada, the king of poets, whose commentaries on *Bhagavat* are full of bhakti and his devotional ecstasies.

(5) All glories to Sri Jiva Gosvami's beloved Deities of Radha-Damodara, who were so dear to Srila Prabhupada. All glories to Seva-kunja in Vrndavana, where Syamasundara serves Kishori. All glories to Sri Rupa-manjari, the constant companion of Srimati Radharani.

(6) All glories to Srila Prabhupada, the most wonderful Vaisnava saint. All glories to the Jagat Guru Srila Prabhupada, who distributed Krishna consciousness all over the world and all over the universe. All glories to the most merciful Lords, Sri Nityananda Prabhu and Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu.

(7) All glories to the *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*. All glories to this scripture (*sastra*), which establishes the proof about the Personality of Godhead Sri Krishna. All glories to Srila Prabhupada's preaching mercy, which purifies and uplifts the fallen souls of Kali-yuga.

(8) All glories to the temples of Radha and Krishna that Srila Prabhupada opened in 108 different cities around the world. All glories to the blissful association of Krishna's devotees found within these temples. All glories to the "big *mrdanga*"---the global

sound made by ISKCON's continual distribution of Srila Prabhupada's books to benefit mankind.

(9) All glories to Sri Kishora (Lord Krishna) and to Sri Kishori (Srimati Radharani), the Deities in ISKCON Chicago. A devotee asked, "Why does Radharani's name (Kishori) appear at the end, when everywhere else Her name comes before Krishna's, as in Radha-Govinda, Radha-Syamasundara, and Radha-Damodara?" Srila Prabhupada smiled sweetly and said, "Why? Because we always save the best for last." All glories to the holy names of Krishna. All glories to Srila Prabhupada's BBT-- the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

(10) All glories to Krishna Balarama, the beloved Deities of Srila Prabhupada that he personally installed in ISKCON Vrndavana. All glories to the cowherd boys of Vrndavana. All glories to Srila Prabhupada. All glories to the wonderful and beautiful ISKCON--the International Society for Krishna Consciousness--which Srila Prabhupada founded to save humanity.

(11) All glories to Radha-Krishna's eternally flowing transcendental pastimes. All glories to Sri Vrndavana Dhama. All glories to Srila Prabhupada, who eternally lives in Vrndavana, serving the lotus feet of Radha(Syama)-Syamasundara. All glories to Govardhana Hill. Giri-Govardhana is the most beautiful and glorious of all mountains. Govardhana is simultaneously the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Krishna and also the best devotee of the Lord.

(12) All glories to the pure chanting of the holy names of Radha and Krishna. All glories to the desire to reside in Vraja dhama. All glories to the mercy of the spiritual master. Only by receiving your mercy, Srila Prabhupada, and by purely chanting the holy names of Radha and Krishna can this fallen eternal servant of yours ever fulfill his desire to live eternally in Vrndavana.

Sucaka Kirtanas

(sung on disappearance day)

Sanatana Gosvami Sucaka Kirtana

śrī rūpera vairāgya-kāle, sanātana bandiśāle
viṣāda bhāvaye mane mane
rūpere karunā kari, trāna koilā gaura hari
mo adhame nā koilo smarāṇe
mora karma doṣā phānde, hate paye gole bāndhe
rākhiyāche kārāgāre pheli
āpana karuna phanse, dṛḍha bāndhī mora keṣe
carana nimate leha tuli
paścāte agādha jala, dui pāṣe dāvānala
sammukhe sāndhilo vyādha bāṇa
kātare harinī dāke, padiyā viṣama pāke
tumi nātha more kara trāna
jagāi-mādhāi hele, vāsudeve ajāmīle
anāyāse karilā uddhāra
karunā ābhāsa kori, sanātana padatari
deha yena ghoṣaye samsāra
e-duḥkha-samudra-ghore, nistāra karaha more
tomā vinā nāhi anya jana
hena-kāle anya jane, alakṣite sanātane
patra dilā rūpera likhana
rūpera likhana pe'ye, mane ānandita ho'ye
sadākare gaurāṅga dheyāna
e rādhā vallabha dāsa, mane hoilo abhilaṣa
patrī paḍi karilā gopana

Sanatana Gosvami Sucaka Kirtana (translation)

(1) When Sri Rupa Gosvami accepted the renounced order of life Sanatana Gosvami was in prison. Greatly distressed, he thought within his mind:

(2) "Gaura Hari has mercifully delivered Sri Rupa but He has neglected this fallen one.

(3) "I am bound hands and neck by the sinful reactions of my previous karma. And this has locked me in this prison.

(4) "With the rope of Your mercy please firmly tie up my hair and drag me to Your lotus feet.

(5) "Behind me is a sea of unlimited depth, on both sides is fire, and before me stands a hunter with arrow aimed.

(6) "In this way a she deer is entrapped in great danger and is crying in grief, 'O Lord, please save me from this disaster.'

(7) "You effortlessly liberated Jagai and Madhai just as Vasudeva liberated Ajamila.

(8) "At least with a shadow of Your mercy give me the shelter of Your lotus feet, which are like a boat. The whole world will glorify Your merciful deeds.

(9) "Kindly lift me out of this deep ocean of suffering. No one else can free me from this state.

