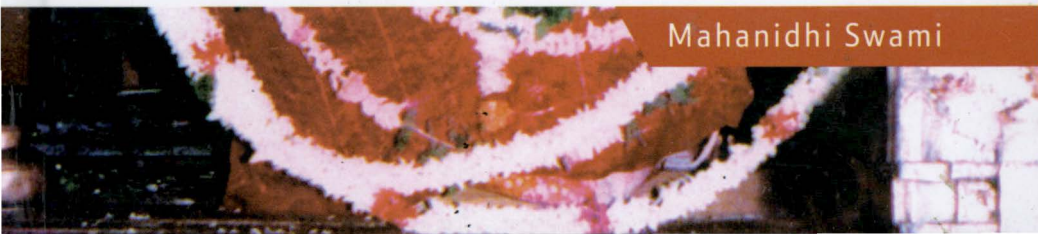




JAGANMATHA PURI GUIDE BOOK

Mahanidhi Swami



Śrī Guru Gaurāṅgau Jayataḥ

Jagannatha Puri Guide Book

Mahanidhi Swami



Books Published by the Author

Seeing Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in Jagannatha Puri
Gaudiya Vaisnava Samadhis in Vrndavana
64 Super Excellent Qualities of Sri Kṛṣṇa
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Mangalacarana

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale, śrimate bhaktivedānta-
svāmin iti nāmine*

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe, nirviṣeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-
deśa-tārīṇe*

I offer my humble obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. He is a dearmost, intimate servant of Sri Kṛṣṇa forever sheltered at His divine lotus feet.

O Gurudeva! I offer my repeated obeisances before you. As a fully devoted servant of your spiritual master, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, you are boldly preaching Lord Gaurasundara's blissful message of personal divine love, thus delivering the western lands from the throes of voidism and impersonalism.

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

I offer my respectful obeisances unto all the Vaiṣṇavas. They are just like desire-trees who can fulfill the desires of everyone, and they are full of compassion for the fallen souls.

*sri rupa sanatana bhata raghunath, sri jiva gopala bhata
dasa raghunath
ei chay gosair kori carana vandan, jaha hoite bighna-nas
abhista-puran*

By the causeless mercy of the six Gosvamis—Sri Rupa, Sanatana, Raghunatha Bhatta, Sri Jiva, Raghunatha dasa and Gopala Bhatta—the obstacles to devotion can be removed, the service of Radha-Govinda Yugala can be attained, and all one's personal desires for service can be fulfilled.

*nityānandaṁ ahaṁ naumi, sarvānanda-karaṁ param,
hari-nāma-pradaṁ devam, avadhūta-śiromaṇim*

I bow down to Sri Nityananda Prabhu, the crest jewel of all renunciates, who gives the topmost ecstatic bliss to all by freely distributing the holy names of Kṛṣṇa.

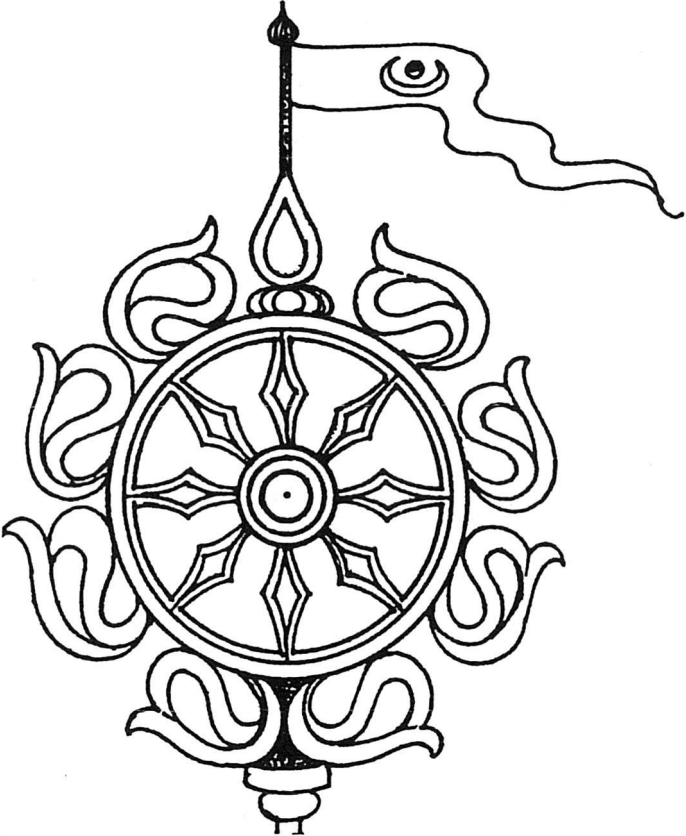


*ānanda-lilā-maya-vigrahāya, hemābha-divyāc-chavi-sundarāya
tasmai mahā-prema-rasa-pradāya, caitanya-candrāya namo namas te*

I offer my repeated obeisances unto Sri Caitanya-candra! His gorgeous body is more brilliant than molten gold. He is the embodiment of blissful pastimes, and He bestows the highest mellow taste of conjugal love (*sṛngara-rasa, maha-prema rasa*).

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

**Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare**





DEDICATION



Jagannatha Puri Guidebook is humbly dedicated to my eternal guide and loving friend, His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada. Thirty-four years ago, my most merciful master introduced me to Lord Jagannatha, the Lord of the Universe, and engaged me in the service of assisting Sriman Jayananda Prabhu in building the Ratha carts in New Jagannatha Puri, San Francisco, U.S.A.

Recollecting his childhood circa 1905 in Kolkata, Srila Prabhupada once said, “Every day of my boyhood I used to think, ‘How to go to Jagannātha Purī?’ At that time the train fare was four or five rupees. So I was thinking, ‘When shall I go?’ I took the first opportunity to go to Jagannātha Purī.” (*Prabhupada Lilamrta*) At the age of twenty-four, the same age as Mahaprabhu when He first visited Puri, Srila Prabhupada fulfilled his long-cherished desire to visit Jagannātha Dhama.

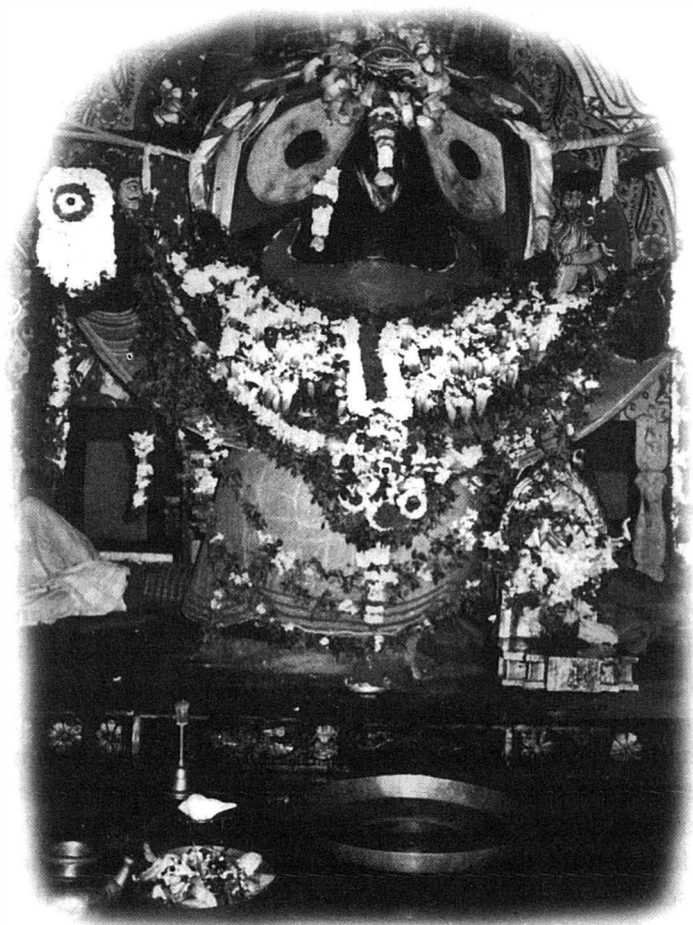
In 1967, Srila Prabhupada inaugurated the western world’s first Jagannatha Ratha-yatra in San Francisco. At that time, he also introduced the prayer; *jagannāthaḥ swāmī nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me*, “O Lord of the universe, kindly be visible unto me.” I pray that Srila Prabhupada will be pleased with this book, and kindly bless me with the vision to someday see the big, beautiful lotus sweet eyes of the Lord of the universe.

Jagannatha Swami ki jai!



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The information in *Jagannatha Puri Guidebook* comes from the benevolent teachings of Srila Prabhupada, Vedic texts like the *Skanda Purana* and *Padma Purana*, and the works of Sri Caitanyadeva's followers. The magnetically attractive cover photos are courtesy of Shri Sudarsana Mahapatra of Goldie Studios, Puri. I extend my deepest thanks to Ravinder Pathela and Gokul Printers, New Delhi, for their excellent work in the layout and printing of the book. And lastly, I am very thankful to two authors from whom I derived additional knowledge to benefit the readers: Bhakti Purusottama Swami—*Sri Ksetra Parikrama* and Dhruva Maharaja Dasa—*Jaya Jagannatha! The Culture and Worship of Lord Jagannatha East and West*.





INTRODUCTION

Jagannatha Puri Guidebook is an all new, greatly expanded, easy to use, “pilgrim friendly,” edition of my original guidebook to Puri published in 1988 entitled, *Seeing Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in Jagannatha Puri*. This informative book will help pilgrims derive the full benefit of their visit to this most celebrated holy place of India. The book’s many quotes from the *Puranas*, different Vedic texts and His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada will help the reader uncover the true identity, history, glories and transcendental significance of Sri Purusottama Ksetra as Jagannatha Puri is called in ancient books. Seeing Jagannatha Puri via our limited material eyes is valuable, but seeing through the eye of scriptural authority (*sāstracakṣus*) will give us the clearest conception and ultimate benefit. Deep spiritual realization and fulfillment will naturally manifest within the pilgrim who approaches Lord Jagannatha’s holy abode in this way.

Besides describing the temple and Deity of Lord Jagannatha, the book focuses on the holy places in Puri associated with Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His eternal associates. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, who is non-different from Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa Him-self, appeared 523 years ago (1486-1534) in West Bengal, India. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu spent half His manifested pastimes living in the holy dhāma of Jagannatha Puri. During the day, Sri Caitanya distributed pure love of God, *kṛṣṇa-prema*, to the masses through the simple and sublime process of chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *maha-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare. In the darkness of midnight, however, Mahaprabhu privately experienced the most confidential ecstasies of love in separation from God, Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa.

The divine raptures relished by Sri Caitanyadeva are both extraordinary and inconceivable. Nevertheless, by His causeless mercy Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu exhibited the unlimited happiness and variety of experiences that can be found on the spiritual platform of pure loving devotion to the Supreme Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa. Let us take shelter in the words of the author of *Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta*, Kṛṣṇadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, who said: “Just try to hear these topics with faith, for there is great pleasure even in hearing them. That hearing will destroy all miseries pertaining to the body, mind, and other living entities, and the unhappiness of false arguments as well.” (Cc. 3.19.109)

A special feature of this book is the “Day Trips” chapters, which list and describe all the holy places located in one particular area of Jagannatha



Puri. You can easily see each group of these sacred places in four or five hours by auto rickshaw. The location descriptions accompanying each holy site and a street map listing the holy places in the back of the book will help you to find them. The author prays that all the readers will experience both the wonderful celestial taste of Lord Jagannatha's maha-prasadam, and the inner heart's satisfaction that come from a devoted pilgrimage to Sri Purusottama-ksetra.

Sri Jagannatha Swami ki jai!
Sri Jagannatha Puri Dhama ki jai!





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Chapter One

Sri Ksetra Dhama

The waves pounding on the beach, the refreshing sea breezes, the colossal hand-carved twelfth-century stone temple, the relaxed and happy ambience of the local folk, the bright red, yellow and blue cloth applique, and that bewitching pair of big smiling eyes looking out from every wall, every billboard, every poster, every calendar, every wedding invitation, every sticker, every button, every bead bag, every taxi and rickshaw, every windshield, every t-shirt, every shoulder bag—This is Jagannatha Puri, one of India’s most popular pilgrimage sites and seaside resorts located in Orissa, three-hundred miles south of Kolkata.

The four directions of India are sanctified by four main holy places (*dhāma*) dedicated to the worship of God. “Dhāma refers to a place where one can immediately contact the Supreme Lord.” (SB 4.8.42 p.) Every year millions of pilgrims and tourists visit these four sacred spots: Sri Badarinatha Dhama in the north; Ramesvaram Dhama—south; Dvaraka Dhama—west; and Jagannatha Puri Dhama—east. While mentioning these four *dhāmas*, Srila Prabhupada said, “Faithful Hindus still visit all these holy places for perfection of spiritual realization.” (SB 3.4.22 p.)

About the four holy *dhāmas* of India, it is said that Lord Visnu meditates at Badrinatha; rules at Dvaraka; sleeps at Rameswaram and eats at Sri Ksetra Nilacala (Puri). As far as eating goes, Gaudiya Vaisnavas say that among their three holy *dhāmas*, *bhaktas* can attain perfection in *kṛṣṇa-prema* simply by enthusiastically honoring Jagannatha *maha-prasadam* in Sri Ksetra Purusottama Dhama. Spiritual perfection is attained by intense performance of *hari-nama-sankirtana* in Sri Navadvipa Dhama. And in Vrndavana Dhama one attains the spiritual world by worshiping and rolling in the dust (*vraja-rajā*) of Vrndavana while crying piteously to attain the eternal service of the lotus feet of Rādhikā.

The Relationship of Three Dhāmas (*teen dhāma sambandha*)

What is the connection between the three holy abodes of Vrndavana, Navadvipa and Sri Ksetra (Jagannatha Puri), which are held most sacred to Gaudiya Vaisnavas? It is generally thought that Sri Ksetra Dhama Puri represents the *aiśvarya*, (power, grandeur and formality) of Dvaraka and Kuruksetra. At Kuruksetra, Srimati Rādhikā saw Sri Kṛṣṇa but did not really



meet Him. It was sort of a union in separation because it was not the Kṛṣṇa whom She knew—the simple cowherd of Vraja wearing a *dhoti* and forest garland. This Kṛṣṇa had golden shoes, armor on His chest, an opulent, tall gold crown, arrows, horses and elephants everywhere shaking the earth. Rādhā broke down crying; realizing that here at Kuruksetra She could not relish the sweet natural flow of love that She once shared with Govinda in Vraja.

Sri Caitanyadeva viewed Jagannatha Swami in the same mood of union in separation that Rādhā felt at Kuruksetra. *Darsana* of the beloved, yes, but without the sweet moods and mellows of Vrndavana. However, every afternoon, Mahaprabhu soothed His aching heart by taking *darsana* of Tota Gopinatha. Here in the temple's beautiful garden filled with fragrant flowers and shady trees, Gaura thrilled to see Gopinatha in Vrndavana with all His sweetness and intimacy. The awe and reverence of Kuruksetra and the opulence and majesty of Dvaraka that Sri Caitanya felt in the Jagannatha Mandira disappeared before the dancing magical eyes of Gopinatha.

Jagannatha Puri and Navadvipa are two *bhajana-sthalis* for *sadhakas* cultivating *kṛṣṇa-prema* because they contribute two important ingredients. Navadvipa Dhama gives the mercy of Sri Kṛṣṇa's holy names and Gaura-Nitai who kindly remove *anarthas* and *aparadhas* from the heart. Puri embodies the mood of separation—awakening deep longing and yearning to be with Kṛṣṇa—which forcefully carries one into Kṛṣṇa's association. Mahaprabhu displayed this mood in Jagannatha Puri. Through the door of Gaurāṅga's Puri pastimes, one can enter the land of eternal enchantment, Sri Vrndavana Dhama.

Sri Ksetra Gives Vrndavana Darsana

The lakes and trees, gardens and groves, the sand dunes and sea—all reminded Gaurāṅga Mahaprabhu of Sri Dhama Vrndavana as He wandered through Sri Kṣetra in search of Syama. During his visit here, Gopa-kumara also saw Vraja in Puri after sincerely chanting his Gopala-mantra. Gopa-kumara states that the cause of his unique *darsana* is the greatness of Jagannatha *dhāma* and his intense eagerness to see Vrajabhumi.

*yadāsya darśanoṅkaṅṭhā, vraja-bhūmer abhūt tarām
tadā tu śrī-jagannātha, mahimnā sphurati sma me
tat-kṣetropavana-śrenī, vṛndāraṇyatayārṇavaḥ
yamunātvena nīlādri, bhāgo govārdhanātmanā*



Whenever my yearning to see Vrajabhumi becomes intense, on the strength of Sri Jagannatha Deva's glories, the many groves of His abode appeared to me as Vrndavana, its sea as the Yamuna, and the dunes behind Sri Mandira as Govardhana. (Br. Bh. 2.1.194-5)

These two verses state that Gopa-kumara attained a *sphurti* (*sphurati sma me*) or vision of Vraja in Puri. *Sphurti*, *visphurti* and *saksad-darsana* are three progressively deeper experiences of seeing Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa, His abode and His pastimes that occur only on the level of *bhāva* and *prema*. Therefore, Gopa-kumara's *sphurti* proves that he was on the level of *bhāva*, and thus he saw Vrndavana in Jagannatha Puri. Gopa-kumara declares here that the ability to see Vraja in Puri is an intrinsic feature or special glory of Sri Ksetra Dhama (*śrī-jagannātha mahimnā*). Thus, this entry inspires us to increase our spiritual hankering (*darśana utkañṭhā*) to see Vraja and to seriously chant our Gopala-mantra while remembering the wonderful glories of Sri Ksetra Dhama (*śrī-jagannātha mahimnā*).

Sri Ksetra Dhama in the Spiritual World

Does Sri Ksetra Dhama exist in Vaikuntha, the spiritual world, or is it only manifest on the earth planet? *Acaryas* present different answers to this question. In *Bṛhad-bhagavatamṛta*, Sri Sanatana Gosvami says:

*kintūpadeśām hitam ekam etaṁ
mattaḥ śṛṇu śrī-puruṣottamākhyam
kṣetraṁ tad atrāpi vibhāty adūre
pūrvam tvayā yad bhuvī dṛṣṭam asti*

Sri Narada Muni to Gopa-kumara, "Please hear from me this one instruction: Not far from here [Vaikuntha] a place named Śrī Puruṣottama-ksetra is splendidly manifested. This is the same place you saw before on the earth. The transcendental abode of Lord Jagannatha on earth is also present in Vaikuntha." (Br. Bh. 2.5.209 verse and tika)

Srila Prabhupada said, "There is no special planet for the Lord in His form of Lord Jagannatha. This particular *lila* was performed with His brother and sister when They were on this planet. If you are attracted to worshiping this form of the Lord [Jagannatha], then you will go to Kṛṣṇa [Goloka Vrndavana]. Lord Jagannatha is Kṛṣṇa. (Letter 9/jan/75)



Teen Dhama Comparison Chart

Puri	Navadvipa	Vrindavana
1. Deity: Jagannatha, Gauranga	Gaura-Nitai	Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa
2. Mood: Aisvarya (opulence)	Audarya (compassion)	Madhurya (sweetness)
3. Significance: Non-dif. Dvaraka & Kuruksetra;	b/p Caitanya, non-dif. Vrindavana;	Topmost Goal
4. Special Mercy: Maha-prasadam	Harinama	Dust
5. Benediction: Develop mood separation, searching for Sri Kṛṣṇa;	Mercy Gaura-Nitai chant free anartha & aparadha, quickly advance;	Serve & worship attain Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa prema
6. Facts: Aisvarya yet Gauranga experienced union in separation;	Kali strong dhama; Need Nv. Mercy to attain Vrn;	12 forests are RK's eternal lila sthalis
7. Name: Vipralambha Dhama	Krpa Sthana, Audarya Dhama;	Madhurya Dhama

Different Names of Jagannatha Puri Dhama

India's ancient Vedic texts refer to Jagannatha Puri as Sri Purusottama-ksetra. The *Skanda Purana* contains a lengthy chapter entitled, *Sri Purusottama-ksetra mahatyam*, which delineates the glories of Jagannatha Puri Dhama. In that chapter, Jaimini Rsi, the main speaker, states that anyone simply desiring to visit Sri Purusottama-ksetra will become free from his past sinful reactions.

Besides being called Sri Purusottama-ksetra, Lord Jagannatha's peaceful abode has many other names; each having a unique meaning.



1. Śrī-kṣetra— The word Śrī refers to the internal potency of Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa known as Śrīmatī Rādhārānī, the source of all Kṛṣṇa's *saktis* or powers. Thus the tract of land predominated by *śrī-sakti* or Rādhārānī is named Śrī-kṣetra. *Madhurya-bhaktas* see this as the place wherein the sweet charm of Sri Rādhā's *madhurya-rasa* manifests. For this reason, Caitanya Mahāprabhu stayed here relishing *rādhā-bhāva*. Whenever He took *darsana*, Mahāprabhu saw Lord Jagannātha as Syāmasundara and cried out, "O Prānānātha, beloved of My heart!"

Jagannātha shows His Syāmasundara form only to one in *rādhā-bhāva* and no one else. If one is feeling acute pains of separation from Kṛṣṇa upon entering the temple, he will also see Jagannātha Swami in His supremely beautiful Syāmasundara form. Śrī-kṣetra is the place where the sweetness of *śrī-prema*, *rādhā-prema*, was displayed in its most intense form as *madanākhyā-mahābhāva*. It is also interesting to note that local residents and Oriyan Vaisnavas refer to the main temple of Lord Jagannātha as Sri Mandira not Jagannātha Mandira.

2. Sri Purusottama Dhama (Ksetra)—Puri is called Sri Purusottama-dhama because *līla-purusottama* Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa resides here in His *arca-murti* called Sri Jagannātha Deva or Sri Purusottama Deva. This holy dhama is non-different from Purusottama Sri Kṛṣṇa Himself.

3. Jagannātha Puri Dhama—Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa is the master Lord and supreme controller of the three worlds. Therefore, He is called as Jagannātha and His sacred abode is known as Jagannātha Puri Dhama.

4. Śrī Śāṅkha-kṣetra—Puri is called Śāṅkha-kṣetra because the land area that it encompasses resembles the shape of a conch shell. Lord Viṣṇu's four weapons are represented in four places in Orissa: Śāṅkha-kṣetra (conch)—Jagannātha Puri; Padma-kṣetra (lotus)—Konark; Cakra-kṣetra (disc)—Bhubanesvara; and Gada-kṣetra (club); Jājapura. Of these four *kṣetras*, Śāṅkha-kṣetra is the best because the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His Deity form as Sri Jagannātha Swami resides here with all His majesty, beauty and sweetness. The *Skanda Purāna* says one should commence *parīkrama* (circumambulation) of Śrī-kṣetra in Margasīrsa month (Nov-Dec.) on the fifth day of the waning moon, which is the appearance day of Lord Nārāyaṇa's Pañcajanya conchshell.

5. Nilacala Dhama—There is a small mountain (*acala*) located in the middle of Sri Ksetra which is bluish (*nila*) in color; hence the name Nilacala Dhama. Previously, Orissa was inhabited by aboriginal tribes, whose civilization was quite distinct



from the Vedic Aryans. The *Puranas* state that Jagannatha was originally a Deity of the Śabarās (tribal woodsmen) and was known as Nila Madhava. The *murti* was made of some exotic effulgent blue stone. Later, the Lord manifested in the form of four wooden Deities (Daru Brahma) that are presently worshiped here. In ancient times, there was a dense forest here where the tribal Sabarās worshiped a charming Deity called Nila Madhava, whose complexion was more dazzling than crores of blue sapphires (*nilamani*). The present day temple is situated on this mountain; hence, Prabhu Jagannatha is sometimes called Nilacala Candra. The following *bhajana* is often sung during Ratha-yatra parades:

nilacala candra amar prabhu jagannatha, jai jagannatha! jai jagannatha!
vrndavana candra amar prabhu jagannatha, jai jagannatha! jai jagannatha!
jai jagannatha! jai jagannatha! jai jagannatha, swami, jai jagannatha!

6. Krandana or Vipralambha-kṣetra— Here one feels the pain of separation (*vipralambha*) from the beloved so intensely that he wails (*krandana*) in anguish. Both Lord Jagannatha and Lord Gaurāṅga are suffering intense pangs of love in separation from each other. The two Lords are crying in the ecstatic mood of *mahabhava*. Deeply merged in Rādhā's mellows of love, Gaura weeps for Kṛṣṇa and Jagannatha Kṛṣṇa weeps for Rādhā. Therefore, this *dhama* is known as Krandana Ksetra, the crying place. The two lovers, burning in separation, finally meet together in Purusottama Ksetra.

“*Gaura-lila* and *kṛṣṇa-lila* is the same *lila* but the mood is different. *Vraja-lila* accents meeting (*sambhoga-milan*) and *gaura-lila* stresses separation (*viraha*). It is like the flow of a river which endlessly flows on with the constant enactment of *prema-lilas*. As a river has two banks, similarly, *kṛṣṇa-lila* manifests two features or banks: *Vraja-lila* is the embankment of union, and *gaura-lila* is the embankment of separation.” (Sri Gaura Govinda Swami)

7. Dasa-avatara Ksetra: Jagannatha Puri Dhama, a supremely purifying (*parama pavana*) abode, is also called Dasa-avatara Ksetra, the place of Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa's ten descents (Mina, Kurma, Varaha, Nrsimha, Vamana etc.). It is said that Bhagavan originally manifests His different descents in Puri and then goes other places to enact the *lilas* associated with that *avatara*. Upon finishing that *lila*, Bhagavan returns to Dasa-avatara Ksetra.

Lord Jagannatha wears different dresses to commemorate these ten descents. “The result obtained from seeing all ten descents (Dasa Avataras) is achieved by just one *darsana* of Lord Jagannatha.” (*Skanda Purana*)



8. Bhauma Vaikuntha: The *Kapila Samhita* states, “This tract of land called Purusottama-ksetra is a direct manifestation of Vaikuntha (*saksat vaikuntha rupam tat*). It is the best of all the *ksetras* and *tirthas*.”

9. Nrsimha Ksetra: The *Padma Purana* says Puri is called Nrsimha Ksetra. When Lord Brahma performed the Jagannatha Temple installation *yajna*, a ferocious Nrsimhadeva appeared from the fire. King Indradyumna became frightened, so Ugra Nrsimhadeva assumed a friendly peaceful form of Narayana.

10. Bhūsvara: The land of Purusottama is known as Bhūsvara, “heaven on earth.” (Skanda Purana 6.27-28). The Brahma Purana says, “Purusottama-ksetra is a transcendental abode unlike any other place on earth. It is rarely attained even by demigods.”

11. Puri Dhama: Puri means residence and one who lives here is called a *purusa*. Jagannatha Swami is the *parama purusa*, the absolute supreme person. Puri-dhama is the place where the Supreme Person resides. In this *dhama*, everything is *purna* or complete due to the presence of the complete, full form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Jagannatha Deva.

Residents of Sri Ksetra Dhama

Several *Puranas* describe the unique position of the residents of Jagannatha Puri, Sri Ksetra Dhama.

*aho kṣetrasya mähātmyam samantād-daśa-yojanam
diviṣṭhā yatra paśyanti sarvān-eva caturbhujān*

The glories of Puruṣottama Dhāma (Jagannātha Puri) are extraordinary. The *devatās* from the celestial planets look upon all living beings spread within a radius of *ten yojanas* (approximately eighty miles) of this sacred place as four-handed denizens of Vaikuṅṭha. (*Brahma Purāṇa*).

Veda-vyāsa explains in the *Garuḍa Purāṇa*:

*yatra sthitā janāḥ sarve, śaṅkha-cakrābja-pāṇayah
drśyante divi devāṁś ca, mohayanti muhur muhuḥ*

When the demigods see that the residents of Puri are four-armed residents of Vaikuṅṭha holding a conchshell, cakra, and lotus in their hands, again and again they faint.



Dhama Dogs

Sri Kavi Karnapura describes how even the dogs in Jagannatha Puri perform *nama-sankirtana* and attain spiritual forms: “One year, when thousands of devotees were traveling to Puruṣottama-kṣetra, a dog started walking beside Sivananda Sena. Seeing the dog faithfully following him, Śivānanda made special food for him. Whenever they crossed a river, Śivānanda paid the boatman to carry the dog. One day, when the journey was three-fourths over, Śivānanda’s servant forgot to feed the dog and it disappeared. Śivānanda called out: ‘Alas! Today my dog was not fed!’ Śivānanda searched everywhere but could not find the dog, so he became grief-stricken. When the party reached Puruṣottama-kṣetra, Śivānanda was surprised to see that dog sitting on the beach near Gauranga Mahaprabhu. At once, Sivananda offered obeisances to the dog to neutralize his offenses. At that time, Mahaprabhu was throwing Jagannātha coconut pulp *maha-prasādam* to the dog while saying, ‘Chant Kṛṣṇa!’

The dog was eating the coconut pulp and chanting ‘Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa.’ Astonished by the sight, Śivānanda again bowed down to the dog. A short time later, the dog disappeared and was never seen again. Surely, the dog attained a divine body and went to the spiritual world—*svarūpāntaram labdhvā lokāntaram prāptaḥ*. (Caitanya Candrodaya Act 10 v. 7-9)

Dhama Donkeys

In *Brahma Purana*, Lord Brahma says all the residents of Puri have four arms (*sarvān eva catur-bhujāḥ*). Sri Purusottama-kṣetra is so amazing that even the donkeys living there have four arms, what to speak of the human beings. Sri Sanatana Gosvami confirms:

*aho tat kṣetra-māhātmyam, gardabho ‘pi catur-bhujāḥ
yatra praveśa-mātreṇa, na kasyāpi punar bhavaḥ*

Oh, the glory of Sri Ksetra! Even an ass there is four-armed. Anyone who goes there once is never born again. (Br.Bh. 2.1.163)

The Power and Benefit of Visiting Sri Ksetra Dhama

The *Skanda Purana* states that in Dvapara-yuga, Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna visited Nilacala-Dhama, Jagannatha Puri for three days.



They observed some *vratas* and took *darsana* of Jagannatha Swami.

Srila Veda-vyāsa describes how fortunate one is to have the chance to visit and contact this most powerful Sri Ksetra Dhama:

*sparśanād eva tat kṣetram, nṛṇām mukti-pradāyakam
yatra sākṣāt param brahma, bhāti dārava-lilayā
api janma-śataih sāgrair, duriścāra-tat-parah
kṣetre 'smin saṅga-mātreṇa, jāyate viṣṇu-samam*

“Touching Sri Ksetra Dhama (Puri) gives liberation to human beings. Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa enjoys pastimes here, playing as a wooden Deity. By performing difficult austerities for a hundred births one is able to touch Sri Ksetra Dhama and attain a form like Lord Viṣṇu.” (*Bahv-ṛca-pariśiṣṭa*)

One time, Narada Muni told Prahlāda Mahārāja about the glories of Jagannatha Puri Dhama: “One who sees or even hears about the Supreme Personality of Godhead manifest on the summit of Nilācala Hill [Jagannatha Puri] will attain Lord Viṣṇu’s abode, *te yānti bhavanam viṣṇoḥ*.” (*Padma P.*)

“In the *Padma Purana* (chp. 11), Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa tells Lord Siva, ‘I eternally reside in Sri Ksetra and I eat there every day. By sleeping in Puri one obtains the results of *samadhi*, and lying down here brings the results of offering obeisances. By wandering around Puri, one obtains the result of *parikrama*, circumambulation. Every word spoken here is a prayer glorifying Me. Puri is so sanctified and pure that one attains the result of eating *haviṣya* (boiled sunned rice with ghee) even by eating fish. Everyone who resides in Jagannatha Puri is equal to Me. Yamaraja has no jurisdiction to punish anyone in Puri.’” (Cb. 3.2.370-377)

Seven Doors to Liberation

The *Siva Purana* says that in Sri Kṣetra, there are seven means to attain freedom from the cycle of repeated birth and death (*samsara-cakra*):

1. Remembrance
2. Maha-prasadam
3. Pilgrimage
4. Sankirtana
5. Residence
6. Darsana
7. Death



āste 'nanto 'vyayo viṣṇuḥ, purāṇa-puruṣottamaḥ
muktim dadāti yo devaḥ, saptadhā bhakta-vatsalaḥ
smaraṇaḍ bhakṣaṇād yānāt, tathā nāmānukirtanāt
kṣetre vāsād asu-tyāgād, darśanāc ca yathā tathā

“The unlimited, imperishable and primeval Sri Purusottama Deva resides in Puri. Being warmly affectionate to His devotees, Sri Jagannatha Deva bestows liberation in the following seven ways: by remembering Jagannatha Swami, by honoring Jagannatha *maha-prasadam*, by visiting His holy abode, by repeatedly chanting Jagannatha’s holy names, by residing in Sri-Kṣetra Dhāma, by seeing Lord Jagannatha, or by dying there.” (Siva P.)

One Vedic *sastra* states that if one simply enters Jagannatha Puri, he will never take birth again:

sparśanād eva tat kṣetram, nṛṇāṃ mukti-pradāyakam
yatra sākṣāt param brahma, bhāti dārava-līlaya
api janma-śataih sāgrair, duritācāra-tatparaḥ
kṣetre smin saṅga-mātreṇa, jāyate viṣṇunā saha

“The holy place of Sri Ksetra Dhama, where the Supreme Truth is present in His pastime of having a wooden form, bestows liberation upon all men who simply touch it. Even if someone has been dedicated to sinful behavior for hundreds of lives, by merely coming in contact with this holy place he will take birth in the company of Lord Visnu.” (*Bahvrca-parisista*)

“A pilgrimage to Jagannatha Puri Dhama gives the result of visiting all the holy places. One who has seen Puri Dhama need not go to any other holy place.” (*Embankment of Separation*)

A Purifying Dip in the Sea

Five hundred years ago, when the Gaudiya Vaisnavas arrived in Puri, they ran to the Gambhira on the wings of their hearts to take *darsana* of their beloved Lord Gaurāṅga. On Mahāprabhu’s order everyone then went to see the blooming lotus eyes of Jagannatha Swami in Sri Mandira; take a purifying dip in the sea; and then honor Jagannatha *maha-prasadam* to their full satisfaction.

Like the holy Ganga and Yamuna Rivers, the ocean at Puri is a purifying sacred place of pilgrimage. The ocean here is not just a pilgrimage place; it is a *mahā-tīrtha*, a great pilgrimage site. During the *samadhi* ceremony in Puri, Mahāprabhu bathed the body of Haridāsa Ṭhākura in the sea and declared, “From today onward, this sea has become a great pilgrimage site, *samudra ei mahā-tīrtha*. In *Bhagavad-gīta* 10.24,



Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa says: *sarasām asmi sāgaraḥ*, “Of bodies of water I am the ocean.”

Although westerners, non-Hindus, cannot enter some temples here, everyone, irregardless of skin tone, can frolic and play in the *prema*-filled waves of the sea in Puri. Sea bathing is especially beneficial for *sadhakas* because it cleanses the heart. “Anyone who bathes in the sea is immediately freed from all kinds of offenses.” (*Skanda P.*)

Bathing in the ocean (called Mahodadhi) or any one of four other sacred water tanks here in Jagannatha Puri grants one freedom from the cycle of repeated birth and death. The *Puranas* state that one can attain liberation by bathing in any of these five holy places in Jagannatha Puri.

Panca Mukti Tirthas

Name	Deity	Founder
1. Indradyumna Sarovara	Siva	Indradyumna
2. Markandeya Sarovara	Siva	Markandeya
3. Sveta Ganga	Sveta Madhava	King Sveta Madhava
4. Rohini Kunda	Kapalamocana	Kapalamocana
5. Mahodadhi (sea)	Cakra Narayana	Sage Kandu

The *Brahma Purana* states that by bathing in any of these five sacred places located in Jagannatha Puri, one will never take birth again in the material world.

Indradyumna Sarovara: *Skanda Purana* states that during the opening the of Jagannatha temple, King Indradyumna donated thousands of cows to the *brahmins* at this place. The weight of the cows formed a deep depression which became filled with water from the *arghya* that the king offered to the hands of the *brahmins*.

Markandeya Sarovara: Once Lord Visnu and Siva visited Markandeya’s *asrama*, and Visnu showed the *pralaya*, universal floods, to the sage. Since then Markandeya stayed here worshipping a Siva *linga*.

Sveta Ganga: This tank is named after a Treta-yuga, devotee king named Sveta who performed intense austerities to see Lord Jagannatha. *Skanda Purana* says one will attain liberation by bathing here and taking *darsana* of the presiding Deity of Sveta Madhava.

Rohini Kunda (located inside Jagannatha Mandira, inaccessible to westerners): *Skanda Purana* says the sacred water inside this *kunda* is left over from the last *pralaya*, universal deluge of destruction. At the time of *pralaya*, the flood waters emanate from here, and at the time of the next creation the waters are reabsorbed here. Just by touching this sacred water



one can attain liberation. “When visiting here Lord Brahma saw a crow fall into this *kunda* and then attain a four-armed Visnu form. In other words, the crow got *vaikuntha-mukti*, liberation by touching the sanctified water. (Skanda P. 2.3-4)

Mahodadhi (the ocean): The sea is considered *sarva-tirtha maya*, the sum total of all holy places, because all the sacred rivers (Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Kaveri, etc.) of India flow into it.



Chapter Two

The Temple and Deity of Lord Jagannatha

Cakra and Flags

Viṣṇu temples (also Kṛṣṇa, Rama, Nṛsiṃha and Narayana) are identified by the *cakra* (disc) gracing the pinnacle of the temple dome (*shikara*) towering above the central and main Deity altar. Śiva temples feature a *trisūla* (trident) at their apex. The *cakra* (Sudarsana disc) above Jagannatha Deva's temple is called "Nila-cakra" because it appears dark blue or green in color. The Nila-cakra is composed of eight metals (75% iron and copper), and has a diameter of twelve feet, and a circumference of thirty-six feet. It was installed by King Ramacandra Deva in 1594.

Every afternoon, the Garuda Sevaka (a *pujari* flag bearer) fearlessly climbs up 214 feet to the Nila-cakra and fastens a number of flags to the mast fixed to the Nila-cakra. The flags, which are bright red, white or bright yellow in color, are embroidered with a crescent moon and a sun in the middle, signifying that Jagannatha Swami is our ever-watchful, loving guardian both in the day and night. It also means that Lord Jagannatha rules the universe wherever the sun and moon shine. The Nilacakra *sevaitis*, who begin this hereditary service from the age of eight, get the ability to perform it by the mercy of Garuda, whose name they chant while scaling the *shikara*. In this regard, Śrīla Prabhupada states that seeing the temple *cakra* is equal to direct *darsana* of the temple Deity.

*mandirera cakra dekhi' kariha praṇāma
ei ṭhāni tomāra āsibe prasādāna*

One day in Jagannatha Puri at Siddha Bakula, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said to Haridasa Thakura, "Remain here peacefully and look at the *cakra* [Nilacakra] on the top of the temple of Lord Jagannatha and offer obeisances. As far as your *prasādam* is concerned, I shall arrange to have that sent here."

"Lord Caitanya asked His servant [Haridasa Thakura] simply to look at the Viṣṇu wheel [*cakra*] on top of the temple and offer obeisances (*namaskāra*). This means that if one is not allowed to enter the temple, or if he thinks himself unfit to enter the temple, he can look at the wheel from outside the temple, and that is as good as seeing the Deity within. (Cc. 2.11.194 v/p)



The flag flapping in the breeze above the Nila-cakra is known as “Patita Pavana Bana.” If by chance a high wind blows the flag away, then *bhoga* will not be offered to Jagannatha Swami. Devotees incapable of visiting the temple feel the presence of the Lord by seeing Jagannatha’s flag billowing in the wind from a distance. If devotees cannot come to the temple to offer their food (*bhoga*), then they will offer *bhoga* at that place where they can see Jagannatha’s flag, which is called Cakramanohi. When devotees see the beautiful flags and Nila-cakra above the Sri Mandira in Puri they felt surcharged with Jagannatha Swami’s joyful presence and then immediately offer prostrated obeisances out of loving reciprocation.

The Temple Architecture

Orissan temples display one of the most distinctive styles of religious architecture in Southeast Asia. There is something special about the design which is ornate on the outside but simple within. Although the temple exteriors are intricately carved, grand and often toweringly tall, they always appear unpretentious, small and sweet even when standing right next to them.

The main temple of Jagannatha Swami soars 214 feet high above the road level. The temple complex encompasses 450,000 square feet contained within two rectangular walls. The twenty-five foot high outer wall (665’ x 640’) is called Meghanada, the inner wall (420’ x 315’) is Kurma Prachir. This ancient temple combines two styles: South Indian (Dravidian) and North Indian (Nagara). The fine quality of the temple architecture is easily seen outside, and especially inside at the borders of the door frames wherein the 24 forms of Visnu are beautifully sculpted in stone. The temple records say King Anangabhima Deva completed the present temple in 1200 a.d. The main temple consists of four distinct buildings:

1. Bhoga Mandapa

Jagannatha Swami’s spacious food offering hall (18m by 17m) is called the Bhoga Mandapa, and it contains beautiful sculptures and paintings of *kṛṣṇa-līla*.

2. Nata Mandapa

The Nāṭa Mandira is the spacious music and dance hall (21m by 20m),

3. Jagamohana (Mukhaśāla)

This is the visitors’ hall or the main darsana area for pilgrims to see Lord Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra. Here stands the the famous Garuda Stambha from where Gauranga Mahaprabhu took daily darsana of Vrajendranandana Jagannatha Deva.



4. Vimana (Bada Deula or Garbha Grha)

This is the inner sanctum, the main altar (*ratna simhasana*), featuring the Deities of Jagannatha Swami, Baladeva, Subhadra, Sudarsana, Laksmi, Sarasvati and Nila Madhava

Start a Temple with Jagannatha

Jagannatha Swami is a unique Deity form of Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa, who has especially appeared in Kali-yuga to deliver the most fallen souls. Merciful Lord Jagannatha accepts worship from one and all. In 1970, Srila Prabhupada instructed a disciple that when establishing a new temple we first just worship Jagannatha Swami. After sometime when everything is running smoothly we can introduce the more demanding worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *murtis*.

“The Deities worshiped in the ISKCON Temples are Jagannatha Swami with Balarama and Subhadra and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. When we first start a temple, we start with Jagannatha Swami. My Guru Maharaja recommended temples of Jagannatha in these countries [outside of India]. So I was inspired to establish first of all Jagannatha Swami because He is kind even to the *mlecchas*. Then, when there is opportunity, I establish a Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *murti*.” (SPLetter 700205)

History—Appearance of the Jagannatha Deity - Story I

The Deity of Lord Jagannatha appeared in Satya-yuga on Snana Purnima during the first part of the Svayambhuva Manvantara. The Deities were installed 153,400,000 years ago! (*Skanda Purana*)

There are three popular stories about appearance of Lord Jagannatha, which will be retold below. During Satya-yuga, King Indradyumna ruled the entire world from his capital of Avanti. Being very religious, the emperor desired to see God face to face, *saksad-darsana*. Once a palace guest related a strange event he witnessed while visiting Purusottma-ksetra, Jagannatha Puri: “Every nite I saw demigods coming down to worship the presiding Deity of Lord Nila Madhava with fragrant flowers and devotional prayers. Although I personally do not have any qualifications, just by living in Purusottama-ksetra I developed intense love for Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa.”

Enchanted by the story, King Indradyumna deputed the *brahmin* Vidyapati to search for the Lord in Orissa. By good fortune, Vidyapati entered the forest around Nilacala Hill and was received by Visvvasu, the chief of the tribal woodsmen. After pleasantries, Vidyapati revealed his desire to attain *darsana* of Lord Nila Madhava, who was being worshiped by Visvvasu.



Visvavasu said, “Friend, a tribal legend tells that someday a king will come to worship our Nila Madhava. Providence has brought you here. Come see our beautiful Deity.” Upon beholding the indescribably attractive Lord, Vidyapati offered prayers: “O my Nila Madhava! You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the reservoir of unlimited bliss. Only by Your mercy can one understand Your divine form.” Vidyapati soon left Niladri and returned to Avanti to give King Indradyumna the good news.

One day, while Visvavasu was collecting forest articles to worship Nila Madhava, a huge cyclone ripped into Puri uprooting trees and throwing sand everywhere. When the violent storm subsided, the Deity of Nila Madhava had disappeared! Overwhelmed in loving separation, the tribal chief Visvavasu searched madly through the forest crying for the Lord. An aerial voice announced, “Nila Madhava will no longer be seen. The Lord will reappear in another form when King Indradyumna arrives. Be patient.”

King Indradyumna gathered all his belongings and subjects and set out for Orissa. Upon entering the state of Orissa, the royal procession was met by the King of Utkal (present day Orissa). Unfortunately, the sovereign of Utkal conveyed some bad news: “O King Indradyumna, it is our good fortune that you have come to this sacred land. However, recently, a vicious storm created havoc in our country and covered the area of Nilacala with sand. Hence, the Deity of Nila Madhava was lost.”

Narada Muni, who was traveling with him, comforted the disconsolate King Indradyumna saying, “Sri Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself to His loving devotees. Be assured, your desire to see the Lord will be realized upon reaching Purusottama Ksetra. Lord Brahma told me that the Supreme Lord will appear again in a unique form especially to fulfill your desire.”

Leaving their chariots, Narada led the king to a clearing amidst the dense forest surrounding Nilagiri Hill. There they saw a ferocious Deity of Lord Nrsimhadeva. Narada worshiped that Deity, and showed King Indradyumna the *kalpa-vrksa* tree under which Lord Nila Madhava previously stood. An aerial voice advised the king to follow Narada’s orders. Narada instructed the king to build a temple for Lord Nrsimhadeva and perform one thousand horse sacrifices. Meanwhile, Narada Muni went to the heavens and returned carrying a Deity of Nrsimhadeva to install in the temple built by Indradyumna. [This Nrsimha Temple is on Grand Road directly north of the Gundica Mandira]

During the final sacrifices, some citizens informed the king, “We have just seen a wonderful tree floating in the ocean’s waves. From a distance, we perceived its sweet smell and dazzling effulgence. Looking closer, we found the symbols of Visnu on that extraordinary log.”



King Indradyumna collected that tree and kept it on an altar in the Gundica Mandira. A supernatural voice proclaimed, “O King! A carpenter will come to carve the Lord’s proper form. Play music to cover the sound of carving and allow the carpenter twenty-one days to complete the work. Disaster will follow if anyone interrupts the carving.” After sometime an old carpenter arrived and fashioned four Deities. When the work period ended, King Indradyumna beheld the beautiful forms of Lord Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsana. After erecting a lavish temple, Narada and the king went to invite Lord Brahma to inaugurate it.

At Brahmaloaka, the gatekeeper had Narada and the king wait until Lord Brahma finished the *raga* that he was singing. “O King,” said Brahmaji, “Since you left the earth, hundreds of different kings have come and gone. Now return to Purusottama-ksetra and I will soon come when everything is ready.” To the visiting demigods, Lord Brahma said, “For the first half of my life, the Lord appeared as Nila Madhava, and from now on He will be worshiped in the wooden forms of Jagannatha, Baladeva, Subhadra and Sudarsana *cakra*. They will be carved from a special tree which is a transformed hair from the body of the Lord in Svetadvipa.”

Upon reaching Purusottama-ksetra, King Indradyumna found that by the Lord’s mercy his temple had been preserved despite the fantastic time interval. Narada Muni guided the king in all the details of the installation ceremony. Three handsome chariots were built to carry the Deities from the *mahavedi* (construction site) at Gundica to the main temple for the inauguration. Lord Brahma arrived and performed the elaborate Vedic rituals to install the Deities.

Lord Brahma gave *mantra diksa* to the king and advised him to diligently worship the sacred Daru known as Lord Jagannatha. Finally Brahma said, “O King! Anyone from any caste or creed who worships this form of God with devotion will become completely freed from all his sins.” Then Lord Jagannatha Himself smiled and spoke to the king in a deep and pleasing voice, explaining the details of performing each ritual and ceremony. Thus ends the story of Lord Jagannatha manifesting in Sri Ksetra Dhama. (*Skanda Purana*)

History—Appearance of the Jagannatha Deity - Story II

This story will answer the following four questions: How did the unusual form of Lord Jagannatha manifest in this world? What *kṛṣṇa-lila* from Dvapara-yuga is depicted in the annual Jagannatha Ratha-yatra? Why does Jagannatha rock back and forth when coming out to mount His chariot?



Why Baladeva's chariot leads the procession and Jagannatha Swami's comes last?

When Sri Kṛṣṇa lived in Dvaraka, He was always thinking of Rādhā's suffering in His separation. Even while dreaming, Sri Kṛṣṇa cried, "Radhe! Radhe! Radhe!" Identifying with Rādhikā's deep *viraha-bhava*, emotions of separation, Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu always sang, "Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa he" while wandering through South India. Similarly, the Vraja-gopis, remembering their Priyatama Syama, wailed uncontrollably, "Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa" and sometimes collapsed unconscious on the ground.

In *Lalita-madhava*, Srila Rupa Gosvami says that one day in Dvaraka, Kṛṣṇa cried piteously, "Radhe, Radhe, Radhe" and fainted. The astonished palace attendants became very worried when all their attempts failed to revive Kṛṣṇa. There was nothing they could do to bring Kṛṣṇa back to consciousness. Narada, Balabhadra and Uddhava met to resolve the crisis. They decided that Narada should sing the glories of Vraja with his *vina* in order to stir Sri Kṛṣṇa to consciousness. Feeling apprehensive, Narada said, "I think when Sri Kṛṣṇa returns to external consciousness, He will immediately run to Vrajabhumi."

"You are correct," replied Uddhava, "And if Kṛṣṇa visits Vṛndavana and sees the miserable state of the Vrajavasis and hears their piteous wailing, He will never come back to Dvaraka."

Narada replied, "Uddhava, you are Kṛṣṇa's reliable messenger. Therefore, you should go ahead to Vṛndavana and inform the Vrajavasis of Kṛṣṇa's imminent arrival."

Uddhava said, "I cannot refuse the request of an advanced devotee like you. Nevertheless, Kṛṣṇa sent me once before to Vraja, but I failed in my mission to console them. The Vrajavasis are crying for Kṛṣṇa 24 hours a day. How could I tell the Vrajavasis not to cry for Sri Kṛṣṇa; that would be an offense. I promised them that I would immediately send Kṛṣṇa from Mathura. But it has not happened till now, and that was 50 years ago! If I go to Vṛndavana again, they will never ever put faith in my words. The Vrajavasis will deride me, saying, "You are a liar; that's all!"

Balarama said, "Narada, I would have immediately gone to Vraja after you had suggested it. But like Uddhava, I also went to Vṛndavana once before and stayed for two months in an effort to pacify the Vrajavasis and remove their pains of separation from Kṛṣṇa. I told them, 'You need not feel so badly, Kṛṣṇa is coming back soon.' I even promised mother Yasoda to send Kṛṣṇa to Vṛndavana upon My return to Dvaraka. But I never did that. I let her down and that was 50 years ago!

"Although I repeatedly begged, 'Kṛṣṇa, please go to Vrajabhumi



and save Your family and friends,' Kanu only said, 'Yes, yes I will go' but He never went. So Narada, if I go to Vrndavana, what would I tell Yasoda? How would Yasoda put any faith in My words?" Saying this, Balabhadra broke down crying.

Subhadra said, "Everyone just relax, I will go first to Vrndavana. I will sit on mother Yasoda's lap, dry the tears from her eyes and tell her, 'Kṛṣṇa and Balarama are coming home to see you.' I will inform each and every *gopi*. Then all the *Vrajavasis* will become blissful and organize a huge festival to welcome Kṛṣṇa." Narada, Uddhava and Baladeva approved of Subhadra's proposal. Baladeva said that He would accompany Subhadra on the chariot to Vrndavana.

Meanwhile, back in the bedroom, Narada strummed his *vina* and started singing *Vraja prema-kirtana* in Kṛṣṇa's ears. At once, Sri Kṛṣṇa stood up displaying His beautiful three-fold bending form (*tri-bhaṅga-lalitām*), which was never before seen in Dvaraka. Immersed in *vraja-bhāva*, Sri Kṛṣṇa queried, "Who stole My flute? The *Vraja-gopis* must have." Kṛṣṇa then ran here and there searching for His flute.

Suddenly stumbling into Uddhava, Kṛṣṇa said with astonishment, "Hey Uddhava, what are you doing in *Vraja*?" Then Sri Kṛṣṇa noticed Narada and said, "O Narada, you are also here?" Surfacing to Dvaraka awareness, Kṛṣṇa said, "This is not *Vraja-bhumi*."

Uddhava consoled Kṛṣṇa, "My Lord, we knew that You would immediately run to Vrndavana, so we prepared a chariot for You. Please board Your chariot." Captivated by the thought of meeting Kisori, Syama started rocking and swaying like an intoxicated man as he staggered toward the chariot. With great difficulty Narada and Uddhava placed Kṛṣṇa on the chariot. This is the reason why during *Ratha-yatra*, Lord Jagannatha observes the *Pahandi* ceremony of rocking back and forth while slowly mounting His chariot. Jagannatha Kṛṣṇa is inebriated over the prospect of returning to Vrndavana (*Gundica*) for a reunion with *Rādhikā*.

When Baladeva and Subhadra entered Vrndavana, They noticed how all the *Vrajavasis* appeared half-dead due to burning in separation from Kṛṣṇa. Propelled to the limits of ecstasy, Baladeva and Subhadra swooned while manifesting their *mahabhava-prakasa rupas*, unique forms of intense love. They perspired, trembled and cried profusely. Their bodily hair stood erect and their voices choked up.

The wrenching pains of separation from Kṛṣṇa carried *Rādhikā* to *Nidhuvana* to sacrifice Her life. *Rādhā* had entered the final state of divine love madness, *adhirudha mahabhava*. *Rādhā* seemed to be in a dying,



unconscious state. All the Vrajavasis were in anxiety over Rādhā's impending departure. Lying in Her *nikunja* in Nidhuvana, Rādhā rested Her head on Lalita's thigh.

Just at that time, Sri Kṛṣṇa's chariot arrived in Nidhuvana where Rādhā was lying half dead. Seeing the plight of Priyaji, Syama ran into *nikunja*, shouting, "O Radhe, Radhe, Radhe! Please give Me Your lotus feet so I can hold them on My head." Devastated by the pangs of separation from Rādhikā, Kṛṣṇa collapsed on the ground. With unlimited intensities, all eight *sattvikabhavas* simultaneously seized Sri Kṛṣṇa's divine form and transformed it into a tortoise—hands, legs, and neck pushed inside His body. With big, dilated and expanded eyes Kurma Kṛṣṇa gazed at Rādhikā lying motionless in the *kunja* and then He fell unconscious. This is the form of Jagannatha Swami in Puri—Sri Kṛṣṇa in His *mahabhava-prakasa rupa*.

Suddenly a gentle breeze passed over Kṛṣṇa's body, and acted as a balm to revive Rādhā. Lalita-sakhi whispered, "Pyarijeu! Kṛṣṇa has come!" Rādhā slowly opened Her eyes, saw Her Pranavallabha and then stood up; Her life regained. But Kṛṣṇa's tortoise-like form was still lying unconscious on the ground of Nidhuvana. Rādhikā directed Visakha to help Syama, and she did by calling, "Radhe, Radhe, Radhe" in Syama's ear. Regaining consciousness, Kṛṣṇa opened His eyes and looked directly at Rādhikā—eye to eye union.

At that time, Sri Kṛṣṇa told Sri Radha, "Baladeva, Subhadra and I will reside in Jagannatha Puri Dhama forever manifesting our *mahabhava-prakasa* forms that We revealed here in Vraja. In Kali-yuga, I will come as Mahāprabhu and spend twenty-four years in Sri Ksetra experiencing Your feelings of separation from Me. Residing in Puri as Jagannatha Swami, I will be experiencing intense pangs of separation from You."

Srila Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvami describes Gaurāṅga's *mahabhava-prakasa rupa* as a tortoise form, *kūrmera ākāra*. After searching here and there, Govinda Dasa, Ramananda Raya and Svarupa Damodara Gosvami came to the cowshed near the Sirīha-dvāra. There they saw Mahāprabhu lying unconscious among the cows.

*peṭera bhitara hasta-pada, kūrmera ākāra
mukhe phena pulakāṅga, netre aśru-dhāra
acetana paḍiyāchena, yena kuṣmāṇḍa-phala
bāhire jaḍimā antare, ānanda-vihvala*

"Gaurāṅga's arms and legs had entered the trunk of His body, exactly like those of a tortoise. Gaurāhari's mouth was foaming, there were eruptions on His body, and tears flowed from Gaurā's eyes. As Mahāprabhu lay there unconscious,



His body resembled a large pumpkin. Externally Gauranga was completely inert, but within He felt overwhelming transcendental bliss.” (Cc. 3.17.15-17) (*Embankment of Separation*, adapted)

History—Appearance of the Jagannatha Deity - Story III

This story is very popular and once appeared in an abbreviated form in a Back to Godhead magazine. Once Narada Muni came to Dvaraka and met Sri Kṛṣṇa’s principal queens, Rukmini and Satyabhama, who were both looking very disturbed and unhappy. When Narada inquired about the cause of their distress, Rukmini replied, “Not once since our marriage have I been able to make Kṛṣṇa happy. My love cannot control Kṛṣṇa at all. At night, while Kṛṣṇa sleeps, He pulls my veil and cries, ‘O Rādhikā! O Rādhikā! Where are You? I will die without You.’”

Rukmini continued, “The entire bed moistens from Kṛṣṇa’s tears, and most amazingly this happens every night! Kṛṣṇa never looks at us or even once calls our names. Indeed, we are not at all dear to Him.”

Satyabhama said, “You are correct. In fact, just last night, Kṛṣṇa pulled my veil while wailing, ‘O Rādhā! O Rādhā!’ And then He fell unconscious. Narada, what is behind all this? We are married to Him, but why does Kṛṣṇa never look at us?”

Meanwhile, Sri Kṛṣṇa was sitting in the Sudharma hall along with Maharaja Ugrasena, Baladeva, Uddhava and Akrura. They were dealing with the political affairs of Dvaraka. Being all-knowing, Sri Kṛṣṇa understood that Narada was meeting with His queens in Rukmini’s palace.

To solve their personal dilemma, the queens met Mother Rohini and said, “Rohini Mata, you stayed in Vraja for eleven years with Kṛṣṇa and Balabhadra and you know all about the Vraja-gopis. Can you tell us about the nature of the Vrajavasis’ love that makes it impossible for Kṛṣṇa to forget them? We have been living with Kṛṣṇa for more than fifty years and still He never calls out, ‘O Rukmini! O Satyabhama!’ Why is it like this?”

“Why is it that we 16,108 queens with our matchless beauty, unique expertise and unparalleled qualities cannot satisfy one Kṛṣṇa, even though we serve Him in innumerable ways and love Him so completely? Kṛṣṇa is only concerned with the Vraja-gopis and always crying out for them. Please, tell the reason for all this?”

Rohini-devi replied, “The Vraja-gopis only know that Kṛṣṇa is their beloved. But you sometimes think Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord Himself and you see His four arms. But the Vrajavasis can never think like this. For them, Kṛṣṇa is just an innocent boy dancing all around playing His flute.



The Vraja-gopis do not have any formal relationship with Kṛṣṇa, yet from birth they have given everything to Him.

“Your love is divided into twelve parts; one husband, ten sons and one daughter. The *gopis*’ love is indivisible and unbroken; they have no children and have renounced their husbands. While performing any chore the *gopis* keep their minds and hearts fixed on Kṛṣṇa. While sweeping their homes they sing, ‘Govinda, Damodara, Madhaveti’; while cooking, they sing ‘Govinda, Damodara, Madhaveti’; while caring for the children of their elders, they sing ‘Govinda, Damodara, Madhaveti’; while grinding wheat, they sing, ‘Govinda, Damodara, Madhaveti’; and they teach their household parrots to sing, ‘Govinda, Damodara, Madhaveti.’

“The *gopis*’ minds and hearts are like a chariot upon which Kṛṣṇa forever sits. And Kṛṣṇa’s mind and heart is like a chariot upon which the *gopis* ride on and on. The *gopis* always call, ‘Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa,’ and Kṛṣṇa always calls, ‘Rādhe, Rādhe, Rādhe, Jaya, Jaya, Jaya Sri Rādhe!’ Kṛṣṇa cares so much for the *gopis* that sometimes He wiped the drops of perspiration from their faces fatigued from the exuberant dancing of *rasa-lila*.”

Meanwhile, Subhadra-devi was standing outside the queens’ quarters guarding the door to prevent Kṛṣṇa from entering. Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva arrived and joined Subhadra in listening through the locked door to Rohini’s narration of Kṛṣṇa’s Vraja *lila*. Kṛṣṇa became so absorbed in hearing about the intense love of the Vraja-gopis that His body and the bodies of Baladeva and Subhadra melted in ecstasy. Kṛṣṇa’s neck, arms and legs disappeared; leaving only the shape of the Jagannatha Deity seen today in Puri.

At this time, Narada Muni opened the door and saw the unusual melted forms of Kṛṣṇa, Baladeva and Subhadra. Then Narada asked Kṛṣṇa for a boon, saying, “O my Lord, I desire that the whole world may see You in this unique form of transcendental ecstasy. In this form You will be known as *patita pavana* (savior of the fallen), and You will liberate the entire world by Your auspicious *darsana*.”

Sri Kṛṣṇa replied, “So be it Narada! I will manifest these Deity forms in Jagannatha Puri for all time and then everyone can come see Us.”

The Identity of Dāru Brahma Jagannatha

The name Dāru Brahma means that God, the Absolute Truth, Brahman, has appeared in a Deity made of wood (*dāru*). This is confirmed in the *Padma Purana*:

*samudras-yottare tīre, āste śrī-puruṣottame
pūrṇānanda-mayaṁ brahma, dāru-vyāja-śārīra-bhṛt*



“At Sri Purusottama [Jagannatha Puri], on the northern shore of the ocean, resides the Supreme Absolute Truth. Full of ecstatic bliss, He has assumed a transcendental body that appears wooden.”

Jagannatha Swami is called *dāru-brahma* because He is the Absolute Truth in wood (*dāru*), and because He destroys (*dāraṇāt*) the miseries of material existence. The word *dāru* has three parts. The syllable *dā* is a combination of *dā* and *do*. *Dā* means to give endless bliss, *ānanda*. *Do* means to cut away illusion, material attachments, suffering and the various miseries eclipsing the pure soul. *Ru* means to revert to one’s original nature.

In conclusion, Dāru Brahman means the Deity form of God, the Supreme Brahman, Parabrahman. It means the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Kṛṣṇa, who cuts away all sufferings and miserable material attachments, and then awards one an eternal life of endless bliss in the spiritual world; He is Lord Jagannatha or Dāru Brahman.

In the age of Kali, Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa appears in two special forms, Dāru Brahma Jagannatha and the Ganga River, to liberate conditioned souls from the cycle of birth and death. Once in Puri, Gaurāṅga confirmed this point while instructing Sarvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya and Vidya Vacaspati:

dāru jala rūpe kṛṣṇa, prakāṣa samprati
daraśana snāne’ kare, jīvera mukati
dāru-brahma-rūpe—sākṣāt, śrī-puruṣottama
bhāgīrathī hana sākṣāt, jala-brahma-sama

Mahāprabhu said, “In this Age of Kali, Kṛṣṇa is manifest in two forms—wood and water. Thus, by seeing the wooden form [Jagannatha] and bathing in the water [Ganga], conditioned souls become liberated. Lord Jagannātha is directly the Supreme Lord Himself in the form of wood, and the river Ganga is directly the Supreme Lord Himself in the form of water. (Cc. 2.15.134-135)

There is another reason why the Deities for Kali-yuga have appeared in wood. The *murtis* of Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra are carved from Neem wood (*margosa*). *Brahmins* say that *neem* wood Deities can be worshiped by all the four *varnas* (not just born *brahmins*), and bestow the fourfold benefits of life.

The Absolute Nature of Lord Jagannatha

Being absolute, Lord Jagannātha is identical in person, form, picture, *kīrtana* and all other circumstances. If one thinks that the form of Lord Jagannātha is an idol made of wood, he immediately brings ill fortune into his life.



Lord Jagannātha is *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*, just as the body of Kṛṣṇa is *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*. A pure devotee who knows the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness makes no distinction between Lord Jagannātha and His body. He knows that they are identical, just as Lord Kṛṣṇa and His soul are one and the same.

Lord Jagannatha is identical with Sri Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇera 'ātma-svarūpa*). But in Jagannatha Puri, He appears as *dāru-brahma*, a nonmoving entity (*sthāvara-svarūpa*). Thus Lord Jagannātha and Mahāprabhu, although appearing as two, are one because They are both Kṛṣṇa, who is one alone. The supreme desire to deliver the entire world meets in both Mahāprabhu and Jagannatha, and for that reason also They are one and the same. To deliver all the materially contaminated people of the world, that same Kṛṣṇa has descended in the moving form (*jan̄gama rūpa*) of Gaura. (Cc. 3.5.148-151)

The Beauty of Jagannatha Swami

Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu was very thirsty to see the Deity of Lord Jagannatha. Gaurāṅga's eyes became like two bumblebees drinking the honey from the lotus-like eyes of Lord Jagannatha who is Kṛṣṇa Himself. The eyes of Lord Jagannatha conquer the beauty of blossoming lotus flowers, and His neck defeats the luster of a mirror made of blue sapphires. The chin of Jagannatha Swami, tinged with a buff color conquers the beauty of the *bandhuli* flower. This increases the beauty of Jagannatha's mild smiling, which is like lustrous waves of nectar. The luster of Jagannatha Deva's beautiful face increases at every moment, and the eyes of hundreds and thousands of devotees drink its honey like bumblebees. Feeling such great pleasure upon seeing the face of Lord Jagannatha, Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu forgot everything. (Cc. 2.12.210-19)

Sri Sanātana Gosvami glorifies his beloved Lord Jagannatha thus:

*dūrād adarṣi puruṣottama-vaktra-candro
bhrājad-viśāla-nayano maṇi-puṇḍra-bhālah
snigdhabhra-kāntir aruṇādhara-dīpti-ramyo
'śeṣa-prasāda-vikasat-smita-candrikādhyaḥ*

“The moonlike face of Sri Puruṣottma Deva is beautified with brilliantly shining, large round eyes. Jagannatha's forehead is decorated with *tilaka* made of gems, His complexion glows like a cloud full of rain and the brilliance of Jagannatha's ruby red lips pleases the hearts of all. His irresistible charm is magnified by the moonbeams of boundless mercy emanating from His mild smile.” (Br. Bhag 2.1.167)



The Extraordinary Form of Lord Jagannatha

Pilgrims in Puri often ask the question, “Why does the Deity of Jagannatha Deva have such an unusual form?” The answer is simple—God wants to appear like this, in this most unusual form, to establish religion in this most unusual age of Kali. The *Vamadeva Samhita* and the *Skanda Purana* (Utkala Khanda 18.3, 37) state that Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa appears in this covered wooden form out of His independent will and due to the prayer of Lord Brahma. Ultimately, Jagannatha Deva exhibits whatever form his devotee wants to see as stated in *Skanda Purana* (Utkala Khanda 23.49-50). The following story is a slightly different version of the third story told above about the appearance of the Jagannatha Deity. I personally like this pastime, and as they say, anything good is worth repeating.

Kahnai Khuntia, a 16th century Oriya Gauḍiṃya Vaiṣṇava, gives an amazing explanation for Jagannatha Deva’s form in his classic drama entitled *Mahābhāva Prakāśa*. He states that Lord Jagannatha’s form is actually the form Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa once manifested while experiencing intense separation from Srimati Rādhārāni. Jagannatha is the *mahābhāva-prakāśa rupa* of Sri Kṛṣṇa—with fully dilated, blooming lotus eyes, a big round face and shrunken hands, arms and legs. A summary of *Mahābhāva Prakāśa* follows:

In Dvaraka, Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa resided simultaneously in the palaces of each and every one of His 16,108 wives. Yet in the stillness of midnight, Sri Kṛṣṇa often wept and cried out piteously in His sleep, *Rādhe! Rādhe!! Rādhe!!!* Even though His queens served Him with so much love and care, still Sri Kṛṣṇa was not happy. Something was missing. The fact is that after His departure from Vrndavana, Syama’s pangs of separation from Srimati and the damsels of Vraja were as acute as their feelings were for Him. Kṛṣṇa was dreaming of Vrajabhumi and crying, Gopi! Gopi!! Gopi!!! Rādhe! Rādhe!! Rādhe!!!

Perplexed, Kṛṣṇa’s queens once asked mother Rohini to explain their husband’s strange behavior. Rohini Ma replied, “You cannot understand the sweet, intoxicating nature of Sri Kṛṣṇa’s Vraja *madhurya-lila* because you are all royal people absorbed in grandeur and opulence. Nevertheless, I will describe it just to satisfy your curiosity. I am afraid, however, that if Kṛṣṇa or Balarama happen to pass by and hear the narration, They will totally forget themselves and go mad in ecstasy.”

After collecting all the queens in a big hall, Rohini suggested, “Let Subhadra-devi stand outside the door to prevent Kṛṣṇa and Balarama from entering. If They come, Subhadra will warn me and I will stop speaking.”



While standing by the door, Subhadra became absorbed in the *Vraja lila-katha* and completely forgot herself. She became stunned and manifested a uniquely ecstatic form with dilated eyes and arms and legs retracted into her body. Meanwhile, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama came there and saw Subhadra's bizarre form. Curious, the two brothers listened to Rohini's narration. Within a few minutes, They lost themselves in the sweet memories of Vraja and swooned in ecstasy. The lotus eyes of Kṛṣṇa and Balarama fully blossomed and Their arms, hands, legs and feet withdrew into Their divine bodies like a tortoise.

Devarsi Narada suddenly appeared and from a distance gazed upon these three beautiful, ecstatic forms manifesting the symptoms of the topmost *Vraja madhurya-prema* in Their *mahābhāva-prakāśa* forms. As Narada neared, Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra concealed that *bhāva* and assumed Their original forms. It was too late! Narada joyfully exclaimed, "I have seen it! I have seen it! O my Lord! Please hear my prayer. May that *mahābhāva-prakāśa* form of Yours be manifest in some place on the earth. Let all the people in the world see that beautiful form and worship You in that form!"

Sri Kṛṣṇa, who always fulfills the desires of His pure devotees, replied, "Let it be" (*tathāstu*). In this way, Sri Jagannatha Deva, Sri Baladeva and Srimati Subhadra manifested the unique forms visible today in Sri Purusottama Dhama. (*Embankment of Separation*, adapted)

The Extraordinary Features of Lord Jagannatha

Large Eyes—Balarama Dasa, a medieval Oriyan Vaisnava saint, gives a most interesting explanation about the Deities of Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra. He says these three Deities rest in the different parts of a man's eye. The black center (pupil) represents Lord Jagannatha, the colored portion (iris) represents Subhadra and the white outer portion represents Lord Balabhadra. Therefore, one can realize God (Jagannatha Swami) by concentrating on his eyes! Furthermore, he says the four-fold *murtis* represent the four bodily organs that a *sadhaka* can use to realize God: eyes—Jagannatha; ears—Balabhadra; lips—Subhadra; nose—Sudarsana.

Some Puri scholars claim the four Deities represent the four major groups of humans inhabiting the world: Jagannatha—black men (India, Africa); Baladeva—white men (Europeans); Subhadra—yellow (Chinese); Sudarsana—red (Red Indians). As the old adage goes, many men—many minds, which produce many extraordinary ideas about this extraordinary, but highly lovable, transcendental form of the Supreme Personality



of Godhead. On the practical side, the Jagannatha temple chronicles say the height of Lord Jagannatha, Baladeva and Sudarsana is 84 inches or seven feet tall (same height as Sri Caitanyadeva), and Subhadra-devi is 51 inches or four feet three inches tall.

The Extraordinary Tolerance of Lord Jagannatha

Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa possesses 64 exceptional transcendental qualities, and each one is unlimited in quantity. Having the quality of tolerance, Sri Kṛṣṇa can bear and forgive all kinds of offenses committed by foolish antagonists like Sisupala. In 1968, during the early days of ISKCON, a disciple once asked Srila Prabhupada, “Gurudeva, you said that Jagannatha Deities are more tolerant than Kṛṣṇa Deities. Can you please explain this point?”

Srila Prabhupada replied, “Jagannatha is another feature of Kṛṣṇa, and He is especially favorable to the people who are not strictly advanced to the *brahminical* culture of Vedic rituals. Lord Jagannatha is situated in India, at Puri; one of the towns of Orissa province. And 90% of the people of Orissa and Bengal are fish-eaters. But Jagannatha Swami in Puri accepts service from these people although they are sometimes fish-eaters.

“In the Kali-yuga, the people are supposed to be not so clean, and therefore, service to Jagannatha Swami is preferred. So far as service to Laksmi-Narayana and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, it requires a highly elevated position, transcendental to *brahmins*. But still, either we serve Jagannatha or Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, the effect is the same. But to facilitate the worship of the Lord, the form of Jagannatha is more congenial than others. But when anything is offered to Jagannatha, it does not mean that it is not taken by Kṛṣṇa. In the temple, although we offer to Jagannatha, it is also accepted by Kṛṣṇa.” (SPLetter 680824)

The History of Jagannatha Worship

Ancient scriptures state that Jagannatha worship has been going on eternally. The *Rg Veda* mentions it and the *Puranas* (*Skanda*, *Brahma*, *Narada*) present elaborate descriptions of Sri Ksetra Dhama. The *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* refer to the Deity of Jagannatha Deva. During the last two thousand years of continuous worship the cult of Jagannatha has assimilated the practices and philosophies of many religious faiths. Consequently, the cult of Jagannatha worship symbolizes the unity in diversity of all the major religious cults of India, including tree and totem pole worship (the Śabara cult); Jainism; Buddhism; the cults of Purusottama, Vasudeva, Madhava, Rama and Laksmi Nrsimha; and Panca Upasana worship (five-fold Hinduism) as Vaisnavism (Visnu worship), Saivism (Siva worship), Saktism



(Durga worship), Ganapatya cult (Ganesh worship) and Saurism (Suryadeva worship).

“Jagannatha represents an integration of all the important Hindu cultures that had flourished in India, including the Vedic, Puranic, Tantric, Smarta, Vaisnava, Jainism, Buddhism and the aboriginal tribes. Jagannatha is worshiped as Visnu or Narayana when He sits on the *simhāsana* in the *sanctum sanctorum*; as Ganesa during Snana Yatra; as Rudra during the Nava Kalevara ceremony; as Durga in the Sayana festival and as the Sun when riding on the chariot during Ratha-yatra. Apart from this, pilgrims worship Jagannatha according to their religious persuasion. Ramanuja Vaisnavas worship Jagannatha as Narayana, Nrsimha, Hari; Ramanandi Vaisnavas adore Him as Rama; Gaudiya Vaisnava worship Jagannatha as Kṛṣṇa; and Oriyan Vaisnavas see Jagannatha as the combined form of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Hence, Lord Jagannatha represents an assimilation of all the religious cults, creeds and sectarian philosophies under the broadest sense of the term Hinduism.”
(*Jagannatha Puri*, temple pamphlet)

It appears that people worship Lord Jagannatha according to their own realization. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His followers, however, see and worship Sri Jagannatha Deva as identical with Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa, the original, Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Gaudiya Vaisnava view is supported by the fact that Jagannatha Swami's *pujaris* use two *kṛṣṇa-mantras* in their daily worship of Lord Jagannatha: *gopijana vallabhaya svaha* and *klim kṛṣṇaya govindaya gopijana vallabhaya svaha*. Sri Baladevaḥji is worshiped as the son of Vadudeva with the *mantra om namo bhagavate vasudevaya*. Subhadra is worshiped with the *bija-mantra Hrim*. Incidentally, the Oriyan Vaisnavas pronounce Kṛṣṇa as Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Jagannatha and His Pujaris

In privacy, Jagannatha Swami sometimes talks and engages in personal exchanges with His Oriyan *pujaris*. There are many ancient and modern stories to confirm the confidential dealings of Jagannatha Deva and His devotees. You can read about them in chapter six, “Lord Jagannatha's Pastimes with His Devotees.” Five hundred years ago, Sri Sanatana Gosvami described the intimacy shared between Jagannatha Swami and His *pujaris*:

*nijaiḥ priyatamair nitya, sevakaiḥ saha saḥ prabhuḥ
narma-goṣṭhīm vitanute, prema-kṛīḍām ca karhicit*

“Sometimes Jagannatha Swami jokes with His dearest permanent servants (*nitya-sevakas*), and sometimes He enjoys loving pastimes with them.”



(Br. Bh. 2.1.202) Sri Sanatana Gosvami's commentary further condenses the sweetness of this verse: "Lord Jagannatha is not a lifeless log; He only pretends like that. Every chance He gets, Jagannatha indulges in all sorts of sports and tricks with His *pujaris* and devotees. Jagannatha's *pujaris* continually marvel over how Jagannatha Swami frolics like a naughty child at one moment, and the next poses as a motionless Deity. Nevertheless, the *pujaris* happily go along with whatever pastime Jagannatha Swami plays at the moment, be it active or passive."

Including the *pujaris*, various *sevakas* execute the following thirty-six categories of duty in their daily service of Sri Jagannatha Deva: 1. Temple opening and closing 2. Fire sacrifice 3. Bhoga offerings 4. Decorating the Deities 5. Collecting puja paraphernalia 6. Works with Dayitas during Rathayatra. 7. Door guards 8. Store in-charge 9. Bhoga preparation 10. Deity guards 11. Fixing temple door locks 12. Special *sevaitis* engaged in Rathayatra and Navakalevara. 13. Deity painting 14. Records in-charge 15. Provide betel nuts 16. Grinding sandalwood paste 17. Provide yoghurt for *abhiseka* 18. Provide water 19. Drummer 20. Sing songs 21. Sing *Gita Govinda* 22. Hold the umbrella 23. Torch carrier 24. Supply clay pots 25. Laborer 26. Cleaner of the temple 27. Astrologer 28. Doctor 29. Prepares vegetables for curry 30. Blacksmith 31. Cleans the temple if someone dies inside 32. Blacksmith and carpenter 33. Boat carriers 34. Horse and elephant caretaker 35. Dress cleaners 36. Cleans the temple premises.

Rites and Ritual

Jagannatha Swami is regarded as both the Supreme Lord and the only monarch of the state of Orissa. The entire ritual pattern of Jagannatha operates under this conception. Even the Gajapati King of Puri is seen as a humble servant of Lord Jagannatha. The Sanskrit word *niti* means rule, policy or principle. But in Puri *niti* refers to particular religious rites observed in the temple. There are three classes of *nitis*:

1. Daily *Niti*— fixed rites observed daily as a routine course;
2. Occasional or Special *Niti*—rites done on certain days, months or mishaps in the temple. For example, on Ekadasi night a huge ghee lamp is placed near the *cakra* above the temple;
3. Festival *Niti*—rituals to celebrate various yearly festivals like Candana Yatra and Ratha-yatra. Jagannatha Swami celebrates the twelve annual religious festivals mentioned in the *Padma Purana* (Purusottama-ksetra mahatyam). Nowadays, more than sixty official festivals are held yearly. Over time, various devoted rulers and the faithful have added the extra celebrations.



Odana-ṣaṣṭhī Festival (winter cloth)

At the beginning of winter, there is a ceremony known as the Odana-ṣaṣṭhī, which indicates that from that day forward, a winter covering should be given to Lord Jagannātha. That covering is directly purchased from a weaver, so it must be washed to remove all the starch before offering it.

Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi saw that the priest neglected to wash the cloth before offering it to Jagannatha Swami. Since he wanted to find some fault in the devotees, he became indignant. That night the brothers Jagannātha and Balarāma came to Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi and, smiling, slapped him. Although his cheeks were swollen from the slapping, Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi woke up feeling supreme joy within. (Cc. 2.16.76-81)

The Daily Rituals of Lord Jagannatha

For ten months a year the temple doors open at 5 a.m. For two months (Oct.-Nov. and Dec.14-Jan.14) they open around 2 a.m. Mangala *arati* follows with ghee lamps which provide a clear *darsana* of Jagannatha Swami's sweet face. Before the Deities are bathed, tooth sticks and tongue scrapers are shown to denote brushing Their teeth.

To prevent damage to the wooden *murtis*, only the image of the Deities is bathed every day in silver mirrors (or bronze) which are held before Them. Sanctified water mixed with yogurt, camphor, *amla* and sandalwood paste is poured over the mirrors to complete the Deities' bath.

The Deity Dresses (*veṣa*) of Lord Jagannatha

Lord Jagannatha is regularly dressed in silk or cotton outfits enhanced with lots of pretty flowers, *tulasi* garlands and *manjaris*. Only sweet smelling flowers of white, yellow, gold, orange and pink colors are offered to Jagannatha Swami. Jasmines, marigolds and pink and white lotuses are Jagannatha's favorites.

Some Vaisnavas adore Jagannatha Swami as Sri Kṛṣṇa, the majestic, opulent Lord of Dvaraka. And others see Him as Vrajendranandana, the simple, carefree cowherd of Vraja. This combination of simplicity and grandeur is prominently visible in the varieties of Lord Jagannatha's outfits. Sometimes Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra wear gold dresses (*Suna Vesa*) made of one ton of gold! At other times, Jagannatha appears like a simple Vrajavasi wearing *tulasi* and forest flowers.

There is a story behind the two modes of worship. King Anantadeva Coda Gangadeva of the eleventh century built the present temple of Jagannatha Swami. He often dressed Jagannatha like a king with royal silks, gold



ornaments and gem-studded crowns. A *pujari* named Dhanesvara Sarma saw the Lord as a cowherd of Vraja. Having no interest in opulence, this *pujari* removed all the gold and redressed Jagannatha with flowers, *tulasi manjaris* and a peacock feather.

Seeing the switch of outfits, the king angrily confronted Dhanesvara. The two met with a local holy man named Mudugal Rsi to resolve their differences. The king argued, “Lord Jagannatha is the Lord of the universe and the husband of Laksmi-devi. He should dress opulently.” The *brahmin* replied, “No, no, no! Lord Jagannatha is Syamasundara and Nandanandana from the forest of Vrndavana. He is Gopinatha, the conjugal lover of Rādhikā and the Vraja gopis. Jagannatha prefers to wear these simple natural outfits.”

The sage was undecided, so he asked the contending parties to remain in his *asrama* for a few days. One day, Lord Jagannatha appeared and told the king and the *brahmin* that He would accept both the fancy, opulent outfits and the plain floral dresses. Four times a year, Lord Jagannatha puts on very opulent outfits, but every night He wears His Bada Srngara Vesa made of wild flowers and *tulasi* garlands. It appears that Jagannatha Swami favors mercy above justice and sweetness above power. *Vrndavana Candra amar prabhu Jagannatha ki jai!*

On normal days, Sri Jagannatha Deva wears clothes of the color which pleases the planetary demigod ruling that particular day. On Sunday, Jagannatha Swami wears two pieces of red cloth (Sun-Suryadeva); Monday—white cloth decorated with black spots (Moon-Candradeva); Tues—five-colored cloth, primarily pink (Mars-Mangalvara); Wednesday—sky blue color (Mercury-Buddhvara) note: most Deities in India wear green today; Thursday—yellow (Jupiter-Brhaspativara); Friday—white or silver (Venus-Sukravara); Saturday—black, dark blue, violet (Saturn-Shanivara).

On special days throughout the year, Jagannatha Swami, Baladeva and Subhadra wear one of 36 different outfits to celebrate the pastimes of Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa, Sri Rama, Laxmi-Nrsimha, Durga and Ganesa. Costumes related to Sri Kṛṣṇa include, Vanabhoji veṣa, Kaliya Damana veṣa, Bali Bamana veṣa, Kṛṣṇa Balarama, Pralambasura, Rādhā Damodara, Vamana, Nrsimha, Gaja Uddharana, Raja. On Snana Purnima afternoon, Jagannatha and Baladeva dress as elephants (Hati or Gajapati veṣa). To give some idea of the unique variety, six different *veṣas* are described below:

1. Suna Vesa—Upon returning to the Lion Gate after Ratha-yatra, the Deities wait a couple days before reentering the temple. On Ekadasi evening, Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra wear Their most opulent and costly outfit called Suna (gold) Vesa, which includes solid gold hands and feet;



a gold crown, a gold peacock feather and gold earrings; a gold effulgence encircling Their lotus faces; and eight luxurious gold necklaces modeled after different flowers like *kadamba*, lotus, *campaka* and *parijata*.

2. Kaliya Damana Vesa—In reenactment of Sri Kṛṣṇa's vanquishing the monstrous serpent Kaliya, Jagannatha Swami holds a huge model snake above His head.

3. Kṛṣṇa Balarama Vesa—For this *vesa*, two specially fabricated arms are attached to the Deities, so it appears that the two brothers (Jagannatha and Baladeva) are resting Their beautiful arms on each other's shoulders.

4. Raja Vesa—On Vijaya Dasami day, Sri Purusottama Deva celebrates His descent as Sri Rama and subsequent defeat of the *raksasa* Ravana by sporting a regal dress, a bow and arrows.

5. Laxmi Nrsimha Vesa—Today, Jagannatha Swami dresses as a lion to rejoice in His Satya-yuga descent as Lord Nrsimha.

6. Raja Vesa—On Rasa Purnima the Deities wear a regal outfit once again. Today Jagannatha Swami dresses as Sri Kṛṣṇa with a flute in His hand.

7. Baḍa Srngara Vesa

Every night before taking rest, Jagannatha Swami wears a unique outfit called Baḍa Srngara-Vesa, composed of long *tulasi* garlands, and crowns, ornaments and decorations—all made of the most colorful and fragrant flowers. This outfit contains eight different floral pieces: 1. an all flower forehead decoration; 2. flower garland *tilaka*; 3. flower ornaments representing hands and fingers; 4. *makara* shaped flower earrings; 5. an eighteen inch diameter heart shaped flower piece to cover His heart; 6. a flower nose decoration; 7. a crown of many *tulasi* garlands tied on a bamboo frame; 8. and twelve foot long flower garlands stretching from arm to arm.

The main cloth, used daily for other costumes and for this offering, is a 12 meter long piece of fine silk that is tied around the Lord's body. Only before taking rest, Jagannatha Deva's head is covered with a 12 foot long red silk cloth inscribed with *slokas* from *Gita Govinda*. It is said that Jayadeva's wife Padmavati used to portray the verses of *Gita Govinda* by dancing every night in the temple for the pleasure of Jagannatha Swami.

Lastly, at 1 a.m. the temple closes. Everyone goes home happy and satisfied, and Jagannatha Swami slips away to cavort in the *rasa* dance with the damsels of Vraja. In this outfit, Sri Jagannatha Deva is completely adorned in aromatic flowers to appear like a lover (*srngaraka*) waiting for a tryst with the Vraja-gopis. Five hundred years ago, Sanatana Gosvami described the *baḍa srngara-vesa*:



*rātrau mahotsave vṛtte, bṛhat-çṛṅgāra-sambhave
nirgamyate tu nirvṛtte, puspāñjali-mahotsave*

“At night, there was a grand festival, with Jagannatha Swami dressed and ornamented in elaborate splendor (*bṛhat-çṛṅgāra*). At the end of the festival, palmfuls of flowers were offered and then it was time to leave the temple.” (Br. Bh. 2.1.176)

Darsana Takes One Back to Godhead

Once while instructing his disciple, Prahlada, about the glories of seeing Jagannatha Swami in Puri, Narada Muni said, “Anyone who takes *darsana* or hears about Lord Jagannatha, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, residing on the top of Niladri Mountain (Nilacala) will go to Vaikuntha, the spiritual abode of Visnu, *te yānti bhavanam viṣṇoḥ*.” (Padma P.)

Darsana of Jagannatha Swami As He Is

By great fortune one can enter a sanctied temple and see (*darsana*) the Supreme Lord presiding in his most merciful and beautiful form of the Deity. But who is the seer or who is seen? Can I see God with my material vision? For a moment or minute I look upon the Deity of Kṛṣṇa and then absorb myself in the world around me. From the *sastra* and the lives of the saints, we learn that pure devotees like Srila Prabhupada can stand “for hours on end” heartily beholding their dear Radha-Govinda. Srila Kṛṣṇadasa Kaviraja Gosvami says that a pure devotee spends his entire day seeing his worshipable Deity of Giridhari Syama and singing His names.

*sarva-dina karena vaiṣṇava nāma-saṅkīrtana
svacchande karena jagannātha daraśana*

A pure Vaisnava will perform *nama-sankirtana* and spend the whole day freely gazing upon his beloved Lord Jagannatha. (Cc. 3.6.219)

“Whenever Gauranga Mahaprabhu took *darsana* of Jagannatha, He directly saw Vrajendranandana, the son of Nanda Maharaja, *jagannāthe dekhe, sākṣāt vrajendra-nandana*. Becoming fully absorbed in seeing Jagannatha Swami, Mahāprabhu entered a deep state of *gopi-bhāva*, and then here, there and everywhere He looked He saw Muralivadana, pressing the flute to His lips.” (Cc. 3.14.32-33)

These verses show that Lord Jagannātha mercifully appears in a form corresponding to one’s meditation on Him. Some see in Jagannatha Swami the form of Vrajendranandana Kṛṣṇa and some see Ganesha, Narasimha or Vāmana, but according to the *Vedas* neither will take another birth.



And if someone in illusion thinks of the objects of the senses, he sees those objects, not Kṛṣṇa; he sees a doll made of wood. The article that follows wonderfully explains the true meaning of *darsana*, and how to see the spiritual reality beyond the mundane cover.

Deity Darsana—Seeing the Subjective World

“If we concentrate our attention on the outward form of a thing, neglecting its inner substance, then we shall find that we are looking in the wrong place. When Mahaprabhu looked at the Deity of Jagannatha Deva, apparently it seemed that His aim was fixed on the same thing we see when we look at the Deity. To our vision, however, the Deity of Jagannatha is only a doll made of wood. And yet when Gauranga Mahaprabhu fixed His eye there, He shed tears of joy which flowed in an incessant current. Where is Gauranga’s vision of reality connected? What we see as a wooden doll, Lord Gauranga sees in a completely different way. And just by looking at that, an incessant current of tears pours from Mahaprabhu’s eyes. Where is His connection with reality located? Sri Caitanyadeva is viewing things from the opposite side, from the subjective world.

How should we approach the Deity? When we have a look at the Deity, what should be our attitude? The Deity form of the Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa is not a mundane thing, so we should learn the proper way in which to see the Deity. And more than this, we must try to look at this from the other point of view. As we are trying to see the Deity, He sees us. Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa has come down to help the fallen souls in this material world, and He has come down in such a way as to take us up to His domain.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu looked at the Deity and His eyes were flooded with tears. It is not that His eyes were fixed upon the superficial characteristics of wood when He saw the Deity form of Lord Jagannatha, but Gauranga was connected on a vastly higher level with Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Mahaprabhu’s thoughts were deep with Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

“Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu thought, ‘Lord Jagannatha has come here and is making arrangements to deliver millions of fallen souls, especially by extending His own *prasadam* to one and all in great magnitude. Jagannatha’s magnanimous presence has manifest here for the relief of this world.’”
(*Loving Search for the Lost Servant*)

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura always took *darsana* of Jagannatha from behind the Garuda-stambha. When asked why he stood so far away, Sarasvati Thakura replied, “Let Jagannatha see us. Let Him cast His merciful glance upon us. Jagannatha Deva will look at Garuda, because Garuda is His devotee.



So at that time Jagannatha will see us. We will stand behind our guru, Garuda.” (Lion Guru)

Non-Hindus Tread the Humble Path

Although many western born converts to Hindu thought and Gaudiya Vaisnavism in particular visit Puri, they cannot enter the temple to see Lord Jagannatha because temple law forbids entrance of “non-Hindus.” Srila Prabhupada speaks sympathetically, “We should not feel sorry about this, as long as we engage in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. Kṛṣṇa Himself associates with devotees who are chanting His holy name, and there is no need to be unhappy over not being able to enter a certain temple. Such dogmatic prohibitions were not approved by Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Those who were thought unfit to enter the Jagannātha temple [Srila Rupa Gosvami, Sanātana Gosvami, Haridasa Thakura] were daily visited by Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and this indicates that Mahāprabhu did not approve of the prohibitions. To avoid unnecessary turmoil, however, these great personalities did not enter the Jagannātha temple.” (Cc. 2.1.63)

Humility paves the way to the heart of the Lord. Our guardian once said, “Do not try to see Kṛṣṇa, but act in such a way that the Lord will come to see you.” Our previous *acaryas* exhibited the zenith of meekness while living in Puri. Rupa Gosvami, Sanātana Gosvami and Namacarya Haridasa Thakura never entered Jagannatha’s temple and took great pains to avoid even the possibility of touching one of Jagannatha’s priests, by not even traveling on the path in front of the temple main gate, (Lion Gate). In fact, during one scorching summer day, Sri Sanātana Gosvami walked on the blistering beach sands to go see Mahāprabhu, instead of taking a shorter path near the main entrance gate of the temple.

Mahāprabhu asked Sanātana, “How did you come along the beach, where the sand is so hot? Why didn’t you come by the cool path in front of the Siraha-dvāra gate? The hot sand must have blistered your soles. Now you cannot walk. How did you tolerate it?”

Sanātana Gosvāmī replied, “I did not feel much pain, nor did I know that there were blisters because of the heat. I have no right to pass by the Siraha-dvāra, for the servants of Jagannātha are always coming and going there. If I touch them, I shall be ruined.”

Greatly pleased with Sanātana’s conduct, Mahāprabhu said:

tathāpi bhakta-svabhāva maryādā-rakṣaṇa
maryādā-pālana haya sādhuṛa bhūṣaṇa



“It is the nature of a devotee to protect and observe Vaiṣṇava etiquette. Maintenance of the Vaiṣṇava etiquette is the ornament of a devotee.” (Cc. 3.4.125-130)

Out of His infinite compassion for the non-Hindu pilgrims to Puri, Jagannatha Swami shows Himself in three wonderful forms. Everyday Lord Jagannatha sits just inside the Lion Gate as Patita Pavana Jagannatha smiling and glancing lovingly toward anyone who peeks in from the street. Secondly, Jagannatha Swami appears in His most relishable form as Jagannatha *maha-prasadam* for everyone to see by tasting. Unlike Hindus who take “little, little” *maha-prasadam* in stride with everything else they do in Puri, non-Hindu western Vaisnavas enter divine states of ecstasy honoring heaps and heaps of Jagannatha *maha-prasadam*. In the form of *maha-prasadam*, the Lord of the universe, Jagannatha Swami, reciprocates very intimately and individually with all of His so-called “non-Hindu” worshipers. Thirdly, Lord Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra come out in full public view two times a year (Snana-yatra and Ratha-yatra). At these times, non-Hindus can directly see their benevolent Lord, worship and pray to Him, pull Jagannatha’s chariot and relish His beautiful *darsana* to their heart’s content.

In addition, non-Hindus will be relieved to know that they will get all the spiritual profit gained by seeing Jagannatha just by hearing the ecstatic *lilas* of Sri Caitanyadeva. This point is confirmed by Sri Murari Gupta, an eternal associate of Lord Gauranga, who said, “Whatever benefit is achieved by having direct *darśana* of Lord Jagannātha, the master of Puruṣottama Kṣetra, one can obtain simply by regularly reciting the pastimes of Gaurahari.” (Sri Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Carita Maha-kavya 3.4.39)

Srila Prabhupada Advocates Darsana for All Planets

In Jagannātha Purī, on the evening of January 26, 1977, Srila Prabhupada was invited to address an assembly of Puri *paṇḍas* and scholars who had gathered to glorify a famous Orissan scholar named Jagannātha dāsa Gosvāmī, a contemporary of Lord Caitanya, and his Oriyan edition of the *Bhagavat-ṣaṭ-sandarbha*.

Srila Prabhupada began his talk saying, “[I would like to] introduce the Jagannātha Swami’s culture—*jagannātha svāmī nayana-pathagāmī bhavatu me*.” Although Srila Prabhupada was specifically asked to inaugurate the book of a famous medieval Puri scholar, he took the opportunity to preach about the success of ISKCON’s many Ratha-yatra festivals around the world. With his opening words: *jagannātha svāmī nayana-pathagāmī bhavatu me*: “O Jagannatha Swami, please be visible unto me,” Srila Prabhupada,



in a hidden way (*parokṣa-vādāḥ*), established the true purpose of his address; which was convincing the *pandas* to let his western disciples in the temple to see Jagannatha Swami. To drive the point home, Srila Prabhupada concluded his delivery repeating the same phrase, “These European and American Vaiṣṇavas are hankering like that, *jagannātha svāmī nayana pathagāmī bhavatu me.*” A portion of Srila Prabhupada’s talk is included here:

“Unfortunately, you do not allow these foreigners to enter the temple of Lord Jagannatha. How it can be adjusted? This stumbling block should be dissolved. You want Jagannātha Swami to pack up within your home, and you do not expand the mercy of Jagannātha. He is Jagannātha. He is not only this Purī-nātha or Oriya-nātha; He’s Jagannātha. Kṛṣṇa declares in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasāṁ sarva-loka-maheśvaram* [Bg. 5.29]. That is the definition of Jagannātha, *sarva-loka-maheśvaram* [supreme controller of all planets]. Why you should deny the inhabitants of Sarvaloka [all planets including earth] the *darśana* of Jagannātha? Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu never approved such thing.” (SP 770126AD.PUR)

Prayers to Lord Jagannatha

Whether one is taking *darśana* of Jagannatha Swami within the temple or viewing Patita Pavana Jagannatha from outside the Lion Gate, he can offer the following devotional prayers to the Supreme Lord. The *Jagannatha Astakam* (see Ratha-yatra chapter four) can also be chanted for the pleasure of Lord Jagannatha.

1. *jagannāthaḥ svāmī nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me*

Srila Prabhupāda said this means, ‘O Lord of the universe, kindly be visible unto me.’ He said this means the devotee is praying to see the spiritual form of the Lord. We are always seeing material objects, but the devotee prays to God in the form of the Deity of Jagannātha that he may see Him as He actually is—the Lord of the universe.” (BTG 23/8/88 SDG article)

2. *patita-pāvana jagannātha sarveśvara bṛndāvana-candra sarva-rasera ākara*

Sri Kṛṣṇa is *patita-pāvana*, the purifier of the fallen souls; Lord Jagannatha, the Lord of the universe; *sarveśvara*, the controller of all beings; *bṛndāvana-candra*, the moon of Vṛndāvana, and the original reservoir of all *rasas*. (*Gitavali* song 1.8)



3. *sakala chāḍiyā, āsiyāchi āmi,*
tomāra caraṇe nātha!
āmi nitya-dāsa, tumi pālayitā,
tumi goptā, jagannātha!

I have given up everything and come to Your lotus feet, O Lord. I am Your eternal servant, and You are my maintainer and my sole protector, O Jagannatha, lord of the universe! (*Saranagati* song 1.3)

Sri Jagannatha Deva Stava (Sri Sanatana Gosvami)

śrī-jagannātha nīlādri-
śiro-mukūṭa-ratna he
dāru-brahman ghana-śyāma
prasīda puruṣottama

O Lord Jagannatha, O Lord of the universe, O crest jewel of the city of Jagannatha Puri, O Supreme Person whose form is spiritual, although it appears to be made of wood, and whose complexion is like that of a dark rain-cloud, O Lord, please be merciful to me.

praphulla-puṇḍarīkākṣa
lavanābdhi-tatāmṛta
gūtikodāra mām pāhi
nānā-bhoga-purandara

O Lord Jagannatha, Your lotus eyes have blossomed wide-open and You appear to be nectar washed up on the shore of the salt water ocean. O monarch who enjoys multifarious royal pleasures and whose waist is decorated with pearls! O Lord, please protect me.

nijādhara-sudhā-dāyinn
indradyumna-prasādita
subhadra-lalanā-vyāgra
rāmānuja namo 'stu te

O Lord Jagannatha, You were pleased by the worship of King Indradyumna and You give Your devotees Your *maha-prasadam*, which is the pure nectar coming from Your own lips. O younger brother of Lord Balarama, who earnestly takes care of Your sister Subhadra-devi, I offer respectful obeisances unto You.

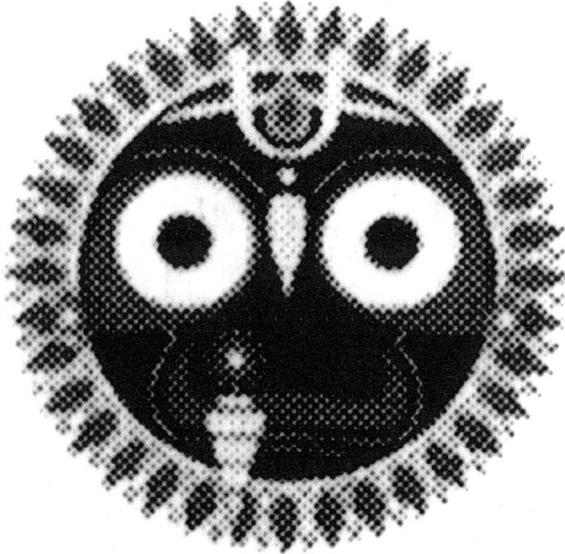


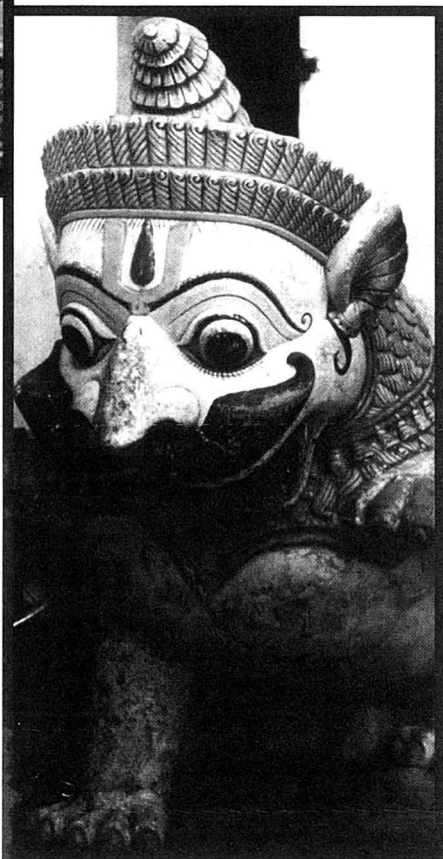
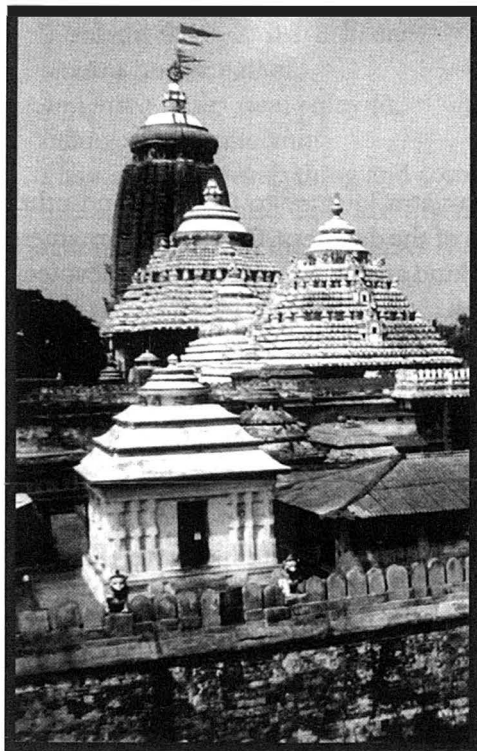
*guṇḍicā-ratha yātrādi-
mahotsava-vivardhana
bhakta-vatsala-vande-tvām
guṇḍicā-ratha-maṇḍanam*

○ Lord Jagannatha, with the Ratha-yatra journey to Gundica and other festivals, You increase the happinesses of the devotees. ○ beautiful ornament of the Ratha cart! ○ Lord who is very kind and affectionate to Your devotees, I offer respectful obeisances unto You.

*dīna-hīna-mahā-nīca-
dayārdri-kṛta-mānasa
nitya-nūtana-māhātmya-
darṣin caitanya-vallabha*

○ Lord Jagannatha, Your heart is always expressing mercy to the poor, miserable, abandoned, fallen souls. ○ Lord, the sight of whom and the glorification of whose qualities is ever-fresh, ○ Lord who is very dear to Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu, I offer respectful obeisances unto You. (Sri Kṛṣṇa lila-stava 44th Obeisance 398-402)





Chapter Three

Kitchen and Maha Prasadam of Lord Jagannatha

The Kitchen of Lord Jagannatha

The temple kitchen has an astounding 752 wood-burning stoves (each 3'x4') spread over one acre in the south east corner, far left inside the Lion Gate. Six hundred cooks and 1,000 laborers work daily in the kitchen. Chillies, onion, garlic, carrots, potatoes, tomatoes and several vegetables are not used in any preparation. Everyday, a fire sacrifice is performed in the temple kitchen. Afterwards, the cooks take embers from that sacrificial fire to ignite their individual stoves for cooking each day. All the food is cooked in earthen pots.

The process of cooking Lord Jagannatha's *bhoga* is *tantric* in nature and unique in character. Nine clay pots full of *bhoga* are cooked simultaneously upon one oven with nine burners representing nine *devatas*: Laksmi-Narayana and Agnideva in the center surrounded by Visnu, Siva, Indra, Brahma, Surya and Candra. Every pot of *bhoga* that has been prepared is placed before Lord Jagannatha, unlike most temples in India, where only small portions of the entire meal are offered before the Deities.

Locals believe and the *Brhad Bhagavatam* (2.1.161) confirms that the goddess Laksmi personally cooks for Sri Jagannatha Deva (*tasyānam pācitam lakṣmyā*). After Nilacala Candra (Jagannatha) enjoys the *bhoga*, it is presented to Vimala Devi. Then it becomes the renowned *maha-prasadam* of Sri Ksetra Dhama. During Ratha-yatra, Jagannatha *maha-prasadam* is cooked in the Gundica temple.

Everyday Jagannatha Swami is offered 56 items (*chappana bhoga*) for His pleasure:

- 9 Rice preparations
- 14 Subjis and curries
- 9 Milk preparations
- 11 Sweets
- 13 Cakes, Pancakes and Patties

The following list gives a hint of the variety of delectable items offered daily: plain rice, ghee rice, ghee sweet rice, dry sweet rice, yoghurt rice,



plain *kitri*, sweet *kitri*, ginger rice and lemon rice. Sri Jagannatha Deva enjoys six *bhoga* offerings per day:

1. 8 a.m. Gopala Vallabha Bhoga
2. 10 a.m. Sakala Bhoga
3. 11 a.m. Bhoga Mandapa Bhoga (huge quantities of *bhoga* offered for mass distribution)
4. 12:30 p.m. Madhyahna Bhoga
5. 7 p.m. Sayana Bhoga
6. 11:15 p.m. Bada srngara bhoga

Gopala Vallabha Bhoga: (early morning breakfast) This is Jagannatha Swami's first *bhoga* offering of the day consisting of milk sweets, fruit, butter, yogurt, coconut *malai*, etc.

Sakala or Rāja Bhoga: Contains various preps of black gram like *baḍa kānti*, *sāna kānti*, *enduri*, *māthapuli*, *hamṣakeli*, *kākatuā*, *jhili*, *kitri*, etc.

Madhyana Bhoga: Rice, *dal*, *sabjis*, etc.

A Wonderful Description of the Kitchen and Offerings

The following entry by Yamuna Devi concisely describes the amazing kitchen and offerings in the majestic temple of Lord Jagannatha in Puri:

“Without electricity or machines, skilled chefs work under oil lamps over open wood fires. Every day they prepare more than a hundred different dishes and offer them to the Deities. Further, given only one day's notice the chefs can prepare a full meal for up to ten thousand guests at a sitting. The Jagannātha Temple kitchens are exemplary in many ways, but three are of special significance: the preservation of ancient cooking standards, the training program for temple priests, and the highly efficient system for distribution of temple *prasādam*.

Kitchen Arrangement and Equipment

“The kitchen compound includes nine kitchens. Two of them are more than 2,500 square feet each, and seven are slightly smaller. The cutting, chopping, grinding, and so on, are done just in front of the kitchens, in an open area called the *agana*. (With binoculars you can get a partial bird's-eye view of the *agana* from atop the Purī Library, just across the street.) Numerous small storage areas make up the rest of the kitchen compound. The kitchens house an astounding 752 wood-burning clay stoves, called *chulas*, each about three feet square and four feet high. To accommodate various sizes of pots, small clay knobs, called *jhinkas*, are judiciously placed



at intervals on the stove's surface for support. A circle of five jug-shaped earthen pots rests directly on the stove's surface, kept in place with *jhinkas*. Three more pots go in the open spaces above the pots to form a second layer, and one more pot goes in the center on top, forming a nine-pot pyramid. In this way all nine pots receive lickings of heat and smoke from the wood fires below.

“The new earthen cooking pots are called *kudias*. Most are jug-shaped (for the nine-pot pyramid), though some are shallow and wide, resembling Spanish *paella* pans or French *saute* pans without handles. As the food cooks in these unglazed pots, their thick walls become very hot. The pots provide amazing heat retention. Food stored in them stays piping hot up to four or five hours.

Kitchen Staff and Training

“One thousand men work in the kitchen daily. Five hundred attain the status of executive chefs, called *swaras*, and are the only persons allowed to cook on the stoves. Three hundred “first-string” assistants are called *jogunias*. They are allowed to enter the kitchens to assist the *swaras*, but they mainly light fires, fetch water from temple wells, wash and clean the earthen cooking pots, and finally fill the pots with ingredients. The other two hundred assistants, the “second-string,” are called *tunias*. They are not allowed to enter the kitchens but work in front of them in the *agana*, engaged in such tasks as washing ingredients, cutting vegetables, grating fresh coconut into a powder, and stone-grinding herbs, ginger, and spice blends.

“A special staff of men, called *mahaswaras*, have the single task of transporting hot clay pots of food from the kitchen to the offering area, called the *bhoga mandapa*. To lift a pot, the *mahaswara* knots the end of a damp jute rope and makes a noose around the neck of the pot. He places the pot in a basket and then deftly builds a stack of four or five pots. One basket is then hung at each end of a flexible five-foot bamboo pole. To carry the lot, the *mahaswara* gingerly lifts the pole at its center and rests it on his shoulder. Now with a silky gait, hips shifting from side to side, he transports eight to ten pots at a time to the offering area—the pots bobbing rhythmically at either end of the pole without a drop of food spilled. All members of the kitchen staff begin training at age twelve, after they've received *brāhmaṇa* initiation and the sacred thread. They serve for life, or until they become too old to perform their duties.

“I asked Śrī Kanu Charan Puja Panda Samanth, a senior temple *paṇḍa*, to state the most important principles in focusing the mind for service to the temple Deities.



He replied, ‘Number one, before beginning to cook one should eat sufficiently and feel no hunger, to enable mental and physical strength to reach a maximum. And number two, while cooking for Lord Jagannātha one should constantly remember His name, fame, pastimes, and qualities in a mood of devotion.’

Offerings in the Temple

“In the *bhoga maṇḍapa* area the temple Deities are offered food five times a day: Gopāla Vallabha Bhoga at about twelve noon; Rāja Bhoga at about 2:00 P.M.; Upadi Bhoga, the largest and most varied offering, at about 4:30 or 5:00 P.M.; Madhyama Bhoga at about 7:00 P.M.; and Śayana Bhoga, before the Lord takes rest, at about 11:00 P.M. The timings of the offerings are not rigid; on any given day, the offering times can vary by half an hour or so. The timings may also shift during festivals and according to season.

“Offerings fall into two general categories: *pakka* food—fifty-four varieties of “boiled” dishes, including *dāls*, soups, stews, rice, *kiccharīs*, and vegetables; and *sukka* food—fifty-six varieties of “dry” food, such as cookies, biscuits, sweetmeats, pastries, and confections. Five kitchens are devoted to *pakka* dishes and four to *sukka* dishes.