(10) After receiving a confidential letter from his brother, Rupa Gosvami, Sri Sanatana thought like this.

(11) He felt pleased within his heart and began remembering Lord Gaurāṅga.

(12) This Radha Vallabha Dasa (a disciple of Srinivasa Acarya and author of many *sucaka kirtans*) says,"after reading Rupa's letter Sanatana felt pleased within his heart. But he kept the letter a secret."

Sri Rupa Gosvami Sucaka Kirtana

are mor śrī rūpa gosai!
gaurāṅga-cāndera bhāva, pracāra kariyā saba,
jānāite hena āra nāi.
vṛndāvana nitya-dhāma, sarvopari anupāma,
sarva avatārī nandasuta.
tānra kāntā-gāṅga-dhikā, sarvārādhyā śrī rādhikā,
tānra sakhī gāna sanga jūta.
rāga mārge tāhā pāite, jāhāra kārūnā haite,
bhujilo pāilo jete janā.

*emona dayālu bhāi, kothāo dekhiye nāi,
 tānra pāda koraho bhāvanā.
 śrī caitanya ājnā pāiyā, bhāgavata vicāriyā,
 yata bhakti siddhānter khani.
 tāhā uṭhāiyā kata, nija grantha kari yata,
 jīve dilā prema cintāmani.
 rādhā kṛṣṇa rase keli, nāṭya gīta padāvali
 śudha-parakīyā-mata kori.
 caitanyer mano vṛti, sthāpana karilā kṣiti,
 āsvādiyā tāhāra mādhurī.
 caitanya virahe śeṣa, pāi atīśya kleśa,
 tāte jata pralāpa vilāpa.
 se saba kahite bhāi, dehe prāṇa rahe nāi,
 e rādhā-vallabha hiye tāpa*

Sri Rupa Gosvami Sucaka Kirtana (translation)

O, My Sri Rupa Gosvami!

(1) Your presentation of the devotional mellows of Lord Sri Gauracandra is unparalleled.

(2) In the eternal spiritual world of Vrndavana, which is matchless and supreme, the source of all *avatars* sports as Nanda Maharaja's son (Sri Krishna).

(3) He always enjoys with thousands of *gopis*, and especially with His most beloved and best worshiper Sri Radhika.

(4) Sri Rupa, you mercifully reveal the path of *raganuga bhakti*. By adopting this anyone can attain the spontaneous love the *gopis* have for Krishna.

(5) Dear brother, nowhere will you find such kindness. So just meditate upon the lotus feet of Sri Rupa Gosvami.

(6) Receiving Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's order, he thoroughly studied the *Srimad Bhagavatam* and extracted the essence of *prema bhakti* (pure devotional service).

(7) Rupa Gosvami wrote many books which give love of God and fulfill everyone's desires.

(8) On the platform of *parakiya rasa* (pure paramour love) Radha and Govinda enact intimate pastimes full of singing, dancing, and playing.

(9) After tasting the honey sweet nectar of these pastimes and understanding the mood of Lord Caitanya, you revealed this *parakiya rasa* to the world.

(10) Feeling extreme separation from Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and suffering unlimited miseries, I speak like a madman and lament.

(11) My dear brother, when I (Radha Vallabha Dasa) try to express all these things I feel great distress and wish to give up my life.

Sri Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami Sucaka Kirtana

jai bhaṭṭa raghunātha gosāi!
rādhā kṛṣṇa līlā gune, divā niśi nāhi jāne,
tulanā dibāre nāhi thāi.
caitanyera prema pātra, tapana miśrer putra,
vārāṇasī chilo yānra vāsa.
nija grhe gauracandre, pāiyā parama ānande,
carāṇa sevilā dui māsa.
śrī caitanya nāma japi, kata dina grhe tāki,
korilena pitāra sevane.
tānra aprakāṭa hoile, āsi puna nīlācale,
rahilena prabhūra carāṇe.
mahāprabhu kṛpā kori, nija śakti sañcāri,
pāṭhāiyā dilā vṛndāvana.
prabhu śikṣā hṛde gani, āsi vṛndāvana bhūmi,
mililen rūpa sanātana.
dui gosāi tāne pāiyā, parama ānanda hoiyā,
rādhā kṛṣṇa prema-rase bhāse.
aśru pulaka kampa, nānā bhāvā veśa aṅga,
sadā kṛṣṇa kathāra ullāse.
sakala vaiṣṇava saṅge, yamunā puline range,
ekatra hoiyā prema sukhe.
śrī bhāgavata kathā, amṛta samāna gātā,

niravadhi śune jā mukhe.
parama vairāgya sīmā, sunirmala krishna premā,
susvara amṛta maya vānī.
paśu pakṣī pulakita, yānra mukhe kathāmṛta,
śunite pāśāna hoyā pānī.
śrī rūpa sanātana, sarvā rādhyā dui jana,
śrī gopāla bhāṭṭa raghunātha.
ei rādhā vallabha bale, paḍīnu viṣaya bole,
kṛpā kori kara ātma sātha.

Sri Raghunatha Bhatta Sucaka Kirtana (translation)

All glories to Sri Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami!

(1) Sri Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami was always absorbed in remembering the transcendental qualities and pastimes of Radha-Madhava. He didn't know whether it was day or night. There is no comparison to the strength of his *bhajana*.