Ingredients and Recipes

“The standard for ingredients has remained constant for two thousand years: ingredients must be local, organic, and native to the area. Widely available “new-world” ingredients such as cabbage, potatoes, tomatoes, papaya, cauliflowers, and hot red chilies are not used. But variety is not a problem; locally available are many types of beans, tubers, squashes, melons, leafy greens. Local spices include mace, cumin, fennel, nutmeg, cardamom, cinnamon, coriander, mustard seed, and black cumin.” (*Back to Godhead*, December 1994)

The Appearance of Maha Prasadam in Puri

Most people assume that *maha-prasadam* has always been available in this world. But this is not true. Prior to the pastime narrated below, Lord Visnu’s *maha-prasadam* was absolutely not available in this material world; not even for demigods like Lord Siva nor sages like Narada. Although today we take *maha-prasadam* for granted, attaining it is actually a rare privilege available only to the most fortunate living entities.

One day in Jagannatha Puri, Murari Gupta told Damodara Pandita the story of how Lord Visnu’s *maha-prasadam* appeared on this planet.



Murari said, “While playing his *vina* and continually glorifying Gauranga, Narada Muni traveled among the demigods informing them of imminent advent of Sri Caitanyadeva on earth. During his travels, Narada met Lord Siva and Parvati on Mt. Kailasa.

“Narada told Siva and Parvati about a conversation he had heard between the great *haridasa* (servant of Lord Hari) named Uddhava and Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa. At that time, Uddhava admitted that Kṛṣṇa’s merciful remnants were the only cause of his exalted status in devotion. Uddhava said:

*tvayopabhukta srag gandha, vāso laṅkāra-carcitāḥ
ucchiṣṭa bhujino dāsās, tava māyām jayema hi*

‘Simply by decorating ourselves with the garlands, fragrant oils, clothes and ornaments that You have already enjoyed, and by eating the remnants of Your meals, we, Your servants, will indeed conquer Your illusory energy. (SB 11.6.46) To tell You the truth, my dear Lord, the ability of this Haridasa [Uddhava] to conquer Maya comes from eating Your *maha-prasadam* remnants. Therefore, I always desire to receive Your food remnants.’

“Continuing his narration to Siva, Narada said, ‘After hearing this conversation between Sri Kṛṣṇa and Uddhava, I became dumbstruck. Although I myself have been on the path of devotion for a long time, and have been constantly chanting the holy name of the Lord, still I had no idea about the potency of Sri Kṛṣṇa’s *maha-prasadam*. Simply on the strength of the Kṛṣṇa’s *maha-prasadam*, Haridasa Uddhava had become an empowered pure devotee of the Lord. In the presence of the Lord, Uddhava praised that *maha-prasadam*.

‘Within my heart, however, I felt deprived because I myself had never tasted Visnu’s *maha-prasadam*. Then I thought of how to please Lord Visnu with my actions, so that He would give me a taste of His *maha-prasadam*. With this idea, I visited Vaikuntha and rendered various services to Laksmi-devi for twelve years. Satisfied with my *seva*, Laksmi-devi affectionately said, “Tell me Narada, what do you want? I will give you a boon.”

Narada continued, ‘I decided to reveal my heart’s desire so I folded my hands and said, “For a long time, I have been feeling pain within my heart. Everyone knows that I am your servant. But somehow, I never got the chance to taste Lord Visnu’s *maha-prasadam*. Please glance favorably upon me and give me the boon of receiving a handful of Lord Narayana’s *maha-prasadam*. This is my only desire.”

‘Laksmi-devi, astonished and surprised, submissively said, “You see Narada, My Prabhu ordered me not to distribute His *maha-prasadam* remnants to anyone. My dear Narada, how can I break the order of my Prabhu?



But wait, just listen, I will disobey His order and give you some of His food remnants.”

After some time, Laksmi-devi told her husband that she had carelessly promised to give His remnants to Narada Muni. Understanding her dilemma, Lord Narayana said, “My dear Laksmi-devi, you made a big mistake. Nevertheless, you can secretly give My remnants to Narada; but not in My presence.”

Narada continued, ‘Mahadeva, you will not believe it. But by the mere touch of Lord Visnu’s *maha-prasadam*, my own effulgence and spiritual potency increased one hundred times. I experienced intense spiritual ecstasy and automatically started chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Playing my *vina*, I journeyed here just to see you and tell you about my fantastic fortune.’

Lord Siva commented, “I must say Narada, you do look most extraordinary. What has made you so effulgent and spiritually surcharged?”

“Narada told Lord Siva that Laksmi-devi had given him Narayana *prasada*. Siva then scolded Narada, ‘What’s this? You obtained Lord Narayana’s *maha-prasadam*, which is rarely attained, and then devoured it without offering any to me. Out of affection, you have visited me, but why didn’t you offer me any of this rare treasure?’

Murari Gupta continued, “Hearing of Siva’s dissatisfaction, Narada hung his head down in shame. But suddenly, Narada remembered that he still had a morsel of *maha-prasadam*. Delighted, he quickly gave it to Mahesa, who then immediately ate that *maha-prasadam*.

“Lord Siva started dancing wildly in the joyous ecstasy of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. The earth trembled under the pounding of his feet and Mt. Sumeru rocked back and forth dangerously. Bouncing off the dome-like covering of the universe, Mahadeva’s euphoric roaring of Kṛṣṇa *nama* reverberated in all ten directions. The whole universe was trembling in ecstasy. The hood of Ananta Deva was stretching back to the point of touching the back of Kurma. Startled by this strange tickling sensation, Kurma poked His head out of his shell and stared at Ananta. Siva’s devastating dance almost drove the earth to the bottom of the universe.

“Terrified, Mother Bhumi [earth personified] ran to Mt. Kailasa and appealed to Lord Siva’s wife, ‘O Parvati Devi, I will die if your husband does not stop dancing. Not only that, but the whole material world is in great danger. Please, do something if you want to save the creation from destruction.’

“Somehow, Parvati pacified her husband and he stopped his dance of destruction. Curious about this astonishing display, Parvati asked Siva, ‘Prabhu, why are you dancing like this and how have you become more



effulgent than ten million suns? I have never seen you exhibit such a magnificent form. Please tell me, why is it that today you have displayed such unlimited rapture in *kṛṣṇa-prema*?’

Lord Siva replied, ‘Devi, listen to the joyful news of my good fortune. Today, the great sage, Narada, gave me some of Lord Narayana’s *maha-prasadam*. Although glorified in the *Vedas*, Vishnu’s *maha-prasadam* is inconceivably rare. In all three worlds, it is very difficult to get Kṛṣṇa’s remnants, which are mixed with the nectar of His lips. Today, my life is a success because of attaining Lord Narayana’s *maha-prasadam*. This alone is my real wealth and the source of my ecstasy.’

‘Agitated and disturbed by her husband’s words, Parvati said, ‘I foolishly believed that you were always kind and merciful to me. You have accepted me as half of your body, therefore, as husband and wife we are one. But today, your false love is revealed. It was all just a pretense; a false show. You cheated me! After getting that rarely attainable *maha-prasadam*, you ate it all yourself and did not even give me a speck of it.’

Murari Gupta continued, ‘Feeling slightly guilty, Siva replied, ‘O Parvati, actually you have no right to receive this transcendental wealth.’

‘Siva’s statement ignited a fire of furious anger within his wife. Parvati said, ‘Don’t you know that one of my names is Vaisnavi because I have deep devotion for Lord Vishnu. Now everyone listen carefully. Today, I make a solemn vow that if Lord Narayana bestows His compassion upon me, I will make sure that Bhagavan’s *maha-prasadam* is distributed to everyone in the universe from the demigods to the dogs and even the jackals; every living entity will receive *maha-prasadam*!’

‘Surprisingly, at that very moment, Lord Vishnu Himself appeared in Mt. Kailasa to uphold Parvati’s promise. At that time, Lord Narayana said, ‘O Parvati-devi, you always engage in My devotional service. For without you, the material creation cannot exist. The whole world worships you and your husband, Lord Siva, as Hara and Gauri knowing that you both are My very self. Be assured, I will definitely uphold your promise. I will personally appear in Purusottama-ksetra (Jagannatha Puri), and distribute My *maha-prasadam* to everyone in the universe.’” (Visnu-Katyayani Samvada from Padma P. cited in *Caitanya Mangala*)

Jagannatha Maha Prasadam— The Nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s Lips

One day the *pujaris* offered Gauranga Mahaprabhu some first-class Jagannātha *maha-prasadam* prepared from many costly ingredients. The *prasadam* was so nice that its aroma alone, to say nothing of its taste,



drove the mind mad. To Mahāprabhu the *prasādam* tasted millions upon millions of times better than nectar, and thus He was fully satisfied. The hair all over Gauranga's body stood on end, and a stream of tears flowed from His eyes. Mahāprabhu considered, "Where has this wonderful divine taste come from? Certainly it is due to its having been touched by the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips."

The *īśvara-sevakas*, Lord Jagannatha's servants, were astonished to see Gauranga's ecstatic transformations just by tasting a morsel of *maha-prasadam*. When Gauranga said that one obtains *maha-prasadam* only by great fortune, the *sevakas* asked the Lord to explain this point. Gauranga replied, "This Jagannatha *maha-prasadam* was eaten by Kṛṣṇa and now it is the nectar from His lips. Even the demigods beginning with Brahmā find it difficult to obtain. Only by heaps of pious deeds may one receive a particle of Kṛṣṇa's remnants. Only persons who have the full mercy of Kṛṣṇa can receive such remnants."

After His talk, Mahāprabhu returned to the Gambhira. In the evening, Gauranga again took Jagannatha *maha-prasadam* along with Rāmānanda Rāya, Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī and all the other devotees. As they tasted the uncommon sweetness and fragrance of the *prasādam*, everyone's mind was struck with wonder.

Mahāprabhu said, "These ingredients, such as sugar, camphor, black pepper, cardamom, cloves, butter, spices and licorice, are all material. Everyone has tasted these material substances before. Yet in these ingredients there are extraordinary tastes and uncommon fragrances. Just taste them and see the difference in the experience. Apart from the taste, even the fragrance pleases the mind and makes one forget any other sweetness besides its own. Therefore, it is to be understood that the spiritual nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips has touched these ordinary ingredients and transferred to them all their spiritual qualities. Kṛṣṇa's lips have the qualities of an uncommon fragrance and a highly enchanting taste that make one forget all other experiences."

Mahāprabhu, submerged in the ocean of ecstatic love, ordered Rāmānanda Rāya to recite some verses which he spoke as follows.

*surata-varḍhanam śoka-nāśanam, svarita-venunā suṣṭhu-cumbitam
itara-rāga-vismāraṇam nṛṇām, vitara vira nas te 'dharāmṛtam*

"O hero of charity, please deliver unto us the nectar of Your lips. That nectar increases lusty desires for enjoyment and diminishes lamentation in the material world. Kindly give us the nectar of Your lips, which are touched by Your transcendently vibrating flute, for that nectar makes all human beings forget all other attachments." (SB 10.31.14)



*vrajātula-kulāṅganetara-rasāli-tṛṣṇā-hara-
pradīvyad-adharāmṛtaḥ sukr̥ti-labhya-phelā-lavaḥ
sudhā-jid-ahivallikā-sudala-vīṭikā-carvitaḥ
sa me madana-mohanah sakhi tanoti jihvā-sṛhām*

“O sakhi! The all-surpassing nectar from the lips of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, can be obtained only after many, many pious activities. For the beautiful *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana, that nectar vanquishes the desire for all other tastes. Madana-mohana always chews pan that surpasses the nectar of heaven. He is certainly increasing the desires of My tongue.” (*Govinda-līlāmṛta* 8.8)

After hearing these verses, Gaura Prabhu became absorbed in the *mahābhāva* of Srimati Rādhikā and started speaking like a transcendental madman.

Mahaprabhu said, “O Nāgara, intimate lover! Just hear about the attributes of Your divine lips. Your sweet lips agitate the mind and body of everyone; increase lusty desires for enjoyment; destroy the burden of material happiness and lamentation; and they make one forget all material tastes. The whole world falls under their control. Your luscious lips vanquish shame, religion and patience; especially in women. Indeed, they madden the minds of all women. Your lips increase the greed of the tongue and thus attract it. Considering all this, We see that the activities of Your transcendental lips are always paradoxical.” (Cc. 3.16.121-122)

“O Syama! The nectar of Your lips and the vibration of Your flute join together to loosen our undergarments and induce us to give up shame and religion, even before our superiors. As if catching us by our hair, they forcibly take us away and deliver us unto You to become Your maidservants. Hearing of these incidents, people laugh at us. We have thus become completely subordinate to the flute. Such is the policy of Your lips. Just consider some other injustices. Everything that touches those lips—including food, drink or *betel*—becomes just like nectar. It is then called *kṛṣṇa-phelā*, or remnants left by Kṛṣṇa.” (Cc. 3.16.128, 130)

While thus speaking like a madman, Gaurahari became full of ecstatic emotion. In the company of Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī and Rāmānanda Rāya, Gauranga sometimes danced, sometimes sang and sometimes became unconscious in ecstatic love. Thus Mahaprabhu passed His days and nights in the Gambhira. (Cc. 3.16.91-150)

Power of Maha-prasadam

The wonderful glories of *maha-prasadam* are recounted in the *Padma*, *Visnu*, *Vayu*, *Bhavisya* and *Brahmanda Puranas*. “Even if the food eaten by the Lord



of the universe has been touched by outcastes, by those with no caste, or by those born in mixed castes, still it has the power to destroy sins.” (*Bhavisya P.*) Demigods like Siva and Brahma always wait anxiously to obtain even a morsel of Jagannatha Swami’s remnants, which they relish with the utmost joy. Jagannatha *maha-prasadam* is totally transcendental and completely pure. Even if it falls from the mouth of a dog or is touched by a low class man, a cultured *brahmin* will never hesitate to honor it because it never gets contaminated. *Maha-prasadam* is also called *kaivalya* because it gives liberation to anyone who eats it.

Nirmalya is a dried rice preparation made by special *pujaris*. Half-cooked rice is offered in clay pots to Lord Jagannatha, and then sun-dried in the temple courtyard. Finally, it is put in pink cloth sachets, purchased by pilgrims traveling abroad, and used to break *Ekadasi* or honored before one leaves his body at death.

In Orissa, Jagannatha *maha-prasadam* plays an important role in all the socio-religious rituals such as birth, marriage, the various *samskaras* and death. In fact, families confirm Hindu marriage negotiations by honoring *maha-prasadam*. In Ananda Bazaar, it is a common sight to see men of different castes sharing Jagannatha *maha-prasadam*. *Maha-prasadam* works wonders to establish friendship among the rich and poor and the cultured and uncultured. Sri Jagannatha Deva’s *maha-prasadam* is sold to the public at Ananda Bazaar on the northeast side of the temple premises to the right of the Lion Gate, Simhadvara. Ananda Bazaar, (measuring 6,500 sq. ft.), is the world’s biggest outdoor eatery, where every day thousands of pilgrims honor the indescribably scrumptious *maha-prasadam* of Lord Jagannatha.

Maha Prasadam Prayers

Before honoring Jagannatha *maha-prasadam*, you can recite the following prayer from the *Puranas*, which is recited by many devotees in Puri.

*nīlācala nivāsānya, nityāya paramātmāne
balabhadra subhadrayam, jagannāthāya te namaḥ*

“I offer my respectful obeisances to the Supreme Lord Jagannatha, who eternally resides in Nilacala along with Balabhadra and Subhadra.”

Followers of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura often sing this *bhajana* from *Gitavali* before honoring Jagannatha *maha-prasadam*:

*bhāi-re!
eka-dina nīlācale, prasād-sevana-kāle,
mahāprabhu śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya
bolilen bhakta-gaṇe, khecarāṇna śuddha-māne,
sevā kori’ hao āj dhanya*



1) O brothers! One day in Nilacala Dhama (Jagannātha Puri), at the time of honoring Jagannatha *prasāda*, Mahāprabhu Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya told all the devotees, “Today, may you all become blessed by honoring the *khicurī* of Lord Jagannatha in a pure state of mind.

*khecarānna pithā-pānā, apūrva prasāda nānā,
jagannātha dilo tomā sabe
ākanṭha bhोजना kori’, bolo mukhe ‘hari hari’,
avidyā-durita nāhi robe*

2) Gauranga Mahaprabhu continued, “Lord Jagannātha has given you varieties of extraordinary and wonderful *prasāda*, such as *khicurī* and *piṭhā-pānā* (a type of cake and condensed-milk preparation). Therefore, take all of this *prasāda* until you are filled up to the neck, and with your mouths chant ‘Hari! Hari!’ In such a transcendental atmosphere, ignorance and sin cannot remain.

*jagannātha-prasādānna, viriñci-sambhura mānya,
khāile prema hoibe udoy
emona durlabha dhana, pāiyācho sarva-jana,
jaya jaya jagannātha jay*

3) Mahaprabhu concluded, “These foodgrain remnants of Lord Jagannātha are worshipable even by Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva. Upon the eating of it, *kṛṣṇa-prema* arises within the heart. All of you have obtained such a rare treasure. All glories! All glories! All glories to Lord Jagannātha!”

Seven Rules for Honoring Jagannatha Maha Prasadam

A few times in Puri, I took *maha-prasadam* with some very devoted local brahmins who observed the following strict rules. Of course, it will not always be possible to abide by these rules. But they are listed here to show the deep respect and love that Puri residents have for Jagannatha Swami’s precious food remnants. After reading these rules, you can understand that the local *brahmins* have the full realization that *maha-prasadam* is Lord Jagannatha Himself.

1. You must eat sitting on the floor without an *asana* or table to ensure that you on a lower level than the *maha-prasadam*.



2. Serve ALL *maha-prasadam*, even liquid *dal*, with your right hand—without utensils. If an item is too hot to hold, you can serve it by covering your hand with a makeshift banana leaf glove.

3. Chant a special *mantra* before eating, which they did not tell me. When I asked, my host simply said, “Yes, there is a *mantra* to chant before honoring Jagannatha *maha-prasadam*. But it is not essential. When the *maha-prasadam* comes, just say, ‘Jai Jagannatha!’ and taste the nectar!”

** Note—Followers of Srila Prabhupada chant the following *mantra* before honoring *maha-prasadam*:

*mahā-prasāde govinde, nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave
svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan, viśvāso naiva jāyate*

“A person whose past pious deeds are meager can never develop faith in the Sri Kṛṣṇa’s *mahā-prasādu*, Govinda Himself, Kṛṣṇa’s Holy Name (*nāma-brahma*) and the Vaisnavas.” (*Skanda P.*, Utkala-khaṇḍa)

4. To avoid an offense, you must happily accept and honor every preparation. However, if you are observing a special *vrata*, you can avoid some items.

5. When washing the mouth, swish the water around and then swallow the first mouthful to prevent spitting out any particles of *maha-prasadam*.

6. The water from washing your hands and mouth should directly fall on the ground. It should not be put in a sink or a bowl lest some precious *maha-prasadam* passes offensively down the sink.

7. Afterwards, do not use a broom or cloth to clean the floor. You should use your hand and a little water so you can feel and pick up any bits of *maha-prasadam* and immediately honor them. Then you can wash the floor in the regular way.

The Golden Rule for Honoring Jagannatha Maha Prasadam

Gaurahari, the golden *avatara* of love divine, introduced only one golden rule to observe while honoring the holy remnants of Raktādhara Sri Jagannatha Deva. Mahaprabhu told His followers to just chant the holy name of Hari between each and every bite, and that alone would make their *prasada seva* perfect in every way.

*nānā pīṭhā-pānā khāya, ākaṇṭha pūriyā
madhye madhye ‘hari’ kahe, ānandita hañā*

Gauranga Mahaprabhu’s devotees ate all kinds of Jagannatha *maha*-cakes and sweet rice, filling themselves up to their necks, and between bites they chanted, Hari! Hari! Hari! in great bliss. (Cc. 2.11.209)



Srila Prabhupada elucidates further in his purport: “It is the practice of Vaiṣṇavas while taking *prasādam* to chant the holy name of Lord Hari at intervals and also sing various songs, such as *śarīra avidyā-jāla*. Those who are accepting the remnants of food offered to the Deity must always remember that *prasādam* is not ordinary food. *Prasādam* is transcendental.

“Both *prasādam* and Kṛṣṇa’s name are on the Brahman platform, or spiritual platform. One should never consider *prasādam* to be like ordinary hotel cooking. By worshiping the Deity, eating *prasādam* and chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, one can always remain on the spiritual platform (*brahma-bhūyāya kalpate* [Bg. 14.26]).”

Praying to Honor Jagannatha’s Remnants

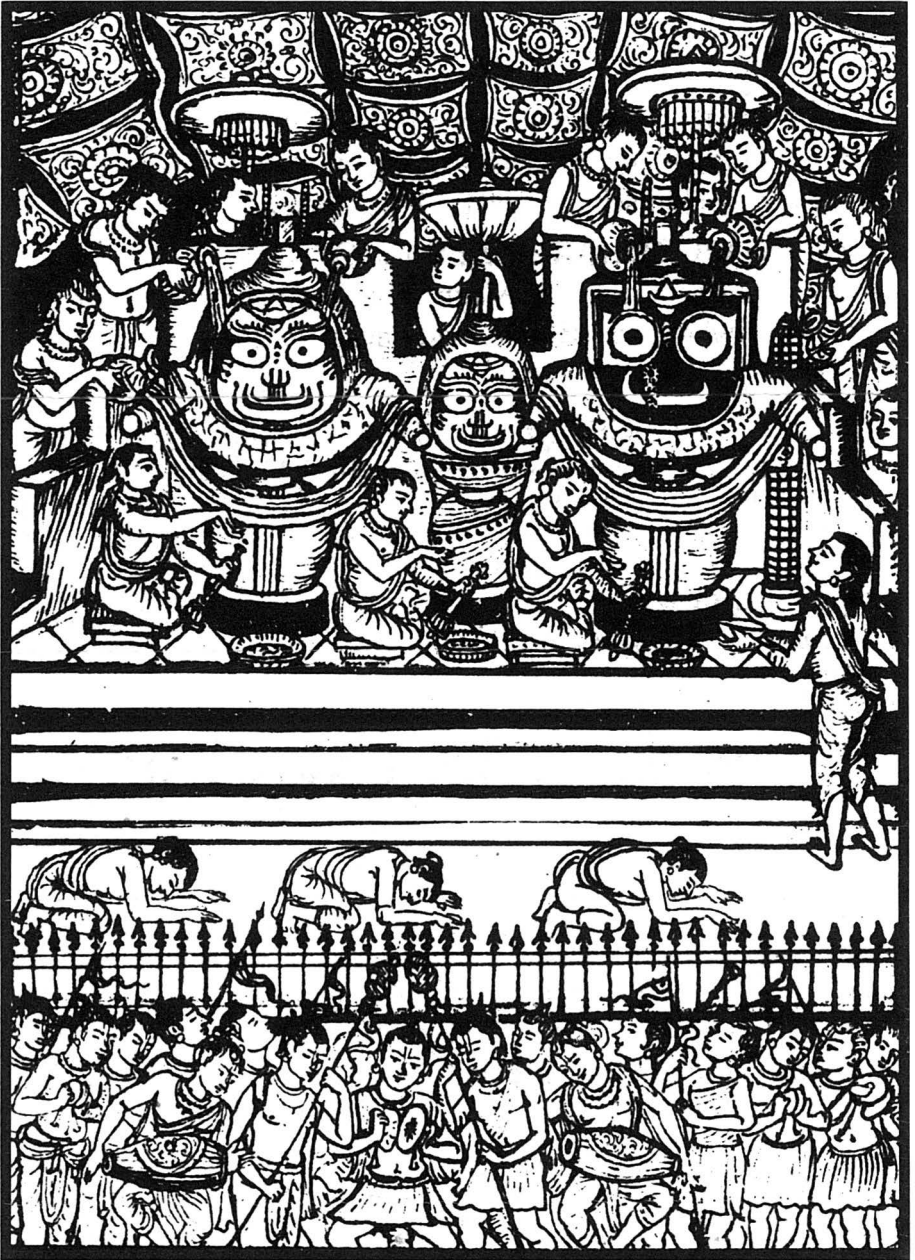
In 1975, while living in the U.S., I received my first taste of Jagannatha *maha-prasadam* from a godbrother who had just returned from India. It was called *khājā*, which is a light, crispy sweet made from flour, fried in ghee and coated with sugar. *Khājā* is Jagannatha’s favorite and the premier sweet for all the pilgrims in Puri. In the beginning, no one knew the name of this fantastic sweet, so it was humorously called, “Jagannatha’s tongue depressors,” because it has the basic shape of a doctor’s wooden tongue depressor. Of course, Jagannatha’s *maha-prasadam khājā* does not depress the tongue in the least; rather it is the most impressive sweet a tongue can ever taste. In short, *khājā* is the undisputed “tongue impressor.”

With me Jagannatha *khājā* became love at first bite. I could never forget that incredible experience—the crunchy sound, the melting sugar coating my tongue and the taste—yes, it must be the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lips! In my heart I am always praying to Lord Jagannatha that He will somehow send Me this causeless mercy again and again.

Guess what? Jagannatha is the Lord of the Universe! And yes His ears are everywhere! He hears my prayers, unqualified that I am, and regularly, too often to be coincidence, Jagannatha Swami sends His mercy; and *khājā* magically arrives in my hand. From the passage below, one can see that my beloved Gurudeva, Srila Prabhupada, is also praying for the opportunity to honor Lord Jagannatha’s *maha-prasadam*.

Srila Prabhupada once said, “Sometimes I wish to take Jagannatha *prasada*, because nowadays I have no appetite here. I went to Jagannatha Puri in 1958 during some special function. I was taking Lord Jagannatha *prasada* very sumptuously. I am praying to Lord Jagannatha to take me there again at His will and honor His remnants of food.” (Letter 15 Nov. 76)

Jagannatha Maha Prasadam ki jai!



Chapter Four

Ratha Yatra

The History of Ratha Yatra

The *Skanda Purana* states that Ratha-yatra began a few billion years ago in Satya-yuga during the reign of Svarocisa Manu, the second of the fourteen Manus. Every year Lord Jagannatha enacts the Ratha-yatra (Mahavedi Yatra) in order to see His appearance place at the Yajna Vedi in the Gundica Mandira. (*Skanda P.* 29.25-44) In Orissa, the Ratha-yātrā festival is known as Jagannātha's journey to Guṇḍicā. Although outsiders call it Ratha-yātrā, the residents of Orissa call it the Guṇḍicā-yātrā in honor of Gundica Devi, King Indradyumna's queen, who purportedly initiated this festival. The songs of many Oriyan poets state that Ratha-yatra started with the request of King Indradyumna's wife named Gundica.

Ratha-yatra is also known as the Patita Pavana Mahotsava because non-Hindus get the opportunity to see Lord Jagannatha. This auspicious *darsana* cleanses all sins and grants liberation.

The First Ratha Yatra of Srila Prabhupada

As a boy in Kolkata, Srila Prabhupada wanted a cart to perform his personal Ratha-yātrā so he asked his father Gour Mohan to arrange; but it was too costly to make. Sadly, Srila Prabhupada left the carpenter's shop, crying. A sympathetic old woman approached and asked why he was crying. Gour Mohan explained that the boy wanted a Ratha-yātrā cart but they could not afford it. "Oh, I have a cart," said the woman and then later she sold it to Gour Mohan.

Srila Prabhupada and his father modified the cart by fixing sixteen supporting columns and a canopy on top of the three foot high cart. Srila Prabhupada insisted that it must look authentic, like the big carts at Puri, so they also attached the traditional wooden horse and driver (*sarathi*) to the front of the cart. In addition, Srila Prabhupada personally painted the cart, copying the Purī originals. He also wanted to make homemade firecrackers to heighten the festival atmosphere but his mother stopped him.

With great enthusiasm, Srila Prabhupada organized all aspects of the festival. He engaged his playmates in helping him under the leadership of his sister Bhavatarini. He also jajoled mothers in the neighborhood to cook



special preparations for *prasādam* distribution during the Ratha-yātrā. Like the festival at Purī, Srila Prabhupada’s chariot festival ran for eight consecutive days. His family and playmates joined in the procession. They pulled the cart, played drums and karatālas, and chanted the holy names. Srila Prabhupada, a natural leader, led the children in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and in singing a Bengali *bhajan*, “*Ki kara rāi kamalini:*”

What are You doing Rāi Kamalini (Rādhikā)?

Please come out and see.

They are stealing Your dearest treasure,

Syama—the blue sapphire gem.

If the young girl only knew!

The young boy Syama,

Treasure of Her heart,

Is now forsaking Her.

Srila Prabhupada personally conducted all the rituals of the Ratha-yatra festival, including gorgeously dressing the Deities in new outfits, offering *bhoga* and *ārati* with a ghee lamp and incense, and concluding with *dandavats* before the Supreme Lord. Srila Prabhupada was always ecstatically absorbed in the festival proceedings. His spontaneous spirit of pure devotion sustained the eight-day mini Ratha-yatra festival, and each successive year brought a new festival, which Srila Prabhupada observed in the same glorious way. (*SP Lilamṛta* 1)

Eleven Ceremonies Connected with Ratha Yatra

The eleven different ceremonies connected with Lord Jagannatha’s Ratha-yatra festival are listed below as Roman numerals I-XI.

I. Snana Yatra

Millenia ago, King Indradyumna started the ceremony of bathing (*snana-yatra*) Lord Jagannatha with 108 pots of sandal-scented well water. At that time, Jagannatha Swami told the king that for fifteen days after *snana-yatra*, no one should see the Deities. Snana-yatra occurs on Jyestha Purnima (June full moon), one of the hottest days of the year. *Skanda Purana* says that Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa manifested His Daru Brahman form as Jagannatha Swami on this day. Therefore, Jyestha Purnima (Snana Yatra day) is the appearance day of Lord Jagannatha, which is Sri Kṛṣṇa’s *mahabhava-prakasa* form depicting His devastation in separation from Srimati Rādhikā.

Just after sunrise, Balabhadra, Sudarsana, Subhadra and finally Jagannatha



are brought in a hopping style procession to the bathing platform located on the northeast corner of the temple's outer boundary wall. The Deities stand the whole day within public view under a multi-colored canopy. *Pujaris* bathe the Deities (*abhiseka*) with 108 golden water pots of refreshing sandal-scented water. From Snana-yatra until the end of Ratha-yatra, Jagannatha Swami is cared for by a group of *pujaris* called *Daityapatis*, who are descendants of the *brahmin* *Vidyapati* and *Lalita*, the daughter of the tribal (*Sabara*) chief *Visvvasu*.

“Jagannatha Swami is burning in the intense fever of separation from *Rādhikā* in *Vraja*, so He is taken out on the temple roof to “cool off.” Unfortunately, Lord Jagannatha gets hotter, and the *pujaris*, in the mood of *Vraja-gopis*, pour 108 pots of cool sandal-scented water over Jagannatha's head. But even this gives no relief and Jagannatha becomes hotter. Afterwards, Lord Jagannatha retires in a secluded place with *Laksmi-devi* for fourteen days. At this time, Jagannatha is fed coconut water and unpeeled fruits. Why unpeeled? That is the natural way fruits appear in the forest of *Vrndavana*. The fruits are given like this because it satisfies Lord Jagannatha by reminding Him of *Vraja*.” (Dr. Fakir Mohan)

A few times I had the fortune to attend Jagannatha Swami's Snana-yatra in *Puri*. Since I am a western *Vaisnava* and not allowed in the temple, I took advantage of this rare opportunity to see the Lord. Standing on the street within one hundred feet of Jagannatha, I bathed the Lord with my own conchshell, dried Him, offered delicious milk sweets, and then a complete *aratika*—all for the satisfaction of Jagannatha Swami. One *Puri brahmin*, upon noticing my little attempt to serve the Lord, said, “Today, it appears that yours is the real worship of Jagannatha Swami.”

Srila Prabhupada explains how the merciful Lord *Sri Kṛṣṇa* appreciates any sincere service: “Even though, externally, a devotee may not render full service, if he is internally sincere and serious the Lord welcomes his service nonetheless. Thus *Sri Kṛṣṇa* is known as *bhāva-grāhī janārdana* because He takes the essence of one's devotional mentality.” (SB 8.23.2 p.)

In late afternoon, the Deities appear in a striking outfit that looks like the head of an elephant; complete with trunk and big floppy ears. This dress is called *Hati-vesa*, which Lord Jagannatha once displayed to express His love for a devotee. *Ganapati Bhatta*, a devout servant of the elephant demigod named *Ganesh*, once visited *Sri Ksetra*. Beforehand, he was told that Jagannatha Swami is the supreme God and reveals Himself to every worshiper according to his individual mood. Expecting to see his lord *Ganesh* in Jagannatha, *Ganapati Bhatta* once attended Snana-yatra. But not seeing *Ganesh*, he went away disappointed. The all-merciful Lord Jagannatha



secretly appeared as a *brahmin* and convinced Ganapati Bhatta to return for another *darsana*. Arriving before the Deities, Ganapati Bhatta saw Lord Jagannatha with the head of an elephant and thus fulfilled his desire.

Bhakta-vatsala Jagannatha Swami ki jai!

II. Anavasara (Renovation of the Deity)

The *Narada Purana* (Utkal Khanda 59.29) states that the Deities catch a cold and get a fever just after Snana-yatra because of exposure to cool winds. To recuperate, Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra remain in seclusion for two weeks being attended by special servants named Dayitas or Dayitapatis, who are descendants of the Sabaras, the original worshipers of the Deity of Nila Madhava. The Dayitapatis render what is called *śrī-āṅga-sevana*—attending to the personal divine form of Lord Jagannatha. During the fifteen days of *anavasara*, Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra are offered a medicine of fruit juices and indigenous herbs and roots. The Dayitas renovate and repaint the Deities with natural paints that need about 15 days to dry; charcoal is used for black color, mother-of-pearl for white, turmeric for yellow. The pupils of the Deities' eyes are painted by the temple priests, not the painters. In tribal dialect the word *anasara* means to “dry up.”

Śrīla Prabhupada very nicely describes the Dayitapati servants of Lord Jagannatha: “The word *dayitā* refers to one who has received the mercy of the Lord. Lord Jagannātha has a number of stalwart servants known as *dayitās*. These servants of Lord Jagannātha take care of the Lord from the day of the Snāna-yātrā up to the time the Lord is carried from the throne to the Ratha car. The *Kṣetra-māhātmya* says these *dayitās* or *dayitā-patis* come from the *śabaras* who come from the *brāhmaṇa* caste. The *dayitāpatis* offer food such as sweetmeats to Lord Jagannātha during the *anavasara* and an infusion of drugs represented by fruit juice. It is said that in the beginning Lord Jagannātha was worshiped by the *śabaras* and was known as the Deity Nila Mādhava. Later, when the Deity was established in the temple, the Lord became known as Jagannātha.” (Cc. 2.13.8 p.)

“Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura comments that as an ideal husband, Lord Jagannātha remained fifteen days in private with His wife, the supreme goddess of fortune. Nonetheless, Lord Jagannatha wanted to come out of seclusion to give happiness to His devotees. The Lord enjoys Himself in two ways, known as *svakīya* and *parakīya*. The Lord's conjugal love in the *svakīya-rasa* relates to the regulative principles observed in Dvārakā, where the Lord has many married queens.



But in Vṛndāvana the conjugal love of the Lord is not with His married wives but with His girlfriends, the *gopīs*. Conjugal love with the *gopīs* is called *parakīya-rasa*. Lord Jagannātha leaves the secluded place where He enjoys the company of the supreme goddess of fortune in *svakīya-rasa*, and He goes to Vṛndāvana [Gundica Mandira], where He enjoys the *parakīya-rasa*. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura therefore reminds us that the Lord's pleasure in *parakīya-rasa* is superior to His pleasure in *svakīya-rasa*." (Cc. 2.13.34 p.)

III. Nayanotsava (Netrotsava) or Nava-yauvana Darsana

The word *nayanotsava* means "a festival for the eyes." Indeed, that is just what the devotees experience when they see their beloved Lord Jagannatha after fifteen days of separation. Jagannatha Swami, Baladeva and Subhadra appear in Their finest robes and ornaments before throngs of enthusiastic devotees one day before Ratha-yatra. This day is named the Nava-yauvana day, the day of fresh youthfulness. Devotees celebrate exuberantly the return of their hearts as they delight in seeing Jagannatha Swami sitting on His *ratna-simhāsana*.

IV. Pahandi Ceremony (Rocking on to the carts)

The next day, (Asadha sukla dvitiya) the *pujaris* carry Jagannatha Swami and Baladeva from the temple to the colossal chariots in a ceremony called *pahandi*, which means "jumping" or "swaying step by step." Instead of lifting the Deities, the *pujaris* rock Them back and forth and side to side while slowly dragging Them to the carts. The two brothers look like a pair of drunks staggering to and fro; intoxicated over Their imminent return to Vrajabhumi, represented by the Gundica temple and gardens.

As the *sevaitis* hug, lift, pull and push Jagannatha Swami the distance to the cart, it seems that they are wrestling with the Lord. With Subhadra-devi, however, the *sevaitis* use a gentle approach. Holding Her face up over their heads, they run from the temple to the carts without stopping. Lord Baladeva is the first Deity to emerge from the temple. Then the Sudarsana cakra, Subhadra, and lastly Jagannatha Swami are carried to the carts. Sudarsana remains on Subhadra's cart during the journey to Gundica.

V. Chera-pahanra (Sweeping the carts)

The King of Puri arrives in a royal procession, mounts Baladeva's cart, offers *arati* and fans the Lord. The King then circumambulates the Deity



while humbly sweeping the cart with a golden broomstick. Thousands of eyes watch the performance with rapt attention, and thousands of hands clap uproariously to honor the head of state as he humbly serves the Lord of the universe. This ritual proclaims to the world that in the big, beautiful lotus eyes of Jagannatha, the highest political figure is not superior to the lowly sweeper. All are servants; equal in the eyes of the Lord.

Ratha Yatra Chariots—Facts and Figures

Surprisingly, these gigantic carts are rebuilt every year. Carpenters work on the Grand Road near the temple for two months preceding the festival, meticulously building each cart in the same way year after year. The chariot designs and decorations follow ancient traditions passed down from father to son. The old carts are used for cooking Jagannatha Swami's daily *bhoga*. The *kalasa* (pots above the canopies), the wooden charioteer drivers (*sarathi*), horses and fourteen deities arrayed around the carts are only remade every twelve or nineteen years when new Jagannatha Deities are prepared. To make the three chariots, 125 carpenters (hereditary craftsmen), spend 58 days carving 2,188 pieces of wood. Each chariot is divided into three parts: 1. Wheels and axles; 2. Wheels to floor where the Deities sit; 3. Floor to canopy and *kalasa*. Each chariot is pulled by four stout ropes of four inch diameter and 250 ft. length.

Nandighosa: This is the name of Jagannatha's chariot which flies the flag of Garuda holding a snake in its beak. The cloth canopy is yellow and red. The chariot is made of 832 wooden parts, all fitting without nails, but sometimes iron clamps are inserted for reinforcement.

Taladvaja: This is the name of Balabhadra's chariot which flies the emblem of a ploughshare (*hala*) on its flag. The canopy is green and red.

Padmadvaja: This is one of three names (Devadalana, Deviratha) of Subhadra's chariot which flies a flag with a lotus flower. A black and red canopy shields Subhadra and Sudarsana who ride on this cart.

Srila Kṛṣṇadasa Kaviraja Gosvami describes the Ratha-yatra cart thus: "Lord Jagannatha's chariot appeared to be newly made of gold and it was as high as Mt. Sumeru. It was gorgeously decorated with bright mirrors and hundreds and hundreds of *camara* fans. There was a neat and clean canopy and a very beautiful flag on top of the cart. Silken cloth and wood carvings of various gods and goddesses also beautified the chariot. Many brass bells, gongs and other bells rang attractively." (Cc. 2.13.13-21)



Ratha Chariot Facts

	Jagannatha	Balabhadra	Subhadra
Name	Nandighosa	Taladvaja	Devadalan
Wheels	16	14	12
Total pieces	832	763	593
Height	40.5 ft.	39.6 ft.	38.4 ft.
Length	34.6 ft.	33 ft.	31 ft.
Width	34.6ft.	33 ft.	31 ft.
Top Color	Red/Yellow	R/Green	R/Black
Guard	Garuda	Vasudeva	Jayadurga
Sarathi	Daruka	Matali	Arjuna

Damaged Chariots

“Jaimini Rsi said, ‘If the steering mechanism of the chariot is broken, the *brahmins* will suffer; if the axle breaks, *ksatriyas* will suffer; if the balance beam breaks, *vaisyas* will suffer; if the yoke pin breaks, *sudras* will suffer. If the flag topples from the cart, the state administration will change, and if the chariot itself is damaged, the entire state will suffer.’” (*Skanda P.*)

Notice to Pilgrims Attending Ratha Yatra

The Ratha-yatra procession is a wild jamboree, free for all with 500,000 super zealous devotees. If you like compression, a stampede or two, and thrill with delight in huge crowds—this is the place for you. Nonetheless, I have happily attended nine Ratha-yatras in Puri, and personally relished the forceful waves of devotion swirling through the masses. If you want the experience without the crush, then a few days before the procession you can book a peaceful seat on the rooftop of one of the many buildings along the parade route. You should bring an umbrella [for the sun or rain], and try to arrive at your seat by 7 a.m. the morning of Ratha-yatra to avoid the severely congested access streets. If you prefer to attend a more peaceful festival with far less crowds and mayhem then come ten days later for the return Ratha-yatra (Bahuda-yatra).

The Spiritual Benefit from Seeing the Chariots

Sri Kṛṣṇa may be seen in other Deity forms but the charming beauty of Jagannatha Swami is unique in that merely one glance frees one from all miseries



and grants one perfection. In the *Padma Purana*, Narada Muni tells Prahlada, “Anyone who sees Lord Jagannatha will go to the abode of Visnu, *te yānti bhavanam viṣṇoḥ*).

“A person who sees Jagannatha’s Ratha-yātrā festival and then stands up to receive Lord Jagannatha can purge all kinds of sinful results from his body” (*Brahmāṇḍa P.*).

“One who sees Lord Visnu, Sri Kṛṣṇa or Lord Jagannatha on His *ratha* will definitely get liberated and go to the spiritual world.” (*Padma P.*)

Srila Prabhupada comments, “This business is going on. ‘Now I have seen Jagannātha. My liberation is guaranteed. Now I can do anything.’ That’s all. This mentality will not give you liberation. You have seen Jagannātha, your sinful activities are now neutralized, but don’t commit again. Now make progress. Then your liberation is guaranteed. Is it clear?” (710701LE.LA)

Seven Kirtana Parties Assault the Universe

Before the massive chariots started rolling, Gauranga Mahaprabhu gathered all the devotees. Then with His own hand, He decorated them with flower garlands and sandalwood pulp. Altogether, there were four parties of *kirtana* performers, comprising twenty-four chanters. In each party there were also two *mrḍanga* players, making an additional eight persons. Mahaprabhu divided the chanters and appointed leading dancers for each group, along with five assistants to respond to his chanting.

From the villages of Kulina, Santipur, and Khanda, Sri Caitanyadeva made another three parties, bringing the total to seven *kirtana* parties. The four *kirtana* parties, first arranged by Lord Gauranga, chanted and danced in front of Lord Jagannatha’s chariot. The three village parties chanted on the sides and rear of Jagannatha’s cart. Fourteen drums beating simultaneously made a tumultuous sound, driving the devotees mad. Indeed, no one heard any mundane sounds or musical instruments other than the congregational chanting. (Cc. 2.13.29-50)

Srila Kṛṣṇānanda Kavirāja Gosvami says that Lord Gauranga came to earth to preach the hidden treasure of Gaudiya Vaisnavism which is *prema-nama*: *prema-nāma pracārite ei avatāra* (Cc. 1.4.5). *Prema nama-sankirtana* is saturated with Srimati Rādhikā’s pure love for Syama. Lord Gauranga came to distribute *kṛṣṇa-prema* through the chanting of the holy name in the mood of the damsels of Vrṇḍavana. As Sri Caitanyadeva personally arranged seven *kirtana* parties during Ratha-yatra, in Goloka Vrṇḍavana Srimati Rādhikā is arranging and guiding the Vraja-gopis in doing *prema nama-sankirtana*, especially when they feel acute pangs of separation from Syama.



At that time, all the *gopis*, their hearts saturated with *viraha-bhāva*, form a *sankirtana* party and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.

The *Gopi-gita* in *Srimad Bhagavatam* also depicts *prema nama-sankirtana* wherein the *gopis*, their minds full of longing and eagerness, sang together in separation from Syama. Similarly, at the time of Ratha-yatra, Gauranga Mahaprabhu, identifying with Rādhā's intense pangs of separation, was chanting *Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare*.

Lord Gauranga's Eight Prayers at Ratha Yatra

Throughout the chariot procession, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu spoke different words, phrases and *slokas* to convey His deep moods of love. The prayers numbered below are given in the order that Mahaprabhu uttered them as Lord Jagannatha proceeded on His chariot toward the Gundica Mandira.

1. *Maṇimā! Maṇimā!*

While Lord Jagannatha moved from the temple to His chariot, Mahaprabhu loudly proclaimed “*manima, manima,*” an Oriyan word used to address a respectable person. It basically means, “O my Lord, I offer You all My honor and respect.” (Cc. 2.13.14)

2. *Hari! Hari! Jaya Jagannātha!*

During the parade, Gauranga wandered through all seven *sankirtana* parties dancing madly. In euphoria, the golden Lord sometimes beheld His beloved Jagannatha, lifted His beautiful arms above His head and roared “*Hari! Hari! Jaya Jagannātha! All glories to Lord Jagannatha!*” (Cc. 2.13.51)

Mahaprabhu's movements during Ratha-yatra were totally unpredictable. Sometimes Lord Gauranga jumped high in the air while dancing. Sometimes the devotees ran alongside Mahaprabhu singing with the Lord. At other times, Gaurahari just collapsed on the ground offering *dandavats* before Lord Jagannatha. Then lifting His tear soaked lotus face toward Jagannatha Swami, Mahaprabhu folded His hands and offered the following four prayers: (Cc. 2.13.76-81)

3. *namo brahmaṇya-devāya, go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca jagad-dhitāya kṛṣṇāya, govindāya namo namaḥ*

Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the worshipable Deity for all *brahminical* men, who is the well-wisher of cows



and *brāhmaṇas*, and who is always benefiting the whole world. I offer my repeated obeisances to the Personality of Godhead, known as Kṛṣṇa and Govinda. (Viṣṇu P. 1.19.65)

4. *jayati jayati devo devakī-nandano 'sau
jayati jayati kṛṣṇo vṛṣṇi-vaṁśa-pradīpaḥ
jayati jayati megha-śyāmalah komalāṅgo
jayati jayati pṛthvī-bhāra-nāśo mukundaḥ*

All glories unto Devakinandana, the Supreme Personality of Godhead! All glories to the light of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty! All glories to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose bodily luster is dark blue like a rain cloud, and whose body is as soft as a lotus flower! All glories to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who appeared on this planet to deliver the world from the burden of demons. All glories to Mukunda, who can offer liberation to everyone! (*Mukunda-mālā* 3)

5. *jayati jana-nivāso devakī-janma-vādo
yadu-vara-parīṣat svair dorbhir asyann adharmam
sthira-cara-vṛjina-ghnaḥ susmita-śrī-mukhena
vraja-pura-vanītānām vardhayan kāma-devam*

Sri Kṛṣṇa eternally lives gloriously among the Yadu dynasty, and He is the ultimate resort of all living entities. Sri Kṛṣṇa is known as the son of Devakī and the son of mother Yaśodā (whose second name is Devakī). Sri Kṛṣṇa is eternally served by the members of the Yadu dynasty or the cowherd men of Vṛndāvana. With His mighty arms, or by His devotees like Arjuna who are just like His own arms, Sri Kṛṣṇa kills the demons and destroys the misfortune of all living entities, moving and inert. With His blissful smile and beautiful face, Govinda always increases the lusty desires of the damsels of Vṛndāvana. May Sri Kṛṣṇa be all-glorious and happy! (SB 10.90.48)

6. *nāham vipro na ca nara-patir, nāpi vaiśyo na śūdro
nāham varṇī na ca gr̥ha-patir, no vanastho yatir vā
kintu prodyan-nikhila-paramānanda-pūrnāmṛtābdher
gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor, dāsa-dāsānudāsah*

I do not belong to any caste; I am not a *brāhmaṇa*, I am not a *kṣatriya*, I am not a *vaiśya* or a *śūdra*. Nor am I a *brahmacārī*, a householder, a *vānaprastha* or a *sannyāsī*. I identify Myself only as the servant of the servant of the servant of the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the maintainer of the *gopīs*, who is an eternally effulgent, complete ocean of nectar and the very cause of universal transcendental bliss." (*Padyāvalī* 74)



7. *seita parāṇa-nātha pāinu
yāhā lāgī' madana-dahane jhuri genu*

I have gotten that Lord of My life, for whom I was burning in the fire of lusty desires. (Cc. 2.1.55) While dancing before Jagannatha's cart, especially during the late afternoon, Mahaprabhu immersed in His own internal ecstasy (*antara-bhāva*) and often sang the two lines above while thinking, 'Let Me take Kṛṣṇa back to Vraja.'

Being always absorbed in Rādhikā's *mahabhava*, Mahaprabhu felt the same separation from Sri Kṛṣṇa that Rādhikā felt when Syama left Vṛndāvana and went to Mathurā. When the Vraja-gopis met Sri Kṛṣṇa at Kurukṣetra during the solar eclipse, they wanted to take Kṛṣṇa back to Vṛndāvana. Gauranga Mahaprabhu felt the same ecstasy upon viewing Jagannatha Swami on His chariot. Completely engrossed in *rādhā-bhāva*, Mahaprabhu also recited the following verse which hardly anyone understood:

8. *yaḥ kaumāra-haraḥ sa eva hi varas tā eva caitra-kṣapās
te conmilita-mālātī-surabhayaḥ prauḍhāḥ kadambānilāḥ
sā caivāsmi tathāpi tatra surata-vyāpāra-lilā-vidhau
revā-rodhasi vetasī-taru-tale cetaḥ samutkaṅṭhate*

That very personality who stole away my heart during my youth is now again my master. These are the same moonlit nights of the month of Caitra. The same fragrance of *mālātī* flowers is there, and the same sweet breezes are blowing from the *kadamba* forest. In our intimate relationship, I am also the same lover, yet still my mind is not happy here. I am eager to go back to that place on the bank of the Revā under the Vetasī tree. That is my desire. (Cc. 2.1.58)

After hearing Mahaprabhu recite this verse during Ratha-yatra, Srila Rupa Gosvami composed the *sloka* below which exactly depicts the emotional heart of Sri Caitanyadeva. Noticing this verse at a later time, Gauranga was astonished that anyone understood His ecstasies. Mahaprabhu then showered His full blessings and empowerment upon Srila Rupa Gosvami to preach the confidential mellows (*gūḍha rasa*) of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

*priyaḥ so 'yam kṛṣṇaḥ saha-cari kuru-kṣetra-militas
tathāham sā rādhā tad idam ubhayaḥ saṅgama-sukham
tathāpy antaḥ-khelan-madhura-muralī-pañcama-juṣe
mano me kālindī-pulina-vipināya sprhayati*

Srimati Rādhikā said, "O *sakhi!* Now I have met My very old and dear friend Kṛṣṇa on this field of Kurukṣetra. I am the same Rādhārāṇī, and now We are meeting together. It is very pleasant, but still I would like



to go to the bank of the Kalindi beneath the desire trees of the forest there. My mind wishes to delight in hearing Syama's sweet flute (*madhura murali*) vibrating the fifth note within that forest of Vṛndāvana." (Cc. 2.1.76)

It is commonly said that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu also uttered the following prayer at Ratha-yatra:

Śrī Jagannāthāṣṭakam

*kadācit kālindī-taṭa-vipina-saṅgīta-taralo
mudābhīrī-nārī-vadana-kamalāsvāda-madhupaḥ
ramā-śambhu-brahmāmara-pati-gaṇeśārcita-pado
jagannāthaḥ svāmī nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me (1)*

Śrī Jagannāthadeva sometimes fervently plays His flute on the banks of the Yamunā River in Śrī Vṛndāvana; He is like a bumblebee that blissfully tastes the lotus faces of the *vraja-gopīs*; and His feet are worshiped by great personalities such as Lakṣmī, Śiva, Brahmā, Indra and Gaṇeśa. May that Śrī Jagannāthadeva be the object of my vision.

*bhuje savye veṇuṁ śirasi śikhi-piccham kaṭiṭaṭe
dukūlam netrānte sahacara-kaṭākṣam ca vidadhat
sadā śrīmad-vṛndāvana-vasati-līlā-paricayo
jagannāthaḥ svāmī nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me (2)*

Śrī Jagannāthadeva holds a flute in His left hand; He wears a peacock feather on His head and a fine yellow silken cloth around His hips; from the corners of His eyes He bestows loving sidelong glances upon His companions; and He is forever known as the one who performs wondrous pastimes in the divine abode of Śrī Vṛndāvana. May that Śrī Jagannāthadeva be the object of my vision.

*mahāmbhodhes tīre kanaka-rucire nīla-sikhare
vasan prāsādāntaḥ sahaja-balabhadreṇa balinā
subhadrā-madhyasthaḥ sakala-sura-sevāvasarado
jagannāthaḥ svāmī nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me (3)*

Śrī Jagannāthadeva on the shore of the great ocean resides in a palace situated on the gold-like crest of Nilācala Hill accompanied by His powerful brother Baladevajī and Their sister Subhadrā, and He bestows upon all the demigods the opportunity to serve Him. May that Śrī Jagannāthadeva be the object of my vision.



*kṛpā-pārāvāraḥ sajala-jalada-śreṇi-ruciro
ramā-vāṇī-rāmaḥ sphurad-amala-paṅkeruha-mukhaḥ
surendrair ārādhyah śruti-gaṇa-sikhā-gīta-carito
jagannāthaḥ svāmī nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me (4)*

Śrī Jagannāthadeva is an ocean of mercy; His bodily complexion is as beautiful as a bank of blackish rainclouds; He enjoys with Lakṣmī-devī and Sarasvatī; His face is like a fully blossomed spotless lotus; He is worshiped by the foremost demigods, and His transcendental glories have been sung in the topmost scriptures. May that Śrī Jagannāthadeva be the object of my vision.

*rathārūḍho gacchan pathi milita-bhūdeva-paṭalaih
stuti-prādurbhāvaṁ prati-padam upākaraṇya sadayah
dayā-sindhur bandhuḥ sakala-jagatām sindhu-sutayā
jagannāthaḥ svāmī nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me (5)*

When Jagannātha's Ratha-yātrā is moving along the road, at every step assemblies of *brāhmaṇas* sing His praises. Upon hearing them, Jagannātha, being an ocean of mercy and the true friend of all the worlds, becomes favorably disposed towards them. May that Śrī Jagannāthadeva be the object of my vision.

*param-brahmāpīḍaḥ kuvalaya-dalotphulla-nayano
nivāsī nīlādrau nihita-carāṇo 'nanta-śirasi
rasānandī rādhā-sarasa-vapur āliṅgana-sukho
jagannāthaḥ svāmī nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me (6)*

Śrī Jagannāthadeva is the crown-jewel of all manifestations of the absolute truth; His eyes are like the petals of a fully blossomed blue lotus; He resides at Nilācala; His feet are placed on the head of Śeṣa, He is blissfully immersed in *bhakti-rasa*; and He derives happiness from embracing the *rasa*-laden body of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. May that Śrī Jagannāthadeva be the object of my vision.

*na vai yāce rājyaṁ na ca kanaka-māṇikya-vibhavaṁ
na yāce 'ham ramyāṁ sakala-jana-kāmyāṁ vara-vadhūm
sadā kāle kāle pramatha-patinā gīta-carito
jagannāthaḥ svāmī nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me (7)*

I do not pray to Jagannātha for a kingdom, nor for gold, jewels, wealth, or even for a beautiful wife as desired by all men. My only prayer is that Śrī Jagannāthadeva, whose splendid glories are always sung by Śiva, be the constant object of my vision.



hara tvam̐ samsāram drutataram asāram sura-pate!

hara tvam̐ pāpānām vitatim aparām yādava-pate!

aho dīne 'nāthe nihita-caraṇo niścitam idam̐

jagannāthaḥ svāmī nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me (8)

O master of the demigods! Quickly deliver me from this worthless and fleeting worldly existence. O Lord of the Yadus! Purge me of my limitless host of sins. Aho! You have vowed to place Your feet upon the fallen and shelterless. O Jagannātha Svāmī, please be the object of my vision.

jagannāthāṣṭakam̐ punyam̐ yaḥ paṭhet prayataḥ śuci

sarva-pāpa-viśuddhātmā viṣṇu-lokam̐ sa gacchati (9)

One who carefully recites this sacred *Jagannāthāṣṭakam* will become cleansed of all sins and attain the spiritual world, Viṣṇuloka.