(2) He was a beloved disciple of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He lived in Benares (Varanasi) with his father Tapan Mishra.

(3) Lord Gauracandra once visited his home. Feeling intense happiness, Raghunatha served the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya for two weeks.

(4) While living at home Raghuntha helped his father and constantly chanted the name of Lord Caitanya.

(5) After his father's disappearance he came to Nilacala Dhama (Jagannatha Puri) to take shelter of Gaura Hari's lotus feet.

(6) Mahaprabhu sent him to Vrndavana after showering His mercy and blessings upon him.

(7) Raghunatha Bhatta embraced the teachings of Lord Caitanya within his heart. He met Rupa and Sanatana Gosvamis in Vraja dhama.

(8) Seeing Raghunatha, the Gosvamis felt overjoyed floating in the nectar ocean of Radha Krishna *prema rasa*.

(9) Together they relished Krishna-*katha* and tasted spiritual sentiments. Sometimes they showed ecstatic symptoms such as crying, shivering, and hairs standing on end.

(10) All the devotees would meet on the banks of the Yamuna. Feeling the happiness of pure love for Radha and Krishna, they would laugh and joke.

(11) Regularly Raghunatha recited *Srimad Bhagavatam*. His words sounded just like nectar.

(12) Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami displayed the topmost example of renunciation. He was completely pure and overflowing with *prema*. Melodious and pleasing words decorated His speech.

(13) Birds and beasts would shiver in bliss, and stones would melt upon hearing his nectarean *Bhagavata katha*.

(14) Both Gopala Bhatta and Raghunatha Bhatta worshiped Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana Gosvamis.

(15) This Radha Vallabha Dasa says, "I am drowning in the sea of sense gratification. Please, O Bhatta Raghunatha, be kind, accept me and give me the shelter of your lotus feet."

Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami Sucaka Kirtana

*śrī gopāla-bhaṭṭa prabhu, tuyā śrī caraṇa kabhu,
dekhibo ki nayana bhariyā.
suniyā asīma guna, panjare vindhilā ghuna,
nichani niyā yāire mariyā.
pirite gadala tanu, dasabān hema janu,
cāndramukhe aruna adhara.
jhalake daṣana-kanti, jini mukutāra pānti
hāsi kahe amṛta-madhura.
paranera parāna yāra, rūpa sanātana ara,
raghunātha-yugala jivana.
paṇḍita kṛṣṇa lokanātha, jāna deha-bheda matra,
sarvasva śrī-rādhā-ramana.
premete vithāra aṅga, caitanya-caraṇa bhaṅga,
śrī-nivāse dāyara adhina.
sabhe meli rasāsvada, bhāva-bhare unmāda,
ei vyavasāya ciradina.
līlāsudhā-sura-dhuni, rasika-mukuta-mani,
rasāveśe gada gada hiya.
aho aho rāgasindhu, aho dina-jana bandhu,*

yaśa gāya jagat bhariyā.
hā hā murti su-madhura, hā hā karunāra pura,
hā hā cintāmani guna-khani.
hā hā prabhu ekabara, dekhāo mādhuri-sāra,
śrī-caraṇa-kamala lāvani.
aneka janmera pare, aśeṣa bhāgyera tare,
tuyā parikara pada payān.
nija karamera doṣe, majinu viṣaya rase,
janama gonāinu kholi khayan.
aparādha pare mane, tathāpi tomāra gune,
patita-pāvana āsābandha.
lobhete cañcalamati, upekhile nāhi gati,
phukāraye manohara manda.

Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami Sucaka Kirtana (translation)

(1) Whenever I see the beautiful lotus feet of Sri Gopala Bhatta Prabhu my eyes flood with tears.

(2) One becomes free from the cycle of birth and death by hearing about your unlimited qualities.

(3) Being attracted by your moonlike face and lips radiant like the rising sun, I can't be pierced by Cupid's ten golden arrows.

(4) Your beautiful teeth resemble a string of pearls. Your joyful words are saturated with sweet nectar.

(5,6) The devotees Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana Gosvamis, Raghunatha Dasa, Raghunatha Bhatta, Raghava Pandita, Krishna Dasa Kaviraja, Lokanatha Gosvami are your life. And your soul is Radha-Ramanaji.

(7) With your body full of love you offer obeisances to Lord Caitanya, and like a honeybee you are attached to His lotus feet. You kindly gave shelter to Srinivasa Acarya.

(8) Your only engagement is associating with pure devotees, relishing *rasa*, and tasting the divine madness of *gopi bhava*.

(9) The pastimes of Radha Ramana flow through your mind like the celestial Ganges. You are the crest jewel of *rasika* Vaisnavas. Relishing *prema rasa*, you become overwhelmed with ecstatic emotions.

(10) Oh, ocean of spontaneous love for Radha Ramana. You are the friend of the fallen. Your fame is sung throughout the universe.

(11) Oh, your form is most sweet and full of mercy. And your unlimited qualities act like a touchstone.

(12) Just once, Oh master, let me see your lotus feet, the essence of all sweetness.

(13) After many many births, I have attained the rare fortune of serving the servants of your eternal associates.

(14) Because of bad karma I have wasted my life enjoying sense gratification.

(15) I am full of offenses. But my only hope is that you, being full of merciful qualities, will deliver this fallen soul.

(16) Although my mind is fickle and I'm greedy and sinful, still this Manohara Dasa calls out to you. Please don't neglect me.

Sri Jiva Gosvami Sucaka Kirtana

*śrī-jīva gosāi mora, premā ratna-sāgara
ohe prabhu kṛpā kara more.
mui ta pāmara jane, baḍa sādha kari mane
tuyā guṇa gāibāra tare.
śrī rūpa śrī-sanātana, anupama sumadhyama,
rāma pade dr̥ḍha yānra mati.
tānhāra tanaya jīva, sarva-śāstre su-panḍita,
prakāśila śrī-rūpa saṁhati.
vairāgya janmila mane, rājya chāḍi sei kṣane
calilā śrī nava-dvīpa-purī
prabhu nityānanda dekhi, chala chala kare ānkhī
paḍilā caraṇa-yuge dhari.
mastake caraṇa diyā, dui bāhū paśāriyā,
uṭhāiyā karilena kole.
preme gada gada haiyā, dainya-bhāva prakāśiyā,
kāndite kāndite kichu bale.
prabhu nityānanda nāma, jagatare paritrāna
saba jīve ānanda karilā.
mo hena patita jane, kṛpā kailā nija guṇe*

brahmāra durllabha dhana dilā.
 mahāprabhu tomāra gane, diyāchena datta bhūme,
 śīghra tumi yāho vṛndāvana.
 śrī mukhera ājnā pāiyā, ānanda haiyā hiyā,
 vraja-pure karilā gamana.
 krishna-nāma sadā mukhe, netra-jala bahe buke
 ei rūpe pathe cali yāya.
 prabhu rūpa sanātana, kare pāba darśana,
 prāna mora rākha mahāśaya.
 kabhu karu jala pāna, kabhu cānā carvana,
 kata-dīne mathurā pāilā.
 dekhi śobhā madhu-pūrī, preme paḍi ghuri ghuri,
 dhīre dhīre viśrānti āilā more.
 yamunāte kaila snāna, kari kicchhu jala pāna,
 sei rātre tāñhā kaila vāsa.
 prāte āilā vṛndāvane, dekhi rūpa sanātane
 prabhu saba purāila āśa.
 śrī gopāla-campū nāma, grantha kaila anupāma,
 vraja-nitya-lilā rasa pūra.
 ṣaṭ-sandarbhā ādi kari, yāhāte siddhānta bhārī,
 paḍi suni bhakta hailā sūra.
 ujjvala premera tanu, rase nirmilā jānu,
 bhāva alankṛta saba aṅga.
 paḍite śrī-bhāgavate, dhairaya nā dhare citta,
 sātvice vyāpita saba aṅga.
 yugala bhajana sāra, vilāsai sadā yāñra,
 vṛndāvana-vihāra-sadāi.
 goloka sampuṭa kari, tāhāte se prema dhari,
 samvaraṇa karila gosāi.
 mūi ati mūḍamati, tomā vinu nāhi gati,
 śrī jīva jivana prāṇa-dhana.
 bahu janma punya kari, durllabha janama dhari,
 pāiyāchi śrī-jīva caraṇa.
 śrī-jīva karuṇā-sindhu, sparśi tāra eka bindu,
 prema-ratna pābāra lāgiyā
 kahe raghunātha dāsa, tuyā anugata āśa

rākha more pada chāyā diyā.

Sri Jiva Gosvami Sucaka (translation)

(1) Sri Jiva Gosvami is an ocean full of the jewels of Krishna prema. O Prabhu, please give me your mercy.

(2) I am the most fallen, but I want to sing your glories. This will keep me out of Maya's clutches.

(3,4) O, Srila Jiva Gosvami you are the son of Anupama, who is very devoted to Lord Rama. Anupama is the younger brother of Sri Sanatana and Sri Rupa Gosvamis. O Jiva you know all scriptures and you have revealed the inner meaning of Sri Rupa Gosvami's writings.

(5) With your mind filled with detachment you immediately renounced everything and went to Navadvipa-dhama.

(6) Upon seeing Lord Nityananda you fell down at His lotus feet and cried.

(7) Lord Nityananda put His lotus feet on your head. Then He lifted you up and embraced you.

(8) Overwhelmed with Krishna *prema*, your body shook and displayed other symptoms of ecstasy. In that condition you spoke the following:

(9) "The name of Nityananda Prabhu will deliver the entire universe and give bliss to all living entities.

(10) "You have given Your mercy and Your own qualities to this fallen one. Such mercy is so rare that even Lord Brahma doesn't receive it."

(11) Lord Nityananda replied: "Sriman Mahaprabhu has given a special land to your family. So immediately go to that land of Vrndavana."

(12) Overjoyed by hearing Lord Nityananda's words, you went to Vrndavana.

(13) While walking to Vrndavana you constantly chanted Hare Krishna and cried profusely.

(14) Continuously you called out, "O Rupa! O Sanatana! When will I see you? Please keep me alive until then."

(15) Some days you drank only water or ate a few chickpeas. But eventually you arrived in Mathura.

(16) You lovingly gazed upon Mathura and slowly walked to Visrama Ghat.

(17) You bathed in Yamuna, drank her pure water, and slept on her sands.