Gauranga's Devastating Dance of Love

Srila Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvami enthusiastically describes the blissful dancing of Sri Caitanyadeva during Jagannatha Swami's Ratha-yatra thus:

When Lord Jagannatha mounted His cart, Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu inspired all His devotees to dance in front of it. As Lord Gauranga danced before the cart, He always sang the following two lines: "I have gotten the Lord of My life, for whom I was burning in the fire of lusty desires."

"That very personality who stole away my heart during My youth is now again my master. These are the same moonlit nights of the month of Caitra. The same fragrance of malati flowers is there, and the same sweet breezes are blowing from the kadamba forest. In our intimate relationship, I am also the same lover, but I am not happy here. I am eager to go back to that place on the banks of the Reva under the Vetasi tree. That is my desire." (Cc. 2.1.55, 58)

Gauranga wandered through all seven groups of *kirtana* performers chanting the holy names, "Hari, Hari." Raising His long, beautiful, golden arms, Mahāprabhu shouted, "All glories to Lord Jagannatha!" Gauranga then exhibited another mystic power by performing pastimes simultaneously in all seven *kirtana* groups. Everyone said, "Mahāprabhu is present in my group. Indeed, He does not go anywhere else. Gauranga is bestowing His mercy only upon us."

When Sri Caitanyadeva personally wanted to dance, all the seven *kirtana* parties combined in an awesome assembly. Lord Jagannatha was supremely pleased by the *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, so He stopped His chariot just to watch the performance. Gauranga appeared like a circling firebrand, and His dancing steps and jumping caused the earth to tilt.



Ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa brought blissful changes in Gaurahari's body. Lord Caitanya's hair stood on end; He perspired, cried and His divine body changed color from golden to pinkish. Sometimes Gauranga fell to the ground to appear like a golden mountain rolling on the earth. Nitai ran behind Gaura, extending His beautiful arms in an attempt to catch the Lord of love. Advaita Acarya followed along, bellowing, "*Hari bol! Hari bol!*"

Lord Gauranga became more and more ecstatic as Jagannatha Swami rolled down the Temple Road toward the Gundica Mandira. The devotees formed three circles around Mahaprabhu to protect Him from the excited crowds. As Gauranga experienced deeper ecstatic love, He displayed further transformations, including thrill bumps, chattering teeth, perspiration and blood oozing from all the pores of His transcendental body. While attempting to say, "*Jagannatha, Jagannatha,*" Gaurhari made inarticulate sounds like, "*Jaja, Gaga, Jaja, Gaga.*" Mahaprabhu's tears of love, shooting like a syringe, sprinkled the onlookers with mercy. Gaurasundara's brilliant complexion faded to pink, and His hands and legs became hard as dry wood.

After performing His devastating dance, Sri Caitanya's mind entered a mood of ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. An ocean of transcendental bliss expanded in Mahaprabhu's heart, which caused an increase in all the natural emotional symptoms. Lord Gauranga attracted everyone, including pilgrims, Jagannatha's *pujaris*, government officers, and all the residents of Sri Ksetra Dhama to His lotus feet by sprinkling their minds with the nectar of love of God. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's ecstatic dancing filled the hearts of one and all with bliss.

Occasionally, Jagannatha Swami stopped His cart to watch the rapturous dancing of Gaura-nataraja. While all the devotees danced before His cart, Jagannatha moved slowly forward. To examine the heart of His beloved, Mahaprabhu sometimes dropped behind Jagannatha's cart. At such times, Jagannatha Swami stopped moving, waited for Gauranga's return, and then started rolling again. There was a competition between Lord Jagannatha and Sri Caitanya over who would lead, but Gaurahari was stronger because He always forced Lord Jagannatha to wait in His car.

Sometimes Lord Jagannatha's cart came to a dead stop. And despite the best endeavors of drunken elephants, the strongest wrestlers in Puri, and King Prataparudra himself, Jagannatha's cart would not budge an inch. Compassionate Gauranga, returned to the front of the cart, released the crying elephants, handed the ropes to His men and then personally pushed Jagannatha's cart with His beautiful head.



Miraculously and automatically, Jagannatha's cart suddenly started moving without any effort. Gaura's devotees just held the ropes limply in their relaxed hands, since there was no necessity of pulling. In a moment, the chariot of Lord Jagannatha reached the Gundica Temple. Observing Lord Gauranga's exceptional strength, everyone chanted, "Jaya Sri Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, Jaya Gauracandra, Wonderful, Wonderful!" (Cc. 2.13.26-209)

VI. Procession to Gundica (The Gundica Yatra)

Balabhadra leads the way three kilometers down Grand Road to the Gundica Mandira. Subhadra comes next followed by Sri Jagannatha Deva. Sitting happily upon the majestic carts, the Deities look splendid, gorgeously adorned with floral wreaths and garlands. They appear just like actors going to play on a dramatic stage. The only scheduled stop en route is at Balgandi, where the *pujaris* make wonderful *bhoga* offerings to the Lord.

VII. Hera Pancami Festival

Five days after Lord Jagannatha leaves the temple for His Ratha-yatra, Goddess Laksmi becomes furious with Him for not taking Her along. To vent her anger, Laksmi rides in a palanquin to the Gundica Mandira and breaks off a piece of Jagannatha's chariot. The word *hera* means "to see" and *pancami* means "fifth day." Hera Pancami is the festival occurring on the fifth day of the moon when Laksmi Devi goes to see Jagannatha Swami at the Gundica Mandira.

Hera Pancami Festival—An Eyewitness Account

The following entry comes from my year 2000 diary, when I attended the Hera Pancami festival in Jagannatha Puri which took place late at night during *ratri-kala* (10:48 p.m.-3:36 a.m.). Laksmi-devi rode on a palanquin from Sri Mandira to Gundica Mandira to ask Jagannatha Swami why He had not returned yet. Seeing Laksmi-devi coming down the street with an angry look in her eyes, Jagannatha Swami quickly locked her out of the Gundica Mandira.

Laksmi-devi became furious at this and passed some sarcastic remarks (voiced by the *pujaris*) saying, "Hey Pati (husband)! You have become more attracted to Your sister Subhadra than me? Is that why You locked me out of the Gundica?" Laksmi-devi's maidservants (the *pujaris* carrying her) feel insulted and express their anger by breaking off some wood from Lord Jagannatha's chariot.



Laksmi-devi avoided the direct route via Grand Road, and returned to the Jagannatha Mandira via Hera Gouri Sahi, a side road inhabited mostly by Jagannatha's priests. As Laksmi-devi moved down the road in her palanquin she halted in front of each *brahmin's* house to accept quality *bhoga* offerings and worship. The *palanquin* carriers collected all the offerings in a large basket and sold later as Laksmi-devi's *maha-prasadam*. Between two and three a.m., Laksmi-devi finally returned to the Mandira and took rest.

Meanwhile, immersed in the joy of His *vraja-lila*, Jagannatha Swami forgot all about Laksmi-devi. Four days later, Jagannatha Swami, Baladeva and Subhadra rode Their chariots back to Sri Mandira. Laksmi-devi, still fuming over Jagannatha's absence, locked the temple doors out of defiance. Jagannatha Swami was stuck outside; locked out of His own home by an infuriated wife. The servants of Laksmi and Jagannatha shouted bad names at each other and shoved each other back and forth. Finally Jagannatha Swami made peace with His wife. Laksmi showed her forgiveness by offering Him a huge bowl of big juicy, sweet *rasagullas*. Later Laksmi-devi happily relished Jagannatha's remnants, distributed some to her maidservants, and then opened the door to welcome Jagannatha Swami back to His temple.

Sri Laksmi-devi's Hera Pancami Utsava ki jai!

VIII. Bahuda Yatra (Uṭṭā Ratha)

This is the return Ratha-yatra which occurs on the tenth day. The ceremonies and rituals are basically the same as the Ratha-yatra, except that on the return route, Jagannatha Swami stops at the Ardhasani Temple, which belongs to His "aunt," to enjoy some mouth-watering fried cheesecake.

IX. Suna Vesa Darsana (Gold Outfit)

Upon arriving at the main temple, the carts sit one or two days before the Lion Gate. On Ekadasi night, Sri Jagannatha Deva, Baladeva and Subhadra exhibit Their famous golden outfits (Suna Vesa), wherein They wear many *kilos* of solid gold crowns and ornaments.

X. Reentering the Temple

On Dvadasi evening, Baladeva and Subhadra return to Their *simhāsana* in the main temple. To express Her anger with Her husband,



Lakshmi-devi orders a maidservant to lock Jagannatha Swami outside the Lion Gate. After detaining Him a bit, the maidservant lets Lord Jagannatha in the temple, which is called the Sri Mandira by everyone in Orissa. But Jagannatha Swami faces another hurdle upon reaching the Jaya Vijaya Gate. The Lord is again denied entry by a maidservant sent by Lakshmi-devi. After a heated mock argument between that maidservant and Jagannatha's *sevaitis*, the Lord gains entrance.

XI. Occasional Festival: Navakalevara (New Body Festival)

This unique festival of making completely new Deities was observed only five times during the twentieth century: 1931, 1950, 1969, 1977 and 1996. *Nava* means “new” and *kalevara* means “body” or “embodiment.” The entire process of replacing the four Deities of Jagannatha Swami, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsana takes about four months. It occurs during a leap year whenever two full moons fall in Asadha Mas (June-July), which occurs about every eighteen years. The Navakalevara ceremony comprises many intricate details and secret mystical rites. Even the priests only know the rituals they personally perform.

The village providing the tree must be mentioned in the temple's palm leaf scroll, *Niladri Mahadaya*. Then the *pujari* must have a dream revealing which tree to cut for carving the Deities. It must be a *neem* tree growing beside a Siva temple and three other trees. The four symbols of Visnu (conch, club, disc, lotus) must be seen on the trunk of that *neem* tree. After cutting the tree with a golden axe, the *dayitas* will carve the new Deities.

Carpenters spend thirteen days carving all four Deities (Jagannatha, Baladeva, Subhadra, Sudarsana), and in each *murti* they include a cavity to insert a mysterious substance known as the *brahmapadartha*. To finish the installation, the *brahmapadartha* must be transferred from the old Deities and placed in the heart region of the new *murtis*. This esoteric ritual is performed on Amavasya (dark moon) in the total darkness of midnight in an unlit temple surrounded by the town of Puri, which is completely devoid of any electric light at this time because the government cuts off the supply. Four *dayita pujaris* are blindfolded, and their hands are cloth covered to the elbow so they cannot see or feel the *brahmapadartha*. The *pujaris* remove the mysterious substance from the old *murtis* and insert it into the cavity constructed for it in the new *murtis*. The cavity is then sealed with wood. Obviously, because the *pujaris* are blindfolded and hand bound, the content of the *brahmapadartha* remains unknown.



Ratha Yatra Means Reclaiming Lost Souls

Srila Prabhupada once said, “Just try to understand Jagannātha. *Jagat* means the moving world, *gacchati iti jagat*. The Sanskrit word *gacchati* means that which is moving—all these planets, the universe, the sun—everything is moving, and we are moving. *Jagat-nātha*, *nātha* means master and proprietor. Therefore, Jagannātha means the proprietor or the master of all these movements. And Balabhadra, Balarāma—*bala* means strength and *rāma* means enjoyment. Balarāma means He who gives you spiritual strength for enjoying eternal blissful life. Subhadrā—*su* means auspicious and *bhadra* means well-being. Subhadrā, Jagannātha and Balarāma combined together are present here to reclaim you all from your miserable condition of life. That is the purport of this Ratha-yātrā festival. If anyone sees Jagannātha, Subhadrā and Baladeva on the cart, then he does not take birth again in this material world. *Ratheja vamanam dṛṣṭa*.” (Srila Prabhupada 7/5/70RY.SF)

Meaning of Ratha-yatra—A Bhāva Utsava

Srila Prabhupada wonderfully described the inner mood of Ratha-yatra: “When Srimati Rādhārāni saw Kṛṣṇa in Kurukṣetra in all opulence, She said, ‘My dear Kṛṣṇa, You are also here; I am also here. But We are missing Vṛndāvana. So I wish that You come along with Me again in Vṛndāvana and We can enjoy in the forest of Vṛndāvana.’

“Ratha-yātrā festival is a feeling festival for the Vaiṣṇavas. Lord Caitanya taught us how to feel separation of God. Lord Caitanya never taught us that He had seen God, but He felt the separation of God very severely. Anyone participating in this Ratha-yatra festival will gradually develop his dormant love for Kṛṣṇa.” (720713R2.LON)

The Purpose of Ratha Yatra

When one attends a Janmastami celebration or any other festival, he does so with a purpose in mind. He thinks about how much joy, fulfillment, devotional energy and encouragement he will attain by being there. A friend may ask, “Would you like to go to Puri and see Ratha-yatra?” A positive response will unleash a river of thoughts—“Oh, I will get a chance to directly see the lord of happiness, the smiling Lord Jagannatha; and throngs of devotees, big *kirtanas*, colorful chariots, pageantry, an exciting parade, the holy *dhama*, the sea, and that all-conquering Jagannatha *maha-prasadam*.”

But the thought of going to Puri for the purpose of serving Lord Jagannatha and increasing His pleasure during His chariot ride probably would not arise. However, spiritual festivals like Gaura-Purnima, Janmastami



and Rādhāstami are observed for the purpose of increasing Kṛṣṇa's happiness and providing plentiful service opportunities for all devotees. Srila Prabhupada teaches that we should attend spiritual festivals to increase Kṛṣṇa's joy by serving the Lord and His devotees, worshiping Him, and enthusiastically singing and dancing for His pleasure. When asked the question, "What is the purpose of the Ratha-yatra," Srila Prabhupada replied, "The purpose is to see how Kṛṣṇa is enjoying." (SP 710803SB.LON)

Ratha Yatra and the Vraja Gopis

For Gaudiya Vaisnavas, Ratha-yatra is deeply connected with Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa's visit to Kuruksetra and His loving exchanges with the Vraja-gopis whom He met there. In this regard, Srila Prabhupada once said, "If anyone sincerely sees the Ratha-yātrā festival and understands how Kṛṣṇa visited Kurukṣetra along with His brother and sister, that is very nice. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness." (SP 710803SB.LON)

The following article from *Back to Godhead* wonderfully depicts Sri Kṛṣṇa's pastime at Kurukshetra: "Hearing that Kṛṣṇa would be at Kurukshetra for the solar eclipse, all Vṛndāvana prepared to go. Loading gifts and belongings on ox carts, the simple rural cowherd boys, girls, men, and women made their way north to the gala royal assembly. Religion and diplomacy were not high on their agenda. They wanted only to see Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, their life and soul.

They arrived at Kurukshetra to a warm welcome from the Yadus, who were their intimate friends and relatives. Inquiring about each other's well-being, everyone cried in jubilation while their smiling faces bloomed like lotus flowers. Both parties were great devotees of Kṛṣṇa, and their talk turned around Him. The Yadus, despite their regal opulence and their participation in the lofty religious rituals at Kurukshetra, had no interest in wealth or piety. In all their duties and activities their sole object of devotion was Kṛṣṇa. And as for the residents of Vṛndāvana, they circulated in the dazzling grandeur of the Kurukshetra assembly with eyes only for Kṛṣṇa, their dearest cowherd boy.

Nanda and Yaśodā's affection for Kṛṣṇa was so strong that despite hearing Kṛṣṇa praised by the assembled kings as the omnipotent and omnipresent Supreme Lord, they thought of Kṛṣṇa only as their little child. At the first opportunity, they took Kṛṣṇa and Balarama aside to talk, placing the grown princes on their laps like eight-year-olds.

The *gopīs*, though also not denying Kṛṣṇa's royalty or His position as the Supreme, were interested less than anyone in these trappings. They were overjoyed to see Kṛṣṇa again, but the hubbub at Kurukshetra was a distraction.



The crowds of people, along with horses, elephants, and the din of huge chariots moving here and there, left little room for intimacy. Kṛṣṇa wore the formal attire of a prince and moved in the company of military officers. Drawing Kṛṣṇa away from the crowds, the *gopīs* requested Him to return with them to Vṛndāvana. Vṛndāvana was quiet, they pointed out, with beautiful streams and flower gardens. You could hear the buzzing of bees and the chirping of birds. Kṛṣṇa need not dress up in all this finery or take part in all these ceremonious matters. In Vṛndāvana the *gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa could be alone together again.

Though Kṛṣṇa regretfully explained that He could not yet fulfill the *gopīs'* request, and although after a three-month visit with His dear childhood family and friends He returned to Dwaraka, the *gopīs* forever aspired to have Him back. They longed to leave Kurukshetra with Kṛṣṇa in tow on His grand royal chariot, pulling Him with them down the road to Vṛndāvana." (BTG 36042002)

"The Ratha-yātrā festival observed by Lord Caitanya is the emotional process of taking Kṛṣṇa back to Vṛndāvana. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī refused to go with Kṛṣṇa to Dvārakā to enjoy His company in the atmosphere of royal opulence, for Rādhā wanted to enjoy Kṛṣṇa's company in the original Vṛndāvana atmosphere." (Sri Prabhupada KB 82) "At the Ratha-yātrā festival, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, absorbed in the ecstasy of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, dragged Lord Kṛṣṇa back to Vṛndāvana-dhāma." (Cc. 2.16.281)

The Mysterious Mellows Behind Ratha Yatra

The following article beautifully illuminates the inner meaning of Lord Jagannatha's chariot festival:

"Śrīman Mahāprabhu viewed the Deity of Jagannātha as non-different from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, the origin of all incarnations. Merely seeing the disc at the summit of the Jagannatha temple from far away, Gauranga envisioned a dark-blue boy playing the flute. When Gauranga saw Lord Jagannatha directly in the temple, He deeply contemplated upon the impeccable three-fold bending beautiful form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and rushed to embrace Him. During Jagannatha's cart festival, Mahāprabhu observed the Deity and became overcome by the sublime sentiments of Śrī Rādhā.

The same Śrī Rādhā had nursed similar sentiments on beholding Sri Kṛṣṇa during the solar eclipse at Kurukṣetra many, many years before. Thousands of years ago, there was very rare eclipse of the sun. On that auspicious occasion, many wealthy, influential kings came from all over India to assemble at Kurukṣetra, an ancient place of pilgrimage.



Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa came in regal opulence from Dvaraka on His chariot driven by Daruka. Sri Kṛṣṇa came with a huge army of soldiers, elephants, horses, chariots and infantrymen. With this incredible exhibition of opulence, Kṛṣṇa encamped at Kuruksetra with costly tents adorned with canopies, costly bedsteads, silk cushions and other luxurious paraphernalia. Simultaneously, the Vrajavasis arrived from another direction. Torn in separation from their beloved Sri Kṛṣṇa and intensely yearning to see Him, the Vrajavasis remained a short distance from Kṛṣṇa's camp.

Their only real motive for coming there was to meet their beloved Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, the primary reason for Kṛṣṇa's coming to Kuruksetra was to pacify the love-pent emotions of the Vrajavasis. Finally, the traumatic meeting occurred between Sri Kṛṣṇa and His parents, Nanda Baba and Yaśodā Ma. Along with Kṛṣṇa's mother and father came many other older residents, who had nourished parental affection for Kṛṣṇa. It was a very touching scene. These simple villagers, with their voices choked up and streams of tears pouring from their eyes, embraced and fervently kissed Kṛṣṇa on His cheeks. They had intended to say many things, but were prevented by the force of their emotions. The only words that they uttered were "My Gopal." Their tears of love drenched Sri Kṛṣṇa from head to toe. Similar sentiments agitated Kṛṣṇa's hearts as tears fell from His lotus eyes. Such touching moods of pure love are experienced by a perfected devotee when he attains his final sweet reunion with the Supreme Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa.

Meanwhile, Kṛṣṇa's bosom buddies Subala, Sridama and Sudama were standing nearby anxious to meet Him. Kṛṣṇa offered obeisances to His crying parents and other elderly residents, and then approached His bosom companions who were absorbed in fraternal love. Upon meeting their beloved friend, they simply stood by speechless. Actually, Kṛṣṇa's friends felt somewhat indignant however, and they wanted to voice their protest for being neglected for so long by Kṛṣṇa. But the overwhelming ecstasy of the occasion immobilized their minds; they could not speak but simply muttered, "My brother Kaniya," and fondly embraced their long-lost friend. Sri Kṛṣṇa reciprocated with each devotee according to his particular sentiment of love. There is no end to the glories of the Vrajavasis' love for Sri Kṛṣṇa.

Then the inevitable meeting with the damsels of Vrndavana took place. Their pathetic condition was indescribable. Srimati Rādhikā, the crown jewel of the *gopīs*, was swooning at every moment in pangs of separation; almost to the point of death. In fact, when the *sakhis* placed some cotton under Rādhā's nose, it barely moved, indicating that Her breath was almost finished.



Suddenly a loud cry of “O Syamasundara,” penetrated the air. Rādhikā became rejuvenated and fully conscious of Her main reason for coming to Kuruksetra. In *Rāmānanda Samvada*, Rādhikā’s loving sentiments have been called the topmost of all spontaneous devotional practices. These highest sentiments contain a transformation of moods which enrich and nourish each other. The loving mellow which is torn asunder by mutual separation is called *vipralambha* and the direct conjugal loving mellow is called *sambhoga*. The conjugal loving mellow is nourished by love in separation; both exist for the proper transaction of loving mellows.

While dancing ecstatically in front of Jagannatha’s cart, Mahāprabhu manifested the same loving sentiments that Rādhikā showed in Kuruksetra. After being separated for many long years, Rādhikā experienced overpowering bliss in Her reunion with Syama. Understanding the heart of Gaurāṅga, the wise Svārūpa Damodara sang the following couplet:

*sei ta parāna-nātha pāinu
yāhā lāgi madana dahane jhuri genu*

Rādhā said, “Now I have gained the Lord of My life, in the absence of whom I was being burned by Cupid and was withering away.” (Cc. 2.13.113)

Hearing this, Mahāprabhu danced in great euphoria before Jagannatha’s cart which crept along the road. Sometimes Mahāprabhu danced behind the chariot, and then Jagannatha’s chariot would standstill. When Mahāprabhu returned to the front, again Jagannatha’s cart trudged slowly forward.

Srīla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvatī Thākura explained the mystery of this pastime. He said Mahāprabhu went behind the chariot to test whether His moods, which represented the original sentiments of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, were the reason for the movement of Jagannatha, or whether Jagannatha Śrī Kṛṣṇa had other motives in mind that propelled His chariot forward. To solve the doubt, Mahāprabhu pretended to move behind the cart. Understanding His action, Jagannatha stopped His own movement to wait for Gaurāṅga. In other words, without the presence of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the Vraja *madhurya-rasa* cannot reach its par-excellence.

Lord Gaurāsundara realized that Jagannatha’s forward movement was checked by the superior devotional potency of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. In response, Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu thrilled with joy and lunged before the car in boundless bliss as an abashed Jagannātha trudged slowly behind. When Mahāprabhu exhibited Rādhā’s intense moods of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Jagannātha Deva could not imitate them. In this way, the loving moods of Mahāprabhu towards Jagannātha and the reciprocal sentiments of



Lord Jagannātha competed with each other. However, Mahaprabhu's intense loving moods, which exactly resembled Rādhā's own moods, won in the end.

While dancing, Śrīman Mahāprabhu intoned a verse depicting the loving reunion of a mundane hero and heroine. Somehow, Srīla Rupa Gosvami detected the exact devotional sentiments in the heart of Mahāprabhu and composed the following verse which parallels Gauranga's verse:

*priyaḥ so'yam kṛṣṇaḥ saḥacari kuru-kṣetra-militas
tathāham sā rādhā tam idam ubhayoḥ saṅgama sukham
tathāpy antaḥ-khelan-madhura-muralī-pañcamajuṣe
mano me kālindī-pulina-vipināya sprhayaṭi*

Srīmatī Rādhikā said, "O My dear *sakhis*, I met our beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Kurukṣetra today. I am the same Rādhā and We met with the usual feeling of ecstasy. Nevertheless, My mind is yearning to meet Kṛṣṇa in the forest groves along the Kalindi River. I want to hear Syama blissfully playing the melodious fifth note on His flute." (Cc. 3.1.79)

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja quotes Rādhā saying, "O Kṛṣṇa! Here in Kurukṣetra, there is not even a drop of the ocean of transcendental happiness that I enjoyed with You in Vṛndāvana."

Mahaprabhu was in Rādhā's sentiment of taking Kṛṣṇa back to their original residence of Vrndavana. In that mood, Mahaprabhu recited the following verse:

*āhuś ca te nalina-nābha padāravindam, yogeśvarair hṛdi vicintyam agādha-
bodhaiḥ*

*samsāra-kūpa-patitottaraṇāvalambam, gemaḥ juṣām api manasy udiyāt sadā
naḥ*

"O Master, whose navel is just like a lotus flower, Your lotus feet are the only shelter for those who have fallen into the deep well of material existence. Your feet are worshiped and meditated upon by great mystic *yogīs* and highly learned philosophers. We wish that these lotus feet may also be awakened within our hearts, although we are only ordinary persons engaged in household affairs." (SB 10.82.48) Srīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvami commented on this verse, saying:

*tomāra carāna mora vraja-pura-ghare
udaya karaye yadi, tabe vāñchā pūre*

Rādhā thought, "O Kṛṣṇa, if Your lotus feet again come to our home in Vṛndāvana, our desires will be fulfilled." (Cc. 2.1.82)

The heart of Śrīmatī Rādhikā is immersed in the loving sentiments



of Vṛndāvana Dhāma, where only pure desires for satisfying Kṛṣṇa's senses exist and nothing else. Not a trace of awe, reverence and royalty can exist in pure conjugal mellows, For this very reason, Śrīmatī Rādhikā did not appreciate at all the regal splendor of Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa with all His camels, horses, servants and costly apparel.

In that mood, Rādhikā said, "O Kṛṣṇa! If You actually love Me, then give up all this fancy opulence which diminishes pure conjugal love. Please assume Your youthful, cowherd boy form and accompany Me to Vraja. There, in the lonely forest groves under the *kadamba* trees along the Yamuna, You should play Your flute while exhibiting Your charming, three-fold bending posture. By Your merciful glance, please freely bestow Your grace upon this forlorn servant of Yours."

The hearts of the damsels of Vraja were saturated with natural devotion. Consequently, there was no room to receive instructions on *jnana* or *yogic* mysticism. The same love-stricken cowherd maidens were trying to take Sri Kṛṣṇa from Kurukṣetra to Śrīdhāma Vṛndāvana; the transcendental place of spontaneous, eternal loving dealings.

In the Rātha-yatra pastime of Lord Jagannātha, the main temple is synonymous with the opulence that Dvaraka Sri Kṛṣṇa displayed at Kurukṣetra. And the Gundica Temple represents the pure devotion of Sridhama Vṛindāvana perfectly embodied in the damsels of Vraja. Ultimately, a devotee can attract Sri Kṛṣṇa only by possessing natural and spontaneous pure devotion. What was actually pulling or moving Jagannātha's chariot was this rope of pure devotion.

Vṛndāvana Dās Ṭhākura called Mahāprabhu the moving Jagannātha. It is this very Lord Jagannātha, Sri Caitanyadeva, appearing in the guise of a *sannyasi*, who has emphatically declared that the all-powerful holy name of Sri Kṛṣṇa can give all perfection to everyone. While enacting His internal pastimes of relishing spontaneous loving mellows, Gauranga Mahāprabhu is also inviting all of us to follow His path to achieve the highest bliss. To achieve the highest mellows of pure *bhakti*, one must have the proper qualification; which can be attained only by taking complete shelter of the chanting of the holy name. (*Art of Sadhana*)

The Esoteric Meaning of Ratha-yatra

In a purport of *Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta*, His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada gives a wonderful illumination about the esoteric meaning of Lord Jagannātha's Ratha-yatra.

After giving up the company of the Vraja-gopis, Vrajendranandana performed His pastimes in Dvaraka. When Sri Kṛṣṇa visited Kurukṣetra



during a solar eclipse, He was accompanied by Baladeva, Subhadra, and other Dvarakavasis. At Kurukshetra, Kṛṣṇa again met the Vrajavasis, especially Srimati Rādhikā and His beloved sakhis.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is Sri Kṛṣṇa Himself assuming the part of Sri Rādhā in order to understand Kṛṣṇa. Lord Jagannatha is Kṛṣṇa and Sri Caitanya is Rādhā. Lord Gauranga's leading Jagannatha Swami toward the Gundica Temple corresponded to Srimati Rādhikā's leading Kṛṣṇa toward Vrndavana from Kuruksetra.

Sri Ksetra, Jagannatha Puri, was taken as the kingdom of Dvaraka, the place where Sri Kṛṣṇa enjoys supreme opulence. However, Kṛṣṇa was being led by Mahaprabhu to Vrndavana (represented by Gundica Temple), the simple village where all Vrajavasis are filled with ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. Sri Ksetra, Jagannatha Puri, is a place of richly opulent pastimes (*aisvarya-lila*) just as Vrndavana is the place of intimate conjugal pastimes (*madhurya-lila*).

Lord Gauranga's following at the rear of Lord Jagannatha's car indicated that Lord Jagannatha, Kṛṣṇa, was forgetting the Vrajavasis. Although Sri Kṛṣṇa neglected the Vrajavasis, He never forgot them. Thus in His opulent Ratha-Yatra, Sri Kṛṣṇa was returning to Vrndavana. In the role of Srimati Rādhikā, Sri Caitanyadeva was examining whether Sri Kṛṣṇa still remembered the Vrajavasis. When Lord Gauranga fell behind the Ratha car, Jagannatha-deva, Kṛṣṇa Himself, understood the mind of Srimati Rādhikā. Therefore, Jagannatha sometimes fell behind the dancing of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to indicate to Srimati Rādhikā; He had not forgotten.

Thus Lord Jagannatha waited on His cart for their forward march. In this way, Lord Jagannatha showed that He could not feel satisfied without the ecstasy of Srimati Rādhikā. While Jagannatha thus waited, Gaurasundara, in His ecstasy of Rādhā, immediately rushed forward to Kṛṣṇa. At such times Lord Jagannatha proceeded very slowly.

These competitive exchanges were all part of the love affairs between Sri Kṛṣṇa and Srimati Rādhikā. In that competition between Mahaprabhu's ecstasy for Jagannatha and Jagannatha's ecstasy for Srimati Rādhikā, Mahaprabhu emerged successful. This is the purport of the Ratha-yatra cars going from the Jagannatha Temple to the Gundica Temple. (Cc. 2.13.119 p.)

Sri Jagannatha Swami's Ratha-yatra festival ki jai!

Chapter Five

The Puri Pastimes of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu

There are more than fifty different pastimes of Lord Gauranga told throughout this book. The greatest number of Mahaprabhu's ecstatic pastimes can be found in the Day Trip chapters which describe the individual *lila-sthalis* (pastime places) in Jagannatha Puri. This chapter contains additional *prema*-filled pastimes of Sri Caitanyadeva in Puri for your pleasure and enlightenment.

Gauranga's Time in Puri—A Brief Summary

After taking *sannyāsa*, Gauranga Mahaprabhu made His headquarters in Jagannātha Purī at the request of His mother, Śrī Śacīdevī, and was based there for the remaining twenty-four years of His manifest pastimes. However, Mahaprabhu's first visit to Jagannatha Puri was cut short because on April 10, Gauranga immediately left for a South India *yatra* which lasted two years (1510-1512).

During the first six years, Mahaprabhu traveled widely throughout India, particularly in the south. Sri Caitanyadeva met all the big religious teachers of the time, debating with them and establishing *kṛṣṇa-prema* as the sublime goal of human life. Lord Caitanya based His arguments on the *Bhāgavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Within a short time, Lord Caitanya became known as Mahāprabhu, the great teacher, because of His preaching and behavior. Utilizing the assets of His indescribably sweet beauty and all-encompassing, compassionate love, Sri Gauranga-sundara firmly established His *hari-prema-nāma saṅkīrtana* movement throughout the sub-continent.

Lord Gauranga returned to Puri just before the Snana Yatra (Jyestha Purnima). After viewing Jagannatha Swami's bath festival, Lord Gauranga went to the Ālālanātha temple in Brahmagiri, 20 km. from Puri. Sri Caitanyadeva stayed here grieving in separation, waiting for Lord Jagannatha to reappear at Ratha-yatra after two weeks of seclusion. Mahaprabhu returned to Puri just before the chariot festival and engaged His devotees in thoroughly cleansing the Gundica Mandira with hundreds of pots of water. Gauranga personally led all the devotees in scrubbing, washing, rinsing and the continuous chanting of "Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!"



On the day of Ratha-yatra, Sri Caitanyadeva saw the Pahandi Vijaya ceremony with great joy, and offered *dandavats* and prayers to Lord Jagannatha before circumambulating His cart. Shouting, “*Maṇimā! Maṇimā!*” (Oriyan honorific word), Lord Gauranga raised His golden arms above His head and danced in frenzied delight as His bodily hair stood erect and tears of ecstatic love rushed from His eyes.

After the blissful Ratha-yatra festival, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu passed His time singing and dancing in Sri Jagannatha Deva’s temple, honoring *maha-prasadam* with His devotees, and relishing *rasa*-filled *hari-katha* every evening with Svarupa Damodara Gosvami and Ramananda Raya. In 1515, after three years in Puri, Mahaprabhu spent one year traveling to and from Vrndavana. Returning to Jagannatha Puri, Sri Caitanyadeva stayed continuously from the age of thirty to forty-eight.

Three Stages of Gauranga’s Puri Pastimes

I. Ages 24-30—All India Preaching

At the age of 24, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu left Mayapura, Navadvipa Dhama and established His headquarters in Jagannatha Puri, Orissa. From the ages 24-30 years, Gauranga Mahaprabhu continuously traveled to and from Jagannatha Puri. Sri Caitanyadeva toured all of India, Vrndavana and Bengal distributing love of God by ecstatic dancing and by chanting the holy names of Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa.

II. Ages 30-36—Puri Preaching

After traveling to and from Jagannatha Puri for six years, Gauranga Mahaprabhu fixed His residence at Jagannatha Puri for the remaining 18 years of His life. Every year for eighteen years, the Bengali devotees visited Puri and stayed with Lord Gauranga for four months (*cātur-māsya*) enjoying the Lord’s company.

Sri Caitanyadeva relished various pastimes with all the visiting Bengali and Oriyan Vaisnavas, including cleansing the Gundica Temple, Ratha-yatra, ecstatic *kirtanas* in the Jagannatha temple, water sports in Narendra Sarovara, and Deity festivals like Dola Yatra. Mahaprabhu spent these six years mainly chanting and dancing with His many devotees, thus inducing everyone to love Kṛṣṇa by this simple process.

Through His personal behavior, Sri Caitanyadeva instructed all living entities in the science of *bhakti*. A person who is advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness always feels separation from Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya taught how, with a feeling of separation one can develop his dormant love of Kṛṣṇa.



These feelings develop in time when a person seriously engages in devotional service.

III. Ages 36-48—Gambhira & Internally Relishing Kṛṣṇa

For the last twelve years of His life, Gauranga Mahaprabhu was continuously overwhelmed, night and day by separation from Kṛṣṇa. Associating mainly with Svarupa Damodara Gosvami and Ramananda Raya, Mahaprabhu tasted the blissful divine songs and verses from *Kṛṣṇa Karnamṛta*, *Gita Govinda*, *Srimad Bhagavatam* and *Jagannatha Vallabha Nataka*. Moment to moment, Mahaprabhu relished Sri Kṛṣṇa's sweet beauty, fragrance and mellow as if He were touching Kṛṣṇa hand to hand.

In the mood of the Vraja-gopis, Sri Caitanyadeva was always experiencing the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in separation within His heart. When Kṛṣṇa left the *gopis* and went to Mathura, they cried for Kṛṣṇa the rest of their lives, torn by the pangs of separation from Him. The *gopis'* ecstatic feelings of separation were specifically advocated by Lord Caitanya through His actual demonstrations. Tossed by the waves of separation, Mahaprabhu appeared mad both day and night. Sometimes He laughed, sometimes He cried, sometimes He danced, and sometimes He chanted in great sorrow. At those times, Mahaprabhu saw Jagannatha Swami with the same feelings that the Vraja-gopis had when they saw Kṛṣṇa at Kuruksetra after long separation.

Lord Caitanya now taught everyone to taste the transcendental mellow ecstasy of *kṛṣṇa-prema* by tasting it Himself. An advanced devotee always feels separation from Kṛṣṇa. Gauranga taught how, with a feeling of separation one can develop his dormant love of Kṛṣṇa. Such feelings develop in time when a person seriously engages in devotional service.

Sri Caitanya's Daily Schedule in Puri

In the daytime, Sri Caitanya engaged in dancing, chanting and seeing the temple Deity of Jagannatha. At night, in the company of His most confidential devotees, Ramananda Raya and Svarupa Damodara, Gauranga tasted the nectar of the transcendental mellow of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Gauranga-sundara very happily passed His days in this way at Nilacala Dhama, Jagannatha Puri. Feeling the utmost separation from Sri Kṛṣṇa, Mahaprabhu exhibited day after day many transcendent-tal symptoms all over His body, such as transcendental anxiety, agitation and talking like a madman.

MORNING—Every morning Lord Caitanya took *darsana* of Jagannatha Swami. Standing near the Garuda Stambha, Gauranga Mahaprabhu offered obeisances and prayers, and then danced and sang for the pleasure



of Lord Jagannatha. Mahaprabhu waited to see the Upala Bhoga (morning refreshments) offered at noon. After leaving the temple, Gauranga sometimes became overcome by ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa, sat on the ground and marked it with His nails. Feeling greatly morose at this time, Mahaprabhu wept, “Alas, where is Vrndavana? Where is Vrajeridranandana? Where is that delightfully romantic flute player?”

After visiting Jagannatha’s temple, Gauranga regularly visited Siddha Bakula to meet Haridasa Thakura and Sanatana and Rupa Goswamis. Mahaprabhu talked with them for sometime, then went to the seaside to bathe and perform His noontime duties.

AFTERNOON—After His ocean bath, Gauranga returned to the Gambhira and chanted the holy names. Advaita Prabhu came there to worship Him and smear very fragrant sandalwood pulp all over Lord Caitanya’s body. Gaurahari worshiped Advaita Acarya in return. Everyday, Mahaprabhu accepted *prasadam* by invitation at different devotee’s homes. Upon returning to the Gambhira, it was a long standing rule that Mahaprabhu lay down to rest after lunch and Govinda massaged His legs.

EVENING—When the Bengali Vaisnavas stayed in Puri, they rested after noon *prasadam*, met Mahaprabhu in the evening, went to Jagannatha Mandira, and engaged in congregational chanting. As long as the devotees remained at Jagannatha Puri with Sri Caitanyadeva, this pastime of *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* was performed with great jubilation every day.

After four months the Bengali Vaisnavas returned to Bengal. Then Lord Caitanya spent the nights in the company of His most confidential companions, Ramananda Raya and Svarupa Damodara, tasting the nectar of the transcendental mellows of *kṛṣṇa-līla*. Gauranga recited from *Bhagavatam*, *Gita-Govinda*, *Jagannatha Vallabha Nataka*, and *Kṛṣṇa Karnamṛta*. Mahaprabhu also expressed the emotions of His own verses, tasting them with these two friends. Absorbed in a particular sentiment of *prema*, Mahaprabhu sometimes remained awake all night reciting verses and relishing their taste.

If Ananta, with His one thousand mouths, tried to describe even one day’s pastimes of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, He would find them impossible to describe fully. If Ganesha, Lord Siva’s son and the expert scribe of the demigods, tried for millions of milleniums to fully describe one day of Gauranga Mahaprabhu’s pastimes, he would be unable to find their limit.



Sri Caitanyadeva's Associates in Puri

Among the devotees who accompanied Gauranga in Jagannatha Puri, two of them, namely Paramananda Puri and Svarupa Damodara were the life and soul of Mahaprabhu. The other prominent devotees were Gadadhara, Jagadananda, Sankara, Vakresvara, Damodara Pandita, Thakura Haridasa, Raghunatha Vaidya, and Raghunatha Dasa. All these devotees were Gauranga's associates from the very beginning in Mayapur. And when Sri Caitanyadeva took up residence in Jagannatha Puri they remained there to serve Him faithfully.

Gauranga enjoyed paternal loving affection with Paramananda Puri; exchanged friendly affection with Rāmananda Rāya; accepted unalloyed service from Govinda and others, and savored different humors of conjugal love with Gadādhara, Jagadānanda and Svarūpa Dāmodara. Mahaprabhu enjoyed these four transcendental mellows, and thus He remained obliged to His devotees.

In addition, there were many other constant associates who came from Jagannatha Puri itself, including Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, Gopinatha Acarya, Kasi Misra, Pradyumna Misra, Bhavananda Raya and his 5 sons, (Ramananda Raya, Gopinatha Pattanayaka, Vaninatha, Kala and Subhanidhi), King Prataparudra, the Oriyan born devotees (Krsnananda, Sivananda), Paramananda Mahapatra, Bhagavan Acarya, Brahmananda Bharati, Sri Sikhi Mahiti and Murari Mahiti. Madhavi Devi, 17th prominent devotee and younger sister of Sikhi Mahiti, was formerly a maidservant of Radharani. Kasisvara and Sri Govinda were ordered by their spiritual master, Isvara Puri, to go to Jagannatha Puri and serve Lord Caitanya.

Kasisvara, being very strong, cleared the crowds aside with his hands so Sri Caitanya could pass untouched. Govinda was personally assisted by Nandai and Ramai, Krsnadasa, Balabhadra Bhattacharya, Bada Haridasa, Chota Haridasa, Ramabhadra Acarya, Simhesvara, Tapan Acarya, Raghunatha, Nilambara, Singabhatta, Kamabhatta, Sivananda, Kamalananda, Acyutananda, Nirloma Gangadasa and Vishnu dasa.

Simply by remembering the names of all these Vaisnavas, one can attain the lotus feet of Sri Caitanyadeva. Indeed, simply by remembering their names, one can achieve the fulfillment of all desires. Therefore, I offer my obeisances at the lotus feet of them all.

Searching for Kṛṣṇa in the Forest

One day on the way to the beach, Mahaprabhu suddenly saw a flower garden and quickly entered it, mistaking it for Vrndavana.



Gaurahari was totally absorbed in ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa as He wandered throughout the garden searching for Kṛṣṇa. After Kṛṣṇa disappeared with Rādhā during the *rāsa* dance, the *gopīs* wandered in the forest looking for Him. Similarly, Mahāprabhu wandered in that garden by the sea while quoting the same verses that the *gopīs* spoke when inquiring from the forest trees and creatures about the location of Kṛṣṇa.

Rasaraja Mahabhava Gauranga said, “Have you seen Kṛṣṇa coming this way? Kindly tell us which way He has gone and save our lives.” When the trees did not reply, the *gopīs* guessed, “Since all of these trees belong to the male class, all of them must be friends of Kṛṣṇa. Why should the trees tell us where Kṛṣṇa has gone? Let us rather inquire from the creepers; they are female and are therefore like friends to us.” (Cc. 3.15.28-57)

Mahaprabhu’s Sees Kṛṣṇa’s Jala-keli-lila

One night while walking along the beach in Jagannatha Puri, Mahaprabhu suddenly saw the sea. Brightened by the shining light of the moon, the high waves of the sea glittered like the waters of the River Yamuna. Mistaking the sea for the Yamuna, Gauranga ran into the water, unseen by others. Falling into the sea, Mahaprabhu lost consciousness and all awareness of His surroundings.

Sometimes Gaurhari sank beneath the waves, and sometimes He floated above them. The waves tossed Gauranga here and there like a piece of dry wood. Mahāprabhu fully merged in Sri Kṛṣṇa’s Yamuna *jala-keli lila* with the Vraja-gopis. Later the devotees arrived at the seashore and formed different parties to search for Mahaprabhu. They met a fisherman approaching, who was laughing, crying, dancing and repeatedly chanting “Hari, Hari, Hari, Hari, Hari, Hari.”

The devotees asked why he was behaving so strangely, and if he had seen Gauranga wandering on the beach under the moonlight. The fisherman replied: “I have not seen anyone, but I did collect a dead body in my fishing net. While trying to release that body, I touched it and instantly a ghost entered my heart. I shivered in fear and shed tears. My voice faltered, and all the hairs on my body stood up. I do not know who that corpse is, but as soon as one looks upon it, the ghost enters his body. The body of this ghost is ten feet long and its arms and legs are five feet long, and all the skin and joints are completely slack. [*prema vikāra*: transformations caused by divine love] His eyes are stuck open and He utters the sounds ‘goñ-goñ.’ Do not go near there. I forbid you. If you go, that ghost will catch you all.”

On the pretext of being an exorcist, Svarupa Damodara Gosvami



chanted some *mantras* and slapped the fisherman to remove the “ghost.” On one hand that fisherman had attained ecstatic *kṛṣṇa-prema* and on the other hand he feared the ghost. Svarupa Damodara solaced the fisherman by explaining that the “ghost” was actually Sri Caitanyadeva who in a trance of divine love had fainted in the ocean.

The devotees found Gauranga lying on the beach. Gaurasundara’s body was stretched; His skin was slack and hanging loose. Lord Caitanya was bleached white from being in the ocean so long and covered from head to foot with sand. In this condition, it was impossible to lift Gauranga and carry Him home. The devotees changed Gauranga’s clothes and cleaned the sand from His body.

They all loudly chanted the holy name of Kṛṣṇa in Mahaprabhu’s ear. Gauranga immediately stood up assuming His normal features. But Mahaprabhu was glancing here and there in half-external consciousness (*ardha-bāhye*), which means deeply absorbed in internal consciousness along with some show of external awareness. Looking toward the sky, Lord Caitanya spoke like a mad man:

“Seeing the Yamunā, I went to Vṛndāvana and observed Vrajendranandana enjoying *jala-kṛīḍā*, pastimes in the water, with Rādhikā and all the *gopīs*. I was standing on the bank of the Yamuna with other *sakhis* watching their exuberant water splashing. Everyone was splashing water back and forth. In the tumultuous showers of water, no one knew which party was winning and which was losing. This sporting water fight increased unlimitedly.

“Then they fought hand to hand, then face to face, then chest to chest, teeth to teeth and finally nail to nail. Kṛṣṇa quarreled with Rādhārāṇī, and all the *gopīs* hid themselves in a cluster of yellow lotus flowers. They submerged their bodies up to their necks in the water. Only their faces floated above the surface, and the faces were indistinguishable from the lotuses. After performing such wonderful pastimes, Śrī Kṛṣṇa went up on the shore of the Yamunā River, taking with Him all His beloved *gopīs*.

“Then the *gopīs* on the riverbank massaged Kṛṣṇa and the other *gopīs* with scented oil and smeared paste of *āmalakī* fruit on their bodies. Again they bathed in the Yamuna and dressed in fresh clothes. The *gopīs* and *kuñjā-dāsīs* picked all kinds of wild fruits and added sweets prepared earlier to make a wonderful feast for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Seeing the nice arrangement of food, Kṛṣṇa happily sat down and had a forest picnic. Then, after Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Her *gopī* friends partook of the remnants, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa lay down together in the jeweled house.

“Some *gopīs* fanned Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, others massaged Their feet, and some fed Them *betel* leaves to chew. When Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa fell asleep,



all the *gopīs* also lay down. When I saw this, My mind was very happy. Suddenly, all of you created a great tumult and picked Me up and brought Me back here.”

Gaurāṅga returned to full external consciousness and continued, “Where is the river Yamunā? Where is Vṛndāvana? Where are Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*? You have broken My happy dream!” Mahāprabhu refreshed Himself with an ocean bath and went home along with His associates. (Cc. 3.18.27-119)

Bathing and Sporting in the Sea

In Vṛndavana, Sri Kṛṣṇa and His cowherd boyfriends regularly swam and sported in the Yamuna and wrestled on her soft sandy banks. Today wrestling and swimming are still very popular among Vrajavasis boys. Knowing of Kṛṣṇa’s expertise in the art of wrestling, the wicked king Kamsa invited Him to Mathura for a wrestling match. Of course, Kamsa lost the match.

It has been said that swimming and wrestling are Vaisnava sports. Indeed, every day in Mayapur, Mahāprabhu worshiped mother Ganga and sported in her love-filled waters; alone or with friends. In Jagannatha Puri, Gaurāṅga bathed everyday in the ocean and often sported there with His followers. The ocean in Puri is one of the *panca mukti-tirthas* of Sri Ksetra Dhama.

As soon as devotees arrived in Jagannatha Puri from Bengal or other places, Gaurāṅga ordered them to bathe in the ocean, saying, “Go to the sea and bathe and look at the Nila-cakra of the Jagannatha Temple. Afterwards, please come to Kasi Misra’s house and take Jagannatha *maha-prasadam*.” (Cc. 2.11.183) Most of Mahāprabhu followers regularly bathed in the sea, including Srila Rupa Gosvami who bathed in the sea after writing the famous palm leaf verse.

Often after ecstatic *kirtanas*, Lord Gaurāṅga and His companions bathed in the sea to relieve their fatigue. Besides bathing, Sri Caitanyadeva often enjoyed swimming and playing, especially after the *kirtana* performed at Haridasa Thakura’s Samadhi. Srila Kṛṣṇadasa Kaviraja Gosvami states: *samudre karilā snāna-jala-keli range*, “Mahāprabhu bathed in the sea with His devotees, swimming and playing in the water in great jubilation.” (Cc. 3.11.71) At this time, Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu also said, *samudra ei ‘mahā-tīrtha’ ha-ilā*: “This sea has become a great pilgrimage site.” (Cc. 3.11.64)

Vṛndavana dasa Thakura glorifies the ocean in Jagannatha Puri thus: “Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu enjoyed performing *nama-sankīrtana* on the ocean beach. Sri Caitanyadeva lived within walking distance from the sea, and was Himself continually swimming in the ocean of divine bliss.



The presence of Gaurahari's *prema*-filled form floating in her waves blessed the ocean and purified her waters. Whatever sins the Nilacala-vasis may commit become immediately cleansed simply by bathing in the ocean." (Cb. 3)

Pilgrims visiting Sri Ksetra Jagannatha Puri should not miss the opportunity to purify their consciousness by taking a holy dip in the ocean. Before bathing you should offer *dandavats* to honor the sea which is sacred and purifying for four reasons.

1. Mahodadhi—the ocean is the sum total of all holy places (*sarva-tirtha maya*) because all of India's sacred rivers (Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Kaveri, etc.) flow into it.

2. Lord Gauranga personally stated that the sea in Puri is a '*mahā-tīrtha*', a great holy place of pilgrimage.

3. The ocean is one of Puri's Panca Mukti Tirthas, five holy water bodies which grant liberation from the cycle of birth and death. The *Brahma Purana* states that by bathing in the ocean in Jagannatha Puri, one will never take birth again in the material world.

4. An ocean bath purifies one of all sins. "If someone has committed sin near Mahodadhi (the Puri sea), or in other holy places, he will become free from all those sins by bathing in Mahodadhi." (*Skanda P.*)

After doing *dandavats*, you can chant the following *pranama mantra* to the ocean. Then you can swim, sport and delight to your heart's content, all the while shouting, "*Gauranga! Gauranga! Nitai-Gauranga! Nitai! Nitai! Nitai-Gauranga! Gauraaaaaaaaangaaaaa!!!!*"

Mahodadhi Pranama Mantra

*tīrtha rāja namas tubhyaṁ, jala rūpāya viṣṇave
jīvanāya ca jantūnām, para nirvāṇa hetave
janma koṭi sahasreṣu, yat papam pūrvam ārjitam
tadā śeṣam layam yātu, dehi me brahma śāsvatam*

"I offer my obeisances to You, the king of all holy places. Lord Visnu has taken the form of this ocean water to maintain the living entities and to give them liberation. Please destroy all the sins that I have committed over millions of lifetimes, and give me eternal life in the spiritual world."

If however, you are reading this book far away from the holy *dhama* of Sri Ksetra Jagannatha Puri and cannot take a bath in the ocean there, then you can still attain the best thing in the world by "always swimming in the nectarean ocean of the pastimes of Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa." (*NOD* chp. 30)



Sea Ślokas

The following verses from *Caitanya-caritamṛta* compare the ocean with the unlimited expanse of Gaura-Govinda's love.

*gaura-lilāmṛta-sindhu, apāra agādha
ke karite pāre tāhān, avagāha-sādha
tāhāra mādhyā-gandhe, lubdha haya mana
ataeva tate rahi, cāki eka kaṇa*

The ocean of the nectarean pastimes of Gaura is immeasurable and unfathomable. Who can possibly take a dip in that great ocean? But the fragrance of Gaurāṅgā's sweet pastimes has filled my mind with greed. Therefore, I am standing on the beach trying to taste a drop of it. (Cc. 1.12.94-95)

*ei-mate mahāprabhu, nilācale vaise
rātri-dine kṛṣṇa-vicched, āṇave bhāse*

While living at Nilācala, Mahāprabhu floated all day and night in an ocean of separation from Kṛṣṇa. (Cc. 3.18.3)

*vāyu yaiche sindhu-jalera, hare eka 'kaṇa'
kṛṣṇa-prema-kaṇa taiche, jivera sparśana
kṣaṇe kṣaṇe uṭhe premāra, taraṅga ananta
jīva chāra kāhān tāra, pāibeka anta?*

As the wind can carry away but a drop of the water in the ocean, a living entity can touch only a particle of the ocean of love of Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-prema-kaṇa*) Endless waves arise moment after moment in that ocean of love of Kṛṣṇa. How can an insignificant living entity estimate their limits? (Cc. 3.18.20-21)

The Puri School of Bhakti

At Nilācala, in the temple of Jagannātha, resides the Dāru-brahman, the merciful descent of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in wooden form. In this same *dhāma*, Śrī Caitanyadeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the form of a *sannyāsī*, came and lived in the house of Kāśi Mīśra. Mahāprabhu collected His *priya-bhaktas* at Jagannatha Puri, and together they showered love of Godhead on everyone, just like a wish-fulfilling tree.

Sri Caitanyadeva did not actually open a formal school of *bhakti* in Jagannatha Puri. However, He did expertly arrange for the proper dissemination of spiritual knowledge to establish Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *prema*



as the final goal of human endeavor by personally empowering different devotees to explain the various aspects of devotional service. Through the mouth of Gadadhara Pandita, Gauranga heard the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, especially Dhruva and Prahlada Carita; through the mouth of Rāmānanda Rāya, Gaurahari revealed the confidential secrets of Sri Kṛṣṇa's *smgararasa* in Vrndavana; through the mouth of Sarvabhauma, Lord Caitanya taught the real principle of liberation; through the mouth of Rūpa Gosvāmī, Gauranga taught the details of Vraja *prema-rasa*; and through the mouth of Haridāsa Thakura, Mahāprabhu taught the full glories of the holy name.

The Lion Gate Keeper Shows Kṛṣṇa

One day, when Mahāprabhu was walking through the Simha-dvara (Lion Gate), the gatekeeper offered Him respectful obeisances. Mahāprabhu caught his hand and implored, "Where is Kṛṣṇa, Where is My Prananatha? Please show Me Kṛṣṇa."

The doorkeeper replied, "Vrajendranandana is here! Come with me and I will show You."

"You are really My friend." said Mahāprabhu. "Now please show Me the Lord of My heart." Together they went to the *darsana mandapa* where everyone views Lord Jagannatha.

"Just see!" the doorkeeper said. "Here is Śrī Puruṣottama, the topmost Personality of Godhead. From here You may see the Lord to the full satisfaction of Your eyes."

Mahāprabhu stood behind the the Garuḍa-stambha and looked upon Lord Jagannātha, but as He looked He saw that Lord Jagannātha had become Muralivadana, the most enchanting flute-player named Kṛṣṇa. (Cc. 3.16.80-86)

Prahlada's Ecstatic Darsana of Lord Gauranga

Mahāprabhu lived at Jagannātha Puri with His personal devotees, always overwhelmed in ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-prema-rāge*). Internally and externally, Mahāprabhu's mind and body were were always agitated by various ecstasies due to the waves of separation from Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-virahatarāṅga*). During the day Gauranga chanted, danced and took *darsana* of Lord Jagannatha. At night He relished different ecstatic mellows (*rasa-āsvādāna*) in the company of Rāmānanda Rāya and Svarūpa Dāmodara.