(18) The next day you went to Vrndavana. Upon seeing Rupa and Sanatana Gosvamis all your desires were fulfilled.

(19) You wrote *Sri Gopala-campu*, which fully describes the nectarean pastimes of Vraja.

(20) The *Sat Sandarbhas* and your many other books give full explanation of the Gaudiya Vaisnava philosophy. Anyone who reads or hears these books will become a devotee of Krishna.

(21) Your body is always adorned with all *sattvika bhavas*, symptoms of ecstatic love for Radha-Damodara.

(22) Your body radiates spiritual happiness and your mind loses its equilibrium when you recite the *Srimad Bhagavatam*.

(23) You always worship the Divine Couple and serve Their transcendental conjugal pastimes within the groves of Vrndavana.

(24) You always meditate on Goloka and the loving pastimes of Radha-Damodara.

(25) O Sri Jiva Prabhu, this foolish rascal can't survive without your mercy which sustains my very life.

(26) After many births of accumulating pious acts I have taken this rare birth wherein I've attained the service of the lotus feet of Sri Jiva.

(27) By touching a drop from Sri Jiva's ocean of mercy I have attained the jewel of *prema*, pure love for Radha-Krishna.

(28) Raghunatha Dasa calls out, "O Sri Jiva Gosai, my only desire is to become your follower. Please protect me and give me the shade of your lotus feet."

Sri Raghunatha Dasa Sucaka Kirtana

*śrī caitanya kṛpā haite, raghunātha dāsa cite,
parama vairāgya upajilā.
dārā grha sampada, nija rājya adhipada,*

mala prāya sakali tyajilā.
 yabe rūpa sanātana vraje gelā dui jana,
 śunite raghunātha dāsa.
 indra sama sukha yāra, nija rājya adhikāra,
 chāḍilā calilā prabhu pāśa.
 uṭhi rātri niśā bhāge, jāni va praharī jāge,
 patha chāḍi vipathe calilā.
 manodvege sadā dhāya, kṣudhā tṛṣṇā nāhi bhāya,
 divā niśi kichu nā jānilā.
 eka dina bhikṣā chale, go bāthāne sandhyā kāle,
 hā caitanya baliyā basilā.
 eka gopa dugdha dila, tāhā khāiyā viśrāmila,
 sei rātri tānhāi vañchilā.
 ye aṅga pālanka vine, bhūmi śayyā nāhi jāne,
 se aṅga bāthāne goḍi ya.
 yei dolā ghoḍā vine, pada vraja nāhi jāne,
 se patha hāṭaye rāngā pāya.
 yei belā danda cāri, tolā jale snāna kori,
 sadā rase korita bhojana.
 ebe yadi kichu pāna, sandhyā kāle tāhā khāna
 nā pāile amani gamana.
 bāra dīner patha yāiyā, tina sandhyā anna khāiyā,
 uttarila nīlācala pure.
 dūre dekhī śrī mandira, nayane galaye nīra,
 hā caitanya ḍāke uccaiḥ svare.
 puraścaryā kṛṣṇa nāme, gelā śrī puruṣottame,
 gaurāṅger pada yuga seve.
 ei mane abhilāṣa, puna raghunātha dāsa,
 nayana gocara kabe habe
 gaurāṅga doyāla haiyā, rādhā-krishna nāma diyā,
 govardhaner śilā gunjā-hāre.
 vraja vane govardhane, śrī rādhikāra śrī caraṇe,
 samarpana korilā tāhāre.
 caitanyera agocare, nija keśa cinḍe kore,
 virahe ākula vraje gelā.
 deha tyāga kori mane, gelā giri-govardhane,

dui gosāi tāhāre dekhilā.
 dhari rūpa sanātana, rākhila tāra jīvana,
 deha tyāga korite nā dilā.
 dui gosāira ājnā pāiyā, rādhā-kuṇḍa tate giyā,
 vāsa kari niyama karilā.
 cheḍā kambala paridhāna, vanā phala gavya khāna,
 anna ādi nā kore āhāra.
 tina sandhyā snāna kari, smaraṇa kīrtana kari,
 rādhā pada bhajana yānhāra.
 chāppāna daṇḍa rātri dine, rādhā-kṛṣṇa guṇa gāne,
 smaranete sadāi gonāya.
 cāri daṇḍa śuti thāke, svapne rādhā-kṛṣṇa dekhe,
 eka tila vyartha nāhi yāya.
 gaurāṅger padām bhuje, rākhe mana br̥ṅga rāje,
 svarūpere sadāi dheyāya.
 abheda śrī rūpa sane, gati yāra sanātane,
 bhāṭṭa yuga priya mahāśaya.
 śrī rūpera gana yata, tāṅra pade āśrita,
 atyanta vātsalya yāṅra jibe.
 sei ārttanāda kari, kāni bole "Hari Hari!"
 prabhura karunā habe kabe.
 hā rādhā-vallabha, gāndharvikā bāndhava,
 rādhikā ramana rādhā-nātha.
 hā hā vrndāvaneśvara, hā hā kṛṣṇa-dāmodara,
 kṛpā kari kara ātma sātha.
 śrī rūpa śrī sanātana, yabe haila adarśana,
 andha haila e dui nayana.
 vr̥thā āṅkhi kāṅhā dekhi, vr̥thā prāna dehe rākhi,
 eta boli koraye krandana.
 śrī caitanya śacī-suta, tāra gana hoi yata,
 avatāra śrī-vigraha nāma.
 śuṭpa vyakta līlā sthala, dṛṣṭa śruta vaiṣṇava saba,
 savāre koraye paranāma.
 rādhā kṛṣṇa viyoge, chāḍila sakala bhoge,
 śukha rukha anna mātra sāra.
 gaurāṅgera viyoge, anna chāri dilā āge,

phala gavya korila āhāra.
sanātanera adarśane, tāhā chāḍi sei dine,
kevala koraye jala pāna.
rūpera viccheda yabe, jala chāḍi dila tabe,
rādhā kṛṣṇa boli rākhe prāna.
śrī rūpera adarśane, nā dekhi tāhāra gane,
virahe vyākūla hoiyā kānde.
kṛṣṇa-kathā ālāpane, nā śuniyā śravane,
ucca svare ḍāke ārttanāde.
hā hā rādhā-kṛṣṇa kothā, kothā viśākhā lalitā,
kṛpā kori deha darśana.
hā caitanya mahāprabhu, hā svarūpa mora prabhu,
hā hā prabhu rūpa sanātana.
kānde gosāi rātri dine, puḍi yaya tanu mane,
kṣene aṅga dhūlāya dhūsara.
cakṣu andha anāhāra, āpanāke deha bhāra,
virahe haila jara jara.
rādhā kuṇḍa taṭe paḍi, saghane niśvāsa chāḍi,
mukhe vākya nā hoya sphurana.
manda manda jihvā naḍe, prema aśru netre paḍe,
mane kṛṣṇa koroye smarana.
sei raghunātha dāsa, pūrāha manerā āśa,
ei mora baḍa āche sādha.
e rādhā vallabha dāsa, mane baḍa abhilāṣa,
prabhu more kara parasāda.

Sri Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami Sucaka Kirtana (translation)

(1) By the mercy of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu the highest degree of renunciation manifested within the heart of Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami.

(2) Wife, house, wealth, kingdom, prestige---he left it just like it was stool.

(3) Hearing that Rupa and Sanatana had gone to Vrndavana,

(4) He gave up his opulent kingdom and pleasures equal to those of King Indra and went to Prabhu (Lord Caitanya).

(5) To avoid the guards his father hired to watch him Raghunatha got up in the middle of the night and fled on a back road.

(6) Feeling great anxiety, he ran away not caring for eating and drinking. He didn't know whether it was day or night.

(7) While begging one night he went to a cow shed, cried out "Ha Caitanya," and collapsed from exhaustion.

(8) A cowherd boy gave him some milk. Then he rested there overnight.

(9) That person who never slept without a bed, now slept on the ground.

(10) That person who never traveled without a horse and never walked anywhere, now placed his tender feet on the earth.

(11) That person who spent hours bathing in hot water brought to him by servants and eating opulent food rich in six tastes,

(12) Now eats only at sunset; if he gets anything to eat. And if he gets nothing, he keeps traveling.

(13) During his twelve day journey to Nilacala Dhama (Jagannatha Puri) he only ate three times.

(14) Seeing Lord Jagannatha's temple from a distance, he began crying and shouting "Ha Caitanya, Ha Caitanya" (O Lord Caitanya).

(15) Following a vow to attain perfection in chanting the name of Krishna, Raghunatha Dasa went to Sri Purusottama Ksetra (Jagannatha Puri) and served the lotus feet of Lord Gauranga.

(16) "With this desire in my heart, I, Radha Vallabha Dasa, pray for the day when I can see Raghunatha Dasa in that mood."

(17,18) Out of compassion Lord Gauranga gave Radha-Krishna mantra to Raghunatha Dasa. The Lord gave His personal Deities of Govardhana and Gunja *mala*, and offered him to the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani at Govardhana Hill in Vrndavana.

(19) After the disappearance of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu Raghunatha Dasa became mad in separation. He began pulling out his hair and then went to Vrndavana.

(20) He decided to end his life by jumping off Govardhana Hill. But then he met two Gosvamis, Rupa & Sanatana.

(21,22) Rupa and Sanatana Gosvamis convinced him to live on by taking shelter of Radha-kunda.

(23) His clothing was a pair of kaupins and a torn blanket; milk and forest fruits his food. He never ate grains.

(24) He bathed thrice daily in Radha-kunda, always chanted Hari Nama, remembered Radha-Giridhari's pastimes, and served the lotus feet of Srimati Radhika.

(25) Twenty-two hours a day he engaged in glorifying and remembering Radha-Krishna.

(26) He slept 96 minutes a day. But while resting he remained absorbed in *lila smarana* (remembering Radha-Govinda's loving pastimes). He never wasted a single moment.

(27) First he would fix his mind on the honey sweet lotus feet of Gauranga. Then he would always meditate on his *svarupa* (spiritual form as a Rati-manjari)

(28) His desire was one with Sri Rupa Gosvami's. He always followed Sanatana Gosvami. He was very dear to Gopala Bhatta Gosvami and Raghunatha Gosvami.

(29) "I take shelter of the lotus feet of Sri Rupa Gosvami and all of his associates who are affectionate to all living entities.