People from all over the universe came regularly to Jagannatha Puri to take *darsana* of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Anyone who saw Mahāprabhu received the transcendental treasure of ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. Dressing like human beings on pilgrimage, the demigods, Gandharvas, Kinnaras,



residents of Pātālaloka, and all kinds of demons and serpentine living entities visited Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. The *mahajanas* Prahlāda Mahārāja, Bali Mahārāja, Vyāsadeva, Śukadeva Gosvāmī and other great sages came to visit Lord Gaurasundara. Upon seeing Lord Caitanya, they became unconscious in ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa.

There was a problem with all these visitors, however, because they could not fit in the tiny Gambhira room to see Mahāprabhu, so they remained outside making a tumultuous sound. Then Gaurāṅga came out and told them, “Chant Kṛṣṇa.” All the people taking *darśana* of Mahāprabhu became inundated in ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. In this way Sri Caitanyadeva passed His days and nights. (Cc. 3.9.4-12)

Gaurāṅga Falls in a Well of Butter

While sleeping, eating, or moving about in Jagannatha Puri, Mahāprabhu never left Svarūpa Damodara for even a moment. Even while walking on the road, whenever Mahāprabhu heard Svarūpa Damodara sing, He became overwhelmed with ecstasy and forgot the way. Gaurāṅga was oblivious as to whether He was in the water, on the ground, in the forest, or in the bushes. Wherever Gaura was, He would loudly cry out. Whenever Sri Caitanyadeva fell in the forest or in the bushes, Svarūpa Damodara picked Him up.

One day Mahāprabhu became completely absorbed in ecstatic love and fell into a well. Seeing this, Advaita Acarya and the other devotees became bewildered, and wept as they held their heads in their hands. Tasting the nectar of ecstatic love, Mahāprabhu did not know what had happened. He just floated in that well like a child. When the Lord fell, that well became like butter, so that Gaurāṅga’s graceful body was not even scratched.

This was not very wonderful. By the influence of devotional service a Vaisnava does not feel the pain of a thorn he steps on while dancing. Advaita Acarya and the other devotees quickly pulled Lord Gaurāṅga out of the well. Mahāprabhu did not understand that He had fallen in the well. Sri Caitanyadeva therefore asked the devotees, “What is going on? Why are you crying?” Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu was relishing the mellows of ecstatic love and was completely unaware of external events. (Cb. 3.10.51-65)

Mahāprabhu Examines Sanātana Gosvami

Once in Jagannatha Puri during the hottest month of the year, Sri Caitanyadeva tested His devotee Sanātana Gosvami. At noon, Mahāprabhu sent an invitation for Sanātana to join Him for lunch. The beach sand was as hot as fire,



yet Sanātana Gosvāmī took that path because he had contracted a skin disease en route to Puri. Sanātana felt such bliss within his mind that he did not know that his feet were burned and blistered from the hot sand.

When Sanātana told that he came along the hot beach sand, Mahāprabhu replied, “Why didn’t you come by the cool, shady path in front of the *Sirha-dvāra* gate? The hot sand must have burned your feet, so how did you tolerate it?”

Sanātana replied, “I did not feel the heat nor was I aware my feet were getting blisters. I have no right to pass by the *Sirha-dvāra*, for the servants of Jagannātha are always moving there. If I touch them, everything will be lost.”

Greatly pleased with Sanātana, Mahāprabhu said, “My dear Sanātana, although you are the deliverer of the entire universe and although even the demigods and great saints are purified by touching you, it is the nature of a devotee to observe Vaiṣṇava etiquette. Maintenance of Vaiṣṇava etiquette is the ornament of a devotee. By observing the etiquette, you have pleased Me. Who else but you could show such an example?”

After saying this, Mahāprabhu embraced Sanātana, and the moisture oozing from the itching sores on Sanātana’s body smeared the body of Gauranga. (Cc. 3.4.115-134)

Ecstatic Kirtanas in Jagannatha Temple

Sri Caitanyadeva merged the entire world in the ocean of ecstatic love by performing His beautiful dances within the temple of Jagannatha. He danced exquisitely and jumped high. Every year, upon arriving in Jagannatha Puri, the Bengali devotees met Sri Caitanyadeva, took sea baths, honored *maha-prasadam* with Lord Caitanya, and then retired in their respective residences.

In the evening they met Gauranga, observed Jagannatha Swami’s *dhupa-arati* and chanted congregationally. The temple superintendent decorated everyone with flower garlands and sandalwood paste. Four *kirtana* parties (8 *mrđangas* and 32 cymbals) were placed in the four directions around Gaura-nataraja who danced in the middle. The tumultuous sound penetrated the universe, and ecstatic love immediately overflowed everything. All the Purivasis ran to see, and unanimously agreed that never before had *kirtana* been so performed. Gauranga circumambulated Lord Jagannatha’s temple while continuously dancing, and then stayed for some time behind the temple.

Tears of love shot out like a syringe from Gauranga’s lotus eyes, moistening everyone around. Sri Caitanyadeva performed a miracle as He stood amidst the dancers. All the dancers in all directions perceived that



Mahāprabhu was looking at them. When someone came dancing nearby, Mahāprabhu tightly embraced him. Upon seeing the great dancing, great love and great *sāṅkīrtana* (*mahā-ṅṛtya*, *mahā-prema*, *mahā-sāṅkīrtana*), all the Nilacala-vaśis floated in an ocean of ecstatic love. After the *sāṅkīrtana* performance, Gaurāṅga returned to the Gambhīra with all the devotees, and then personally distributed abundant *mahā-prasadam* to one and all. Afterwards, everyone went home to rest. Thus Sacinandana enjoyed His ecstatic pastimes in Jagannatha Puri. (Cc. 2.11.214-240)

Years later there was another memorable *sāṅkīrtana* performance. With all the devotees, Gaurāṅga saw Lord Jagannatha's early morning rising, and performed His all-encompassing *sāṅkīrtana*. Mahāprabhu formed seven groups, with seven main dancers. As Lord Caitanya went from one group to another inspecting them, the men in each group thought, "Mahāprabhu is within our group."

The tumultuous roaring of congregational chanting filled the sky and made the earth tremble under their feet. King Prataparudra watched from a distance. Svarūpa Damodara sang a line in the Orissan language: *jagamohana-pari-muṇḍā yāu*, "Let my head fall at the feet of Jagannatha in the *kīrtana* hall known as Jagamohan." Hearing this, Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu danced euphorically in divine rapture. Everyone floated in Mahāprabhu's tears of love. Raising His beautiful transcendental arms, Gaurāhari said, "Chant! Chant!" Floating in transcendental bliss, the devotees responded by chanting "Hari! Hari! Hari!"

Mahāprabhu fell unconscious and stopped breathing. Then suddenly Gaurāṅga jumped up, making a loud sound, *hūṅkāra*. The hairs on Gaurā's body constantly stood up like the thorns on a *śimula* tree. Sometimes His body was swollen and sometimes lean and thin. Blood and perspiration flowed from every pore of Gaurāsundara's body. Gaurāṅga tried to repeat the line that Svarūpa Damodara was singing, but He only stuttered, saying, "*jaja gaga pari mumu*."

Gaurāṅga's teeth shook and seemed about to fall to the ground. At every moment Mahāprabhu's divine bliss increased. Therefore even by mid-afternoon the dancing had not ended. The ocean of transcendental bliss overflowed, and everyone present forgot his body, mind, and home. As long as the devotees stayed at Jagannatha Puri with Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu, the *sāṅkīrtana-līlas* were performed with great jubilation every day. (Cc. 3.10.58-83)

Gaurāṅga Pleased by Faith in Vaiṣṇavas

When the Bengali devotees came to Puri one year, they brought a person named Kālidāsa, who never spoke anything but *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Throughout



his entire life, Kālidāsa tried to eat the *prasadam* remnants of the Vaiṣṇavas. In fact, Kālidāsa ate the remnants of all the Vaiṣṇavas residing in Bengal. When Kālidāsa visited Jagannātha Purī, Gauranga bestowed great mercy (*mahā-kṛpā*) upon him.

Just inside the Simha-dvāra, at the bottom of the twenty-two steps leading to the temple is a ditch where Mahāprabhu washed His feet every day before going to see Jagannatha Swami. It was a standing rule that no one took the water that had washed Gauranga's lotus feet. One day Kālidāsa drank three palmfuls of Gauranga's *caranamṛta* before the Lord stopped him. Mahāprabhu gave Kalidasa mercy unattainable by anyone else because in the core of his heart Kalidasa had full faith in Vaiṣṇavas. (Cc. 3.16.5-49)

Mahāprabhu Relishes Four Nectarean Sounds

Once in the Gambhira, Mahāprabhu loudly chanted the holy names of Kṛṣṇa throughout the night. Suddenly, Mahāprabhu heard Kṛṣṇa's flute and became absorbed in a powerful *bhāva* (*bhāva-avesa*) that magically carried Him through the three locked doors of Kasi Misra's house. Running to Jagannatha Mandira, Sri Caitanyadeva collapsed unconscious among the cows near the Simha-dvara.

Discovering the escape of Gauranga, Svarupa Damodara Gosvami and Govinda desperately searched for the Lord. When they reached the Simha-dvara, they saw that Gauranga's arms and legs had entered the trunk of His body, exactly like those of a tortoise. Gauranga's mouth was foaming, there were eruptions on His body, and tears flowed from Gaura's eyes. Gauranga's body resembled a large pumpkin; externally unconscious, yet internally overwhelmed in divine rapture. Though checked, the cows persistently sniffed the beautiful limbs of that fragrant golden pumpkin.

Gauranga's associates carried His divine body back to the Gambhira. Then they loudly chanted the holy names in Lord Caitanya's ears until He awoke and assumed His normal appearance. Looking here and there, Mahāprabhu asked, "Where have you brought Me? I saw Vrajendranandana playing on His flute in the pasturing grounds. By signaling with His flute, Syama brought Radha to a flower cottage in a *kunja* and enjoyed with Her. I entered the *kunja* just behind Kṛṣṇa; My ears captivated by the sound of His ornaments. I saw Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* enjoying all kinds of pastimes together. Hearing their laughing, joking and vocal expressions enhanced the joy of My ears (*karna-ullāsa*)."

Then in the ecstasy of Rādhā's *mahābhāva* and absorbed in Her mood of chastising Syama, Gauranga recited beautiful verses about the four



transcendental sounds produced by Sri Kṛṣṇa that attract everyone: Sri Kṛṣṇa's flute, words, voice, ankle bells and bangles.

Sri Caitanyadeva said, "O Kṛṣṇa! Your flute song acts like a mystic *yogini* to enchant all women in the universe and attract them to You. That flute vibration agitates women so much that they abandon all religious principles and disobey their superiors. Hearing only one vibration of that flute disturbs the hearts of all women. The knots of their undergarments loosen and they run like madwomen toward You. Excited by lusty desires, they give up all shame and fear as Your flute song forcibly pulls them to You to surrender in amorous love."

While merged in the ocean of anxiety and yearning (*utkaṅṭhā-sāgare*) that Rādhā experienced for Sri Kṛṣṇa, Mahāprabhu tasted the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-mādhurya*) and said, "O *sakhi*, My Madana-mohana, whose voice is as deep as a rumbling cloud, and whose joking words convey many deep meanings, always increases the lusty desires of My ears. Kṛṣṇa's sweet song defeats even the sweet voice of the cuckoo; even one particle of it can inundate the entire world.

"The tinkling of Kṛṣṇa's ankle bells surpasses the songs of the swan and crane, and His bangles shame the singing of the *caṭaka* bird. After hearing it just once, one cannot tolerate hearing anything else.

"Kṛṣṇa's speech and jubilant words are far sweeter than nectar, and their deep meaning creates various transcendental mellows. One particle of that blissful nectar is the life and soul of the ear; a *cakora* bird living in hope of tasting that nectar.

"Only the most fortunate can hear these four nectarean sounds—Kṛṣṇa's words, the tinkling of His ankle bells and bangles, His voice and the vibration of His flute. If one does not hear these sounds, his ears are as useless." (Cc. 3.17.3-48)

Mahāprabhu's Love Feast

After the Ratha-Yatra festival and the departure of all the Bengali Vaisnavas, Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu took a wonderful feast at the home of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. Many of us have attended ISKCON's famous "Sunday Love Feasts" held at their centers around the world, and thoroughly relished ten course meals of the most unbelievably delicious *maha-prasadam*. But no one could ever imagine the love feast that Mahāprabhu once honored at the home of His pure devotee, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. The tasty *maha-prasadam* preparations are herein described:



There was three kilograms of rice mixed with so much yellowish and fragrant ghee that it overflowed the banana leaf. There was ten kinds of spinach; *neem* leaf soup; a mild cake of fried curd; buttermilk mixed with fried *dāl* bits; fried eggplant and *neem*; fried rounds of pumpkin and squash; nectar-defying soup; six sour items; mung bean *bharāts*; urad *dāl* and sweet bananas; sweet rice cake and other cakes; sweet rice mixed with ghee; an earthen pot of condensed milk and mangos; delicious freshly churned yogurt; and varieties of *sandesh*.

Indeed, all the various eatables available in Bengal and Orissa were prepared! There was scented cold water in pitchers, and a variety of Lord Jagannatha's *maha-prasadam*, including sweetballs, sweet rice and cakes. Mahārabhu was most astonished to see the gorgeous arrangements.

At that time Gauranga said, "How was all this finished within six hours? Even a hundred men could not accomplish this. Sarvabhauma, you are most fortunate and your sincere endeavors are completely successful; for you and your wife have offered such wonderful food to Radha-Madhava." (Cc. 2.15.186-258)

The Disappearance of Lord Gauranga—Harmony or Discord

There are four popular stories about Mahārabhu's disappearance; Lord Caitanya entered the Gundica Mandira and did not come out; entered the sea and disappeared; entered the Jagannatha Deity or Mandira and was never seen again; Sri Caitanyadeva entered the Deity of Tota Gopinatha. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura and our Srila Prabhupada accept that Lord Gauranga entered the divine form of Tota Gopinatha.

In the *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* prologue, Srila Prabhupada said, "Sri Caitanya Mahārabhu's disappearance was in his forty-eighth year at the time of *sankīrtana* in the temple of Ṭotā-gopinātha." At least once, Srila Prabhupada also said that Caitanya Mahārabhu left this world by entering Lord Jagannatha. In 1967, while discussing the different scenes of a Lord Caitanya play with a disciple, Srila Prabhupada said that Sri Caitanyadeva merged in the transcendental body of the Jagannatha Deity in Puri.

Prabhupāda: "Third scene. In the same way, one day when Sri Caitanya Mahārabhu was 48 years old, He entered the Jagannātha temple."

Hayagrīva: "And disappeared?"

Prabhupāda: "Disappeared. His friends outside waited and waited and He never came back. That is all."

Hayagrīva: "They never knew what happened to Him. They never found..."



Prabhupāda: “Yes, they knew that Mahaprabhu was Kṛṣṇa. He has merged into the existence of Jagannātha.” (folio 6704051c.sf)

When asked about the different disappearance pastimes, Balarama Dasa, the head *pujari* of Tota Gopinatha, said, “What’s the problem? Gauranga is God! Sri Caitanyadeva’s different followers perceive Lord Caitanya on different levels. Therefore, to satisfy all of His loving devotees, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu simultaneously left this world in four different ways in four different places in Puri. Yes, Gauranga did enter Tota Gopinatha; yes, Gauranga did enter Jagannatha Swami; yes, Gauranga did disappear in the Gundica; and yes, Gauranga did merge in ocean, never to be seen again. Everything is possible for Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu!”

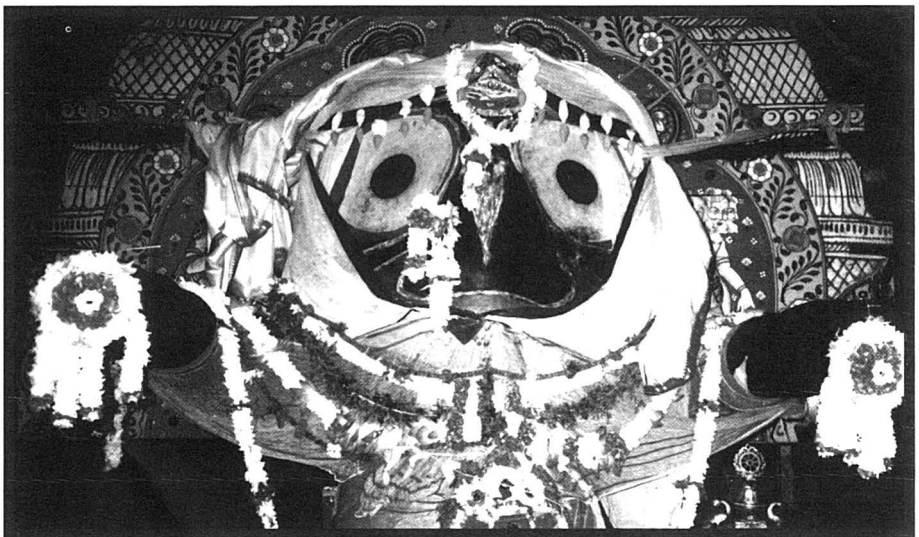
The conclusion is that apparent contradictions are automatically harmonized in a most perfect and beautiful way by the inconceivable power of the Supreme Lord Gauranga.

A Benediction of Love

To the readers and listeners of the Puri pastimes of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu, Srila Kṛṣṇadasa Kaviraja Gosvami gives a benediction.

*śraddhā kari’ sune yei, caitanyera kathā
caitanya-carāṇe prema, pāibe sarvathā*

One who hears about the pastimes of Lord Caitanya with faith and love will certainly attain ecstatic love for the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya without fail. (Cc. 3.10.160)



Chapter Six

Lord Jagannatha's Pastimes with His Devotees

The Eggplant Girl

One day in Puri, a *malli* (gardener's daughter) was singing *slokas* from *Gita Govinda* while picking eggplant. Hearing the melodious voice of the girl, Jagannatha Swami became attracted and left the temple. Jagannatha was so enchanted that He followed her deep into the woods. Completely oblivious to everything, Jagannatha Swami was unaware that His clothes were getting cut to shreds by the brambles and thorn trees. Later when the *pandas* attended the Lord, they noticed His ruined garments and complained to the King. In a dream, Lord Jagannatha related the whole story to the King. The next day, the King sent a palanquin to carry the gardener's daughter to the temple in a royal procession. The King appointed her as an official temple songstress to sing *Gita Govinda* every night before Jagannatha Swami slips falls asleep. In addition, the King donated a home and some income property for her maintenance. To this day her descendents still perform this service for the pleasure of Sri Jagannatha Deva.

A Sadhu Sings for His Devotee

Once Jayadeva Gosvami desired to offer his masterpiece *Gita Govinda* in the form of a garment to Jagannatha Swami. Some weavers from the village of Kenduli agreed to weave the verses of *Gita Govinda* on cloth provided that Jayadeva sang it while they worked. While singing one day, Jayadeva entered a trance of divine ecstasy. The weavers stopped working, but then started again when an unknown *sadhu* suddenly arrived and said, "I am Jayadeva's elder brother and I will sing *Gita Govinda* so you can continue your sacred work."

Shortly later the *sadhu* departed and Jayadeva woke up. The weavers narrated everything and even showed the line from *Gita Govinda* that they had woven after hearing it from that *sadhu*. Jayadeva replied, "How is that possible? I have no brothers. Besides, only Padmavati and I know *Gita Govinda*. Surely, Jagannatha Swami Himself must have sung it to you. You are most fortunate. You are all great devotees because you got direct *darsana* of the Supreme Lord." To show His love for Jayadeva, Sri Jagannatha Deva wears this *Gita Govinda* cloth every night as part of His Bada Srngara dress at the time of resting.



The Jackfruit Thief

This story and a few more involve Jagannatha Swami and Balarama Dasa, a great Oriyan devotee who lived in Puri during the reign of King Prataparudra (1497-1535 a.d.). Late one night, Lord Jagannatha secretly left the temple and went to the home of Balarama Dasa. The Lord asked Balarama Dasa to accompany Him to an orchard to eat some juicy ripe jackfruit. After eating up to their necks the Lord and His devotee fell asleep. Just before sunrise Jagannatha Swami got up quietly and returned to Sri Mandira.

A short time later, the owner of that orchard came and caught Balarama Dasa red handed. He called the king and had Balarama Dasa arrested for stealing. That night, Lord Jagannatha answered the prayers of Balarama Dasa by instructing the king in a dream, "I personally engaged Balarama Dasa the other night in eating jackfruit with Me. He is not at fault, so please free My dear devotee." The astonished king released Balarama Dasa the next morning and begged him with folded hands to please reveal the path of pure devotion.

Jagannatha Swami's Sand Chariots

Once during Ratha-yatra, Balarama Dasa tried to ride on Lord Jagannatha's chariot but was denied on the plea that he was not a *brahmin*. Feeling ashamed, Balarama cried and went to the seashore near Banki Mohana. He formed some chariots out of sand and fervently prayed to Jagannatha Swami to sit in his sand chariots. Not tolerating His devotee's distress, Jagannatha left His cart and sat in the sand chariot of Balarama Dasa. Meanwhile, the huge chariots on Grand Road would not move an inch despite the pulling of powerful drunken elephants.

That night the king of Puri remained awake worrying over the mysterious stoppage of the chariot procession. In a dream, Jagannatha Swami told the king that He was sitting in Balarama Dasa's sand chariots, and that he should come beg forgiveness for the misdeed of the temple *sevaits*. The next morning, the king ran to meet Balarama Dasa, apologized on behalf of the *sevaits*, and personally escorted him to Jagannatha's cart. Beholding his beloved Lord, Balarama collapsed on the road and cried like a child experiencing the sweet love of His guardian. Jagannatha Swami's chariot started moving forward amidst shouts of "Hari Bol! Hari Bol! Jai Jagannatha! Jagannatha Swami ki jai!" Thus Lord Jagannatha maintained the dignity of His devotee.



The Princess and the Sweeper

King Purusottama Dev (1467-1497), the sovereign of Puri, was to marry a beautiful princess named Padmavati from South India. Before the marriage, Padmavati's father's minister attended Jagannatha's Ratha-yatra in Puri. The minister was shocked to see the king of Puri sweeping the road in front of the carts. He reported this to his master, and the South Indian king immediately canceled the marriage proposal; refusing to give his daughter to a mere street sweeper.

King Purusottama Dev felt offended and promptly attacked the South Indian king. Unfortunately, he was soundly defeated. While returning to Puri, King Purusottama Dev received some good counsel from an ascetic devotee of Lord Jagannatha: "O king, you did not seek the Lord's permission before attacking that king." Back in Puri, the king spent the entire night in the temple crying to Lord Jagannatha over his defeat. At the end of the night, the king heard a voice, "Collect your soldiers again and Jagannatha and Balabhadra will also come to fight on your behalf."

As King Purusottama Dev proceeded to South India, he had some doubts about the presence of Jagannatha and Balabhadra since he did not see Them anywhere. Meanwhile, two soldiers riding one black horse and one white horse stopped near Chilika Lake to refresh themselves on some fresh yogurt which they took from an old lady. When she asked for payment, the two pleaded poverty, gave the lady a jeweled ring and told her to show it to King Purusottama Dev and collect the money.

Shortly later, the lady showed the ring to the king and demanded payment. Upon seeing that ring, King Purusottama Dev understood that it was Jagannatha Swami's ring. With this incident confirming the presence of the Lord, King Purusottama Dev swelled with confidence as he marched to victory. He kidnapped Padmavati from her father's palace, and entrusted her to his minister saying, "Give her to a Puri street sweeper!"

The clever minister cared for the princess for one year until the next Ratha-yatra festival. When King Purusottama Dev was engaged in sweeping Jagannatha Swami's chariot, the minister brought forth Padmavati and said, "Your Majesty! You ordered me to deliver this girl to a street sweeper, so now you please accept her and protect her."

A king and a street sweeper may be at opposite ends of the social spectrum, but in a society dedicated to the service of Lord Jagannātha, everyone becomes a menial servant of the Deity. We are kings or sweepers temporarily. But we are all servants of Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa eternally. Lord Caitanya Himself clearly said that He only wanted to be a servant of a servant of the servants of Kṛṣṇa; holding all other servants as superiors.



The Kitri of the Princess

Once a Mogul emperor ransacked Jagannatha Puri, drove out the king and molested his virgin daughter. Abandoned by the Mogul, the now destitute princess raised her baby by feeding him plain *kitri* which she very lovingly offered to a small painting of Jagannatha Swami. One day, while offering the *raja bhoga* in Sri Mandira, the *pujari* noticed some *kitri* stuck to Jagannatha's lips. The astonished *pujari* immediately informed the king that someone had offered *kitri* to the Lord of the universe, and that a few pieces were stuck on Jagannatha's red lips.

Later that night, Jagannatha Swami appeared in the king's dream, saying, "Everyday, I go to eat the *kitri* prepared by that former princess. Today I returned late so I did not get a chance to wipe My mouth before the *pujari* entered with the *raja bhoga* and saw Me. Honestly, I like her *kitri* very much and wanted to eat some every day." After that amazing dream, the king added *kitri* to Jagannatha Swami's daily fare.

Jagannatha Swami kitri maha-prasadam ki jai!



Day Trip One

Eight Ways of Seeing Sacred Space

The following entry will help you derive the maximum benefit from your pilgrimage to Puri or to any holy place: “The real service to a holy place is to meditate upon the pastimes that took place there, meditate on the significance of the particular place, and to then allow the mood of that place to imbue our service with new life. A holy place must be approached with the proper spiritual attitude and humility if we are to gain anything by visiting it. No holy place can actually be “seen” without qualified vision. A *tīrtha* [sacred place] is revealed by the mercy of a pure devotee and is seen through the ears. Every holy place has an internal reality.

We are not always qualified to see it, especially if we remain outsiders to the mood. If we wish to really take advantage of the spiritual and historical authenticity of a particular place, we must learn to see with eyes of devotion. Similarly, we must learn to see the heart of a place and not focus only on the externals, the apparent faults or shortcomings according to our estimations. We must see the saintly people living there and see a little of their purpose in serving their holy place. If we wish to find the spiritual essence of any holy place, we must learn to appreciate both the service and the mood with which it is offered there. Without that vision, we will always remain outsiders, even in the most spiritually authentic place.” (BTG #35-05, 2001)

In summary, there are eight things to do when visiting a holy place.

1. Meditate on the *līla*.
2. Meditate on the significance of the place.
3. Imbibe the mood.
4. Approach with humility.
5. See by mercy of saints and hearing *sastra*.
6. With loving eyes see the heart of the place.
7. Overlook externals.
8. Appreciate the mood and *seva* of the *dhamavasis* (local residents).



Practical Points

The *Jagannatha Puri Guide* is your personal guidebook to help you discover the secret spiritual treasures of Sri Ksetra Dhama, Puri. Upon arriving at one of the holy places, you should offer respects, sit down nearby and read the particular section describing the mysteries there. After hearing attentively, you should pray to Sri Guru and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to allow you to experience even a drop of the unlimited ocean of ecstasy contained within Lord Gauranga's pastimes in Sri Purusottama Ksetra, Jagannatha Puri. When Srila Prabhupada toured Vraja Mandala with his disciples, he held a *kirtana* upon arriving at a holy place, spoke some *hari-katha*, and then concluded with another *kirtana* before leaving.

You can comfortably see each group of sacred places in four or five hours by hiring an auto *rickshaw*, which will carry five adults and charge about 80 Rs. per hour. You should discuss your itinerary and fix the hourly rate before sitting in the *rickshaw*. The location descriptions accompanying each holy site and a street map listing the holy places in the Appendix will help you to find them. Unfortunately, there are a few places where Westerners (non-Indians) are not allowed entrance, and it will be mentioned here as non-Hindus are barred entrance.

Day Trip One

Hiring an auto *rickshaw*, one should visit the places in the order as they are numbered below. Your first stop will be the *bhajana kutira* of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura. Then you should see place number two which is Cataka Parvata Sand Dunes; then place number three which is Tota Gopinatha Mandira, and so on to the last and final stop which is number eight, Paramananda Puri's well. The sequence of sacred spots to visit today is as follows:

1. Bhajana Kutira of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura
2. Cataka Parvata Sand Dunes
3. Tota Gopinatha Mandira
4. Siddha Bakula
5. Gambhira
6. Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya's House
7. Sweta Ganga
8. Paramananda Puri's Well



1. Bhajana Kutira of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura

Location—The *kutira* is on the top of the hill behind the Purusottama Gaudiya Maṭha, which stands on the hilly sand dune known as Cataka Parvata on the road (known as Gaura Bara Sahi) leading to the Tota Gopinatha temple.

Main Deities

The main temple houses Deities of Sri Sri Gaura-Gadadhara and Radha Vinoda Madhava Jiu. Inside the *bhajana kutira* are Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura's bed and some other personal effects. There is a *murti* of Srila Vedavyasa here too.

Pastimes

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura did *bhajana* here near the end of his manifest presence (Kartika 14 October to Dec. 4 1936). Within the temple compound he celebrated Govardhana *puja* by worshiping the hill of sand known as Cataka Parvata. Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada once stayed here for a few days.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura ki jai!

2. Cataka Parvata Sand Dunes

Location: All the hilly sand dunes in this area are known as Cataka Parvata, where Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu enjoyed ecstatic pastimes. Sitting beside Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura's *bhajana kutira*, you can read the entry below while relishing the sublime atmosphere here.

Pastimes (*divya-līlā*)

I. Gaura Sees Govardhana

*caṭaka parvata dekhi' 'govardhana' bhrame
dhāñā cale āṛta-nāda kariyā krandane*

Seeing the sand dunes called Cataka Parvata, Mahaprabhu mistook them for Govardhana Hill and then ran there while wailing and crying loudly.

Mahaprabhu ran toward the dunes at high speed, crying very loudly, expressing the state of mind exhibited by Rādhārāṇī. His state of mind brought Him the atmosphere of Vṛndāvana and Govardhana Hill, and thus



He enjoyed the transcendental bliss of separation and meeting.
(Cc. 2.2.9 v&p)

II. Gaurahari's Divyomāda Mahabhava Lila

One day, while Mahāprabhu was going to bathe in the ocean He mistook the sand dune named Caṭaka-parvata to be Govardhana Hill and ran toward it while uttering a verse from the *venu-gita*:

*hantāyam adrir abalā hari-dāsa-varyo
yad rāma-kṛṣṇa-carāṇa-sparaśa-pramodaḥ
mānaṁ tanoti saha-go-gaṇayos tayor yat
pāṇīya-sūyavasa-kandara-kanda-mūlaiḥ*

O *sakhis!* This Govardhana Hill is the best servant of Sri Hari because he always experiences the jubilant touch of the lotus feet of Sri Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. And with great respect he supplies the cows, calves and cowherd boys with water for drinking, very soft grass, caves, fruits, flowers and edible roots. (SB 10.21.18)

Sri Caitanyadeva's personal servant Govinda followed but he failed to catch the Lord. Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Rāmāi, Nandāi and Śaṅkara Paṇḍita roared tumultuously as they ran after Mahāprabhu. Bhagavān Ācārya, who was lame, trudged along very slowly. Although Gaurāṅga was running at the speed of the wind, He suddenly became stunned in ecstasy (*stambha-bhāva*) losing all power to move.

Within seconds, Sri Caitanyadeva manifested all the *aṣṭa-sāttvika vikāra*, eight transformations of divine ecstasy—stupor (*stambha*), perspiration (*sveda*), horripilation (*romanča*), choking of the voice (*svara-bhaṅga*), trembling (*vepathu*), changes in color (*vaivarṇya*), profuse weeping (*asru*), and loss of external consciousness (*pralaya*). Gaurā's transcendental body flushed with thrill bumps and His bodily hairs, standing on end (*romanča*), appeared like *kadamba* flowers. Blood and perspiration (*sveda*) flowed incessantly from every pore of Gaurāṅga's body. He could not speak a word but simply produced a gargling sound within His throat (*svara-bhaṅga*). Unlimited tears (*asru*) poured from Mahāprabhu's eyes like the Ganga and Yamunā flowing into the sea. Mahāprabhu's golden form turned white (*vaivarṇya*) like a conchshell, and He trembled (*vepathu*) like the waves in the sea and then collapsed on the ground (*pralaya*).

Govinda sprinkled water on Gaurā's body and fanned Him with his *chadar*. Upon seeing the divine rapture visible in Mahāprabhu's body, Svarūpa Damodara Goswami and all the devotees became struck with wonder and cried.



The devotees performed loud *kirtana* and washed Gauranga's divine body with cold water. After listening for a long time, Mahāprabhu suddenly stood up and chanted, “*Haribol!*” Upon returning to half external consciousness (*ardha-bāhya*), Mahāprabhu spoke to Svarūpa Dāmodara.

Gauranga said, “Who has brought Me here from Govardhana Hill? I was seeing Sri Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, but now I cannot see them. Today I went from here to Govardhana Hill to find out if Kṛṣṇa was tending His cows there. I saw Sri Kṛṣṇa climbing Govardhana Hill and playing His flute, surrounded on all sides by grazing cows. Hearing the vibration of Kṛṣṇa's flute, *veṇu-nāda*, Radha Thakurani and all Her *gopī* friends came there to meet Syama. They were all very nicely dressed. When Kṛṣṇa and Srimati Rādhikā entered a cave together, the other *gopīs* asked Me to pick some flowers. Just then, all of you made a tumultuous sound and carried Me from there to this place. Why have you brought Me here, causing Me unnecessary pain? I had a chance to see Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, but I could not see them.”

Saying this, Mahāprabhu wept and then so did the Vaisnavas upon seeing Gauranga's condition. (Cc. 3.14.84-112)

Sri Gauranga ki jai! Giri Govardhana ki jai!

Cataka Parvata Sand Dunes ki jai!

3. Tota Gopinatha Mandira

Location—Keeping the Gaudiya Maṭha on your right and the tall water tower on your left, proceed up the hill on the road called Gauda Bara Sahi. In two minutes, you will see the Sri Sri Tota Gopinatha temple on your left.

Main Deities

The left altar features Lord Balarama with Revati and Varuni on His left and right respectively. Sri Tota Gopinatha graces the center altar with Rādhikā playing *vina* and Lalita playing flute on His left and right respectively. Being deeply absorbed in *śyāma-rasa*—the mellow of satisfying all of Kṛṣṇa's conjugal desires—Rādhikā and Lalita-sakhi appear black.

On the right altar are Deities of Gaura-Gadadhara and Rādhā Madan-mohana installed by Māmu Ṭhākura, whose birth name was Jagannātha Cakravartī. He was the nephew of Śrī Nilāmbara Cakravartī, Lord Gauranga's grandfather. After the departure of Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita, Māmu Ṭhākura became the *pujari* of Ṭoṭā-gopīnātha. There is a one foot square shrine with a set of marble footprints on the floor to the left side of the door of the main temple.



Tota Gopinatha is a most unique Deity because He is the only Kṛṣṇa Deity in the world sitting down. Moreover, Sri Caitanyadeva concluded His manifest pastimes by entering the Gopinatha Deity. At 7 a.m. during *darsana* time, you can give a donation and the *pujari* will show a small golden streak on Gopinatha's right knee where Mahaprabhu entered the Lord. Lalita-sakhi is playing a flute which happens in separation from Syama. Holding Her *kacchapī-vīṇā*, Rādhārāni curiously stands in a three-fold bending form dancing in time with Her darling beloved *śyāmam tri-bhaṅga-lalitām*.

Tota Gopinatha has a charismatic bewitching quality that draws one to His *darsana* over and over again. Vrndavana dasa Thakura extols His power: *ati pāśandī se vighraha dekhe bhule*, "Even an extreme atheist will be changed upon seeing the Deity of Gopinatha." (Cb. 3.7.114)

"O Gopinatha! I am a wicked materialist, always addicted to worldly desires. Please sit down on the lotus of my heart, play Your sweet flute, and make me dance beautifully in Your eternal service."

Pastimes

To answer the question why Tota Gopinatha is sitting down, there are three pastimes spanning millions of years that involve Lord Brahma, Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa and Gadadhara Pandita.

I. Lord Brahma and Tota Gopinatha

In very beginning of creation, Lord Brahma sat in meditation and saw Lord Gopinatha sitting in the middle of a lotus flower in the spiritual world. Sri Gopinatha was vibrating sweet melodies on His flute in the company of His amorous milkmaids.

*karnīkāre mahāsane, samāsinam cid-ānandam
jyoti-rūpaṁ sanātanam, śabda-brahma-mayaṁ veṇuṁ
vādayantaṁ mukhāmbuje*

"Sri Kṛṣṇa, the eternal personal form of effulgent transcendental bliss, sits on the whorl of a lotus flower playing His divine flute." (Bs.26) It is said that after this experience, Lord Brahma installed and worshiped a sitting Deity of Sri Kṛṣṇa, which is now called Tota Gopinatha. One proof given for this story is that Tota Gopinatha has a moonstone locket necklace carved on His chest, which Brahmaji describes: *ālola-candraka-lasad-vanamālyavamśī*, "I worship Govinda, whose neck is beautified with the moon-locket." (Bs.31) Another interesting point is that Tota Gopinatha is sitting



on a stone lotus flower which, it is told, once had a very long stone stem extending below it. To move the Deity to His new temple, that long stem had to be cut.

II. Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa and Tota Gopinatha

It also told that Tota Gopinatha is in a sitting pose because He is in the mood of pleasing the Vraja-gopis. The story is recounted in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.32). During the *rasa* dance in Vrndavana, Sri Kṛṣṇa once disappeared from the Vraja-gopis, who then became extremely disturbed in His absence. After sometime, Gopinatha reappeared before them wearing silken yellow garments and a beautiful flower garland. After Syama consoled them, the sakhis expressed to Him their deep feelings of ecstasy. Gopinatha and the damsels of Vraja happily strolled along the Yamuna. There on the sandy banks, the *gopis* made a seat for Kṛṣṇa out of their shawls (*uttariyaiḥ*), which were smeared with the *kunkuma* powder from their breasts. After Syama sat down they enjoyed with Him by gesturing amorously. The *gopis* revealed their hearts and Gopinatha tenderly told them that He had come under the exclusive control of their loving devotion and would ever remain indebted to them.

III. Gadadhara Pandita and Tota Gopinatha

It is said that the Deity of Gopinatha was previously in a standing form and was being worshiped by Gadadhara Pandita. But after the departure of Mahaprabhu, Gadai (Gadadhara) felt devastated, bent over from the intense agony of separation from his beloved Gaura. Although he was only forty-seven years old, Gadadhara's body became lean and thin like that of an old man. Incapable of lifting his arms, Gadai could neither dress Tota Gopinatha nor offer Him *candana* and flower garlands. Gadadhara thought it best to engage another *pujari* in worshiping the Lord. In a dream that night, Tota Gopinatha appeared and said, "Why do you want to engage another *pujari* in My *seva*? I only want you to serve Me."

Gadadhara replied, "O Prananaṭha! Due to my condition, I can no longer stand up and serve You properly."

Lord Gopinatha said, "No, I insist that you alone serve Me. If you are finding difficulty, then from tomorrow I will become shorter." The next morning when Gadadhara entered the Deity room to serve Gopinatha, he saw an amazing sight. The merciful Lord had sat down in order to receive service from his hands. *Sri Tota Gopinatha ki jai!*



IV. Appearance of Tota Gopinatha

The Gopinatha temple is situated in an area named Yamesvara Tota after an ancient Siva temple called Yamesvara Mahadeva which lies just north of here. Non-Hindus are barred entrance here. While residing in this peaceful garden of trees and creepers, Gadadhara Pandita recited the *Srimad Bhagavatam* every afternoon. Mahāprabhu attended regularly, and heard Gadadhara recount the stories of Dhruva and Prahlada one hundred times.

One day here, Sri Caitanyadeva experienced immense separation from Kṛṣṇa. Crying out, “Where is My Pranānatha,” Gaurāṅga started digging the earth in search of His Lord. Feeling the carved stone *mukuta* of a *murti* below the ground, Gaurāhari declared, “Gadai, I have found a most precious treasure here. Would you like to accept it?” Noticing the head of a *murti* emerging from the sand, Gadadhara helped Gaurāṅga uncover a most beautiful Deity of Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa. Mahāprabhu named the Deity, Gopinatha, and because He appeared in a garden (*toṭā* in Oriyan) the devotees called Him, Tota Gopinatha. Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu engaged Gadadhara Pandita in Gopinatha’s service by awarding him *ksetra-sannyasa*.

V. Govinda Saves Gaurāṅga

One day Gaurāṅga was passing the Jagannātha temple on His way to Yamesvara Tota to meet Gadadhara Pandita. Inside the temple, a lady was singing verses from *Gita Govinda* in a very sweet melody (*gujjarī-rāgiṇī*). Hearing the song from a distance, Mahāprabhu immediately became ecstatic and eagerly ran toward that sweet sound; completely unaware of the gender of the singer. As Gaurāṅga ran to meet the singer, thorny hedges pricked His body. Govinda ran quickly, caught Mahāprabhu in his arms and cried, “It is a woman singing!” As soon as Mahāprabhu heard the word “woman,” He returned to external consciousness and went the opposite way.

At that time, Gaurāṅga told Govinda:

*prabhu kahe,—”govinda āji, rākhilā jīvana
strī-paraśa haile āmāra, ha-ita maraṇa*

“My dear Govinda! Today you saved My life. If I had touched a woman, I would certainly have died. I cannot repay you for your *seva*.” Govinda humbly replied, “Lord Jagannātha has saved You. Who am I to protect You?” (Cc. 3.13.78-85)



VI. Gadai's Pure Love for Gaura

*gadādhara-pañḍitera, śuddha gāḍha bhāva
rukmiṇī-devīra yaiche, 'dakṣiṇa-svabhāva'*

Gadādhara Pañḍita's pure ecstatic love (*śuddha bhāva*) for Mahāprabhu was very deep (*gāḍha bhāva*). It was like that of Rukmiṇīdevī, who was always especially submissive (*dakṣiṇa-svabhāva*). (Cc. 3.7.144) Gaura sometimes desired to see Gadai's affectionate anger (*praṇaya-roṣa*), but because of his knowledge of Lord Caitanya's opulences (*aiśvarya-jñāne*), his anger was never invoked. For this purpose Caitanya Mahāprabhu sometimes showed His apparent anger. Hearing of this anger inspired great fear in the heart of Gadādhara Pañḍita.

Once when Vallabha Bhaṭṭa was visiting Jagannatha Puri, He associated with Gadadhara Pandita here at Tota Gopinatha. Vallabha Bhaṭṭa was accustomed to worshipping child Kṛṣṇa in the mood of a parent (*vātsalya-upāsana*) with the Bāla-gopāla *mantra*. But due to the influence of Gadādhara Pañḍita, Vallabha Bhatta became inclined to worship youthful Kṛṣṇa and perform *kiśora-gopāla upāsana*. Vallabha Bhaṭṭa wanted Gadadhara Pandita to teach him the appropriate *mantras* for worship, but Gadādhara declined saying that he could not do that.

*āmi paratantra āmāra, prabhu gauracandra
tānra ājñā vinā āmi, nā ha-i 'svatantra'*

I am completely dependent on my Prabhu Gauracandra. I cannot do anything independently, without His order. (Cc. 3.7.144-151)

VII. Prema Vivarta Lila of Gadai-Gaura

One year, on the day of Vijaya-daśamī, Mahaprabhu decided to leave Sri Ksetra Dhama and go to Vṛndāvana. Mahārāja Pratāparudra made various arrangements for Gauranga's trip to Vṛndāvana. When Gadādhara Pañḍita started to go with Sri Caitanyadeva, he was forbidden to come and asked not to give up his vow of *kṣetra-sannyāsa*, wherein a *sannyasi* lives his entire life in a sacred place like Sri Ksetra Dhama or Rādhā Kunda without going anywhere else. Gadai (Gadadhara) and Gaura then had a very deep conversation.

Gadai:

*pañḍita kahe yāhān tumi, sei nīlācala
kṣetra-sannyāsa mora, yāuka rasātala*

"Wherever You are staying is Nilacala. Let my so-called *kṣetra-sannyāsa* go to *rasātala* (hell)."



Gauranga: *inhā kara gopīnātha sevana*, “Just stay in Jagannatha Puri and serve Tota Gopinatha.”

Gadai: *koṭi-sevā tvat-pāda-darśana*, “One renders service to Gopīnātha a million times simply by seeing Your lotus feet.”

Gauranga:

prabhu kahe sevā chāḍibe, āmāya lāge doṣa
inhā rahi’ sevā kara, āmāra santoṣa

“If you abandon Gopinatha’s *seva*, it will be My fault. It will give Me great satisfaction if you remain here and render service.”

Gadai:

paṇḍita kahe saba doṣa, āmāra upara
tomā-saṅge nā yāiba, yāiba ekeśvara
ā’ke dekhite yāiba nā, yāiba tomā lāgi’
‘prati jñā ‘sevā’ tyāga-doṣa, tāra āmi bhāgi’
eta bali’ paṇḍita-gosāni prthak calilā
kaṭaka āsi’ prabhu tānre saṅge ānāilā

“Do not worry. All the faults will be on my head. I shall not accompany You but shall go alone.

“I shall go to see Śacīmātā, but I shall not go for Your sake. I will take full responsibility for the fault of giving up my vow and service to Gopīnātha.

“Thus Gadādhara traveled alone, but when all the devotees arrived at Kāṭaka, Mahāprabhu called him, and he went to meet Lord Caitanya.”

It is not possible for anyone to understand Gadadhara’s *gaurāṅga-prema*. He gave up his life’s vow of *śrī-kṛṣṇa-sevā*, service of Gopinatha, just as one gives up a piece of straw. Such intimate divine love can be understood only by very confidential devotees. Actually, within His heart, Gauranga was very much satisfied with Gadai’s behavior. Nevertheless, Gauranga caught his hand and spoke to him, exhibiting anger in divine love (*praṇaya-roṣa*).

Gauranga:

prati jñā sevā chāḍibe, e tomāra ‘uddesa’
se siddha ha-ila chāḍi, āilā dūra deśa
āmāra saṅge rahite cāha,—vāñcha nija-sukha
tomāra dui dharma yāya,—āmāra haya ‘duḥkha’
mora sukha cāha yadi, nilācale cala
āmāra śapatha yadi, āra kichu bala

“You have given up Gopīnātha’s *seva* and broken your vow to live in Purī. All that is now complete because you have come so far.

“Your desire to remain with Me is simply a desire for your own happiness. In this way, you are breaking two religious principles, and because of this I am very unhappy.



“If you want to make Me happy, then please return to Nilācala. You will simply condemn Me if you say any more about this matter.”

Saying this, Mahāprabhu boarded a boat, and Gadādhara Paṇḍita immediately fell down unconscious. Lord Caitanya ordered Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya to take Gadādhara Paṇḍita with him. The Bhaṭṭācārya told Gadādhara Paṇḍita, “Get up! Such are the pastimes Mahāprabhu. You should know that Sri Kṛṣṇa Himself violated His own promise just to keep the promise of Grandfather Bhīṣma. Similarly, tolerating separation from you, Mahāprabhu has protected your vow with great endeavor.”

In this way Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya revived Gadādhara Paṇḍita. Overwhelmed with grief, they both returned to Jagannātha Purī. Lord Caitanya’s devotees abandoned all kinds of karmically prescribed duties for Mahāprabhu’s sake. Yet Gaurāṅga could not tolerate the devotees’ giving up their devotional duties (*bhakta-dharma*).

Srila Kṛṣṇādaśa Kavirāja Gosvami concludes this wonderful narration with a *phala-śruti*, a verse of blessings for all the devoted readers.

*premera vivarta’ ihā, śune yei jana
acire miliye tāñre, caitanya-carāṇa*

All these pastimes of Gaura-Gadadhara are the reversals in loving affairs (*prema vivarta*). Whoever hears these pastimes gets the shelter of Sri Caitanya’s lotus feet very soon. (Cc. 2.16.139-149)

In this verse, Srila Kṛṣṇādaśa Kavirāja Gosvami mentions the term *prema vivarta*. The word *āvartana* means “to move” or “to turn”; so *vivarta* means *viśeṣa-āvarta*, “a special or unique reversal in movement.” Thus *prema-vivarta* is the state of love when it turns against its natural flow; the reversed movements of love. Srila Prabhupada translates it as, “the misgivings of loving affairs.”

In this *prema-vivarta lila*, when Mahāprabhu left Nilācala to go to Vrndavana, He left Gadadhara Paṇḍita behind. At that time, Gadadhara said, “Prabhu! What is the use of my *ksetra-sannyasa*? I only took *ksetra-sannyasa* to be with You; it was not for any purpose of my own. I do not want it.” Such contrary emotions were churning his heart in different directions. This is the mysterious expression of *prema-vivarta*, a transcendental phenomenon shared between Sri Kṛṣṇa and His *premi-bhaktas*.

VIII. Nitai, Gaura and Gadai Take Maha-prasadam

Once, Sri Nityānanda Rama came to Sri Ksetra Dhama to see Jagannātha Swami, Sri Caitanyādeva and His associates. Upon beholding the gorgeous form of Jagannātha, Nitai wept tears of ecstasy and then collapsed on the temple floor.



Nityananda fell with such force that even a hundred people could not lift Him. Nityānanda, the epitome of compassion, embraced the *sevāits* of Jagannatha Swami and bathed them in tears of ecstasy. Nitai then went to the Tota Gopinatha Mandira. When Nitai gazed upon the exquisite, three-fold bending form of Gopīnātha, He cried incessant tears of joy.

Hearing of Nitai's arrival, Gadadhara Pandita immediately stopped reciting the *Srimad Bhagavatam* and hurried to welcome the Lord. Nitai and Gadai embraced firmly, bathed in each other's tears, offered obeisances and profusely praised each other. Oblivious to their own bodies and external environment, they floated in the ocean of spiritual happiness. No one had ever seen such expressions of love and affection.

Nitai had brought with Him thirty kilograms of the best quality rice from Bengal for offering to Gopīnātha. He also had brought brightly colored fine cloth for a Deity outfit. Presenting these items to Gadai, Nitai said, "Here is some fine cloth and first class rice for Gopinatha's *seva*."

Gadai replied gratefully, "Nitai, I have never seen such superb rice. My Lord, did You carefully bring this rice all the way from Vaikuṅṭha for Gopīnātha? Śrī Lakṣmī Devī Herself should cook this rice, which will be offered to Gopinatha and then to His devotees."

Gadai then wrapped the beautiful cloth attractively around Gopinathajiu. After happily collecting wild spinach and tamarind leaves, Gadadhara cooked rice and other delectable dishes for Gopinatha's *bhoga* offering.

Suddenly, Gauranga showed up, exclaiming, "Gadadhara! Gadadhara! Gadadhara! Why haven't you invited Me to the feast? If You do not invite Me, then I will forcefully take the *maha-prasadam*. I certainly will not miss this rare opportunity to take the *bhoga*—brought by Nityānanda, cooked by you and offered to Gopīnātha."

Nitai, Gaura and Gadai sat down together to joyfully honor Gopinatha's remnants. Gauracandra repeatedly praised the rice, saying, "The aroma of this rice will reward anyone with *kṛṣṇa bhakti*. This is a most delectable spinach and the tamarind chutney has been skillfully prepared. You are such an expert cook that you must also be cooking in the spiritual world. Now that the secret is out, you can no longer hide your identity."

Thus Nitai, Gaura and Gadai joked as they all happily honored Gopinatha's *maha-prasadam*. Needless to say, Their sacred remnants were taken with great love and enthusiasm by all the assembled devotees. Anyone who hears about this pastime will undoubtedly attain pure devotion and the lotus feet of Sri Gopinatha. (Cb. *Antya* 6)



IX. Stories from the Head Pujari

Balarama Dasa has been serving as Tota Gopinatha's *pujari* for the last thirty-five years. He told the author the following stories.

A. Brahma's Gopinatha: "This Deity of Gopinatha is sitting down in *padma asana* on a lotus flower. This sitting form of Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa was seen by Lord Brahma and described in verse 56 of his *Brahma Samhita*. In his meditation, Lord Brahma saw Lord Gopinatha sitting down on a lotus surrounded by Sri Radha and all the damsels of Vraja."

B. Fickle Worship: "One time when my father was the *pujari*, he forgot to offer the *pān* (betel nut). Late that night, Tota Gopinatha appeared in his dream and said, 'When you are doing *puja* and worshiping Me, your mind is so fickle (*cancala mati*), moving here and there. You should be more attentive when you are worshiping Me.' My father never again forgot to offer Gopinatha's *pān*."

C. Ankle Bell Dreams: "About ten years ago before the *darsana mandapa* was constructed, I used to sleep outside the temple room door. Though it was very late at night and no one was around, on several occasions I heard the tinkling of ankle bells. When I awoke I was most astonished, so I asked my father about it. My father calmly replied, 'Oh, that tinkling is the sound of Srimati Rādhikā's ankle bells as She wanders around the garden with Tota Gopinatha.'"

Sri Tota Gopinatha ki jai! Gaura-Gadadhara ki jai!

Srimad Bhagavatam ki jai!

4. Siddha Bakula

Location—Siddha Bakula is located on Bali Sahi road and is well known to all *rickshaw wallas*. It is called the Siddha Bakula Maṭha. Our numbered sequence of holy spots is based on using an auto rickshaw to visit each one.

However, if by chance you are starting from the Lion Gate (Simha Dvara) of the Jagannatha temple by foot, you can walk directly south along the road to the ocean about 300 meters. Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya's house (known locally as Ganga Mata Maṭha) is the first spot you will come to. It is just inside a small lane on your right, opposite a large tank of water called Sveta Ganga. The Rādhā Kanta Maṭha (site of the Gambhira) is about thirty meters further south along the road to the ocean on the left. And Siddha Bakula is down a small lane whose entrance is about twenty meters south of the entrance to Radha Kanta Maṭha.

Main Deities

There is a small temple featuring a *murti* of *namacarya* Srila Haridasa



Thakura in a sitting pose chanting *japa*. The main site to see is the extraordinary *bakula* tree winding and climbing around the courtyard. The tree looks like it exploded or it appears like petrified wood; completely dead. Yet it is wonderfully flourishing with lush green leaves and fragrant flowers. The story about this amazing tree is mentioned below.

Under this tree, Thakura Haridasa performed his daily *bhajana* of chanting 192 rounds (300,000 names) of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *maha-mantra*:

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

Acaryas say that Haridasa completed his 192 rounds in about 12 hours.

In another temple situated thirty meters away in the same compound is the *Sadbhuja* Haridasa *Mandira* containing *murtis* of *Sadbhuja Gauranga* in the middle, flanked by *Sri Nityananda Prabhu* and *Advaita Acarya* on His left and right respectively. There is also a Deity of *Narasimhadeva* and another of *Haridasa Thakura* to the side of the main altar. The *dāru-murti* (wooden) of *Srila Haridasa Thakura* was established by *Sri Jagannatha Gosvami*.

Pastimes

I. Gauranga Assigns Haridasa a *Bhajana Kutira*

Mahaprabhu personally welcomed all the devotees from *Gaudadesa* when they arrived in *Puri* to attend *Ratha-yatra*. *Haridasa Thakura*, however, though a member of the group, stayed at a distance offering *dandavats* to *Gauranga* on the main street. At that time, *Haridasa* told his friends, “I am fallen and low-born. I am not qualified to go near the temple. If I could just get a solitary place within a garden (*nibhṛte ṭoṭā-madhye sthāna*), I will pass my time there alone. I do not want the servants of *Jagannatha* to become contaminated by touching me.”

Happy to hear this, *Mahaprabhu* came personally to meet *Haridasa* after all the devotees departed for sea bathing and retired in their allotted rooms. *Haridāsa* was engaged in *prema nāma-sankīrtana*. *Mahaprabhu* embraced *Haridāsa* and they both cried in ecstatic love for each other. Although *Haridasa* condemned himself as “fallen and untouchable,” *Mahaprabhu* said, “Because you are chanting the *Hare Kṛṣṇa maha-mantra*, at every moment you are bathing in all the holy places (*sarva-tīrthe snāna*), performing *yajña*, *tapah* and *dāna*, and studying the four *Vedas*. You are supremely pure (*parama-pāvana*), more so than *brahmins* and *sannyasis*. I touch your body to become purified.”

While showing *Haridasa* his residence in a peaceful garden, *Mahaprabhu* said, “Stay here and perform *nama-sankirtana*, and I will meet you daily.



Gaze at Jagannatha's *cakra* and offer obeisances. As far as your food is concerned, I shall personally bring Jagannatha's *maha-prasadam* to you everyday." (Cc. 2.11.166-195)

II. The Palm Leaf Lila

When Srila Rupa Gosvami visited Jagannatha Puri, Mahaprabhu allotted him a residence in Siddha Bakula with Haridasa Thakura. Sometime later, when Sanatana Gosvami came, Gauranga told him to stay here too. To avoid any disturbance, these three exalted personalities, Sri Rupa and Sanatana Gosvamis and Haridasa Thakura, never entered the temple of Jagannatha. But it was Sri Caitanyadeva's regular practice to meet them at Siddha Bakula.

During a visit one day, Mahaprabhu noticed a palm leaf, containing a Sanskrit verse, stuck in the thatched roof of Rupa Gosvami's *kutira*. Sri Rupa had composed it for the pleasure of the Lord after hearing Mahaprabhu's recitation of a similar verse during Ratha-yatra. Upon reading the following verse, Gauranga Mahaprabhu swooned in a rapture of ecstatic love:

*priyaḥ so 'yaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ saha-cari kuru-kṣetra-militas
tathāham sā rādhā tad idam ubhayoḥ saṅgama-sukham
tathāpy antaḥ-khelan-madhura-murali-pāñcama-juṣe
mano me kālindī-pulina-vipināya spr̥hayati*

"O *priya-sakhi*, now I have met My very old and dear friend Kṛṣṇa on this field of Kurukṣetra. I am the same Rādhārāṇī, and now We are meeting together. It is very pleasant, but I would still like to go to the bank of the Yamunā beneath the trees of the forest there. I wish to hear the vibration of Syama's sweet flute playing the fifth note within that forest of Vṛndāvana." (*Padyavali* 386)

Mahaprabhu asked Svarupa Damodara how Srila Rupa Gosvami knew the confidential secrets of His heart. Then Gauranga answered His own question saying, "During a prior meeting at Prayaga, I gave special mercy to Sri Rupa and empowered him with My full transcendental potency. Now you (Svarupa Damodara) should teach him the fine points of *rasa-tattva*." (Cc. 3.1.70-88)

III. Sweet Glories of the Holy Name

One day at Siddha Bakula, Rūpa Gosvāmī was writing his book (*Vidagdha-madhava*). Mahaprabhu suddenly appeared, glanced at his work and stated,



“The handwriting of Rūpa Gosvāmī is just like rows of pearls.” Then Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu read the following verse and became overwhelmed in ecstatic love:

*tunḍe tāṇḍavinī ratim vitanute tunḍāvalī-labdhaye
karṇa-kroḍa-kaḍambinī ghaṭayate karṇārbudebhyaḥ sphāṁ
cetaḥ-prāṅgaṇa-saṅginī vijayate sarvendriyāṇām kṛtim
no jāne janitā ki yadbhir amṛtaiḥ kṛṣṇeti varṇa-dvayī*

I do not know how much nectar the two syllables “Kṛṣ-ṇa” have produced. When the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is chanted, it appears to dance within the mouth. We then desire many, many mouths. When that name enters the holes of the ears, we desire many millions of ears. And when the holy name dances in the courtyard of the heart, it conquers the activities of the mind, and therefore all the senses become inert. (*Vidagdha-madhava* 1.15)

Hearing the verse thrilled the heart of Haridāsa who then danced joyfully while praising its meaning: “One has to learn about the beauty and transcendental position of the holy name of the Lord by hearing the revealed scriptures from the mouths of devotees. Nowhere else can we hear of the sweetness of the Lord’s holy name (*nāmera mādhuri*).” Mahāprabhu lovingly embraced Haridāsa and Rūpa Gosvāmī and then went to the seaside to perform His noontime duties. (Cc. 3.1.94-103)

IV. Haridasa Speaks on Nama Tattva

One day Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu came to Siddha Bakula and asked Haridasa Thakura to speak on *nama-tattva*. Namacarya Haridasa Thakura said, “The letters of the holy name have so much spiritual potency that they act even when uttered improperly. If one offenselessly utters the holy name (*nāmābhāsa*) even imperfectly, it will destroy all his sinful reactions (*sarva-pāpa-kṣaya*) and deliver one from material bondage (*sāmsāra kṣaya*). All the revealed scriptures proclaim that one can attain liberation simply by *nāmābhāsa*. The *Srīmad Bhāgavatam* establishes this truth in the story of Ajamila. When loud chanting (*ucca saṅkīrtana*) of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is performed all over the world by those who follow in Your footsteps, all living entities, moving and nonmoving, dance in ecstatic emotional love.” His mind fully satisfied with Haridasa’s statements, Gaurācandra embraced him. (Cc. 3.3.49-90)

V. Haridāsa Thākura Niryaṇa (departure)

Sri Caitanyadeva refers to the disappearance of Thakura Haridasa as the *haridāsera vijaya-utsava*, “the festival of Haridāsa Thākura’s passing away.”



In the *phala sruti* concluding this wonderful pastime, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī promises that the hearers will attain Kṛṣṇa *ḍṛḍha-bhakti*, very firm, unwavering devotion to Sri Kṛṣṇa. The faithful, offenseless reader who truly desires Kṛṣṇa *ḍṛḍha-bhakti* will surely achieve it by reading the following story about the disappearance of Namacārya Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

One day Govinda, Mahāprabhu's personal servant, came to Siddha Bakula in great jubilation to deliver Jagannātha's *maha-prasadam* to Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Govinda saw that Haridāsa Ṭhākura was lying on his back and chanting his rounds very slowly. "Please rise and take your *mahā-prasādam*," Govinda said.

Haridāsa Ṭhākura replied, "Today I shall observe fasting. I have not finished chanting my regular number of rounds. How, then, can I eat? But you have brought *mahā-prasādam*, and how can I neglect it?"

Saying this, Haridāsa offered respect to the *mahā-prasādam* and ate a small portion. The next day, Mahāprabhu met Haridāsa and asked him, "Haridāsa, are you well?"

Haridāsa offered obeisances to Gaurāṅga and replied, "My body is all right, but my mind and intelligence are not in a healthy condition."

Mahāprabhu further inquired from Haridāsa, "Can you ascertain what your disease is?"

Haridāsa Ṭhākura replied, "My disease is that I cannot complete my rounds."

"Now that you have become old," Gaurāṅga said, "you may reduce the number of rounds you chant daily. You have already attained your *siddha deha*, so why are you so eager to perform regulated *sadhana*? Your role in this incarnation is to deliver the people in general. You have sufficiently preached the glories of the holy name in this world. Now, therefore, please reduce the fixed number of times you chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*."

Haridāsa Ṭhākura replied, "Kindly hear my real plea. I was born in a low family, and my body is most abominable. I always engage in low work. Therefore, I am the lowest, most condemned of all. I am unseeable and untouchable, but You have accepted me as Your servant. This means that You have delivered me from a hellish condition and raised me to the Vaikuṅṭha platform. Mahāprabhu, You are the fully independent supreme controller.

"You act by Your own free will. You cause the whole world to dance and act as You like. By Your mercy You have made me dance in many ways. For example, I was offered the *śrāddha-pātra*, which should have been offered to first-class *brāhmaṇas*. I ate from it even though I was born in a family



of meat-eaters. I have had one desire for a very long time. I think that quite soon, my Lord, You will end Your pastimes within this material world.

“I wish that You not show me this closing chapter of Your pastimes. Before that time comes, kindly let my body fall down in Your presence. I wish to catch Your lotuslike feet upon my heart and see Your moonlike face. With my tongue I shall chant Your holy name, ‘Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya!’ That is my desire. Kindly let me give up my life in this way. O most merciful Mahāprabhu, if by Your mercy it is possible, kindly grant my desire. Let this lowborn body fall down before You. You can make possible this perfection of all my desires.”

Mahāprabhu said, “My dear Haridāsa, Kṛṣṇa is so merciful that He will certainly do whatever you want. But whatever happiness is Mine is all due to your association. It is not fitting for you to go away and leave Me behind.”

Catching the lotus feet of Gaurāṅga, Haridāsa Ṭhākura said, “My Lord, do not create an illusion! Although I am so fallen, You must certainly show me this mercy! My Lord, there are many respectable personalities and millions of devotees who are like a jeweled crown on my head. They are all helpful in Your pastimes. My Lord, if an insignificant insect like me dies, what is the loss? If an ant dies, is there any loss to the material world? My Lord, You are always affectionate to Your devotees. I am just a semblance of devotee, but nevertheless I wish and hope that You fulfill my desire.”

Mahāprabhu left to perform His noon duties. But the next day after seeing Jagannatha Swami, Gaurāṅga met with Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī and all the devotees of Gaurāṅga surrounded Haridāsa and performed *nama-sankirtana*. In front of all the great devotees like Rāmānanda Rāya and Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, Mahāprabhu enunciated the transcendental qualities of Haridāsa Ṭhākura. While narrating the qualities of Haridāsa, Mahāprabhu seemed to have five mouths. The more He spoke the more His great joy increased. After hearing about qualities of Haridāsa, all the devotees were struck with wonder, and then they worshiped the lotus feet of Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

Haridāsa Ṭhākura made Mahāprabhu sit down in front of him, and then he fixed his eyes, like two bumblebees, on the lotus face of Gaurasundara. He held the lotus feet of Gaurāṅga on his heart and then took the dust of the feet of all the devotees and ornamented his head with it. Haridāsa repeatedly chanted, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya! Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya! Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya!* As he drank the sweetness of the face of Mahāprabhu (*prabhu-mukha-mādhurī*), tears constantly glided down from his eyes.

While chanting “*Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya*”, Haridāsa gave up his air of life



and left his body. Seeing the wonderful death of Haridāsa Ṭhākura by his own will, which was just like a great mystic *yogī's*, everyone remembered the passing of Bhīṣma. There was a tumultuous uproar as everyone chanted “*Hari*” and “*Kṛṣṇa*.” Mahāprabhu picked up the body of Haridāsa, and then danced in the courtyard absorbed in ecstatic love. Submerged in *prema*, all the devotees chanted and danced together.

After sometime, Mahāprabhu placed the body of Haridāsa on a palanquin and then all the devotees carried it to the seashore, accompanied by congregational chanting. Mahāprabhu danced in front of the procession, and Vakreśvara Paṇḍita, along with the other devotees, chanted and danced behind Him. Mahāprabhu personally bathed the body of Haridāsa Ṭhākura with sea water and then declared, “From this day on, this sea has become a *mahā-tīrtha*, great pilgrim site.”

Everyone drank the water that had touched the lotus feet of Haridāsa, and then they smeared Jagannātha's *prasādi-candana* over his body. The body of Haridāsa was then placed in a hole in the sand. Remnants from Lord Jagannātha, such as His silken ropes, sandalwood pulp, food and cloth, were placed on the body. All around the body, the devotees did *kirtana* while Vakreśvara Paṇḍita danced in bliss. With His transcendental hands, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally covered Haridāsa's body with sand, chanting “*Haribol! Haribol!*”

The devotees covered the body of Haridāsa Ṭhākura with sand, constructed a platform upon the site and encircled it with a protective fence. Mahāprabhu danced and chanted all around the platform. The whole universe became filled with the tumultuous vibration of the holy name of Hari. Afterwards, Mahāprabhu bathed in the sea with His devotees, playing in the water in great jubilation.

After circumambulating the *samadhi* of Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Mahāprabhu went to the Simha-dvāra gate of the Jagannātha temple. Throughout the town of Puri, there was an uproar of *hari-kirtana*. Mahāprabhu spread His cloth to beg *prasādam* from all the shopkeepers near Simha-dvāra.

“I am begging *prasādam* for a festival honoring the passing away of Haridāsa Ṭhākura,” Gaurāṅga said. “Please give Me alms.” Hearing this, all the shopkeepers immediately brought big baskets of *prasādam*, which they happily gave to Gaurāṅga. However, Svarūpa Dāmodara stopped them, and the shopkeepers returned to their shops and sat down with their baskets. Svarūpa Dāmodara sent Mahāprabhu back to His residence and kept with him four Vaiṣṇavas and four servant carriers.

Svarūpa Dāmodara told the shopkeepers, “Give me four palmfuls of *prasādam* from each and every item.” In this way varieties of *prasādam*



were collected, then packed up in different loads and carried on the heads of the four servants. Not only did Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī bring *prasādam*, but Vāṇīnātha Paṭṭanāyaka and Kāśī Miśra also sent large quantities of Jagannatha *maha-prasadam*.

Mahāprabhu sat the devotees in rows and, assisted by four men, personally served the *prasādam*. Mahāprabhu was not accustomed to taking *prasādam* in small quantities. Therefore, He filled each plate with enough food to feed five men.

Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī requested Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, “Please sit down and watch. With these men to help me, I shall distribute the *prasādam*.” Svarūpa Dāmodara, Jagadānanda, Kāśīśvara and Śāṅkara distributed the *prasādam* continuously. But no one took *prasadam* until Mahāprabhu ate. On that day, however, Kāśī Miśra had extended an invitation to Lord Gauranga.

Kāśī Miśra personally went there and delivered *prasādam* to Mahāprabhu with great attention and made Him eat. With Paramānanda Purī and Brahmānanda Bhārati, Mahāprabhu sat down and accepted the *prasādam*. When He ate, so did all the Vaiṣṇavas. Everyone ate up to the neck (*ākāṅṭha pūrāṇā*) because Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu kept telling the distributors, “Give them more! Give them more!”

After all the devotees finished and had washed their hands and mouths, Mahāprabhu decorated each of them with a flower garland and sandalwood pulp. Overwhelmed with ecstatic love, Mahāprabhu offered a benediction to all the devotees, which everyone heard with great satisfaction. Mahāprabhu said, “Anyone who has seen the festival of Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s passing away, anyone who has chanted and danced here, anyone who has offered sand on the body of Haridāsa Ṭhākura, and anyone who has joined this festival to partake of the *prasādam* will achieve the favor of Kṛṣṇa very soon. There is such wonderful power in seeing Haridāsa Ṭhākura.

“Being merciful upon Me, Kṛṣṇa gave Me the association of Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Being independent in His desires, Kṛṣṇa has now broken that association. When Haridāsa Ṭhākura wanted to leave this material world, it was not within My power to detain him. Simply by his will Haridāsa gave his life, exactly like Bhīṣma, who previously died simply by his own desire. Haridāsa Ṭhākura was the crown jewel on the head of this world; without him, this world is now bereft of its valuable jewel. Everyone chant ‘All glories to Haridāsa Ṭhākura!’ and chant the holy name of Hari. After saying this, Mahāprabhu danced in great joy.

Everyone chanted: *jaya jaya jaya haridāsa, nāmera mahimā yeṅha karilā prakāśa*, “All glories to Haridāsa who revealed the glories of chanting



the holy name.” Thereafter, Mahāprabhu bade farewell to all the devotees, and He Himself, with mixed feelings of happiness and distress, took rest. The pastime concludes with the *phala sruti verse*.

*ei ta' kahilun, haridāsera vijaya
yāhāra śravaṇe kṛṣṇe dṛḍha-bhakti haya*

Thus I have spoken about the victorious passing away of Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Anyone who hears this narration will certainly fix his mind firmly in devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. (Cc. 3.11.16-101)

VI. The Toothbrush Lila

How did the unique *bakula* tree in the courtyard become known as the Siddha-bakula tree? Every morning the *pujaris* offer three twigs of a *kumbhātuā* tree as toothbrushes (*danta-kaṣṭham*) to Jagannatha Swami, Baladeva and Subhadra. One day before the offering, a twig was missing so the *pujari* substituted a twig from a *bakula* tree to use as a toothbrush. That *bakula* twig was given to Mahāprabhu as *maha-prasadam*.

Gaurāṅga came to see Haridāsa and planted the *maha-prasadi bakula* toothbrush in the garden. Soon the tree grew up luxuriantly and provided soothing shade to everyone. Haridāsa used to perform his *bhajana* under this tree.

After the departure of Haridāsa Thākura, a devotee named Srīla Jagannatha Gosvami used to perform *bhajana* here. One day the king's officers came to cut down the *bakula* tree which was stout and straight; ideal for making the wheels for Jagannatha's chariot. Jagannatha Gosvami told them about the supreme sanctity of the *bakula* tree, which was planted by Mahāprabhu and used as the *bhajana sthali* of the revered *namācārya* Thākura Haridāsa. When the king's officers returned the next day to take the tree, they observed a miracle. Overnight, the main trunk of the *bakula* tree had become petrified; as hard as rock. The rest of the tree was completely hollow, bent over and winding here and there like a snake. It was of no use to them.

Unlike a normal living tree, this phenomenal *bakula* tree has no middle portion; it only has outer bark. According to botanical principles the tree should be dead, yet it is thriving beautifully. Any person or even an object like a *bakula* twig that is intimately connected with Lord Jagannatha, Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu and the *namācārya* Haridāsa Thākura will surely attain perfection and perform miraculous deeds. The *bakula* tree had attained perfection, and from that day on it became famous as the Siddha-bakula tree.



Every year on Caitra Sankranti (April), which is the day that Mahaprabhu manifested the *bakula* tree, the locals celebrate a festival called Danta-kāṣṭhā-ropana Mahotsava, “the festival of planting the wooden toothbrush.” The devotees bathe the Siddha-bakula tree with 108 pots of water and sing many *bhajan*s glorifying Gauranga Mahaprabhu and His devotees like Thakura Haridasa.

Siddha Bakula ki jai! Namacarya Haridasa Thakura ki jai!

5. Gambhira—Rādhā Kanta Maṭha

Location—The Gambhira, the small room in which Sri Caitanyadeva lived during His eighteen years in Jagannatha Puri, is located on Svargadvara Road, the main street running by the Lion Gate toward the ocean. It is about a five minute walk from the Jagannatha temple. The sign above the entrance gate reads, “Sri Sri Radha Kanta Maṭha Gambhira.” This place is known as Sri Kasi Misra’s house or the Gambhira among Gaudiya Vaisnavas. Kasi Misra, the *raja-guru* of the Puri King Prataparudra, provided a room in his house for Mahaprabhu’s residence on the request of the king.

Main Deities

The temple appears immediately on the left as you enter the house. The center Kṛṣṇa Deity named Radha-Kanta is flanked by a beautifully dancing Lalita-sakhi and Srimati Rādhikā on His right and left. Sri Purusottama Deva, father of King Prataparudra, brought the Kṛṣṇa Deity of Radha-Kanta to Puri after conquering the king of Kancipura. For sometime, Radha-Kanta shared the altar with Lord Jagannatha before coming here to accept worship from Kasi Misra.

Later, when Gopala Guru Goswami took over Rādhā-Kanta Maṭha, he installed Deities of Lalita-sakhi, Srimati Rādhikā, a dancing Gauranga (beside Rādhā) and Sri Nityananda Prabhu. Jagannatha Swami is also worshiped in one corner of the altar. There is a small yellow *neem* wood *murti* of Gopala Guru facing east at the entrance of the Rādhā-Kanta Mandira. During the *bhoga* offerings to Rādhā-Kanta, the *pujari* places the Gopala Guru’s *murti* inside the Deity room with the Lord, and then meditates on Gopala Guru offering the *bhoga* to Rādhā-Kanta. You can read more about Gopala Guru Goswami under Pastimes part VII.

Gambhira Deities

The word *gambhira* means deep, inscrutable, hidden or secret. One has to pass through many doors and courtyards to reach this room. The room is “deep”



inside Kasi Misra's house. When Mahaprabhu stayed here the room had mud walls and a sunken floor, which has been raised in the course of time. By looking through a small barred window you can see a box holding the *kamandalu* (clay water pot), *paduka* (wooden shoes) and quilt of Gauranga Mahaprabhu. On a marble throne there is a Deity of Sri Caitanyadeva wrapped with a cloth so that only His beautiful face is visible.

On the wall above is a *terracotta* bas-relief of Gauranga Mahaprabhu flanked by Svarupa Damodara and Ramananda Raya (with a shaved head) on His right and left. Govinda Dasa stands below holding Mahaprabhu's *kamandalu*. There are dioramas upstairs depicting the pastimes of Sri Caitanyadeva.

Pastimes

I. Govinda's Massage

After *prasadam*, Gauranga laid down on the floor completely blocking the doorway of the Gambhira. Govinda, who regularly massaged Mahaprabhu's legs at this time, repeatedly requested the Lord to move slightly so he could enter the room and perform his service. Mahaprabhu replied that He did not have the strength to move, and that Govinda could decide what to do. Seeing that Gauranga was not responding, Govinda covered the Lord with a *cadar* and entered the room by crossing over Him.

As Govinda gave a very relaxing massage, Gauranga slept soundly for forty-five minutes. Upon awaking, Gauranga saw Govinda and said somewhat angrily, "Why didn't you go out and take your *prasadam*?"

Govinda replied, "You were lying down, blocking the door, and there was no way to go."

Mahaprabhu: "Why didn't you leave the room the same way that you entered?" Govinda did not answer but within his mind he thought, "My duty is to serve, even if I have to commit offenses or go to hell. I would not mind committing ten million offenses for the service of the Lord, but I greatly fear committing even a glimpse of an offense for my own self."

Srila Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvami summarizes the pastime thus: It was Govinda's practice to go take lunch when Gauranga was asleep. On that day, however, seeing Mahaprabhu's weariness, Govinda continued massaging His body. There was no way to leave. When he thought of crossing over Gauranga's body, he considered it a great offense. These are some of the finer points of the *bhakti-sastras*. Only by the mercy of Sri Caitanyadeva can one understand all these principles of devotional service. Mahaprabhu takes great delight in manifesting the exalted qualities of His devotees, and that is why He performed this pastime. (Cc. 3.10.82-101)



II. Gauranga's Adbhuta Vikāra Lila

While enduring the intense pangs of separation from Sri Kṛṣṇa, Mahāprabhu manifested the most uncommon transformations, *adbhuta vikāra*. These astonishing exhibitions of *mahabhava* displayed by the crest-jewel of all *sannyasis* were never ever seen before nor described in *sastra*. The following pastime depicts such transcendental ecstatic expressions.

Late one night around midnight, Rāmānanda Rāya laid Mahāprabhu on His bed in the Gambhira and then returned to his home. Svarupa Damodara and Govinda lay down in front of the door of the Gambhira. Mahāprabhu remained awake throughout the entire night, loudly chanting Kṛṣṇa's holy name (*ucca kari' kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana*). But after some time, Svarupa Damodara Gosvami could no longer hear Gauranga's chanting. Upon entering the room, He was surprised to see that Mahāprabhu had mysteriously escaped, passing through three locked doors.

In great anxiety, the devotees took lamps and wandered around Puri searching for Gauranga. Relieved, they found Mahāprabhu lying in a corner near the Lion Gate of the Jagannatha Mandira. Mahāprabhu was lying unconscious and not breathing. His body had become nine feet long. Each of Gaura's arms and legs had become five feet long; only loose skin connected the separated joints. Gauranga's body temperature, indicating life, was very low. All the joints in Gauranga's arms, legs, neck and waist were separated by at least six inches.

When the devotees noticed that Mahāprabhu's mouth was full of saliva and foam and His eyes turned upward, they all almost died. Yet somehow they managed to chant Kṛṣṇa's holy names in Mahāprabhu's ears. After a long time, Mahāprabhu suddenly arose with a loud shout of "Haribol!" As soon as Gauranga assumed external consciousness, all His joints contracted and His entire body returned to normal. Mahāprabhu was very much astonished to find Himself in front of the Simha-dvāra. Upon returning to the Gambhira, Gauranga said that He was completely unaware of all the events that had transpired. At that time, Mahāprabhu said, "All I can remember is that I saw My Kṛṣṇa, but only for an instant. Kṛṣṇa appeared before Me and then, like lightning, immediately disappeared." (Cc. 3.14.57-82)

III. Bleeding for Kṛṣṇa

One time in the Gambhira, Mahāprabhu stayed awake all night, chanting the holy names of the Lord, His mind fully overwhelmed by spiritual ecstasy. Burning in separation from Kṛṣṇa, Gauranga Mahāprabhu was so distraught that in great anxiety He stood up and rubbed His face against the walls



of the Gambhīrā. Due to being absorbed in *mahābhāva* (*bhāva-āveśe*), Mahāprabhu did not know that blood was oozing from the many injuries on His mouth, nose and cheeks. The whole night, Gaurāṅga rubbed His face against the walls making a peculiar sound, *goṅ-goṅ*. Svarūpa Dāmodara and Govinda entered the room, and became filled with sorrow upon seeing Gaurāṅga's face. "Why have you done this to Yourself?" they asked.

Sri Caitanyadeva replied, "I was in such anxiety that I wanted to get out quickly. However, while trying to find the door, I kept hitting the wall with My face and injuring it, but still I could not escape." (Cc. 3.19.57-65)

IV. The Pillow of Mahāprabhu (*pāda upādhāna lila*)

Due to the severe unsteadiness of His mind caused by *divyonmāda mahābhāva* (ecstatic transcendental madness), Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu spoke and acted in a most unusual fashion. In great anxiety over Mahāprabhu's condition, Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvami and all the devotees decided that Śāṅkara Paṇḍita should sleep with Mahāprabhu inside the Gambhīra in order to protect Him. Thus Śāṅkara Paṇḍita lay at the feet of Mahāprabhu, and the Lord placed His legs upon Śāṅkara's body. Śāṅkara became celebrated by the name Prabhu-pādopādhāna, the pillow of Mahāprabhu.

It was the nightly routine that Śāṅkara massaged Mahāprabhu's legs, but while massaging he would fall asleep and lie down without covering his body. Mahāprabhu would get up and wrap him with His own quilt. Śāṅkara Paṇḍita always fell asleep, but he quickly rose, sat up and again massaged Mahāprabhu. Out of fear of Śāṅkara, Mahāprabhu neither left the room nor rubbed His lotuslike face against the walls. (Cc.3.19.65-75)

While remembering this pastime, Srīla Raghunātha dasa Gosvami said, *gaurāṅgo hṛdaya udayan mām madayati*: "May that Gaurāṅga rise in my heart and make me mad with love." Although devotees can never experience the *divyonmāda mahābhāva* of Gaurāṅga, we can pray to Lord Caitanya and His pure devotees like Srīla Raghunātha dasa Gosvami to make us mad in pure love of Kṛṣṇa.

Gaurāṅga's pāda upādhāna lila ki jai! Sri Śāṅkara Paṇḍita ki jai!

V. Tug-of-War with the Senses

The ocean of ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa is very difficult to understand, even for demigods like Lord Brahmā. By enacting His pastimes, Gaurāṅga submerged Himself in that ocean, and His heart was absorbed in that love. Thus Gaurāṅga exhibited in various ways the exalted position of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Throughout the night and day, Mahāprabhu forgot Himself, being internally merged in ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. While passing His days in Puri,



Gauranga Mahaprabhu experienced three states of consciousness: 1. *ātma-sphūrṭi*—internally merged in ecstatic emotion; 2. *ardha-bāhya-sphūrṭi*—partial or half external consciousness; 3. *bāhya-sphūrṭi*—full external consciousness. Elsewhere, Srila Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī refers to these three states as *antar-daśā*, *bāhya-daśā* and *ardha-bāhya daśā*. (Cc. 3.18.77) As a potter’s wheel turns without the potter’s touch, Gauranga’s diurnal activities of bathing, eating and seeing Jagannātha Swami in the temple went on automatically.

One day, while gazing lovingly at Lord Jagannātha in the temple, Mahaprabhu saw Jagannātha appear directly as Vrajendranandana Sri Kṛṣṇa. With this one *sphūrṭi* (vision) of Sri Kṛṣṇa, each of Gauranga’s five senses immediately became forcefully attracted by one of the five attributes of Sri Kṛṣṇa. Just as in a tug-of-war, the mind of Mahaprabhu was being pulled in five directions by Kṛṣṇa’s five transcendental attributes. Thus Gauranga fell unconscious. The devotees took Mahaprabhu back to the Gambhira where He was attended by Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī and Rāmānanda Rāya. Wrapping His golden arms around their necks, Gaurahari lamented.

In *kṛṣṇa-līla*, when Rādhā was at Her home separated from Syama, Her mind was full of *utkaṅṭhita-bhāva*, intense feelings of eagerness and anxiety. Rādhikā became attracted to Her beloved Syama with all Her five senses simultaneously. At that time, Rādhikā spoke a verse to Viśākhā explaining the cause of Her great anxiety and restlessness. Absorbed in Rādhā’s *mahābhāva* and His mind burning (*manaḥ-tāpa*) in separation, Mahaprabhu looked deep into the eyes and heart of Ramananda Raya while reciting that verse in great lamentation.

saundaryāmṛta-sindhu-bhaṅga-lalanā-cittādri-samplāvakaḥ
kaṅṭhānandi-sanarma-ramya-vacanaḥ koṇḍu-śītāṅgakaḥ
saurabhyāmṛta-samplāvāṣṭa-jagat pīyūṣa-ramyādharakaḥ
śrī-gopendra-sutaḥ sa karṣati balāt pañcendriyaṅy āli me

“O *sakhi* Visakha! The prince of the cowherds inundates the mountain-like minds of damsels of Vraja with the waves of the nectarean ocean of His beauty. Syama gives joy to the ears with His pleasant, joking words and the touch of His body is cooler than millions and millions of moons. Syama inundates the world with His ambrosial fragrance and with the nectar of His pleasing lips. In this way, Syama forcibly attracts all My five senses!” (Govinda-līlāmṛta 8.3)

In His own wonderful words, Mahaprabhu elaborated on this verse as follows:



*kṛṣṇa-rūpa-śabda-sparśa, saurabhya-adhara-rasa,
yāra mādhubhya kahana nā yāya
dekhi' lobhe pañca-jana, eka aśva mora mana,
caḍi' pañca pāñca-dike dhāya*

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s beauty, the sound of His words and the vibration of Kṛṣṇa’s flute, His touch, His fragrance and the taste of Kṛṣṇa’s lips are full of an indescribable sweetness. When all these features attract My five senses at once, My senses all ride together on the single horse of My mind but want to go in five different directions.

“O *sakhi* Visakha! If you say, ‘Just try to control Your senses,’ what shall I say? I cannot become angry at My senses. Is it their fault? Kṛṣṇa’s form, sound, touch, fragrance and taste are by nature extremely attractive. These five features are attracting My senses, and each wants to drag My mind in a different direction. In this way the life of My mind is in great danger, just like a horse ridden in five directions at once. Thus I am also in danger of dying.

“The sweetness of Kṛṣṇa’s speaking, which is full of joking words, plays indescribable havoc with the hearts of all women. Kṛṣṇa’s words bind a woman’s ear to the qualities of their sweetness. Thus there is a tug-of-war, and the life of the ear departs.

“Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental body is more cooling than sandalwood pulp or millions upon millions of moons. It attracts the raised breasts of all women, which resemble high hills. Indeed, the transcendental body of Kṛṣṇa is very expert in attracting the minds of all women within the three worlds.

“The fragrance of Kṛṣṇa’s body is more maddening than the aroma of musk, and it surpasses the fragrance of the blue lotus flower. It enters the nostrils of all the women of the world and takes residence there, forcibly attracting them.

“When Kṛṣṇa’s nectar filled lips are combined with the fragrant camphor of His gentle smile, they attract the minds of all women and vanquish any other attractions. If the sweetness of Syama’s smile is unobtainable, their minds become greatly agitated. That sweetness is the only wealth of the damsels of Vraja.”

Speaking thus, Gaurahari grabbed the necks of Rāmānanda Rāya and Svarūpa Dāmodara and said: *kāhān karon, kāhān yāna, kāhān gele kṛṣṇa pāna, duñhe more kaha se upāya*, “What shall I do? Where shall I go? Where can I go to get Kṛṣṇa? Please, both of you, tell Me how I can find Him.” Thus suffering immensely in separation from Syama, Gaura Prabhu lamented day after day in the company of Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī and Rāmānanda Rāya. To pacify Gaurāṅga’s pangs of separation, Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī and Rāmānanda Rāya sang songs and recited verses



from Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura's *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta*, Vidyāpati's poems, and Jayadeva Gosvāmi's *Śrī Gīta-govinda*. Mahāprabhu felt blissful upon hearing these recitations. (Cc. 3.15.1-27)

VI. Gauranga Feels Kishori's Agony of Separation

When Uddhava visited Vraja he found Srimati Rādhikā sprawled in the dust, covered in tattered clothes, emaciated and barely breathing. Kishori was dying from the intense agony of separation from Syamasundara. During His *antya-līla* in the Gambhira, Mahāprabhu experienced the same severe pangs of separation from Kṛṣṇa because He was absorbed in *rādhā-bhāva*. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvami explains:

*rādhikāra bhāva-mūrti prabhura antara,
sei bhāve sukha-duḥkha uṭhe nirantara
śeṣa-lilāya prabhura kṛṣṇa-viraha-unmāda,
bhrama-maya ceṣṭā, āra pralāpa-maya vāda
rādhikāra bhāva yaiche uddhava-darśane,
sei bhāve matta prabhu rahe rātri-dine*

The heart of Mahāprabhu is the form of Śrī Rādhikā's emotions (*rādhā-bhāva*). Thus feelings of happiness and distress arise constantly therein. In the final pastimes, Mahāprabhu was obsessed with the madness of separation from Sri Kṛṣṇa. He acted in erroneous ways and talked deliriously. Just as Rādhikā went mad at the sight of Uddhava, so Mahāprabhu was obsessed day and night with same madness of separation from Sri Kṛṣṇa. (Cc. 1.4.106-8)

Burning in separation, Gauranga anxiously wailed, "Where is Kṛṣṇa?"

*kāhān mora prāṇa-nātha muralī-vadana,
kāhān karoṅ kāhān pān vrajendra-nandana
kāhāre kahiba kebā jāne mora duḥkha,
vrajendra-nandana vinu phāṭe mora buka*

"Where is My Prāṇanātha? Where is My Muralīvadana? What shall I do now? Where should I go to find Vrajendranandana? To whom should I speak? Who can understand My disappointment? Without Vrajendranandana—My heart is broken." (Cc. 2.15.15-16)

Although Sri Caitanyadeva is Sri Kṛṣṇa Himself, under the influence of *rādhā-bhāva* He was always wailing for Syama while crashing into the walls of the Gambhira. Lalita and Visakha, Rādhikā's two most confidential friends, came as Svarupa Damodara Gosvami and Ramananda Raya to comfort Gauranga in the Gambhira. Although they regularly recited verses from



Gita Govinda, Srimad Bhagavatam and the poems of Candidasa and Vidyapati, Mahaprabhu would be oblivious and just keep moaning, “Where is My Syama? Where is My Syama?” Tossed by the high waves of Rādhā’s anguish, Sri Caitanyadeva stayed awake all night. In delirium, Mahaprabhu uttered the same words that Srimati Rādhikā spoke in separation from Kṛṣṇa in Vrndavana:

*kva nanda-kula-candramāḥ kva śikhi-candrakālāṅkṛtiḥ
kva mandra-muralī-ravaḥ kva nu surendra-ñila-dyutiḥ
kva rāsa-rasa-tāṇḍavī kva sakhi jīva-rakṣausadhīr
nidhir mama suhṛt-tamaḥ kva bata hanta hā dhig vidhim*

“My dear friend, where is Kṛṣṇa, who is like the moon rising from the ocean of Mahārāja Nanda’s dynasty? Where is Kṛṣṇa, His head decorated with a peacock feather? Where is He? Where is Kṛṣṇa, whose flute produces such a deep sound? Oh, where is Kṛṣṇa, whose bodily luster is like the luster of the blue *indranīla* jewel? Where is Kṛṣṇa, who is so expert in *rāsa* dancing? Oh, where is He, who can save My life? Kindly tell Me where to find Kṛṣṇa, the treasure of My life and best of My friends. Feeling separation from Syama, I hereby condemn Providence, the shaper of My destiny.” (Cc. 3.19.35)

During His last twelve years (which astrologers say is one *yuga* for humans), Mahaprabhu did not talk to anyone but His intimates like Svarupa Damodara and Ramananda Raya. Nor did Mahaprabhu move from the Gambhira. Day and night, Gaura only wept, “Where is Kṛṣṇa?” At this time, Sri Caitanyadeva displayed unprecedented symptoms of divine love madness.

Absorbed in similar emotions, the six Gosvamis gave up eating and sleeping as they wandered about Vrndavana crying, *he rādhe vraja-devike ca lalite he nanda-sūno kutaḥ*, “O Radha! O Queen of Vraja! O Lalitā! O son of Nanda Mahārāja! Where are you all now?” Without seeing Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami saw Govardhana Hill as a huge python coming to swallow him and Rādhā Kunda as a tiger coming to devour him. Where can you find such an intense mood of *bhajana* today? Only by the mercy of Sri Guru and Gauranga can a *sadhaka* reach the stage where he actually feels deep separation from Sri Kṛṣṇa. When will we feel so vacant and empty that we forget everything else and just cry day and night for Kṛṣṇa? While remembering Mahaprabhu here at the Gambhira and sincerely praying, we hope to one day attain such a pure state of loving attachment.

Gaurahari Viraha Prema Lila ki jai!



VII. Gauranga's Pastimes with Gopala Guru

A. Gopala Becomes a Guru

As a young boy, Gopala came to the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu at the Gambhira and served the Lord along with Govinda dasa. After sometime, Sri Vakresvara Pandita, an eternal associate of Mahaprabhu, trained and initiated Gopala. Lord Gauranga loved Gopala and often joked with him.

There is a story behind the name Gopala Guru. When Gopala was a young boy, he saw a devotee biting his tongue while he was passing urine. Curious, Gopala asked why he was doing that. The devotee replied, "My habit is to always chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, but I fear that it may be offensive to chant while passing urine."

Gopala responded, "There are no hard and fast rules for chanting Kṛṣṇa's holy name. You can chant anywhere at anytime without fear. Besides death can come at any time, so we should always be absorbed in *nama-sankirtana*. Mahaprabhu teaches us to chant the holy names constantly, *kirtanyiya sada hari*."

When Mahaprabhu heard about how nicely Gopala had preached, He started calling him Gopala Guru. The name stuck and henceforward all the devotees called him Gopala Guru.

B. Gauranga Saves Gopala

One day, Srila Abhirama Thakura, who is Sridama in *kṛṣṇa-lila*, came to Puri to test the purity of Gopala Guru. Abhirama Thakura had a special power to expose a pseudo devotee or a Deity if it was not authentic. He simply offered obeisances, either to a devotee or a Deity, and if it was not genuine it would immediately crack into pieces. Greatly concerned for Gopala's welfare, the devotees sought Mahaprabhu's help.

Mahaprabhu solaced the devotees, saying, "I will mark Gopala's forehead with the imprint of My feet as a *tilaka* mark, and this will protect him from all danger." To this day, the members of the Gopala Guru-sampradaya use *tilaka* in the shape of Hari's lotus feet.

C. Sri Gopala Guru Gosvami's Samadhi Pastimes

Two weeks after Gopala Guru disappeared in Jagannatha Puri, the devotees in Vrndavana heard the news and honored him with a second disappearance ceremony in the Radha-Kanta Mandira in the Dhira-samira area of Vrndavana. Suddenly, in the middle of the function, 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-Govinda in Vamsivata.”

Meanwhile, Dhyana-candra Gosvami, the disciple of Gopala Guru and the new *mahanta* of the Radha-Kanta Mandira in Puri, was facing a problem with the king who wanted to throw him out and take over the temple. He was also suffering immensely in the absence of his beloved *gurudeva*. However, when he heard the fantastic news about his guru's reappearance in Vrndavana, Dhyana-candra immediately left Puri. Arriving in Vrndavana, Dhyana-candra met his *guru* sitting under the *bakula* tree, and then begged him to return to Puri to solve the problem.

Gopala Guru pacified his disciple saying, “I cannot leave Vraja, but I will appear in the *neem* tree standing in the courtyard of the Radha-Kanta Maṭha in Puri. Prepare a *murti* of me from this tree and worship me. By this you will no longer feel separation from me. I will also meet the king and make sure he provides everything you need to peacefully worship Rādhā-Kanta.”

Ṭhākura-ji Rādhā Kanta ki jai! Rasaraja Mahabhava Mahaprabhu ki jai! Sri Gopala Guru ki jai!

6. Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya's Home (Ganga Mata Maṭha)

Location—Coming out of the Gambhira Radha-kanta Maṭha, turn right on Svargadvara Road, walk thirty meters and turn left on the first street you see. Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya's home is just opposite a large tank of water called Sweta-ganga on your right.

However, if you are coming from the Jagannatha Mandira, you should turn right out of the Simha-dvara (main gate) and follow the road toward the ocean (Svargadvara) for ½ kilometer. Keep walking straight past the first road to the right, which goes around the temple, and on for another 100 meters. Then turn right on the small lane that leads to the Sweta-ganga bathing tank. Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya's home is just opposite on the left, but it is commonly known as the Ganga Mata Maṭha.

Main Deities

The main Deities are Radha Rasika Raya (Raja) installed by Ganga Mata Gosvamini, and Rādhā Damodara and a *salagrama-sila* worshiped by Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. The *pujari* claims that Sarvabhauma installed Rasika Raja and that Ganga Mata installed Damodara and the *salagrama*. There are also Deities of Rādhā Mohana Raya installed by Bhagavan Dasa,



and Sri Vinoda Raya, Sri Syama Raya, Lalita-sakhi and Gauranga installed by Sri Madhusudana.

Across the courtyard opposite the Deities is the *asana* where Sri Caitanyadeva sat, a bas-relief on the wall of Sad-bhuja and Sarvabhauma's black wooden shoes. Just outside this room is a small square hole in the ground said to be a tunnel that Mahaprabhu used to go to the Jagannatha's temple.

Pastimes

I. Gauranga's First Visit

When Sri Caitanyadeva first came to Puri, He became ecstatic upon seeing the lotus face of Jagannatha Swami. Being extremely unsteady and overwhelmed in *prema*, Mahaprabhu ran swiftly to embrace Lord Jagannatha but He fainted on the temple floor. Sarvabhauma forbade the incensed temple guard from beating Gauranga, and then took Mahaprabhu to his residence wherein the Lord remained unconscious for nine hours.

Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya was very surprised to see the personal beauty of Gauranga, as well as the spiritual transformations wrought on Gaura's body due to *prema*. Sarvabhauma became very anxious, however, when he did not notice any vital signs in Mahaprabhu's body besides a faint breath. Observing in the body of Mahaprabhu the divine symptoms of ecstatic *adhirūḍha-bhāva*, which only appear in the eternal associates of Sri Kṛṣṇa, Sarvabhauma became completely amazed.

Sri Nityananda Prabhu, Mukunda, Jagadananda and Damodara Pandita, who were traveling with Gauranga, arrived at Sarvabhauma's house and saw the condition of Mahaprabhu. They all loudly chanted Kṛṣṇa's holy names and soon Lord Gauranga regained consciousness. (Cc. 2.6.1-37)

II. Mahaprabhu's First Jagannatha Maha Prasadam

After Mahaprabhu returned to external consciousness, Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya arranged sumptuous Jagannatha *maha-prasadam* for Mahaprabhu and all His associates in his house. Although Gauranga was served special rice and first-class vegetables on golden plates, He asked Sarvabhauma to give Him boiled vegetables and serve the cakes and condensed-milk preparations to all the devotees.

Folding his hands, Sarvabhauma said, "Today, all of you please try to taste the *maha-prasadam* just as Lord Jagannātha accepted it." After saying this, he made Gauranga and all the devotees eat the various cakes and condensed-milk preparations. After feeding them, he offered them water to wash their hands, feet and mouths. (Cc. 2.6.38-46)



III. There Are No Rules for Eating

One day just before sunrise, Gaurāṅga brought Jagannātha *maha-prasadam* to Sarvabhauma. Mahāprabhu was very pleased to hear Sarvabhauma chanting “*Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa*” as he rose from bed. Although the Bhaṭṭācārya had not even cleaned his teeth, bathed or chanted his morning *gayatri*, he immediately accepted the *maha-prasadam* in great bliss while reciting two verses from *Padma Purana*:

*śuṣkaṁ paryuṣitaṁ vāpi, nītaṁ vā dūra-deśataḥ
prāpti-mātreṇa bhoktavyaṁ, nātra kāla-vicāraṇā
na deśa-niyamas tatra, na kāla-niyamas tathā
prāptam annaṁ drutaṁ śiṣṭair, bhoktavyaṁ harir abravīt*

“One should eat the *mahā-prasādam* of the Lord immediately upon receiving it, even though it is dried up, stale or brought from a distant country. One should consider neither time nor place.

“*Kṛṣṇa prasadam* is to be eaten by gentlemen as soon as it is received; there should be no hesitation. There are no regulative principles concerning time and place. This is the order of Lord Hari.”

Mahāprabhu was happy to see that Sarvabhauma had acquired full faith in *maha-prasadam* (*mahā-prasāde viśvāsa*), and had thus transcended all attachments to mundane rules regarding time, place and cleanliness. In great ecstatic love, Gaurāṅga embraced Sarvabhauma and together they danced in euphoria. (Cc. 2.6.219-235)

Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya ki jai! Jagannātha Maha-prasada ki jai!

IV. Sad Bhujā Darsana and the Pearl Necklace Verses

One day Mahāprabhu sat with Sārvabhauma in a secluded place within his home and revealed His heart, saying, “Although I have come to Purī to see Jagannātha Swami, My main concern was to meet you. Lord Jagannātha is not going to speak with Me, but you can sever the bonds of My material attachments. Please advise and guide Me in every way.”

Quoting from the *Srimad Bhagavatam* and other Vedic *sastra*, Sarvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya spoke at length about the purpose of life, the *sannyasa asrama*, and how Mahāprabhu had prematurely taken to the renounced order. Sri Caitanyadeva was very pleased to hear his explanations of the science of devotional service.

Then Mahāprabhu said, “O respected Sārvabhauma, please do not consider Me to be a *sannyāsī*. I have shaved My head, given up My *brahmin* thread and left My home and family only because the pangs of separation from My beloved *Kṛṣṇa* were absolutely unbearable. Therefore do not look upon Me as a *sannyāsī*, but please give Me your mercy so that I can develop attachment for *Kṛṣṇa*.”



Gauranga then asked Sarvabhauma to explain the *ātmārāma* verse of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*.

*ātmārāmās ca munayo, nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaiktukīm bhaktim, ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ*

“All different varieties of *ātmārāmas* (those who take pleasure in *ātmā*, or spirit soul), especially those established on the path of self-realization, though freed from all kinds of material bondage, desire to render unalloyed devotional service to the Personality of Godhead. This means that Sri Kṛṣṇa possesses transcendental qualities and therefore can attract everyone, including liberated souls.” (SB1.7.10)

By the mercy of Mahaprabhu, Sārvabhauma began his dissertation in the presence of Gaurasundara, the master of Goddess Sarasvatī. Sārvabhauma said, “The verse means that devotion to Sri Kṛṣṇa’s feet is the root of all truth. Fully realized souls who are free from all hankerings and bindings surrender to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and serve the Lord with devotion. Liberated souls sing the glories of Kṛṣṇa’s qualities and names, while those who disrespect them perish.”

Rapt in his discourse, Sarvabhauma presented thirteen different expositions on the same verse, and finally fell silent saying, “I am unable to speak further on this subject.”

Gently smiling, Gauracandra said, “Each one of your delineations is correct. Now hear My explanations and decide if they are accurate or not.” Lord Gauranga presented many completely original and unprecedented annotations. Sārvabhauma succumbed to a state of shock, thinking, “Is He the Supreme Lord Himself?”

After explaining the *ātmārāma* verse, Gauranga Mahaprabhu roared like thunder and displayed His most wonderful six-armed form (*ṣaḍ-bhuja*). The six-armed form featured Sri Kṛṣṇa playing flute with two hands, Sri Rama holding bow and arrows and Sri Caitanyadeva holding a *danda* and *kamandalu*. Mahaprabhu said, “Sārvabhauma, now what do you say. Am I not qualified to be a *sannyāsī*? I have come here only for your sake. You have passed many lifetimes trying to attain love for Me. Therefore, I am revealing Myself to you.”

Beholding that unprecedented six-armed form of Gauranga, more dazzling than a million suns, Sarvabhauma swooned in unrestrained ecstasy. Gauracandra continued to roar loudly while exhibiting His six-armed form. Mahaprabhu touched Sarvabhauma’s head and said, “Arise.” Gauranga’s divine touch revived Sārvabhauma, yet he remained speechless due to the depth of his rapture. Sri Gaurasundara, the ocean of munificence,



placed His lotus feet on Sārvabhauma's chest. Sārvabhauma, finding the most precious treasure within easy reach, tightly clasped Gaura's lotus feet. With pure joy gushing in his heart, Sārvabhauma said, "Today I have captured the thief who stole my heart."

Words now poured out of Sārvabhauma's mouth as He praised Sri Caitanyadeva with many excellent verses; two of which are most important. These two verses will always declare Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya's name and fame as loudly as a pounding drum; for they have become pearl necklaces around the necks of all devotees (*bhakta-kaṅṭhe ratna-hāra*):

*vairāgya-vidyā-nija-bhakti-yoga-
śikṣārtham ekaḥ puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ
śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-śarīra-dhārī
kṛpāmbudhir yas tam ahaṁ prapadye*

"Let me take shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who has descended in the form of Sri Kṛṣṇa Caitanya to teach us real knowledge, His devotional service and detachment from whatever does not foster Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Gaurāṅga has descended because He is an ocean of transcendental mercy. Let me surrender unto Sri Caitanyadeva's lotus feet." (Cb. and Cc. 2.6.254)

*kālān naṣṭam bhakti-yogaṁ nijam yaḥ
prāduṣkartuṁ kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmā
āvīrbhūtas tasya pādāravinde
gāḍham gāḍham liyatām citta-bhrūgaḥ*

"Let my consciousness, which is like a honeybee, take shelter of the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who has just now appeared as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach the ancient system of devotional service to Himself. This system had almost been lost due to the influence of time." (CB and Cc. 2.6.254)

After hearing these verses, Mahāprabhu said, "You have greatly pleased Me with your explanations on devotional service. Do not tell anyone about the form I have manifested before you. At least as long as I am present on this earth, I forbid you to reveal it to anyone. Nityānanda is very close to Me, in fact He is My second body. Serve His lotus feet with deep devotion. Nitai's character and identity are extremely esoteric subjects; only when I disclose the truth can anyone know about them."

After confiding in Sārvabhauma, Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu concealed His *ṣaḍ-bhuja* form. One will surely attain Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa by hearing



this deeply confidential *kṛṣṇa-kathā*. Anyone who hears the qualities and transcendental pastimes of Sri Caitanyadeva will cross the ocean of material existence and attain Mahaprabhu's personal abode. In this way, Gauranga Mahaprabhu liberated Sārvabhauma and enjoyed His *sankīrtana* pastimes in Nīlācala. (Cb. 3.3.11-156)

Sad-bhuja Mahaprabhu ki jai! Sri Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya ki jai!

V. A Queen Becomes a Vairagi Vaisnavi

Why is the house of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya known today as the Ganga Mata Maṭha? About two or three generations after Sri Caitanyadeva, a child named Saci-devi appeared as the only issue of King Naresh Narayana of Bangladesh. Saci showed unalloyed devotion to Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa from her childhood. Thus she refused to marry on account of her genuine attachment to the Lord. After her father's demise, Saci ruled the kingdom out of duty, but then soon renounced it to find a *guru*.

Saci moved to Vṛndāvana, met the eminent Vaisnava scholar Sri Haridasa Pandita and asked for *dikṣa*. But Sri Haridasa Pandita refused upon hearing that Śacī hailed from a royal family. Haridasa thought that Saci could not possibly endure the austere life in Vrndavana, so he asked her to return home. The spiritual master examined the disciple's determination to receive the mercy. Saci responded courageously; exhibiting extreme detachment while performing intense *bhajana* to Govindaji. Although Saci became frail from undereating, she always slept on the Yamuna's sandy bank, and rose before sunrise to clean Govindaji's temple. Daily she attended Govindaji's *mangala arotika*, heard *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, and circumambulated Radha-Kṛṣṇa's *līlā-sthalis* like Vamsivata, Seva Kunja, Nidhuvana and the Rasa Mandala.

Saci attracted her *guru's* heart by her steady devotion. To test her, Haridasa ordered her to do *madhukari* (begging door to door for food). Without any hesitation or shyness, Saci immediately obeyed. On the pretext of doing *madhukari*, however, Saci actually searched for Syama in every lane and *kunja*. Sri Haridasa Pandita, pleased with her determination, austerity and submission, initiated her with the Gopala-mantra on Akṣaya-tṛtīyā.

Taking her *guru's* suggestion, Saci went to Radha-kunda to associate with Lakṣmipriya dasi, a dear disciple of Sri Haridasa who daily chanted 192 rounds of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *maha-mantra*. Everyday Lakṣmi and Saci circumambulated Govardhana Hill and worshiped Radha-Govinda together. On her *guru's* order, Saci later went to Jagannatha Puri to restore the house of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. Everyday she lectured on *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Her classes became popular, attracting eager listeners from miles around. Many people, including kings and *brahmins* took initiation from Saci-devi.



VI. The Ganga Comes to Puri

The day before Gaṅgā-Sāgara-melā (a spiritual gathering on an island where the Gaṅgā River meets the sea in Bengal) Saci-devi desired to bathe there. Her desire to attend this auspicious, function created a problem, however, because Saci's *guru* had ordered not to leave Sri Ksetra Dhama. She also had no one to care for her Deities in her absence. That night Jagannatha Swami spoke in her dream, "You need not travel so far to bathe in the Ganga. Tomorrow you can just walk across the street and take a dip in the Sweta Ganga bathing tank. Ganga Devi herself will come there to give you *darsana*, and thus you can fulfil your desire to bathe in the Gaṅgā."

Upon awaking, Saci did not inform anyone about her astonishing dream. At midnight, Saci bathed alone in Sweta Ganga. Upon entering the pond, a strong current suddenly and mysteriously transported Saci to a faraway place where thousands of pilgrims were bathing in the Gaṅgā. A few seconds later, Saci was carried by the turbulent waters directly inside Jagannatha's temple.

Hearing some disturbance inside, the guards opened the temple door and found Saci-devi standing before Jagannatha's altar. How did she get there in the middle of the night? The *pāṇḍās* hurried to the temple and then humiliated Saci-devi calling her a thief. They told her that she must have hidden inside the temple before closing time with the intention of stealing Jagannatha's golden ornaments. But her attempt had failed and now Jagannatha had exposed her.

Jagannatha Swami, however, does not tolerate offenses to His pure devotees. Later that night in a dream, Jagannatha told the king, "My dear devotee Saci-devi wanted to bathe in the Gaṅgā at Gaṅgā-sāgara-tīrtha. Because the Gaṅgā comes from My lotus feet, when Saci entered Sweta Ganga she reached My lotus feet. The *pāṇḍās*, who are under your control, abused her. Now you and all the *pāṇḍās* should beg her forgiveness and take initiation from her. Otherwise, I will no longer accept any *seva* from the *pāṇḍās* and you will experience a dire result."

Saci-devi mercifully forgave them and then initiated King Sri Mukunda Deva, but not the *pāṇḍās*, whom she considered to be exalted souls worthy of her worship. Lord Jagannatha inspired the king to donate Sarvabhauma's house to Saci-devi, which she gratefully accepted to fulfill the order of her *guru*. The king also wanted to donate lots of property as *guru-dakṣiṇā*, but Saci declined. When the king insisted, Saci-devi agreed to daily accept Jagannatha *maha-prasadam* for Vaisnava *seva*. Every afternoon, the king sent Saci two pots of rice, one pot of *sabji*, some *prasadi* cloth and 160 *paisa*. After this wonderful pastime, Saci-devi became known all over



Jagannatha Puri as Gaṅgā Mātā Gosvāminī (not the daughter of Nityananda).
Jagannatha Swami ki jai! Gaṅgā Mātā Gosvāminī ki jai! Ganga Mata ki jai!

VII. Radha Rasika Raya Come to Puri

There is a beautiful pastime about the Deities of Radha Rasika Raya who grace the main altar in Sarvabhauma's house. In Jaipur, Rajasthan, Pandita Candra Sharma once worshiped these gorgeous Deities of Rādhā Rasika Raya. One night, Jagannatha Swami appeared in the Pandita's dream saying, "You should immediately give your Deities to Ganga Mata in Puri, otherwise your life will become inauspicious."