(30) "Saying this in great distress and crying 'Hari Hari,' I, Raghunatha Dasa, ask you when will Prabhu (Lord Caitanya) be merciful to me?"

(31,32) "O Radha Vallabha, friend of Gandharvika! O Radhika Ramana! O Radha Natha! O Vrndavanesvari! O Krishna Damodara! Please accept me as one of Your intimate servants.

(33) "When Rupa and Sanatana disappeared I became blind.

(34) "Without eyes how can I see? And without my life and soul (Rupa and Sanatana) how can I maintain this body?" Saying all these things, Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami begins crying.

(35) "Sri Caitanya, the beloved son of Saci Mata, all of His associates, Sri Nama (the form of His holy name), Sri Vighraha (holy Deity forms of Krishna).

(36) "To all the manifest and unmanifested pastime places, the places I've seen or heard about, and to all the unlimited Vaisnavas--I offer my humble obeisances."

(37) In separation from Radha-Giridhari Raghunatha Dasa gave up all sense enjoyment. He ate nothing but dry tasteless rice.

(38) In separation from Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu he stopped eating grains and took only milk and fruits.

(39) After the disappearance of Sri Sanatana Gosvami he gave up all eating and lived on water.

(40) When Sri Rupa Gosvami left this world Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami stopped drinking water. He sustained his life simply by crying out, "Radha-Krishna, Radha-Krishna."

(41) Without seeing Rupa Gosvami and his associates Raghunatha Dasa burns in separation, becomes overwhelmed and cries.

(42) Even when Krishna-*katha* is being spoken he can't hear it. But he cries out in anguish:

(43) "O Radha and Krishna, where are You! O Lalita and Visakha, where are you! Please be kind and appear before me.

(44) "O Caitanya Mahaprabhu! O my dear Svarupa Damodara Prabhu! O my dear Rupa and Sanatana!"

(45) Day and night Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami cries. His mind and body are burning up. In this condition he sometimes rolls in the dust of Vrndavana.

(46) Starvation made him blind. His body became a great burden and constantly shivered in ecstasy due to separation from Radha-Krishna.

(47) Falling on the banks of Radha-kunda, he breathed very heavily and became silent.

(48) With his tongue moving slightly and tears of divine love falling from his eyes he entered *samadhi*, absorbed in remembering Radha and Krishna.

(49) O Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami, please fulfill my one and only desire.

(50) I, Radha Vallabha Dasa, intensely desire to serve Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and all His eternal associates.

Sri Sri Bhagavatastakam

(Prayers praising pure devotees)

by Sri Rasikananda Prabhu

*sri-govinda padaravinda madhupan anyabhilasho-ujjhitan.
purna premarasotsavo' jvala manovrtti-prasanna-ananan.
sasvat krsna-kathamrta payorasou muda khelato.
vande-bhagavatan-iman-anulavam murdhna-nipatya khitau.*

"I always pray to and offer my *dandavats* to all the *Bhagavatas* (exalted pure devotees of the Lord), who are like honeybees drinking nectar from the sweet lotus feet of Sri Govindadeva. By relishing the nectar of the most exalted love for Krishna they have renounced the material world and become absorbed in unalloyed devotion to the Lord. Bliss and satisfaction saturate their pure minds. *Prema* illuminates their faces. They forever enjoy swimming in the ocean of nectar churned from hearing Krishna-*katha*."

*padabje-kṛta-sat kṛtavapi-caturvarge gṛhinam kurvato.
drikpate-pi-gatavyathan-vrajapati premamṛta-svadkan.
mannanan atidustaram bhavamaha pathonidhim gopadam.
vande bhagavatan iman anulavam murdhna nipatya khitan.*

"Even though *dharmā*, *artha*, *kama*, *moksa* fall down at their lotus feet offering service, the *Bhagavatas* simply neglect them. They do not even glance at these allurements. Miseries are unknown to them. Tasting the nectar of love for Krishna, they see the vast, trouble-filled ocean of material existence as insignificant to cross as the water contained in a calf's hoof print. I always pray to and offer my *dandavats* to all the *Bhagavatas*."

*mṛigyam brahmabhavadibhi vrajavadhū nathanghri kanjadvaim.
svatantrayat pranayoru rajjubhirho baddha.
svachhandam pibata stadasava-rasam prasyandamanam muda.
vande bhagavatan iman anulavam murdhna nipatya khitan.*

"They have independently and firmly bound the lotus feet of Krishna with the powerful rope of their topmost *prema*. Although continually looking, Lord Brahma and Siva never attain the lotus feet of Krishna, the Lord of the Vraja *gopis*. But the *Bhagavatas* (exalted pure devotees of Krishna) are always in bliss from drinking the intoxicating nectar flowing from Govindaji's lotus feet. I always pray to and offer my *dandavats* to all the *Bhagavatas*."

*visvesam hridayutsavan svasukhadan maya manusyakritin.
 krsnen adhyavasritan jana samuddharaya prithvitale.
 samsar-abdhi-vahitra-padmalan-'trailokya bhagyodayan.
 vande bhagavatan iman anulavan murdhna nipatya khitan.*

"They give pleasure to Brahma, all the Vaisnavas, and everyone in the universe. By Krishna's desire they take the form of ordinary humans and come to earth in order to liberate the conditioned souls. Their appearance brings good fortune to the material world. And their lotus feet provide a boat for living entities to cross over the ocean of repeated birth and death. I always pray to and offer my *dandavats* to all the *Bhagavatas*."