The next day, Pandita Sharma packed the Deities and traveled to Nilacala Dhama. When he offered his Deities to Ganga Mata, she refused saying, "These Deities should be opulently worshiped by a king. I am just a beggar living by *madhukari*. How can I properly serve them?" Although Ganga Mata declined his offer, Pandita Sharma was determined to fulfill Jagannatha Swami's order.

Secretly, without anyone's notice, Pandita Sharma gently placed his beloved Deities in the *tulasi* garden of Ganga Mata's Maṭha and then quickly left. Rasika Raya appeared that night in Ganga Mata's dream, saying, "O Mataji! Panditji has left Me in your *tulasi* garden. I have personally come here to accept service from you." Startled, Ganga Mata awoke and in great bliss brought Radha Rasika Raya from the garden and worshiped Them with pure love and devotion. After serving the Lord for 120 years, Ganga Mata left this world in 1771 a.d. on Asvina Sukla Ekadasi amidst an uproarious *kirtana* sung by her disciples.

Rādhā Rasika Raya ki jai! Ganga Mata Gosvāminī ki jai!

7. Sweta Ganga Bathing Tank

Location—This large sacred bathing tank is located just opposite Ganga Mata Maṭha. If you are coming from the Lion Gate of Jagannatha Mandira, then walk south on Svargadvara road toward the ocean. It is the first right turn after the road going around the Jagannatha Mandira.

Purivasis say that Ganga-devi personally resides here in the form of Sweta Ganga so that she can regularly take *darsana* and serve Jagannatha Swami. Being non-different from the Ganga, Sweta Ganga never becomes dry. Even if all the water is pumped out for some reason, it automatically refills. Remarkably, its water level rises or falls at the same rate as the Ganga River. Sweta Ganga is one of the Panca Mukti Tirthas of Sri Ksetra Dhama. After cremating the deceased, Purivasis bathe here and perform the *śrāddha* ceremony.



Main Deities

You should bathe here first, and then enter the small temple at the bottom of the stairs on the left side from the door nearest the bathing tank. Immediately on your right is a single Deity of the Adi-avatara Matsya Narayana (aka Matsya Madhava). Continue walking into the inner room and you will see a large black Deity of King Sweta Madhava. On his right side is another black Deity of Sweta Madhava, four-armed Lord Narayana. *Sastra* says that if one bathes here and takes *darsana* of Sweta Madhava and Matsya Madhava, he will be freed of all sins, especially the offense of stepping over Jagannatha *maha-prasadam*.

Pastimes

I. The Lord Honors His Devotee

The *Skanda Purana* (Utkala Khanda) tells the story of a great *kṛṣṇa-bhakta* named King Sweta from Treta-yuga. One morning the king saw thousands of celestials offering lavish items to Lord Jagannatha. At that time, the king thought, "What can I, a mere mortal, offer to my Lord that will match these magnificent gifts from the demigods?" By chance, just as he left the temple, the king saw Laksmi-devi serving Jagannatha Swami the food that he had earlier prepared for the Lord's pleasure. The king felt supreme satisfaction seeing Lord Jagannatha thoroughly relishing each and every item.

King Sweta faithfully worshiped Lord Jagannatha for his whole life. Pleased with his sincere service, Jagannatha Swami gave him a boon that in the future he would be known as Sweta Madhava and worshiped alongside the Lord. To show the world how dear His devotee is, Jagannatha put King Sweta's name before His own. Henceforth the king became known and worshiped as King Sweta Madhava.

King Sweta Madhava ki jai! Jagannatha Swami ki jai!

II. Non-different from the Ganga

Once a *pujari* named Talachu Mahāpatra expressed to Jagannatha Swami his desire to bathe in the Ganga at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh; even though he could not travel due to poor health. One day, Talachu dipped into Sweta Ganga and then found himself a moment later bathing in the Ganga River in Varanasi along with many pilgrims. Overwhelmed in joy, Talachu offered obeisances to mother Ganga and took another dip. Coming back to Sweta Ganga, Talachu realized that Jagannatha Swami had kindly fulfilled his desire.

Jagannatha Swami ki jai! Ma Ganga ki jai!



III. The Smarta Gets Smart

There is another story illustrating Sweta Ganga's oneness with the Ganga River. Once, a *smarta-brahmin* named Mahiratha Sharma came to Sweta Ganga to offer *pitṛ-tarpaṇa*, oblations to the forefathers. After the ceremony, Ganga-devi personally appeared before him, commanding him to abandon his *smarta* ways and take Vaisnava *dikṣa* from Ganga Mata Gosvami. Mahiratha Sharma received the Gopala-mantra and then lived on the beach worshiping Sri Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Within a short time, Sharmaji attained perfection and preached *śuddha-bhakti* within Orissa. *Sweta Ganga ki jai! Ma Ganga ki jai!*

8. Paramananda Puri Well (*kuā*)

Location—This place, located behind the west gate of the Jagannatha Mandira on Lokanatha Road, was formerly the Paramananda Puri Maṭha, but now it is a policemen's residence called Baseli-sahi Out Post. The celebrated well is on the right side of the entrance gate of this compound near the boundary wall. You can collect some water by using the rope and bucket supplied by the Out Post. Be careful not to lose the bucket when tying it and dropping it into the well. A small donation to the local residents will maintain friendly feelings.

Pastimes

I. The Glories of Sri Paramananda Puri

Sri Paramananda Puri, an eternal associate of Mahaprabhu, serves in *kṛṣṇa-līla* as Uddhava Mahāśaya. As Uddhava is an elder, respected associate, Paramananda Puri is also elder to and respected by Mahaprabhu because he was initiated by Madhavendra Puri, the *guru* of Gauranga's *guru*, Isvara Puri. Observing the etiquette of honoring seniors, Mahaprabhu Himself offered garlands and sandalwood paste to Paramānanda Puri and Brahmananda Bharati before anyone else during the Ratha-yatra festival.

Srila Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvami describes Paramānanda Puri as one of the nine *sannyasi* roots which came out of the trunk of the desire tree of devotion. The first sprout of this desire tree was Madhavendra Puri; its well-nourished second sprout was Isvara Puri; its trunk was Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself. The entire tree remained stable sitting on nine *sannyasi* roots: Paramānanda Puri, Keshava Bharati, Brahmananda Puri, Brahmananda Bharati, Vishnu Puri, Keshava Puri, Kṛṣṇānanda Puri, Nrsiṅha Tirtha and Sukhānanda Puri. Of these ten, Paramānanda Puri is the central root. The great mystery here is that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu could both be the trunk of the tree and the gardener who takes care of it. Paramananda Puri played



in many Puri pastimes with Gauranga, including Gundica-marjana, Sarvabhauma's *maha-prasadam utsava*, Narendra Sarovara *jala-keli* and Haridasa Thakura's *tirobhava*.

II. The Meeting of Mahaprabhu and Paramananda

One day, Paramananda returned to Jagannatha Puri after an extended pilgrimage. Seeing His dear devotee coming from a distance, Gauranga quickly stood up to show respect. Raising His golden arms, Mahaprabhu exclaimed, "Hari! Hari! How fortunate I am to behold Paramananda Puri! My birth in this world is fruitful and My taking *sannyasa* has become a success."

Gauranga fully delighted in this delectable moment of meeting His dear devotee after a long separation. Gaura rushed to embrace His beloved servant, held him firmly to His bosom and sprinkled him with tears of divine rapture. Gazing upon the effulgent beatific face of his dear friend, Paramananda forgot everything as he plunged in an ocean of indescribable bliss. With great pleasure Mahaprabhu kept him nearby as an intimate associate. Paramananda Puri daily served Gauranga's lotus feet with ever-increasing joy. (Cb. 3.3.167-177)

Once in great exhilaration, Gauranga said, "I live in this world only because I am bound by Śrī Purī Gosvāmī's love. I am his property. If he wants to sell Me, then he can do so. Anyone who sees Purī Gosvāmī even once will become qualified to attain *sri-kṛṣṇa-prema*." (Cb. 3.3.255-257)

III. The Lord Hears Gauranga's Prayers

One day Gauranga Mahaprabhu came here and sat near Paramananda Puri to discuss the confidential pastimes of Radha-Madhava. Although Mahaprabhu knew that the water in Paramananda's well was undrinkable, nevertheless, he inquired, "Puriji, how do you find the water in your well?"

Paramananda Puri replied, "This well is very bad. The water tastes horrible and it's full of mud."

Gauranga compassionately responded, "Alas! Alas! It seems that Jagannatha Swami is being rather miserly. Actually, anyone who touches the water of your well becomes free of all sins. It seems Jagannatha has made the water muddy and undrinkable."

Then Mahaprabhu stood up, raised both arms and said, "O Jagannatha Prabhu, please grant this boon to Me. Please order the Bhogavatī Gaṅgā to flow from Pātālaloka into this well."

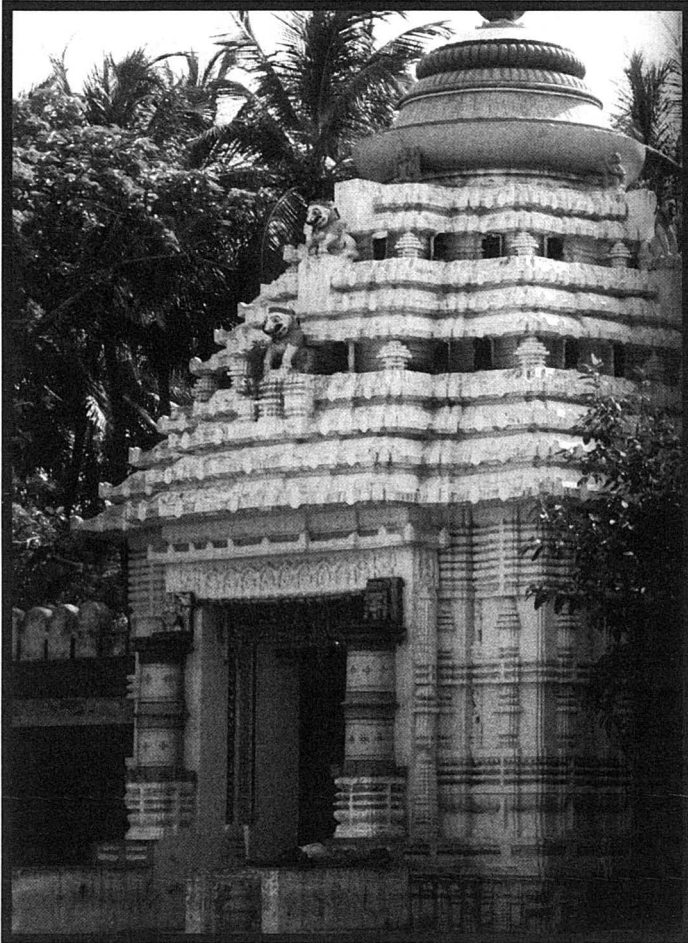
While all the devotees slept, Ma Ganga, honored to execute the Lord's will, filled the well with her perfectly clear, sweet water.



When the devotees came the next day, they witnessed a miracle; the well water had turned crystal clear. Seeing this, Paramānanda Purī fainted in joy. All the devotees then circumambulated the well, chanting, “Ma Ganga has come! Ma Ganga has come!”

Hearing the news, Gauranga quickly came there and rejoiced over the sight of the fresh clean water. At that time, Gauranga said, “Listen My dear devotees! Whoever drinks this water or bathes in it will definitely attain unalloyed, pure devotion to Sri Kṛṣṇa.” Gauranga then happily drank and bathed in the splendid transcendental water of Paramānanda Purī’s well. (Cb. 3.3.232-254)

*Kṛpa Sagara Jagannatha Swami ki jai! Bhakta Vatsala Gauranga ki jai!
Paramananda Puri ki jai! Ma Ganga ki jai!*



Day Trip Two

Hiring an auto *rickshaw*, one should visit the places in the order as they are numbered below. Your first stop is the *samadhi* of Srila Haridasa Thakura. Then you will see place number two which is ISKCON Bhakti Kuti, the former *bhajana sthali* of Srila Thakura Bhaktivinoda; then place number three, and so on to the last and final stop which is number seven, the Gundica Mandira. The sequence of sacred spots to visit today is as follows:

1. Haridasa Thakura's Samadhi
2. ISKCON Bhakti Kuti
3. Sātāsana Bhajana Sthali Area
4. Indradyumna Sarovara
5. Mahaprabhu Viśrāma-sthāna
6. Nrsimha Mandira
7. Gundica Mandira

1. Haridasa Thakura's Samadhi

Location—The *samadhi* is on Marine Parade Road by the sea in the area of Swargadvara, just opposite ISKCON Bhakti-kuti. 500 years ago, this was a desolate area of windy sand dunes where the dead were burned in the seaside cremation grounds which still function today.

Haridasa Thakura's *samadhi* is on the left side as you enter the temple. Inside it, there is a wonderful painting of a bearded Thakura Haridasa, wearing only a loincloth and raising his arms to honor the *cakra* above the Jagannatha Mandira. You should take time to observe all the sacred paintings on the walls, discuss the pastimes with your friends and try to imbibe the deep feelings of transcendental love, commitment and lamentation contained within them.

Every year on Ananta-caturdasi (September), the Vaisnavas observe a *tirobhava mahotsava* here (disappearance celebration) to commemorate the passing away of Srila Haridasa Thakura. Lord Caitanya said, "Anyone who has chanted and danced here will attain Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-prāpti*) very soon. There is such wonderful power in seeing Haridāsa Ṭhākura." (Cc. 3.11.93)

Main Deities

The center one of the three altars features an elegant neem wood Deity of Mahaprabhu being served by Sri Advaita Acarya on His right



and Sri Nityananda Prabhu on His left. After taking *darsana*, you may ask, “Why are the Teen Prabhus all sitting down?” When Haridasa left the world, Mahaprabhu came here everyday after His sea bath and offered Jagannatha *maha-prasadam* to Haridasa in his *samadhi*. Gauranga Mahaprabhu often sat here beside the *samadhi* doing *nāma-bhajana*. Hence the Teen Prabhus are all sitting down doing *nāma-bhajana*.

Pastimes

I. Haridāsa Thākura Niryaṇa

Please read the full story about Haridasa Thakura’s disappearance under Day Trip One, Siddha Bakula Pastimes part V.

2. ISKCON Bhakti-kuti

Location—Bhakti-kuti is the name that Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura gave to his *bhajana kutira*, which was located beside the sea just opposite Haridasa Thakura’s *samadhi*. Millions of years ago, the Sapta-rsis performed *hari-bhajana* in this area.

In 1977, I had the good fortune to visit the original *bhajana kutira* and the adjoining small garden utilized by Thakura Bhaktivinoda. At that time, there was a marble name plaque written in Bengali script fixed in the boundary wall next to the entrance of Bhakti-kuti. But now, all that remains of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura’s original *bhajana kutira* is that marble name plaque, which is fixed in the outer wall of the multi-storied ISKCON temple, *asrama* and guest house that now occupies the site.

The name *Bhakti Kuti* is written in big letters on the left side of that one hundred year old plaque, and the following verse composed by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura occupies the right side:

gauro-prabhoḥ prema-vilāsa-bhūmau
niṣkiñcano bhaktivinoda-nāma
ko’pi sthito bhakti-kuṭira-koṣṭhe
smṛtvāniṣam nāma-guṇam murāreḥ

“In this land, Lord Gaura enjoyed His *prema*-filled pastimes. One desireless *sadhu* named Bhaktivinoda stays in a small room in his Bhakti-kuti, constantly remembering the name and qualities of His Lord Murari throughout the night.” We can pray to Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura to help us become free from material desires, and to empower us to always remember the name, form, qualities and pastimes of Radha-Madhava Yuga.



Main Deities

Rādhā-Giridhari and an innocently beautiful Deity of Srīman Mahāprabhu bless all the visitors to this ISKCON temple. Opposite the Deities, in the back of the temple, Srīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura and Srīla Prabhupada sit together on the same *simhasana*.

Pastimes

I. Nirjana Bhajana at Bhakti Kuti

This is the place where the illustrious Srīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura spent his last four years on earth (1910-1914) before entering *samadhi*. In 1908, the Thākura left household life, and entered the renounced order by accepting *bābājī-veṣa* from Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. In 1910, the Thākura stayed inside the Bhakti-kuti performing *solitary bhajana*. He absorbed himself in uninterrupted meditation upon *asta-kaliya līlā* and rendering mental service to the Divine Couple Radha-Madhava. Feigning paralysis before the eyes of the common people, Bhaktivinoda entered a state of total *samādhi*.

In the quiet solitude of the Bhakti-kuti, Bhaktivinoda Thākura regularly meditated on verses from his last known work entitled, *Śrī Sva-niyama-dvādaśakam*: “Twelve Verses Of Self-Imposed Regulative Principles,” which he wrote 1907. Two verses are given here for you to reflect upon as you sincerely pray to Srīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura. May the benevolent Thākura bless us with a drop of his mercy and divine realizations, so that we too may someday become protected loving maidservants of Srīmatī Rādhikā.

*gurau sri-gaurange tad-dita-subhakti-grakarane
sacisunor lila-vikasita-sutirthe nija-manau
harer namni presthe hari-tithisu rupanuga-jane
suka-prokte sastre pratijan mamastam khalu ratih*

No matter whenever and wherever I happen to take birth, let my loving affection and attachment remain unshaken throughout each and every lifetime for the following ten items:

1. For my divine spiritual master.
2. For Sri Gaurāṅga.
3. For the detailed topics of pure devotional service (and the methods of its execution) as personally instructed by Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu.
4. For the holy places of pilgrimage such as Sri Navadvīpa, Sri Kṣetra and Sri Vrndaavana, which are all blooming with ecstatic divine sanctity due to Gaura-Govinda’s performance of wonderful pastimes therein.



5. For the *diksa mantras* bestowed upon me by the divine grace of my spiritual master.
6. For the holy name of Sri Hari.
7. For the most beloved eternal associates of the Gaura-Govinda.
8. For the sacred days of celebration throughout the year such as Sri Ekadasi, Sri Janmastami, Sri Radhastami, Gaura-Purnima, Rama Naumi, Nrsimha Caturdasi, Siva Ratri and the appearance/disappearance days of the great Vaisnava *acaryas*.
9. For Gauranga Mahaprabhu's dearest devotees who strictly follow in the sacred footsteps of Srila Rupa Gosvami.
10. For the *Srimad Bhagavatam* and other holy scriptures. (*Sva-niyama-dvādaśakam v. 1*)

*prasadanna-ksirasana-vasana -patradibhir aham
padarthair nirvahya vyavahrtim asangah ku visaye
vasam isa-ksetre yugala-bhajanandita-manas
tanum moksyē kale yuga-pada-paranam pada-tale*

Passing my life in a simple, practical way, I will eat only *prasada* foodgrains and milk products—the remnants of Sri Kṛṣṇa and the very form of His mercy. I will only wear Ṭhākuraji's *prasadi* cloth. I will only use the pots and utensils sanctified by Sri Kṛṣṇa's exclusive service. In this way, I will always remain completely aloof from material sense gratification.

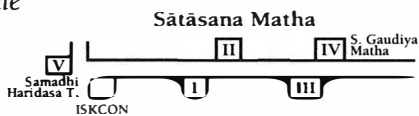
Until the moment of my death, I will reside on the banks of Sri Radha-kunda, Rādhikā's personal abode, worshiping the Divine Couple with a blissful mind. Then at the dust of lotus feet of the devotees, who are themselves absorbed in serving the lotus feet of Radha-Madhava Yugala, I will thus give up my body. (*Sva-niyama-dvādaśakam v.10*)

Here in the Bhakti-kuti on Amavasya, June 23, 1914, the same day that Gadādhara Paṇḍita left the world 450 years before, precisely at noon, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda entered the *nitya-lila* of Gaura-Gadadhara and Radha-Madhava. It is not by chance that Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura (aka Kamalamanjari) entered Sri Kṛṣṇa's pastimes during *madyahna-lila* (10:48 a.m.—3:36 p.m.) just when his worshipable Ananga-manjari, Radha-Madhava and the Vraja-gopis are enjoying five hours of blissful sports at Rādhā-kunda.

After his cremation at Swargadvara, Srila Bhaktivinoda's sacred remains were taken from Puri to his home in Navadvīpa-dhama. Amidst an uproarious *kirtana* by disciples and friends, the Thakura's ashes were placed in a silver urn and buried in the sacred soil of Godruma-dvīpa. The hundreds of admirers observing his *samādhi* ceremony all experienced his direct presence. Truly, the Ṭhākura's great stanza composed in glorification



of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura applies to him:
*He reasons ill who tells that Vaishnavs die
 When thou art living still in sound.
 The Vaishnavs die to live and living try
 To spread the holy name around!*



*Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura ki jai!
 Kṛpāmbudhi Gaudiya Vaisnava bhakta vrnda ki jai!*

3. Sātāsana Bhajana Sthali Area (Sāt Āsana Maṭhas)

Location—On the road just to the left side of ISKCON Bhakti-kuti and opposite the *samadhi* of Haridasa Thakura, you will find the Sāt Āsana Maṭhas, which are actually only four temples honoring the seven sitting places (*sāt āsana*) established by the Sapta-rṣis, who once did *bhajana* here. The Sapta-rṣis are seven potent *brahmin* sages amongst the demigods who assist in universal affairs: Kaśyapa, Atri, Vasiṣṭha, Viśvāmitra, Gautama, Jamadagni and Bhāradvāja.

History of the Seven Asanas

One day during his *samudra-snana* (sea bath), King Indradyumna saw seven exalted sages doing *bhajana* in a lonely place on the beach. When asked about their identity, they remained silent, absorbed in meditation. That night, Lord Jagannatha told King Indradyumna in a dream, “They are the universally famous Sapta-rsis. You must give them some land and daily send My *maha-prasadam*.”

Although the king offered land, the *rsis* refused saying, “We are detached *sadhus* only interested in *bhajana*. But if you desire, you may send Jagannatha *maha-prasadam* everyday.” In time, seven maṭhas (temples) were established to honor the seven sitting places (*āsanas*) of these exalted saints. Today however, only four temples remain which are listed below.

I. Sri Giridhari Asana (Giridhari Maṭha)

Location—This temple is on the right side of the street 50 meters down from the corner housing the ISKCON Bhakti-kuti. See map above.

Main Deities

The main Deities are Rādhā Giridhari, Mahaprabhu and Jagannatha. This is the *bhajana* place of Sri Jagadananda Pandita, an eternal associate of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.



Pastimes

I. Cooking with a Hot Temper

Jagadānanda Paṇḍita has the leftist, contrary mood (*vamya-bhāva*) of Satyabhāmā, his form in Sri Kṛṣṇa's *dvaraka-līla*. Once, Jagadananda carried a big clay pot of sandalwood oil three hundred miles from Navadvīpa to Pūrī as an offering for Mahāprabhu. Meeting Gaurāṅga's servant Govinda, Jagadananda said, "Govinda, please accept this sandalwood oil and rub it on Mahāprabhu's head whenever He talks deliriously or cannot sleep. It is pure oil and will give great relief to Gaurāṅgadeva."

Upon meeting Mahāprabhu, Govinda said, "Jagadānanda Paṇḍita has brought a full pot of sandalwood oil from Bengal, and he wants me to rub it on Your head so You can sleep soundly and maintain Your health."

Mahāprabhu flatly refused saying, "No, no, no, I cannot accept it. This sandalwood oil will emit a nice fragrance and people will say that this *sannyasi* puts scented oil on his head in order to mix with women." Later Mahāprabhu met Jagadananda and said, "Better that you take this oil to the temple and use it for Jagannatha Swami's oil lamps. This will make your efforts fruitful."

Jagadānanda Paṇḍita replied, "Who told You all these false stories? I never brought any oil from Bengal." Jagadānanda then forcefully snatched the clay pot of oil from Govinda's hands and smashed it on the floor in front of Mahāprabhu. Within a few seconds, Jagadananda hastily returned to his *bhājana kutira* at this place, bolted the door and lay down on his bed.

In the morning of the fourth day, Mahāprabhu came here to see Jagadananda. Gaurāṅga called through the locked door, "Jagadānanda, Jagadānanda! Rise and open the door. Today I shall take *prasādam* cooked by your hand and I will not take *prasādam* from anywhere else. I shall return at twelve o'clock and eat the food prepared by your own hand."

What could he do? Jagadānanda had to get up and cook for his beloved Lord Gaura. When everything was done, Jagadananda served Mahāprabhu many varieties of delicious vegetables and other items. Before eating, Mahāprabhu showed his love for Jagadananda by saying, "Put down another leaf plate of rice and vegetables so that today you and I may take lunch together."

Jagadananda declined, saying he would take after first serving Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. Jagadānanda Paṇḍita repeatedly offered Gaurāhari varieties of vegetables. Mahāprabhu was afraid to tell him to stop serving. Gaurāṅga just continued eating, fearful that Jagadānanda would fast again if He stopped. At last Gaurāṅga respectfully submitted, "My dear Jagadānanda,



you have already made Me eat ten times more than I am used to. Now please stop.”

Gaurāṅga then stood up and washed His hands and mouth, while Jagadānanda Paṇḍita brought digestive spices, a garland and sandalwood pulp. At that time, Mahāprabhu said, “Oh Jagadānanda. All the dishes were so sweet and delectable. Indeed, it seems that cooking with a hot temper makes everything taste sweeter. Now take your food in front of Me before I leave. I want to make sure that you eat.”

Jagadānanda replied, “No, no, no, Prabhu! You may go and then I shall surely take food.”

Mahāprabhu said, “All right, I will go. Listen, Govinda, you sit down here and watch him. As soon as Jagadānanda has finished eating, you come and inform Me.”

At the conclusion of this intimate pastime, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī gives the following blessing:

*jagadānandera ‘prema-vivarta’ sune yei jana
premera ‘svarūpa’ jāne, pāya prema-dhana*

“Anyone who hears about the *prema-vivarta*, loving exchanges, between Jagadānanda Paṇḍita and Mahāprabhu, or who reads Jagadānanda’s book *Prema-vivarta*, can understand the form of divine love (*prema-svarupa*). Moreover, he achieves the wealth of ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa.” (Cc. 3.12.105-140) One should know that although Jagadānanda Paṇḍita appeared very angry, his anger was completely transcendental; simply a manifestation of his intense attachment and love for Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. Such are the sweet love-filled exchanges between the Lord and His pure devotees!

*Gaurāṅga Jagadānanda prema-vivarta lila ki jai!
Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍita ki jai!*

II. The Effect of Good Association

Often when devotees meet, they talk, laugh and joke about so many things, but do not say anything about the unlimited names, beautiful form, astonishing qualities and delightfully sweet pastimes of Śrī Gopinātha. From the story that follows we learn that association with a true devotee should make us forget everything else due to the joy of hearing *hari-katha* from him. Hearing such transcendental topics from a genuine devotee should make us feel that we are in the direct association of Rādhā Govinda in Vraja Dhama.

Once Jagadānanda Paṇḍita left Jagannātha Puri and went to Mayapura, Navadvīpa Dhama, to comfort Sacimata with good tidings about her son



Nimai Pandita. At that time, Jagadananda also associated with many of Gauranga's eternal servants like Murari Gupta and Vasudeva Datta. When Jagadanana narrated the *rahasya-lila*, confidential pastimes, of Mahāprabhu to the Nadia devotees, they lost themselves in the bliss of hearing about the Lord (*caitanya-kathā-sukhe*). As soon as someone met Jagadananda, they thought, "Now I have attained the direct association of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu." (Cc. 2.12.100-105)

III. The Perfection of Love

Prema-vivarta is a magnificent book penned by Jagadānanda Paṇḍita. It describes his confidential loving dealings with Sri Gauranga Mahāprabhu and many aspects of Gaudiya Vaisnava *siddhanta*. One excerpt is included here for your consideration:

"Everyone is talking about love, love; but who really understands what love is? One who realizes spiritual amorous exchanges with Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa is truly fit to become a damsel in the groves of Vrndavana. The word *pīriti*, which means love, consists of three syllables and this principle is known throughout the universe. Whoever is touched by love becomes totally obsessed by it, oblivious to shame and infamy in this world.

"Gradually, as one develops the mood of the Vraja-gopis (*gopi bhāva*), he begins to recollect his original identity (*siddha-deha*) in the spiritual world. At that time, He severs all material attachments. Delightful Sri Kṛṣṇa becomes the only object of love (*prema-visaya*) and the individual soul becomes the repository of that love (*prema-asraya*). He then approaches Sri Kṛṣṇa through an intermediary who constantly reminds him of his darling Kṛṣṇa. In this way, the conjugal exchanges in the mood of a paramour (*parakiya-bhāva*) go on increasing." (*Prema Vivarta* ch.16)

Sri Rādhā Giridhari ki jai! Sri Jagadananda Pandita ki jai! Sri Giridhari Asana ki jai!

II. Sri Syamasundara Asana

Location—It is on the left or opposite side of street a short distance from Giridhari Asana.

Main Deities

The main Deities are Radha Syamasundara, Jagannatha Swami, Gaura-Nitai and Salagrama. This is *bhajana sthali* of Brahmananda Bharati, an eternal associate of Lord Caitanya.



Pastimes

I. Deer Skin Clothes Not Approved

Brahmānanda Bhārati was one of the ten *sannyasis* living with Mahaprabhu in Jagannatha Puri: (1) Paramananda Puri, (2) Svarupa Damodara, (3) Brahmananda Puri, (4) Brahmananda Bharati, (5) Visnu Puri, (6) Kesava Puri, (7) Krsnananda Puri, (8) Nrsimha Tirtha, (9) Sukhananda Puri and (10) Satyananda Bharati.

Brahmananda Bharati, one of the roots of the desire tree of divine love, was the godbrother of Lord Caitanya's *sannyasa-guru*, Keshava Bharati. Hence, Mahaprabhu always treated him as a very dear superior. At the time of Ratha-yatra, Gauranga offered flower garlands and sandalwood paste to Paramānanda Puri and Brahmananda Bharati before anyone else.

Once, Brahmananda Bharati, dressed in a tiger's skin, appeared before Lord Gauranga. Mahaprabhu refused to bow down to him until he discarded the tiger skin and wore linen cloth. At that time, Lord Caitanya said, "The person before Me is not a Bharati. How is it that one equal to My *guru* could put on an animal's skin? *Sannyasis* do not support the killing of beasts for the sake of their personal use." Brahmananda Bharati understood that Mahaprabhu did not like his tiger skin dress, so he changed his apparel. Gauranga then bowed down to him, showing proper respect to His *guru*'s godbrother. (Cc. 2.10.151-169)

Radha Syamasundara ki jai! Brahmananda Bharati ki jai!

Sri Syamasundara Asana ki jai!

III. Sri Madana-mohana Deva Asana

Location—It is on the right side of the street a short distance from Syamasundara Asana.

Main Deities

The main Deities are Sri Rādhā Madana-mohana. This is the *bhajana sthali* of Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami.

Pastimes

I. Gauranga Teaches the Essence of Spiritual Truth

Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami (aka Dasa Gosvami) is Rati-manjari (aka Tulasi-manjari or Bhanumati) in Sri Kṛṣṇa's *vraja-lila*, and one of the six Gosvamis in *gaura-lila*. An entire chapter of *Caitanya-caritamṛta* is dedicated to him (*Antya* 6 "The Meeting of Mahaprabhu and Dasa Gosvami").



One day in Jagannatha Puri, Raghunatha dasa Gosvami met Mahaprabhu and asked the Lord to please personally speak some transcendental instructions through His beautiful sweet mouth (*āpani śrī-mukhe more kara upadeśa*). Smiling, Mahāprabhu replied, “I have already appointed Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī to instruct you in *sādhya-sādhana-tattva* (the goal of *bhakti* and the means to attain it). Nevertheless, I will give you a few important instructions for your faithful aural reception.” Then Mahaprabhu spoke the essence of spiritual truth as follows:

*grāmya-kathā nā śunibe, grāmya-vārtā nā kahibe
bhāla nā khāibe āra bhāla nā paribeamānī mānada*

“You should not hear the talks of common men nor talk about mundane news. You should not eat very palatable food, nor dress very nicely.

*amānī mānada hañā kṛṣṇa-nāma sadā la’be
vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa-sevā mānase karibe*

“Never expect honor from anyone, but always offer respect to one and all. Always chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, and within your mind render service to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja.” (C.c. 3.6.231-237)

Rādhā Madana-mohana ki jai! Sri Caitanyadeva ki jai!

Srila Dasa Gosvami ki jai! Sri Madana-mohana Deva Asana ki jai!

IV. Sri Kṛṣṇa Balarama Asana

Location—It is on the left side of the street, a short distance from Madana-mohana Deva Asana.

Main Deities

The main Deities are Kṛṣṇa-Balarama, Jagannatha, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Mahaprabhu. The book *Sri-ksetra* asserts this is the *bhajana-sthali* of Sri Bhagavan Acarya, and the locals say it is the *bhajana-sthali* of Chota Haridasa. Both devotees played roles in Mahaprabhu’s Puri pastimes. Long ago, Vasistha Rsi, one of the celebrated Sapta-rsis, also did *bhajana* here. It is an amazing coincidence that both Bhagavan Acarya and Chota Haridasa did *bhajana* here in the same place. You will read below about their interesting relationship. After visiting these four places and reading about the three others, I definitely encourage you to visit the Sat Asana Gaudiya Math temple (on your left, ten minutes down the same road) to see the many colorful, hand-crafted dioramas of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes all over the premises.



Pastimes

I. The Glories of Bhagavan Acarya

Bhagavan Acarya constantly associated with Mahāprabhu when He resided in Jagannātha Purī. Srila Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvami says that Bhagavan Acarya walked very slowly because he was lame, and he was a gentleman, a learned scholar and a *parama* Vaisnava. His relationship with Caitanya Mahāprabhu was friendly, and he was staunchly devoted to the lotus feet of Gaurāṅga. He sometimes invited Caitanya Mahāprabhu to his house for *prasadam*.

Once a Bengali friend of Bhagavān Ācārya wanted to recite a drama that he had written that was against the principles of devotional service. Although Bhagavān Ācārya wanted to recite the drama before Mahāprabhu, Svarūpa Dāmodara forbade him, and then highlighted the many faults and anti-devotional *siddhanta* within that drama. Now understanding the faults in his writing, the wise author begged for mercy and then surrendered to Svarūpa Dāmodara. This is described in (Cc. 3.5.91–158).

II. Bhagavan Acarya's Mayavadi Brother

Vyāsadeva compiled the *Vedānta-sūtras* to explain the philosophy of pure devotional service. Māyāvādīs misinterpret the *sūtras* to deny the eternal transcendental form of Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa. They do not accept the eternal distinction between God and the individual living entities (Bhagavan and the *jīvas*), nor do they believe that the individual soul has an eternal service relationship with Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa. Service to Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa is the eternal constitutional activity of every living entity. *Sastras* warn that if a devotee hears Māyāvāda philosophy, it will destroy his *bhakti* and his loving relationship with Sri Kṛṣṇa; everything will be lost.

Bhagavān Ācārya had a younger brother named Gopāla Bhaṭṭācārya, who was a scholar of *Vedānta*. When Gopala came to Purī, Bhagavān Ācārya repeatedly asked Svarūpa Dāmodara to hear his brother's elucidation of the *Vedānta-sūtras*. Svarūpa Dāmodara objected by saying:

*buddhi bhraṣṭa haila tomāra, gopālera saṅge
māyāvāda sunibāre, upajila raṅge
vaiṣṇava hañā jebā, sārīraka-bhāṣya śune
sevya-sevaka-bhāva chāri, āpanāre īśvara māne
mahā-bhāgavata jei kṛṣṇa prāṇa-dhana jāra
māyāvāda-śravaṇe citta avaśya phire tāra*



“Bhagavan, you have lost your intelligence by associating with your brother Gopāla. Because of this you are now eager to hear Māyāvāda philosophy. When a Vaishnava hears Śaṅkara’s *Śārīraka-bhāṣya* (Māyāvāda commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*), he loses his *sevya-sevaka-bhāva*—the deep feeling and belief that Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa is the master and the living entity is His servant. And then he starts thinking that he is God. Hearing Māyāvāda philosophy will definitely change the heart of even a *mahā-bhāgavata* devotee whose life and soul is Sri Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa prāṇa-dhana*).”

In spite of Svarūpa Dāmodara’s protest, Bhagavān Ācārya pressed his desire, saying, “We are all *kṛṣṇa-niṣṭha* (fixed on Kṛṣṇa with our hearts and minds. Therefore the *Śārīraka-bhāṣya* cannot change our minds.” Svarupa Damodara Gosvami gave a stern reply:

*svarūpa kahe tathāpi māyāvāda śravaṇe
cit brahma māyā mithyā ei mātra śune
jīvājñāna-kalpita īśvare sakala-i ajñāna
yāhāra śravaṇe bhaktera phāṭe mana-prāṇa*

“Nevertheless, when a devotee hears the Māyāvāda philosophy that only Brahman is truth and knowledge and that the material universe is false; that the independent consciousness of the individual *jīva* is only imaginary; and that everything including the Supreme Personality of Godhead is under the influence of ignorance, it breaks his mind and heart.”

After hearing this, Bhagavān Ācārya felt greatly ashamed and fearful. He said nothing, but the next day, he sent his brother Gopāla back to Bengal. (Cc. 3.2.90-100)

Sri Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu ki jai! Bhagavān Ācārya ki jai!

III. The Lesson of Chota Haridasa

One day Bhagavān Ācārya invited Mahāprabhu to dine at his home. He also called Choṭa Haridāsa, who sang like a Gandharva for the pleasure of Mahāprabhu. Choṭa Haridāsa was a *parama Vaisnava* who had dedicated his life to the service of Gaurāṅga. Bhagavan Acarya said, “Listen Chota Haridasa, I need some first-class rice to offer to Gaurāṅga. Go ask Madhavi-devi, the sister of Śikhi Māhiti, for it and bring it here.” Madhavi was an old, extremely renounced, topmost devotee of Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu and Radha-Govinda.

A short time later when Gaurāhari was taking His meal, He noticed the fine quality of the rice and asked, “Haridasa, where did you get this rice?”

Haridāsa replied, “From mother Mādhavi.”

Gaurāṅga said, “What sort of action is this? You have violated the principles



of the renounced order by talking intimately with a woman (*prakṛti sambhāṣaṇa*). Although Mādhavī is a perfectly chaste pure devotee, who has implicit faith in her Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas, how can the religious principles of the renounced order be upheld if you talk intimately to women? For this reason I reject you from My association.” (Cc. 3.2.101-152)

Sri Chota Haridasa ki jai! Sri Kṛṣṇa Balarama Asana ki jai!

The Remaining Three of the Seven Sitting Places (Sāt Āsana)

V. Baḍa Āsana—Here Svarupa Damodara Gosvami did *bhajana* and worshiped the Deities of Rādhā-Damodara. The temple no longer exists and the original Deities are gone. The Mahanta of Radha-Giridhari Maṭha now worships a new set of Radha-Damodara Deities.

VI. Sri Gumpha Āsana— Vaisnavas did *bhajana* here deep in a cave (*gumpha*). The temple has disappeared.

VII. Kadali-paṭkā Āsana—The temple was beside ISKCON Bhakti-kuti but it no longer exists. A great *siddha* devotee named Svarupa Dasa Babaji once performed *bhajana* here.

Pastimes

I. The Glories of Siddha Svarupa Dasa Babaji

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura often came here to meet Svarupa Dasa. In his own words, Thakura Bhaktivinoda glorified Babaji Maharaja, saying:

“The great saint Svarupa Dasa Babaji is a wonderful Vaisnava who performs *bhajana* in his *kutira* throughout the day. In the evening, he steps into the courtyard, offers obeisances to Tulasi Maharani, and then dances and chants *harinama* with tears trickling from his beautiful eyes. At this time some devotees offer him a palmful of Jagannatha *maha-prasadam*, which he honors only to pacify his hunger. Sometimes I take *darsana* of his lotus feet during the evening. Babaji speaks very sweetly to all the visitors.

“He listens to the *Caitanya Bhagavata* from the lips of the Vaisnavas until 10 p.m. and then reenters his *kutira* to continue his *nirjana-bhajana* (exclusive solitary devotion unconscious of the environment). In the dark before sunrise, he regularly bathes in the ocean. Then he quickly sweeps, cleans, washes his cloth, cares for Tulasi-devi, collects drinking water and performs other services himself to insure that he does not take service from any Vaisnava that may visit him.



What is most astonishing about all these actions is that Svarupa Dasa is completely blind! How he bathes in the ocean in the pitch black is known only to Mahaprabhu. There is no doubt that Svarupa Dasa Babaji was a *siddha-purusa*, fully God realized soul.” (Sri Ksetra Parikrama)

Kadali-patkā Āsana ki jai! Siddha Svarupa Dasa Babaji ki jai!

4. Indradyumna Sarovara

Location—This water tank is a half km. from the Gundica temple. Mahaprabhu took water from here to cleanse the Gundica temple. It is well known and the *rickshaw* will take you directly there from anywhere in Puri. If you are standing at the Nrsimha temple (today’s stop # 6), walk to the road, turn right and then walk two minutes down the road away from Jagannatha Puri. When you come to a fork in the road, take the left small road down to the tank. As always, you can ask directions from any local person.

Main Deities

There are three main temples here; Indradyumna Maharaja’s temple on the left side near the water tank, and a large temple of Saksi Gopala on the right side. Non-Hindus are barred entrance, but sometimes the *pujari* can be “encouraged” to let you in for *darsana*.

On the left side, mid way down the stairs leading to the sarovara is an ancient temple of Nilakantesvara Mahadeva Siva. Sometimes Non-Hindus are allowed in for *darsana*; try your luck. Nilakantesvara Mahadeva, one of the five *dig-pala* Siva Deities (Panca-Siva) who protect Sri Ksetra Dhama, is also called Sahadeva, one of the Panca Pandavas. Candana Yatra and the Sitala-sthali festival are pompously celebrated here. Sitala-devi is the goddess of smallpox.

Pastimes

I. Mother Cow Creates a Huge Lake

Millions of years ago during Satya-yuga, King Indradyumna performed an *aśvamedha-yajna* (horse sacrifice) here. At that time he honored the assembled *brahmins* by donating thousands of cows. While all those heavy cows were standing here, their hooves made a deep depression in the earth; creating a large lake. The lake became filled with water and cow urine. Since then it became a *tirtha*, a purifying place of pilgrimage. The *Skanda Purana* says that Indradyumna Sarovara is the best of all *tirthas*. A bath in this sacred lake will free one from sin.

Indradyumna Sarovara ki jai! Gomata ki jai!



II. The Broken Waterpots

Indradyumna Sarovara encompasses an area of five acres. During the annual cleansing of the Gundica temple before Ratha-yatra, the devotees brought water from here. Hundreds of devotees carried full water pots, and hundreds took the empty pots to refill. Many of the waterpots were broken when people collided with one another. (Cc. 2.12.107-110)

Sri Caitanya jala kumbha khaṇḍa lila ki jai!

III. Gauranga Mahaprabhu's Jala-keli Utsava (water splashing festival)

One day, Mahaprabhu, His heart merged in the mellow of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes (*rādhā-saṅge kṛṣṇa-līlā—rase magna*), enjoyed water sports in Indradyumna lake with all His confidential associates. Gauranga gleefully splashed His friends and they splashed Him back. They formed circles, made sounds like *karatals* by hitting the water and they croaked like frogs (*jala-maṇḍūka-vādye*).

Mahaprabhu enjoyed the fun as pairs of devotees (Svarupa & Vidyanidhi; Murari Gupta & Vasudeva Datta; Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura & Gadādhara Paṇḍita; Rāghava Paṇḍita & Vakreśvara Paṇḍita.) duelled in water fights. Advaita Acarya, being defeated by Nityananda, called Him bad names. Mahaprabhu was surprised to see the duelers, Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya and Rāmānanda Rāya, lose their gravity and act like children. Gauranga jokingly told Gopinatha Acarya (brother-in-law of Sarvabhauma), "Tell them to stop their childish pranks because they are both learned, grave personalities."

Sri Caitanyadeva amazed all the devotees by enacting His *śeṣa-śayi lila*. Mahaprabhu laid on the back of Advaita Acarya, making him act like Śeṣa Nāga, and then He floated all around the lake. (Cc. 2.14.75-90)

Gauranga Mahaprabhu vraja jala-keli ki jai!

Śeṣa-śayi Mahaprabhu ki jai! Indradyumna Sarovara ki jai!

5. Mahaprabhu Viśrāma-sthāna (Mahaprabhu's resting place)

Location—Coming from Indradyumna Sarovara, walk to the main road, turn right and go back toward the Jagannatha temple. A hundred meters on your left (before reaching the Nrsimha temple) is Mahaprabhu's resting place; a small temple near the road.

If you are coming from the Nrsimha temple (spot # 6), then walk out to the main Grand Road, turn right and walk toward Indradyumna Sarovara. After only a few meters on your right, you will see Mahaprabhu's resting place, a very small temple-like structure with a gate near the road.



Unfortunately, this temple is usually locked, but when not locked it is open to all.

Main Deities

A dancing Gauranga Mahaprabhu and Radha-Govinda Yugala. Inside the temple is a box with a piece of a clay pot said to be broken during Lord Caitanya's Gundica-marjana lila.

Pastimes

It is said that Sri Caitanyadeva rested here after His water sports in Indradyumna Sarovara.

*aparāhne āsi' kaila darśana, nartana
niśāte udyāne āsi' karilā śayana*

In the afternoon, Mahaprabhu went to the Guṇḍicā temple to visit Lord Jagannatha and dance. At night He went to the garden to take rest. (Cc. 2.14.95)

Mahaprabhu viśrāma-lila ki jai!

6. Nrsimha Mandira (Yajña Nrsimhadeva)

Location—It is just beside Grand Road, north-east of the Gundica temple and very close to its boundary wall. From Mahaprabhu's resting place, it is a short distance on the left.

Main Deities

There are actually two Deities of Nrsimha, one behind the other. Santa Nrsimha (peaceful) is in the front. Santa Nrsimha has human-like features: a sharp nose, a curvy moustache and an outstretched tongue. By seeing Santa Nrsimha you will feel cool and relaxed; all your anger, anxiety and frustration will vanish. Once a Muslim marauder named Kalapahad ransacked Puri and broke many Deities. Upon seeing Santa Nrsimha, however, his anger subsided and he did not destroy the Deity.

The Deity behind is Ugra Nrsimha (ferocious), and may be seen with the *pujari's* lamp and a donation of course. Non-Hindus are barred entrance, but can see the Deities from a distance by standing near the door. Occasionally, with the mercy of Lord Nrsimhadeva, the right *pujari* and a sizable donation, non-Hindus can obtain a close-up *darsana* of both Deities.



Pastimes

I. The Appearance of the Deity

In Satya-yuga, when King Indradyumna first came to Orissa, he performed 1,000 horse sacrifices (*asvamedha-yajna*) in this area which was known as Mahāvedī. Before starting the horse sacrifices, the king worshiped Lord Nrsimhadeva. From the *yajna-kunda*, a form of Nrsimhadeva appeared with Mahalaksmi sitting on His lap and Anantadeva over His head. Later, this Nrsimhadeva took the form of the Yajna Nrsimhadeva Deity in the temple here.

The *Puranas* also say that Narada Muni brought and installed a Nrsimha Deity in Puri prior to the installation of Jagannatha Swami. (*Skanda Purana*)
Santa Ugra Nrsimhadeva ki jai!

II. Gauranga Saves Advaita's Son Gopala

During the festival of cleaning the Gundica temple, Gauranga also cleansed the inside and outside of the Nrsimha temple and then rested briefly. Refreshed, Mahaprabhu jumped up and started dancing like a maddened lion amidst the devotees who were chanting *harinama* with unbounded exuberance and bliss. Raining tears of divine love, Gauranga bathed all those around Him in waves of joy. As Sacinandana saturated the sky with *harinama*, the ecstatic pounding of His feet sent tremors through the earth. Svarupa Damodara's loud chanting thrilled the heart of Gaura who responded by jubilant jumping in the sky.

Induced by Gaurahari, Sri Gopala, the son of Advaita Acarya, danced in ecstatic love but then suddenly fainted on the ground. Although all the devotees loudly prayed and cried, Gopala remained unconscious, without breathing. Sri Caitanyadeva touched the boy's chest, saying, "Gopala! Stand up!" Immediately, Sri Gopala awoke, jumped up and the chanting and dancing continued. (Cc. 2.12.132-150)

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu ki jai! Advaita Acarya ki jai!

7. Gundica Mandira

Location—This famous temple is located at the end of Grand Road (Baḍadāṇḍa), two kilometers from Jagannatha Mandira.

Main Deities

Jagannatha Swami, Baladeva and Subhadra stay here for seven days every year during Ratha-yatra. The Deities sit upon a plain chlorite stone *simhāsana*



that is four feet high, nineteen feet long. Although there are no Deities here the rest of the year, the temple and gardens remain open for visitors. Non-Hindus are barred entrance to the temple, but they can walk within the walls to see the beautiful garden.

Pastimes

I. The Glories of Gundica

Every year, the Ratha-yatra culminates at this temple which is surrounded by lush gardens and tall cooling coconut trees. The fragrant flowers and shady trees create a Vrndavana atmosphere which Lord Jagannatha enjoys for seven days before returning to the Sri Mandira. Gundica Mandira is called the “birth place” of Jagannatha Swami because here on a special platform called the *mahāvedī*, a celestial carpenter carved the *dāru* that manifested the Deities of Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra during the reign of King Indradyumna in Satya-yuga.

It is called Gundica in honor of King Indradyumna’s queen named Gundica Maharani. In the language of the Śabarās, the tribal woodsmen of this region, the word *kun* means “he” and *dijā* means “the trunk of a tree.” *Kundijā* means, “He, Lord Jagannatha, came from the trunk of a tree.” Overtime, *kundijā* became *gundijā* and now *gundicā*.

The Gundica temple is located in an area which is compared to Vrndavana and called Sundaracala (beautiful hill). The Jagannatha temple area is called Nilacala (blue hill), and due to its grandeur and opulence it is compared to Dvārakā or Kuruksetra. During Ratha-yatra, the eager devotees are in *vraja-bhava* begging Jagannatha to come to Vrndavana with them as they pull the chariots to the Gundica in Sundaracala, the replica of Vrndavana.

Ratha-yatra, the chariot procession or festival, is locally known as the Gundica-yatra, Ghoṣa-yatra or the Nava-dina-yatra (nine day journey) because the Deities travel to and fro for two days and remain in Gundica for seven. One *darsana* of Jagannatha here during Ratha-yatra is equal to ten *darsanas* at Sri Mandira, His main temple. Another *Purana* says that Jagannatha’s *darsana* here grants liberation plus the result of seeing Jagannatha Swami in the Sri Mandira for hundreds of years (*niladro sata varsani gundica mandape dine*). The following *Puranic* verse extols the tremendous result of seeing Lord Jagannatha here:

*gundicā maṇḍapam yānti, ye paśyanti rathe sthitam
kṛṣṇa-rāmau subhadrām ca, te yānti bhavanam hareḥ
ye paśyanti tadā kṛṣṇam, saptaḥam maṇḍape sthitam
halinam ca subhadrām ca, viṣṇulokam vrajanti te*



“Whoever comes to the Gundica temple during Ratha-yatra and sees Jagannatha, Balarama and Subhadra will have his mind turned toward God, Lord Hari. If he sees the Deities while They are remaining seven days on the throne in the Gundica, he will go to Vaikuntha.”

II. Jagannatha Becomes the Queen’s Son

When Jagannatha Swami manifested here at Gundica, He offered a boon to King Indradyumna. The king took the boon of having no sons, so that no descendent could lay claim to the property of Lord Jagannatha. Queen Gundica grieved greatly over this knowing that she would never bear a son.

The compassionate Lord Jagannatha consoled the queen, assuring her that He Himself would act as her son. At that time, the loving Lord Jagannatha filled the queen’s heart with the utmost satisfaction by saying, “For your pleasure, I will come here to Gundica once a year.”

Jagannatha Swami Gundica Yatra ki jai!

III. Gauranga Cleanses the Gundica

On the day before Ratha-yatra, Mahaprabhu smeared sandalwood pulp on His personal associates, gave each a broom and went to Gundica to clean the temple for the arrival of Lord Jagannatha. Mahaprabhu did not engage His *guru-varga* in any of the difficult tasks like carrying pots of water. Rather, they were engaged in cleaning alongside Lord Gauranga with the water brought by other devotees. Except for Nityananda, Advaita, Svarupa, Brahmananda and Paramānanda Puri, all the other devotees carried water.

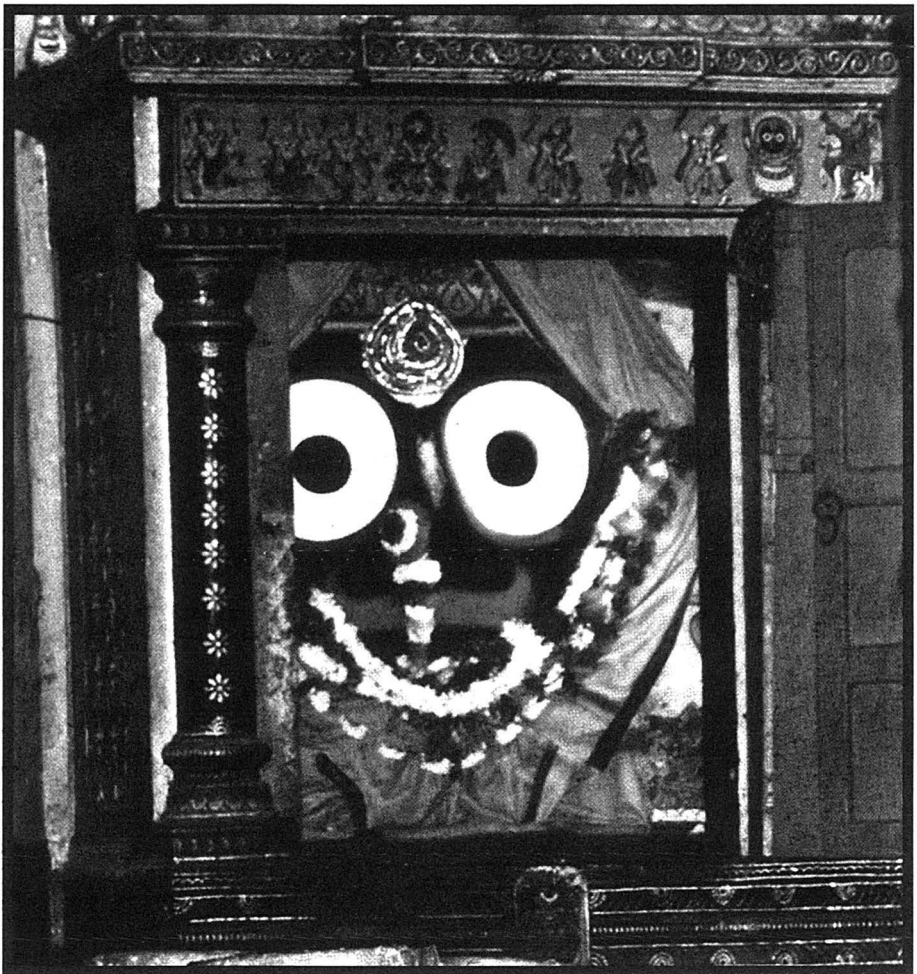
Mahaprabhu and His associates cleansed everything nicely including the ceiling. They moved Lord Jagannatha’s throne to clean underneath it. Sri Caitanyadeva cleansed in jubilation and chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa simultaneously; everyone followed His good example. Mahaprabhu’s beautiful golden body was entirely covered with dust and dirt as He washed the temple with His tears.

The outside yard and residential quarters were also cleansed. Following the example of Sri Caitanyadeva, the devotees gathered dust and straw in their cloths and discarded it outside into one pile. Gauranga’s pile of straw and dust was much bigger than the devotee’s collective pile. Everything was then cleansed a second time. Gaurahari threw water on the ceiling, which then cleansed the walls and floor. One devotee secretly drank the water that had washed Gaura’s lotus feet. Sri Caitanya mopped and polished the room and Jagannatha’s throne with His personal cloth. All the rooms were cleansed with a hundred water pots.