*alokamrta danato bhavamaha-banhana nrinam chindatah.
 sparsat-padasaroja-socapaysam tapatrayam bhindatah.
 alapad vrajanagarasya padayo premanam atannato.
 vande bhagavatan iman anulavan murdhna nipatya khitan.*

Simply seeing the devotees gives a taste of nectar, stops the *samsara cakra* (cycle of repeated birth and death), and cuts the hard knot of material attachment. Honoring the water from their lotus feet destroys the three-fold miseries. Talking with them increases one's love for Sri Krishna, the hero of Vraja. I always pray to and offer my *dandavats* to the *Bhagavatas*."

*bhavaves samujjvalan pulakino harsasru dharavali.
 nirdhout-annan-pankajan navanava anandat bhrisam nrtyatah.
 premochhai-caritam sa gada gada padam gopi pater gayato.
 vande bhagavatan iman anulavan murdhna nipatya khitan.*

"Overwhelmed with ecstatic love, their bodies are always radiant, their hair standing on end. Streams of loving tears continually wash their lotus faces. Moment to moment they enjoy

spiritual happiness. Dancing blissfully and with voices choked in loving emotions, they loudly sing the glories of Sri Krishna, the lord of the *gopis*. I always pray to and offer my *dandavats* to the *Bhagavatas*."

*premasvad parayanan haripada sphurti sphuran manasan.
anandaik payonidhin rasasumlasi sri mukhan.
dhanyan sat-charitougha nanditajanan karunya purasrayan.
vande bhagavatan iman anulavan murdhna nipatya khitan.*

"Relishing Krishna *prema* is their only vow. Their hearts are always softened by remembering Krishna's lotus feet, the reservoir of bliss. Because Krishna floods their hearts; gentle smiles adorn their beautiful faces. They please everyone by their divine qualities. They are grateful to all and reservoirs of ever flowing mercy. I always pray to and offer my *dandavats* to the *Bhagavatas*."

*kṛṣṇad-anyam ajanathah ksanam svapne api visvesvare.
tasmim bhaktim-ahaitukim vidhato hritkayavagbhi sada.
srilan sadgunapuna kelinilayan premavatara naham.
vande bhagavatan iman anulavan murdhna nipatya khitan.*

"Even in dreams they never forget Krishna for a moment. With pure unalloyed devotion they are completely devoted to the Supreme Lord Krishna. They are joyful abodes of wonderful qualities. They live in this world as incarnations of pure love for Radha and Krishna. I always pray and offer my *dandavats* to the *Bhagavatas*."

Sruti Phala (fruit,benefit of prayer)

*etat bhagavatastakam pathati yah sraddhanitah ksema dam.
bhakti udreka vivardhanam pratipadam prem pramod pradam.
premanam paramam dhruvam sa labhate vrindvanesa atmasu
ksipram bhagavateshu yena vasgo gopangana vallabha.*

"This *Bhagavatastakam* bestows all auspiciousness and awards one the lotus feet of Lord Krishna. It increases the excellence of *bhakti* and gives *prema* at every moment.

"One who faithfully reads this prayer will quickly obtain the highest ecstatic love for Krishna. The Bhagavatas live in Krishna's heart. And they completely control that *gopi-jana-vallabha* Sri Krishna by their pure love. I always pray and offer my *dandavats* to the *Bhagavatas*."

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The Gaudiya Vaisnava Samadhis in Vrndavana

PERSONAL POWER, empirical inquiry, and scientific experimentation may improve our material situation. But they can't give us entrance to the transcendental realm of Radha-Govinda's ever-flowing blissful pastimes. Spiritual advancement depends on mercy. Without the mercy of God and His devotees we can't attain spiritual perfection—pure love for Radha and Krishna in Vrndavana.

Prayer, proper action, and surrender to the spiritual master will attract his divine grace and the merciful glance of the Lord. *The Gaudiya Vaisnava Samadhis in Vrndavana* explains how to meet and associate with the eternal servants of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu and the greatest spiritual masters coming in the line of pure devotion to Radha and Krishna.

Absorbed in ecstatic love of God, the fully self-realized pure devotees of Lord Sri Krishna exist beyond the limits of time and space. They can instruct and give mercy to any sincere soul. In one form these completely liberated associates of the Lord eternally live in the sacred land of Vrndavana. Peacefully sitting in their *samadhi* tombs, the pure devotees distribute divine mercy to serious seekers of spiritual perfection.

The Gaudiya Vaisnava Samadhis in Vrndavana is actually two books in one: a guide to *samadhis* and a biography of eighty eternal associates of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. With words, maps and photos the book shows the reader the types, location, and history of Vrndavana's *samadhis*. Prayers, ways of worship, and secrets on finding treasures of mercy make it a valuable handbook for advancing in Krishna consciousness.

Part two has brief, yet poignant biographies full of pastimes and philosophy from the lives of Lord Caitanya's intimate followers. Hearing about the previous *acaryas* invokes the Vaisnava's blessings, enlivens the mind with spiritual desires, and inspires the reader to reach life's perfection—pure ecstatic love for Sri-Sri Radha-Krishna.