Whenever anyone had to speak, they uttered only the holy name of *Kṛṣṇa*, *Kṛṣṇa*, *Kṛṣṇa*! The holy name of *Kṛṣṇa* became an indication for everyone who wanted something. It appeared as if Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu was cleansing and washing with a hundred hands. Gaurācandara approached everyone just to teach them how to work. Without bearing a grudge, Gaurāṅga chastised the slow unproductive devotees and praised the good *sevakas*, saying, “You have done well, now teach the others.” Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally instructed how to receive the Supreme Personality of Godhead within one’s cleansed and pacified heart. (Cc. 2.12.72-137)

Gaurāṅga’s Gundica Mandira marjana lila ki jai! Gaura bhakta vrnda ki jai!



Day Trip Three

Hiring an auto *rickshaw*, one should visit the places in the order as they are numbered below. Your first stop is Narendra Sarovara. Then you will see place number two which is the Mausi Ma Temple; then place number three, and so on to the last and final stop which is number five, the Ahulya Maṭha. The sequence of sacred spots to visit today is as follows:

1. Narendra Sarovara
2. Mausi Ma Temple
3. Jagannatha Vallabha Maṭha (Gardens)
4. Birthplace of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura
5. Ahulya Maṭha

** Note—Today's holy places are all close together and can be seen rather quickly. If you have less time in Puri and cannot go out tomorrow, then today you can also see the places mentioned in Day Trip Four. Thus in three days you will have seen all the important sacred places in Sri Purusottama Dhama, Jagannatha Puri.

1. Narendra Sarovara

Location—This large water tank is located north-east of Jagannatha's temple. It is well known to the *rickshaw wallas*. If coming from the Lion Gate of Jagannatha Mandira, then walk down Grand Road toward Gundica for about one kilometer and turn left on Atharanala Road, a big road angling into the Grand Road, and follow it to Narendra-Sarovara. As always, you can find your way by asking the locals.

Main Deities

There are three small temples located on a platform about a hundred feet into the lake connected by a cement walkway. The two smaller temples feature Bala Kṛṣṇa and a Siva-linga. The third temple has Deities of Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra. A Deity of mother Yasoda stands directly behind Jagannatha, and on the opposite side of the room is a Deity of Laksmidevi. During Candana-yatra the *vijaya-vigrahas* (festival Deities) from the Jagannatha temple and the Panca Mahadevas receive worship here. During the time of Sri Caitanyadeva and now all the Bengali devotees who visit the Jagannātha temple bathe and wash their hands and feet here before entering the temple.



Pastimes

I. The Appearance of Narendra Sarovara

In the 13th century, Narendra Mahapatra, a minister to Kavi Narasimha Dev built this eight acre water tank (873x743 feet), which is the site of Lord Jagannatha's evening boat festival during the yearly Candana Yatra. Some say that a great personality (*narendra*) named King Indradyumna built it for Jagannatha Swami.

II. Jagannatha Swami's Naukā Lila (boating pastime)

Candana-yatra (sandalwood pastime) starts on Vaisakha Akṣaya-trtiyā (April) and continues to Jyestha Suklastami (May), the hottest time of the year in Jagannatha Puri. Narendra Sarovara is also known as Sri Candana Pukur because Lord Jagannatha comes here every evening for twenty-one consecutive days during Candana-yatra to enjoy a boat ride. Before coming here, Lord Jagannatha's festival deity (*utsava murti*) of Madan Mohana along with His consorts Sridevi and Bhudevi bathe in sandalwood water and are decorated with fragrant flowers.

All the Deities travel here on seven different palanquins. Madana-mohana, Sri and Bhu-devis arrive in one palanquin; Sri Rama Govinda on a second palanquin; and five more palanquins transport the Panca Mahadevas (five Siva *linga* Deities): Lokanatha, Janesvara, Kapala-mocana, Markandesvara and Nilakanthesvara. The Panca Mahadevas are usually called the Panca Pandavas because these five Siva *lingas* were installed in Jagannatha Mandira in honor of the Panca Pandavas, who, according to the Oriyan *Mahabharata*, once prayed to Jagannatha Swami to help them overcome their troubles.

The entire length of the procession route from Jagannatha Mandira to Narendra Sarovara is lined with white canopies strewn with forest leaves, flower and fruits. The Deities stop under these canopies in Their palanquins to accept food offerings and entertainment of *bhajans* and dancing. Arriving at the lake, the Deities board two long, attractively decorated black *gondolas*; one for Madana-mohan, Sri and Bhu-devi and one for Rama Govinda and the Panca Mahadevas.

Throng of devotees line the banks chanting *harinama*. They feel completely refreshed from the heat of the day by attaining the sweet *darsana* of Madana-mohana as He passes by in His boat. At a certain point, the Deities enter the temple in the middle of the tank to accept worship. After the celebration, the Deities return to Sri Mandira in Their palanquins. Pilgrims interested in observing this festival should be prepared for a late night. The celebration concluded at 1 a.m. the year I saw the Lord Jagannatha's spectacular boating pastime.

Jagannatha Swami Naukā Vihara ki jai!



III. Mahaprabhu Meets the Yatris

Once all the *bhaktas* residing in Gaura-mandala and Navadvipa Dhama desired to go to Nilācala to see Śrī Gaurāṅga. It was a large group of two hundred devotees, including Advaita Acarya, Srivasa Thakura, Candrasekhara, Pundarika Vidyanidhi, Gaṅgādāsa, Vakreśvara Paṇḍita, Pradyumna Brahmācārī, Thākura Haridāsa, Vāsudeva Datta and Mukunda Datta, Śrī Śivānanda Sena and his wife and sons, Govinda and Mukunda Ghosh, Śuklāmbara, Kholaveca Śrīdhara, Jagadīśa Paṇḍita, Buddhimanta Khān, Rāghava Paṇḍita, Murāri Gupta, Dāmodara Paṇḍita and Raghunandana Thākura, Śrī Mukunda, Narahari, Rāmānanda Vasu and Satyarāja.

Hearing of their arrival in Puri, Gaurahari sent an advance party of devotees to Narendra Sarovara to welcome them. Then Sri Caitanyadeva hurried to Narendra Sarovara in the company of Nityananda, Gadadhara Pandita, Paramananda Puri, Brahmānanda Bhāratī, Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Sanātana, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, Svarupa Damodara, Sankara Pandita, Kasisvara Gosvami, Pradyumna Miśra, Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya, Govinda, Raghunātha, Śikhi-Māheti and Vānīnātha.

When the Puri and Navadvipa devotees glimpsed at one another, they all immersed in the joy of the spontaneous festive spirit. Overcome with divine rapture, everyone wept and trembled in transcendental bliss. They offered *dandavats* to one another and cried out, “*Hari! Hari! Hari!*” Although He is the Supreme Lord, Śrī Gaurāṅga also offered *dandavats* along with the other Vaiṣṇavas. By His perfect behavior, Mahaprabhu showed that despite all spiritual and social positions the principle of honoring the Vaiṣṇavas is of paramount importance. Jagadīśvara Gaurāṅga happily worshiped the Vaiṣṇavas and thus smashed the false pride of *sannyāsis* and other persons attached to high positions.

Trembling, tears, and thrill bumps appeared in the bodies of the Vaiṣṇavas. They joyfully danced and sang together, and became decorated with dust due to repeatedly offering *dandavats* to each other. Intoxicated in the delight of seeing Gaurāṅga, (*gaurāṅga-darśana-ānanda-mattāḥ*), they forgot everything and bellowed, “*Gaurāṅga! Jaya Gaurāṅga! Gaurāṅgaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!*” (*Srī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Carita Maha-kavya* 4.18.1-8)

With a heart full of love, Gaurāṅga embraced all the Vaiṣṇavas, one by one, and then wrapped His golden arms around their necks and wept. By Sri Caitanya’s order sandal paste and thousands of Jagannatha’s *maha-prasādi* garlands arrived. Mahaprabhu first placed a garland around Advaita’s neck. With His own graceful hands, Gaurasundara placed garlands and sandal



paste on the body of each Vaiṣṇava. Seeing Mahaprabhu's mercy, the devotees raised their arms and loudly wept.

Everyone clasped Gauranga's feet and asked for boons: "O Prabhu! Birth after birth may I never forget You. Whether I take birth as a human being, an animal or a bird, may I always gaze on Your lotus feet. O Prabhu, O Karuṇā-sindhu, please give this boon to me." (Cb. 3.8.87-95)

Sri Gauranga bhakta prema milana ki jai!

IV. Narendra Sarovara Becomes the Yamuna

One summer evening during Candana-yatra, Jagannatha Swami's festival Deities of Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and Śrī Govinda came to Narendra-sarovara to sport in the cooling waters. There was a great tumult of *harinama sankirtana* enhanced with *mṛdaṅgas*, conchshells and *bherīs*. Thousands and thousands of parasols, flags, and *cāmaras* beautified the four directions. No other sound could be heard except *Jaya! Jaya! Hari! Gopala! Govinda!* The Deities of Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, and Śrī Govinda peacefully cruised the waters of Narendra-sarovara in a boat.

The *sevāits* of Jagannatha Swami and the associates of Gauranga joined in *sankīrtana* to harmonize in one group. Verily, the personified bliss of Vaikuṅtha descended there and saturated the four directions with absolute ecstasy. Gauranga submerged in the sea of *sankīrtana* and inundated everyone else as well. A host of devotees waved *camara* fans to refresh Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and Śrī Govinda as They moved around the lake. Mahaprabhu felt supreme happiness seeing the Deities enjoying Their boat ride.

Gaurahari suddenly jumped into the lake and sported gleefully with His associates, just as He had previously done in Vraja with the cowherd boys in the Yamunā. The devotees played a water-game called "*kayā*," which is popular in Bengal. They splashed water with their hands while shouting, "*Kayā! Kayā!*" To enhance the exuberance, other devotees stood by in the water playing musical instruments.

As Gauranga absorbed Himself in *gokularaja-bhāva*, the mood of Gopala in Vrndavana, everyone else adopted the mood of *gopas* in Gokula. All the devotees got lost in internal consciousness. Wild with bliss, they fearlessly splashed water on Lord Gauranga, the Lord of all creation. Gaura and Advaita Prabhu enjoyed the bliss of splashing each other. One moment Advaita was victorious, but the next moment Gauranga was the victor.

Nityānanda, Gadādhara, and Śrī Purī Gosāi fought in the water but no one emerged the victor. Roaring with delight, Vāsudeva Datta and Murāri Gupta repeatedly splashed each other. Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi and Svarūpa



Dāmodara enjoyed a friendly duel amidst much laughter. Śrīvāsa, Śrī Rāma, Haridāsa, Vakreśvara, Gaṅgādāsa, Gopīnātha, and Śrī Candrasekhara splashed water on each other. In the company of Lord Gauranga, everyone became wild with bliss.

After the festival Deities of Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, and Śrī Govinda had enjoyed Their boat trip, many hundreds of thousands of devotees played in the water. Lord Gauranga sported with the devotees just as He had previously enjoyed water-pastimes in the Yamunā. By Śrī Caitanyadeva's mercy Narendra-sarovara became the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā. Lord Gauranga enacted these pastimes to deliver the conditioned souls. By hearing or reading these pastimes one becomes free from the cycle of birth and death. (Cb. 3.8.102-141)

*Mahāprabhu jala keli lila ki jai! Yamuna Maharani ki jai!
Ganga Mata ki jai! Narendra Sarovara ki jai!*

2. Mausī Ma Temple (Balagandi Area)

Location—This temple, located in the Balagandi area, is a small building jutting into the Grand Road. It has white iron gates and a unique, shiny black ceramic tile exterior. From Narendra Sarovara return to Grand Road, turn left and it is ½ km. down toward Gundica Mandira on the right side. If coming from the Lion Gate, proceed down Grand Road toward Gundica; go past Śrī Caitanya Gaudiya Matha and Jagannatha Vallabha Gardens for a ½ km. and look on the right side of the street.

Main Deities

As you enter the temple, immediately on your left is the Deity of Ardhāśinī Devī, one of the eight power goddesses (*maha-saktis*) who help protect Purusottama Dhama. The Deity looks exactly like Subhadra-devi. The word *mausī* means aunt. Once Subhadra-devi stayed here in her aunty's house during the time when Jagannatha and Baladeva were forced to wander around Puri begging for food due to a quarrel with Laksmi-devi. During the return Ratha-yatra, Jagannatha stops here to savor a delicious cake called *poḍā-pītha*.

Pastimes

I. Jagannatha Accepts All Offerings

During Ratha-yatra, the three carts stop here so Jagannatha can accept a massive *bhoga* offering. When Jagannatha halted here, He glanced to the



right at some attractive flower gardens resembling Vrndavana, and to the left at a coconut grove where the *brahmins* resided. According to the yearly custom, innumerable dishes were offered to Jagannatha Swami at this time. All kinds of devotees from neophytes to adepts offered their best preparations to Lord Jagannatha. King Prataparudra, his queen, ministers, friends, and all the other big and small residents of Puri, visitors from other countries, and local devotees offered their personally cooked food to Lord Jagannatha.

Devotees offered their food everywhere—in front, behind, on the sides of Jagannatha's chariot, within the garden nearby, wherever possible; there were no hard and fast rules. The offered items included yoghurt, fruit juice, coconut, mango, dried coconut, jackfruit, various kinds of bananas and palm-fruit seeds, oranges, grapefruit, tangerines, almonds, dried fruit, raisins and dates, hundreds of different types of sweetmeats like *manoharā-lāḍu*, *amṛta-guṭikā* and various types of condensed milk, papayas, *saravatī* (a type of orange), crushed squash, regular cream, fried cream, creamed filled *purīs*, *hari-vallabha* sweet, sweets made of *śeṇoti* flowers, *karpūra* flowers and *mālātī* flowers, pomegranates, sweets made with black pepper, sweets made with fused sugar, and *amṛti jilipi*, lotus-flower sugar, *urad dal* bread, crispy sweetmeats, sugar candy, fried-rice sweets, sesame-seed sweets and cookies, sugar-candy sweetmeats formed into the shape of orange, lemon and mango trees and arranged with fruits, flowers and leaves, yogurt, milk, butter, buttermilk, fruit juice, fried yogurt and sugar candy, and salty *mung-dal* sprouts with shredded ginger, and varieties of pickles—lemon, mango, berry and date.

Indeed, I, Kṛṣṇadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, am not able to describe the variety of food offered to Lord Jagannātha at Balagandi. While Jagannatha enjoyed, Mahāprabhu and His devotees took rest under the trees in the Jagannatha-Vallabha gardens. (Cc. 2.13.193-200; 14.25-34)

Mausi Ma ki jai! Sri Jagannatha Swami ki jai!

3. Jagannatha Vallabha Maṭha (Jagannatha Vallabha Garden)

Location—From Mausī Ma Temple, walk ½ km. up Grand Road toward Jagannatha Mandira. Jagannatha Vallabha Maṭha is on the right side of the street. It has a distinctive dark red boundary wall. Above the main entrance gate there is a colorful diorama of Lord Viṣṇu lying on Ananta Sesā.

Main Deities

Immediately to the left of the entrance is the Jagannatha Vallabha Maṭha



said to be established by the Sri Visnuswami Sampradaya. Inside the temple, you will see Rādhā Gopala with four hands holding *sankha* and *cakra* and His celebrated flute. There are large Deities of Jagannatha, Baladeva, Subhadra and Sudarsana Cakra. There is also a *murti* of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu sitting before Ramananda Raya. Officially, non-Hindus are barred entrance here, but sometimes you go in and out quickly without being noticed. There are three temples of Hanuman in the large garden outside this temple.

Pastimes

I. Jagannatha Steals Flowers

This large garden, full of coconut trees and cooling ponds, is very dear (*vallabha*) to Jagannatha Swami because it produces varieties of flowers and fruits for His service. On different auspicious occasions, Lord Jagannatha comes here in His *utsava murti*, festival Deity, to relish many spectacular pastimes.

On Caitra sukla-caturdasi, Jagannatha and Baladeva come here as Kṛṣṇa and Sri Rama (*vi jaya vighras*) to steal *damanaka* flowers, a favorite of Lord Jagannatha. The Deities come in a procession with musical accompaniment and are then worshiped in a *jhūlana* house. The *sevakas* take Kṛṣṇa and Sri Rama to the garden without any procession or beating of drums. They enter the garden silently like thieves. Twelve previously uprooted *damanaka* trees are then offered to Kṛṣṇa and Sri Rama.

Kṛṣṇa-Balarama puspa-caura lila ki jai!

II. Jagannatha Milks a Cow

Two days before Makara-sankranti (mid January), Jagannatha and Balarama come here as Kṛṣṇa and Sri Rama (*utsava murtis*) and sit on a marquis before the Jagannatha Vallabha temple. *Sevakas* stand a milk cow near the Deities, and a cowherd milks the cow on behalf of Kṛṣṇa and Sri Rama. The Deities accept that fresh sweet milk from a *pujari* and then return to Sri Mandira.

Kṛṣṇa Balarama vraja gostha lila ki jai!

III. Mahaprabhu Delivers the King

For all Gaudiya Vaisnavas, Jagannatha Vallabha garden is an important place of pilgrimage because Gauranga Mahaprabhu enacted many wonderful pastimes here. When Jagannatha Swami relaxes in the Gundica temple, Sri Caitanyadeva takes rest here for nine days.



Once when Jagannatha's chariot stopped during Ratha-yatra, Mahaprabhu came here, absorbed in the ecstasy of divine love. Following Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya's instructions on how to meet Mahaprabhu, King Pratāparudra gave up his royal dress and entered the garden in simple Vaisnava dress. First the king humbly took permission from Gauranga's associates, and then he fell down on the ground and clutched Gaura's lotus feet.

Although Gauranga's eyes were closed—rapt in ecstatic love, the king started expertly massaging Mahaprabhu's legs while reciting verses from the *gopi-gīta* (Sb. 10.31). Sri Caitanyadeva was pleased beyond limits, so He said again and again, "Go on reciting, go on reciting." Gaurahari stood up and embraced King Prataparudra in ecstatic love upon hearing him utter the following verse:

*tava kathāmr̥tam tapta-jīvanam
kavibhir īḍitam kalmaṣāpaham
śravaṇa-māṅgalam śrīmad ātatam
bhūvi gr̥ṃanti ye bhūri-dā janāḥ*

"O Kṛṣṇa, the nectar of Your words and the descriptions of Your pastimes are like nectar for those who are parched in this dry material world. Transmitted by exalted personalities, these narrations eradicate all sinful reactions. They are auspiciousness for the ears, because they bring the fortune of love for You. Those in this world who broadcast these delightful topics are the most munificent altruists." (Sb. 10.31.9)

After repeatedly reciting this verse, Mahaprabhu tightly embraced the King and cried, "*bhūri-dā, bhūri-dā,*" (you are the most munificent!) Mahāprabhu continued, "I do not know who you are, but suddenly you came here and made Me drink *kṛṣṇa-līlā-amṛta*—the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes."

Seeing Mahaprabhu's special mercy upon King Pratāparudra, the devotees praised the king's good fortune, and their minds became full of bliss. The king then left the garden after submissively offering prayers to the devotees and offering dandavats to Sri Caitanyadeva. (Cc. 2.14.4-22)

Conclusion: When Mahaprabhu first came to Puri, King Pratāparudra was denied a meeting with Lord Gauranga. But when Gauranga saw the king serving Jagannatha as a menial sweeper, He bestowed His mercy. Mahārāja Pratāparudra had now adopted Vaisnava dress and was serving Mahaprabhu in the garden, so Gauranga did not ask who he was. Rather, Gauracandra compassionately embraced him. For all time to come, Kṛṣṇadasa Kavirāja Gosvami highlights the unprecedented mercy of Mahaprabhu by using the phrase: *dekha caitanyera kṛpā-mahābala*, "Look! How powerful is the mercy of Mahāprabhu."

Karuna-sindhu Gauranga ki jai! Mahārāja Pratāparudra ki jai!



IV. Mahāprabhu's Bhojan Lila

After meeting Mahāprabhu in the Jagannatha Vallabha Garden, King Prataparudra sent Gauranga and His associates the finest quality Jagannatha *maha-prasadam*, which had just been offered at Balagandi. Mahāprabhu was fully satisfied simply to see the wide variety of food that had been given to His beloved Jagannatha Swami. [see description above under Mausi Ma Temple pastime I.]

In order to honor the feast, every devotee was given one leaf plate and ten leaf cups. Knowing how much energy the *kirtanias* had expended, Mahāprabhu sat them down in lines and personally served them; being very eager to feed them. However, the devotees refused to eat until Mahāprabhu sat down to eat. Gauraraya sat down, but He made sure that everyone ate sumptuously up to their necks (*ākaṅṭha pūriyā*). (Cc. 2.14.36-42)

Lord Gauranga bhojana lila ki jai! Jagannatha maha-prasadam ki jai!

V. The Pandita Learns to Look Beyond the Cover

Once a great *brahmin pandita* named Pradyumna Misra asked Mahāprabhu to enlighten him by speaking about Sri Kṛṣṇa. Mahāprabhu ordered him to go to Jagannatha Vallabha garden to hear *kṛṣṇa-katha* from Ramananda Raya. When Pradyumna arrived in the garden, a servant told him to wait because Ramananda was busy bathing, massaging and training two teenage girls to exhibit the emotions of his drama through dance.

Upon hearing the activities of Ramananda Raya, Pradyumna became disturbed. When they finally met, Ramananda humbly inquired how he could serve Pradyumna. Hiding his original purpose for coming, Pradyumna politely said, "Oh, I just came to see you and become purified by your *darsana*." Then he abruptly left and went home.

The next day, when Pradyumna Misra met Mahāprabhu, the Lord inquired, "Did you hear *kṛṣṇa-katha* from Ramananda Raya?" Pradyumna did not give a direct answer but rather described the activities of Ramananda that he had heard from the servant. The all-knowing Sri Caitanyadeva understood that Ramananda's actions had created doubts in Pradyumna's mind which kept him from hearing Ramananda's *katha*.

To clear Pradyumna's doubts and glorify His beloved devotee Raya Ramananda, Gauranga spoke as follows: "I am a renounced *sannyāsī*. But what to speak of seeing a woman, if I even hear the name of a woman, I feel changes in My mind and body. Therefore who could remain unaffected by the sight of a woman? It is very difficult. The two professional dancing girls are beautiful and youthful, yet Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya personally massages



their entire bodies with oil. He personally bathes, dresses and decorates them with ornaments. In this way, he naturally sees and touches the private parts of their bodies.

“Nevertheless, the mind of Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya never changes, although he teaches the girls how to physically express all the transformations of ecstasy. His mind is as steady as wood or stone. Indeed, it is wonderful that even when he touches such young girls, his mind never changes. The authority for such acts is the prerogative of Rāmānanda Rāya alone, for I can understand that his body is not material but has been completely transformed into a spiritual entity, *aprākṛta deha*. Ramananda Raya is situated on the path of *rāganuga-bhakti* performing *bhajana* in his *siddha-deha: rāgānuga-mārge jāni rāyera bhajana, siddha-deha-tulya, tāte ‘prākṛta’ nahe mana*. I also hear *kṛṣṇa-kathā* from Rāmānanda Rāya. Thus if you want to hear such topics, I suggest that you visit him again.”

Meeting again with Ramananda, Pradyumna heard the most satisfying talks about Sri Kṛṣṇa. Later Pradyumna told Mahaprabhu about his experience, “Everything I heard from Ramananda Raya was like an ocean of Kṛṣṇa *rasa*. Because of You, my Lord, I drank that *rasa* and now I am obliged to You life after life.” (Cc. 3.5.11-70)

To vanquish the false pride of so-called renunciants and learned scholars [like Pradyumna Misra], Gauranga Mahaprabhu spreads real religious principles (*dharma prakāśa*), even through a *sūdra* or a lowborn, fourth-class man. Generally *brāhmaṇas* are very proud of their birth and spiritual knowledge. To cut down the pride of birthright *brāhmaṇas*, Sri Caitanyadeva proved that a person like Rāmānanda Rāya, a *sūdra gr̥hastha*, can become the *guru* of Pradyumna Miśra, a highly qualified born *brāhmaṇa*. Mahaprabhu empowered Ramananda Raya to instruct Pradyumna in *bhakti-tattva* and *prema-tattva*, the truth about devotional service and ecstatic divine love.

High class *brahmins* generally believe only born *brahmins* can become spiritual masters. However, according to Mahaprabhu’s philosophy, anyone who knows the science of Kṛṣṇa can become a spiritual master.

*kibā vipra kibā nyāsī sūdra kene naya,
yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei ‘guru’ haya*

“Whether one is a *brāhmaṇa*, a *sannyāsī* or a *sūdra*—regardless of what he is—he can become a spiritual master if he knows the science of Kṛṣṇa.” (Cc. 2.8.128)

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is creating pure, exalted Vaiṣṇavas even from those born in families considered lower than those of *sūdras*. This is proof that a Vaiṣṇava may appear in any family.



In essence, Mahāprabhu taught that any person who knows the science of Kṛṣṇa and who is fully qualified in spiritual life can become *jagad-guru*. (Cc. 3.5.84-85 v.&p.)

Srila Ramananda Raya ki jai! Sri Pradyumna Misra ki jai!

VI. Gaurāṅga's Sphurṭi of Syama

One night in April (Vaiśakha Purnima), Mahāprabhu and His companions wandered in Jagannātha Vallabha garden under the soothing rays of the full moon. The garden abounded with fully blossomed trees and creepers exactly like those in Vṛndāvana. Bumblebees, parrots and *mynas* talked with one another. The gentle, flower-scented breeze acted as a *guru* to teach the trees and creepers how to dance. The trees and creepers glittered in brilliant rays of the full moon.

Although all six seasons were present there, Gaurāṅga Bhagavan enjoyed most in the predominant spring season. Mahāprabhu danced through the garden, as His personal associates sang verses from *Gīta Govinda* describing Rādhā-Madhava's *vasanta-rasa*, beginning with the line *lalita-lavaṅga-latā*. As Gaurāṅga wandered around every tree and creeper, He suddenly saw Syama beneath an *aśoka* tree. When He saw Kṛṣṇa, Mahāprabhu ran swiftly toward Him, but Kṛṣṇa smiled and disappeared. Attaining Kṛṣṇa and then losing Him, Mahāprabhu fell to the ground unconscious.

The entire garden became mysteriously filled with the fragrance of Kṛṣṇa's beautiful transcendental body. When Mahāprabhu smelled it, He entered a deep state of internal consciousness. As the scent of Syama's body incessantly entered His nose, Mahāprabhu became mad to relish it. Absorbed in internal consciousness (*antar-sphūrṭi*), Mahāprabhu recited a verse that Rādhā once spoke to Her *sakhis* describing how She hankers for the transcendental scent of Syama's body:

*kuraṅga-mada-jid-vapuḥ-parimalormi-kṛṣṭāṅganah
svakāṅga-nalināṣṭake śaśi-yutābja-gandha-prataḥ
madenduvara-candanāguru-sugandhi-carcārcitah
sa me madana-mohanah sakhi tanoti nāsā-sphṛhām*

“With the waves of scent from His transcendental body, which conquers the maddening smell of musk, Kṛṣṇa attracts the minds of all women. All eight lotuslike parts of Govinda's body (face, navel, eyes, palms and feet) distribute the fragrance of a lotus mixed with camphor. Acyuta's body is anointed with aromatic substances like musk, camphor, sandalwood and *aguru*. O *sakhi*! Thus My Madana-mohana always increases the desire of My nose.” (*Govinda-līlamṛta* 8.6)



“O *sakhi*, the scent of Kṛṣṇa’s body especially enters the noses of women, captures them and forcibly brings them to Kṛṣṇa. The scent of Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental body is so attractive that it enchants the bodies and minds of all women. That bewildering scent loosens the underwear and hair of all women, makes them mad and causes them to dance. The scent of Kṛṣṇa’s body is like a plunderer for all women in the world. The dramatic actor Madana-mohana has opened a shop of scents that attract the women of the world to be His customers. Syama delivers the scents freely, but they make the women all so blind they cannot find the path returning home.”

Gaurahari, His mind thus stolen by the scent of Kṛṣṇa’s body, ran here and there like a bumblebee. Gaura ran to the trees and plants, hoping to see Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa sphurti*), but instead He found only that maddening scent. Both Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya sang to Mahāprabhu, who danced and enjoyed happiness until sunrise. Then they devised a plan to bring Gaurāṅga back to external consciousness (*bāhya-sphūrti*). (Cc. 3.19.78-100)

Sri Kṛṣṇa prema sphurti ki jai! Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu ki jai!

Prema—A Sequence of Revelations

In *Madhurya-kadambini*, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura describes of how Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa progressively reveals His sweetness to a devotee at the level of *prema*. This can be called the “sequence of *sphūrtis*” or revelations, which appear at seven levels beginning with the eyes, then nose, ears, skin, lips, generosity and compassion. Mahāprabhu’s experience in Jagannatha Vallabha garden of first seeing Kṛṣṇa (in *sphurti*), and then smelling Kṛṣṇa’s sweet fragrance follows Visvanatha’s expose. While eagerly waiting to someday have a *prema-sphurti* of our sweet Lord Syama, let us examine the sequence of revelations.

1. Sweet Form (eyes): When *kṛṣṇa-prema* first arises, Kṛṣṇa reveals the endless sweetness of His beautiful body to the eager eyes of His loving devotee. Syama’s sweetness turns the mind and all senses into eyes to behold the exquisite transcendental beauty of the Govinda. Seeing Syama’s matchless splendor, the devotee experiences ecstatic symptoms (*asta-sattvic vikāra*) like trembling, weeping and becoming stunned. The ecstasies may hinder his vision of Kṛṣṇa or he may faint due to exhilaration.

2. Sweet Fragrance (nose): In order to awaken the devotee who has fainted, Kṛṣṇa fills his nose with His fragrance. Now all the devotee’s senses withdraw from the sense of sight and rush to focus on the sense of smell. Kṛṣṇa’s sweet fragrance overpowers him and once again he faints.

3. Sweet Voice (ears): Kṛṣṇa rescues His devotee once again by reviving



him with His melodious voice, whispering in his ear, “My dear devotee! I am now fully under your control. Do not be overwhelmed anymore; just experience My sweetness and fulfill your heart’s desire.” In this way, Kṛṣṇa appears to the *premi-bhakta*’s ears with His third sweetness. Surcharged, all the devotee’s senses try to hear and absorb the sweet melody of His beloved Lord’s voice. Unable to contain the ecstasy, the devotee faints again.

4. Sweet Touch (skin): With the fourth sweetness of His transcendental touch Kṛṣṇa revives His devotee. To the *dasya-bhakta* (servitorship mellow) Kṛṣṇa puts His lotus feet on his head; to the *sakhya-bhakta* (friendship mellow) Kṛṣṇa entwines His lotus-petal fingers with his fingers; to the *vatsalya-bhakta* (parental mellow) Kṛṣṇa wipes away his tears with His lotus hands; and to the *madhurya-bhakta* (amorous mellow) Kṛṣṇa draws him to His chest and wraps His arms around him in a tender embrace. Thus Sri Kṛṣṇa reciprocates appropriately with the different mellows of each devotee’s love.

5. Sweet Lips (taste): As before, the devotee faints in indescribable joy, and then Kṛṣṇa shows His fifth sweetness by offering the nectarean taste of His lips. Of course, Kṛṣṇa only reveals this sweetness to those who are in a conjugal relation with Him, not to any other devotee. The excessive bliss arising from this intimate encounter with Kṛṣṇa causes the devotee to faint again.

6. Sweet Generosity (*audarya*): Now the devotee’s blissful swoon is so deep that Kṛṣṇa must revive him by bestowing His *audarya* (generosity), the sixth type of sweetness. At this stage, all of Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental attributes like beauty forcefully manifest simultaneously to the devotee’s senses: sight, hearing and mind. *Prema*, being induced by Kṛṣṇa, increases immensely and the devotee’s thirst for it increases proportionately. Acting like the full moon, *prema* creates hundreds of waves on the ocean of the devotee’s ecstasy. *Prema* then installs itself in the devotee’s mind as its guardian deity; repairing and rebuilding his inner being. *Prema* extends its power (*audarya-sakti*) over him in such a way that a devotee can relish unhindered all of Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental qualities simultaneously.

One may argue that by nature the human mind can only focus on one subject at a time, hence it is impossible to mentally focus on five different subjects at once. But this argument is completely wrong, because Sri Kṛṣṇa instills His inconceivable potency within the *premi-bhakta*, thus enabling him to simultaneously relish all of His qualities through his mind and five senses.

7. Sweet Compassion (*karuna*): Although it wants to, it is impossible for the *cataka* bird to drink all the rain of the occasional downpour during the



scorching heat of summer. Similarly, seeing the intense eagerness of the *cataka* bird like *premi-bhakta* to savor His full sweetness, but actually tasting only a drop, Kṛṣṇa thinks: “If My devotee cannot sufficiently enjoy My sweetness, then I possess all this sweetness for nothing.” Hence, Sri Kṛṣṇa extends His compassion, the seventh sweetness, so the devotee can relish all His sweetness at once.

The power of compassion (*anugraha-sakti*) resides in the whorl of the lotus of Sri Kṛṣṇa’s eight potencies: *Bimala*, *Utkarsini*, *Jnana*, *Kriya*, *Satya*, *Isana* and *Prahvi* (power to cause endless possibilities and capacities). *Anugraha*, the ninth potency, rules like a queen over these eight energies. *Anugraha-sakti* emanates from Kṛṣṇa’s lotus eyes, which means that when Kṛṣṇa casts His mercy-laden glance, *krpa-sakti* is showered upon the *bhakta*. To a *dasya-bhakta* she is compassion; to the *vatsalya-bhakta* she is filial fondness; and to the *madhurya-bhakta* she is heart-melting magnetic power.

When Kṛṣṇa’s independent will power, *iccha-sakti*, is directed by the *krpa-sakti*, even self-realized sages become astonished at Lord Hari’s qualities. As a result, they give up their indifference and self-satisfaction (*atmaramata*) to become Kṛṣṇa *bhaktas*. Kṛṣṇa’s *krpa-sakti*, alone acts to bring out Kṛṣṇa’s magnanimous quality of *bhakta-vatsalya*, the Lord’s protective feelings and affection towards His surrendered devotees. Thus *krpa-sakti*, the regal queen, directs Kṛṣṇa’s *bhakta-vatsalya* potency, which in turn reigns supreme over all the other auspicious, constitutional qualities of the Sri Kṛṣṇa, such as *satya*, *sauca*, *daya* and *ksanti*, mentioned by Bhumi-mata:

satyaṁ śaucaṁ dayā kṣāntiḥ, tyāgaḥ santoṣa ārjavam
śamo damaḥ tapaḥ sāmyaṁ, titikṣoparatiḥ śrutam
jñānaṁ viraktir aiśvaryaṁ, śauryaṁ tejo balaṁ smṛtiḥ
svātantryaṁ kauśalaṁ kāntir, dhairyaṁ mārḍavam eva ca

“Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa possesses within Himself: (1) truthfulness, (2) purity (3) intolerance of another’s unhappiness, (4) the power to control anger, (5) self-satisfaction, (6) straightforwardness, (7) steadiness of mind, (8) sense control (9) responsibility, (10) equality, (11) tolerance, (12) equanimity, (13) faithfulness, (14) knowledge, (15) absence of sense enjoyment, (16) leadership, (17) chivalry, (18) influence, (19) the power to make everything possible, (20) the discharge of proper duty, (21) complete independence, (22) dexterity, (23) fullness of all beauty, (24) serenity, (25) kindheartedness, (26) ingenuity, (27) gentility, (28) magnanimity, (29) determination, (30) perfection in all knowledge, (31) proper execution, (32) possession of all objects of enjoyment, (33) joyfulness, (34) immovability, (35) fidelity, (36) fame, (37) worship, (38)



pridelessness, (39) being (as the Personality of Godhead) and (40) eternity.” (Sb. 1.16.26-27)

Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa kṛpā-sakti ki jai! Sri Kṛṣṇa prema-sphurti ki jai!

4. Birthplace of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura

Location—Exit Jagannatha Vallabha garden, turn right on Grand Road and proceed about ½ km. toward Jagannatha Mandira until you see on the right side the big pink Sree Caitanya Gaudiya Math temple with a sign above the entrance gate saying, “Birth Place of Prabhupada 108 Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Thakura.”

The present day temple is located on the former site of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura’s house, where he lived while acting as the Puri District Magistrate and the Jagannatha Temple Administrator. In the pastimes section below, you can see the Thakura’s amazingly productive daily Puri schedule.

Main Deities

A gorgeous black Kṛṣṇa and a most attractive, charming golden Rādhārāni named Sri Sri Radha-Nayana Mani Jiu grace the center altar. The words *nayana mani* mean, “Kṛṣṇa—the jewel of Rādhā’s lotus eyes.”

Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra are also here. A *murti* of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura is being worshiped in the far right altar, the exact spot where he appeared. It is said that when they were digging the earth during the temple construction, a sweet sandalwood smell emanated from the ground where Sarasvati Thakura took birth. While doing *Mandira parikrama*, you will see the four *sampradaya acaryas*: Visnuswami, Madhvacarya, Nimbarka and Ramanuja.

Pastimes

I. Every Minute Absorbed in Seva

The following description of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura’s daily Puri schedule while he lived here comes from the diary of his son, Lalita Prasada. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura was always engaged in the service of Gaura-Gadadhara and Radha-Madhava; he was never idle. He rested from 8:00 P.M.—10:00 P.M.; wrote transcendental books until 4:00 A.M. and took rest for 30 minutes. At 4:30 A.M. he chanted *maha-mantra japa* for 2 ½ hours. At 7:00 A.M. he answered correspondence. From 7:30 A.M.—8:30 A.M. he read religious and philosophical works, received visitors, or continued reading until 9:30 A.M.



Sometimes from 8:30 A.M.—9:30 A.M., Bhaktivinoda walked back and forth on the veranda of his house, contemplating different religious questions and solving them in his mind; or he solved them aloud as if preaching to some unseen guest. From 9:30 A.M.—9:45 A.M., he took a short nap. Upon rising, he bathed, and took a breakfast of two cups of milk, two *chapatis* and some fruit; all this in ten minutes!

At 9:55 A.M. the Ṭhākura, wearing coat, pants and six strands of big *tulasī* beads around his neck, attended the District Court. As the Magistrate, he was resolute and expedient in his court decisions, not tolerating any hypocrisy; He did his work and left. Although Bhaktivinoda held a high post under the British Government, He shaved his head monthly and never cared what anyone thought of it.

The lawyers and Englishmen were astounded by the Ṭhākura's work capacity. Daily from 10:00 A.M.—1:00 P.M. he heard between thirty and fifty cases and passed judgments. What took other Magistrates 30 minutes; he finished in seven, including a written judgment. At 1:00 P.M. he went home, refreshed himself and then returned to work from 2:00—5:00 P.M. Every evening, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura translated Sanskrit religious works into Bengali by dictating them to a secretary. Then he bathed and ate a little rice, two *chapatis* and two cups of milk. (*The Seventh Gosvami*)

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura ki jai! Sri Kṛṣṇa akhaṇḍa sevānanda ki jai!

II. Jagannatha Blesses His Devotee

While serving as the British government appointed administrator of the Jagannathā temple, Thakura Bhaktivinoda visited the temple everyday to pray to Bimala-devi, the *parā-śakti* of Lord Jagannatha. He begged the goddess to send a spiritually empowered son (a ray of Visnu) to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness worldwide.

On Friday, February 6, 1874, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura appeared in Sri Ksetra Dhama. To show his gratitude for receiving a pure devotee son, Bhaktivinoda Thakura named him Bimala Prasada (the mercy of Bimala-devi). In July of the same year, Jagannatha's chariot stopped directly in front of Bhaktivinoda Thakura's house. The baby Bimala Prasada was placed on the chariot and offered to the lotus feet of Jagannatha Swami. Suddenly to everyone's surprise a long pink lotus garland fell from Jagannatha's neck onto the baby: announcing to the world; "This pure golden child is truly blessed by the Lord of the universe!"

Nilacala Candra Jagannatha ki jai!

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura ki jai!



III. Sarasvati Thakura's Rādhā Bhāva

Sometimes while speaking on *rādhā-tattva* or mentioning the name of Rādhā, Sarasvati Thakura suddenly manifested various *aṣṭa-sāttvika-vikāra*: stunned, perspiring, standing body hairs, faltering voice, trembling, changing color, tears and devastation. Sarasvati's whole face turned white and then red, his hair stood erect, and his whole body stiffened. Profuse tears flowed from his eyes and his voice became deep and grave. Whenever he elucidated the teachings of Rupa and Raghunatha, his whole body and especially his face turned bright-red. These incidents occurred several times, in different public places, especially at Rādhā-kunda or Mayapura. Although he tried his utmost to suppress these feelings and continue lecturing, everyone in the assembly saw that Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura was internally experiencing turbulent spiritual ecstasies due to his *rādhā-bhāva*. (*Lion Guru*)

In 1935, during the Vraja Mandala Parikrama, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura held a festival in Radha-kunda and fed all the Vrajavasis with opulent food like *laddu*, *pera* and *kacoris*. Everyone ate so much, “*chakachak*” at that unforgettable feast. On Radhastami, 500 people assembled at Rādhā-kunda to hear Sarasvati's Thakura's lecture. At one point he spoke animatedly on *radha-tattva*. But after only ten minutes he fell silent, overwhelmed with ecstasy. After some time he spoke again. (*Lion Guru*)

IV. Siddhanta Sarasvati Anecdotes

To further glorify Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, my most exalted *nitya-siddha param gurudeva*, four anecdotes are given here from an unpublished biography entitled *Lion Guru*.

A. In Puri, Sarasvati Thakura passed the summer in rented houses before establishing the Purusottama Matha. He told his disciples to walk along the beach early in morning chanting the Panca-tattva *mantra* because at this time Mahaprabhu and the Panca-tattva were coming there for bathing.

B. At the end of every lecture, Sarasvati Thakura recited this verse by Prabodhananda Sarasvati from the *Caitanya Candramṛta*:

*dante nidhāya tṛṇakam padayor nipatya
kṛtvā ca kāku-śatam etad aham bravīmi
he sādhaḥ sakalam eva vihāya dūrād
caitanya-candra-carāṇe kurutānurāgam*

“Holding a straw in my mouth, I fall at your feet and and flatter you: ‘O sir, you are a very great and intelligent man. There is no one more advanced than you. You are so intelligent, rich and beautiful.’”



“After hearing this, you may ask, ‘Why are you so humble and why are you flattering me? Please tell me your intention.’

“I will reply, ‘O you are a great *sadhu* who has learned so many things. This is very good, but now please kick them out. Whatever nonsense rascaldom you have learned, and whatever hogwash things are in your brain; kick them all out. Throw them all far away and place all your love in the lotus feet of Lord Gauranga.”

C. A popular *mantra* in Bengal and Orissa is “*Sri Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, Prabhu Nityananda, Hare Kṛṣṇa Hari Rama, Sri Radhe Govinda.*” Srila Bhaktisiddhanta never said that it was *rasabhasa*, but he never chanted it himself.

D. Srila Sarasvati Thakura taught and practised renunciation, but for preaching he did everything in a grand way. For example, to observe the Govardhana Annakuta Mahotsava he hosted a thousand guests, and called in cooks from all over India! 1,008 items were prepared in the cooking styles of Bengal, Andhra, Gujarat, Orissa and Bangladesh.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura ki jai!

5. Ahulya Maṭha

Location—This important place is the Puri home of Nityananda Prabhu and Advaita Acarya. It is on the other side of Grand Road, a five minute walk from the Gaudiya Maṭha temple. Coming from Gaudiya Matha, go down Heragohiri-sahi road toward Daitaparha-sahi area. Go past the Jaduani Library and Temple (a famous landmark), then look on the left side of Heragohiri-sahi road just after passing Old Sadar Thana Lane which comes in on your right. There is signboard reading “Goswami Bhandar” above a small store on the right of the entrance which is just a small wooden door opening into a courtyard cum private house. The run down temple is straight back to the left.

The owner, Asish Goswami (mo. 9778642891 & 9238987580), and his family are very friendly Vaisnavas trying their best to maintain this important sacred place of Sri Caitanyadeva’s transcendental pastimes. Since the value of service is judged by its necessity, your interest and kind donations here will go a long way here to improve the temple and your own devotional position.

Main Deities

Gauranga Mahaprabhu stands in the center, flanked by Advaita Acarya and Sita-devi on His left, and Sri Nityananda Prabhu on His right. Small Deities of Jagannatha, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and *salagrama* are here too.



Pastimes

I. Mahaprabhu Meets Naḍa and Nitai

The temple owner, Shri Asish Goswami kindly narrated the following story: “The word *ahūlya* means oar in Bengali. Five-hundred years ago, the founder of this temple came from Bengal to Puri by rowing a boat with an oar, hence the temple founder was known as Ahūlya Goswami.

“When Advaita and Nitai came to Puri, Lord Gauranga was already staying here but they did not know where. Advaita and Nitai stayed here in this house with Vinode (aka Ahūlya) Goswami while going out everyday looking for Sri Caitanyadeva. Finally Lord Gauranga came here Himself and met His two eternal associates Naḍa (Advaita Acarya) and Nitai. At that time, Mahaprabhu asked them to return to Navadvipa, but they stayed here for two months. Mahaprabhu came here regularly to meet Naḍa and Nitai and take Jagannatha *maha-prasadam*. Every year Advaita and Nitai stayed here whenever they came to Puri. After some time, Vinode Goswami installed the big wooden Deities on the altar here to worship Mahaprabhu, Nitai, Sita and Sitanatha, to venerate Their visit, and to remember all the ecstatic pastimes They performed here at Ahūlya Maṭha.”

Nitai-Gaura Sitanatha ki jai! Srimati Sita-devi ki jai!

Ahūlya Goswami ki jai! Ahūlya Maṭha ki jai!





Patita Pavana Jagannatha

Day Trip Four

Hiring an auto *rickshaw*, one should visit the places in the order as they are numbered below. Your first stop is Markandeya Sarovara. Then you will see place number two which is the Viśākhā Maṭha then place number three, and so on to the last and final stop which is number seven, the Beḍi Hanumān temple. The sequence of sacred spots to visit today is as follows:

1. Markandeya Sarovara
2. Visakha Maṭha
3. Bali Maṭha
4. The Jagannatha Temple (Sri Mandira)
5. Atharanala Bridge
6. Cakra Tirtha (Cakra Narayana Temple)
7. Bedi Hanuman Temple

** Note—Today, if you have less time, only visit places one through four, six and seven and skip number five, Atharanala Bridge. If you have even less time, then see these six places on Day Trip three.

Place number five, Atharanala Bridge, is outside Puri town on the main road to Bhubanesvara. It can be seen today, or whenever you leave Jagannatha Puri Dhama to go Bhubanesvara Airport or the Railway station.

1. Markandeya Sarovara

Location—This large water tank is located south-west of Jagannatha Mandira in the Markandeshwar-sahi area off Markanda Road. The great Vaisnava sage Markandeya Rsi resides here worshipping a Siva Deity named Markandesvara Mahadeva, one of Puri's Panca Mahadevas. Sri Madanamohan, Jagannatha's *utsava murti*, enacts His Kaliya-mardana-lila (crushing Kaliya serpent) in this holy water tank. If one bathes in Markandeya Sarovara, and then takes darsana of the Markandesvara Mahadeva Siva *linga* here, he obtains the pious result of performing both *rajasuya* and *asvamedha-yajnas*.

Main Deities

There is a *murti* of Markandeya Rsi and a Siva *linga* called Markandesvara Mahadeva, who can be praised with the following *pranama mantra*:

*trilocana namas te 'stu, namas te śaśi-bhūṣaṇa
trāhi mām tvaṁ virūpākṣa, mahādeva namo stu te*



“I offer my respects to the one with three eyes who is ornamented by the moon. Please always protect me, O Lord with fearsome eyes. O Mahadeva, I offer my respects unto you.”

There is a friendly *pujari* here named Seshdeva Panda. He allowed me, albeit a “non-Hindu,” to take *darsana* of Mahadeva and told many inspiring *Puranic* stories.

Pastimes

I. Purity Defeats Lust

Markandeya, a lifelong celibate, worshiped the Supreme Lord Hari for six lifetimes of Manu. In the seventh *manvantara*, King Indra sent Kāmadeva (Cupid) and his associates to break Markandeya’s vow of *brahmacharya*. Cupid the god of lust, beautiful celestial singers, dancing girls, the season of spring and the sandalwood-scented breeze from the Malaya Hills, along with greed and intoxication personified all arrived one day at Markandeya’s *asrama*.

The fragrant springtime breeze, carrying cooling drops of water evoked the lusty spirit of Cupid. A voluptuous *apsara* with heavy breasts ran about in front of Markandeya until her clothes suddenly fell off. Kamadeva shot his arrows to seduce the sage to sin but he failed. Rather, the sage’s power of purity started burning Cupid and his heavenly damsels.

Thus Mārkaṇḍeya Ṛṣi defeated Cupid and all his *maya* by his *tapah-balam*, the potency generated from his penance. Then, to show him special mercy, Markandeya’s venerable Lord Śrī Hari appeared before him in the form of Nara-Nārāyaṇa. Mārkaṇḍeya immediately offered *dandavats*, and then worshiped and praised the Lord with magnificent prayers. (SB 12.8.1-22)

Mārkaṇḍeya Ṛṣi ki jai!

II. Brahma Gayatri Means Visnu

Once King Vajranabha, Sri Kṛṣṇa’s great grandson asked Mārkaṇḍeya Ṛṣi why Brahma Gāyatrī is chanted in Vaiṣṇava sacrifices if the worshipable and presiding deity of Brahma Gayatri is the sun-god. Mārkaṇḍeya answered that Brahma Gāyatrī actually refers only to Lord Viṣṇu. After showing how each word of Brahma Gāyatrī relates to Lord Viṣṇu, Markandeya concluded his *tika*, saying:

*kāma-kāmo labhet kāmaṁ gati-kāmas tu sad-gatim
akāmas tu tad avāpnoti yad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam*

“A person desiring material gain or liberation in the next life can achieve



either by chanting Brahma Gāyatrī, but the worshiper who is devoid of desires attains the supreme abode of Lord Viṣṇu (*viṣṇoḥ paramam padam*).” (*Viṣṇu-dharmottara* P. Prathama Khaṇḍa chp. 165)

Sri Gayatri Mata ki jai! Parama Vaisnava Mārkaṇḍeya Rṣi ki jai!

III. The Cosmos in His Belly

At the end of Brahma’s day, all the residents of earth perish in the waters of devastation (*pralaya*). Markaṇḍeya alone survives because he was blessed to live for seven days of Lord Brahma. During one annihilation, however, Markaṇḍeya was floating in the deluge looking for shelter. Suddenly he saw an island with a *banyan* tree. To his great surprise, Markaṇḍeya observed in that tree an effulgent sapphire blue baby lying on a leaf playfully sucking His toe.

When Markaṇḍeya approached that captivating child to learn his identity, the baby inhaled and forcefully drew the sage into His body. Within that baby’s belly, he saw the fourteen planetary systems and all the ruling demigods. Markaṇḍeya traveled toward the end of creation but failed to reach it. As Markaṇḍeya marveled at the unprecedented display, the baby exhaled and out came the *muni*. Now Markaṇḍeya realized that the infant was none other than the Supreme Lord Gopala, his worshipable beloved. Markaṇḍeya asked the Lord, “Why is this particular tract of land unaffected by the cosmic *pralaya*?”

Lord Gopala replied, “This is My transcendental abode called Purusottama-ksetra (Jagannatha Puri). It is completely beyond the influence of material creation or destruction. Residents of this place experience eternal joy and never take rebirth.” After hearing this astonishing fact, Markaṇḍeya stayed here in Puri meditating upon his Lord Hari. (*Skanda P.*)

Markaṇḍeya Mahadeva Siva ki jai! Markaṇḍeya Rsi ki jai!

2. Visakha Maṭha

Location—This extremely small holy spot is only a five minute walk from Markaṇḍeya Sarovara. Madhava Chandra Dasa worships the Deities in a makeshift Deity room next to the original temple which is now severely rundown.

Main Deities

It is said that Sri Narahari Sarakara Thakura, an eternal associate of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, installed and worshiped the five feet tall, blissfully dancing *neem* wood Deities of Gaura-Gadadhara here. Jagannatha, Baladeva, Subhadra and many *salagrama-silas* share the altar.



Pastimes

I. Narahari Sarakara Thakura Caritamṛta

Before meeting Mahāprabhu, Narahari Sarakara had written many Sanskrit and Bengali songs about the *vraja-rasa* of Rādhā-Gīrīdhārī. Later, he and Gadadhara Pandita always stayed with Gaurāṅga in Mayapur. Narahari used to please Mahāprabhu by waving a *camara* fan as mentioned in a Thakura Bhaktivinoda's Gaura-aroti song: *narahari adi kori camara dhulaya*.

Narahari Sarakara was born in Sri Khanda. By the influence of his pure Vaisnava family, the entire village became devotees and turned into a "branch of the desire tree of love of God." One day Nityananda Prabhu came to Sri Khanda and asked Narahari, "All right, we know who you are. So where is the honey?" Narahari magically turned a pot of water into supersweet honey for the Nityananda Balarama's pleasure. This is not so surprising, however, because in *vraja-lila* Narahari is Madhumati-sakhi who supplies mouth-watering honey for Syama's satisfaction.

Srila Locana Dasa, a disciple of Narahari, eulogizes his guru in *Caitanya Mangala*: "The mind and heart of Sri Narahari Sarakara were saturated with fathomless devotion for Rādhā-Govinda Yugala. In Vraja, Narahari is Madhumati-sakhi, a storehouse of sweetness in the service of Rādhikā. And in *gaurāṅga-lila* he is Narahari, a storehouse of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *prema*."

Sri Narahari Sarakara Thakura ki jai!

II. The Glories of Gadadhara Pandita

In order to please Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu and Sri Narahari Sarakara Thakura, pilgrims can lovingly chant the following eight prayers written by Srila Svarupa Damodara Gosvami in glorification of Gadādhara Pandita:

Śrī Gadādharaṣṭaka

1. *sva-bhakti-yoga-lasinām sadā vraje vihāriṇam*

hari-priyā-gaṇāgragam śacīsuta-priyeśvaram

sarādhā-kṛṣṇa-sevana-prakāśakam mahāśayam

bhajāmy aham gadādharam supāṇḍitam gurum prabhum

I worship the greatly learned and exalted spiritual master, Gadādhara Prabhu, who appears very splendid, engaged in Gaurāṅga's service. He always performs pastimes in Vraja, where he is very prominent among the beloved *gopis* of Hari. Sacīsuta is the dear master of Gadādhara Prabhu, who manifests the confidential *seva* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.



2. navojjvalādi- bhāvanā-vidhāna-karma-pāragam
vicitra-gaura-bhakti-sindhu-raṅga-bhaṅga-lāsinam
surāga-mār-ga-darsākam vrajādi-vāsa-dāyakam
bhajāmy aham gadādharam supaṇḍitam gurum prabhum

I worship the greatly learned spiritual master, Gadādhara Prabhu. He is expertly absorbed in meditation on the nine rasas of devotional service, beginning with *ujjala-rasa* (erotic love), and he dances in the waves of the amazing ocean of *gaura-bhakti*. He preaches the path of *rāganuga-bhakti* (spontaneous devotional service), and He can grant a fit person residence in the transcendental land of Vraja.

3. sākīśutānghri-sara-bhakta-vṛnda-vandya-gauravam
gaura-bhāva-citta-padma-madhyā-kṛṣṇa-vallabham
mukunda-gaura-rūpiṇam svabhāva-dharma-dāyakam
bhajāmy aham gadādharam supaṇḍitam gurum prabhum

I worship the greatly learned spiritual master, Gadādhara Prabhu, who is the best of those devoted to the lotus feet of Sacisuta. I offer respectful obeisances to him and treat him with great reverence. Gadadhara is very dear to Sri Kṛṣṇa, who sits in the middle of the lotus of his heart in His golden form as Gaura. Gadadhara also preaches that Lord Mukunda has assumed the golden form of Gaura to reestablish the living entities in their original constitutional positions as eternal servants of the Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa.

4. nikuṅja-sevanādika-prakāsānaika-kāraṇam
sadā sakhī-rati-pradam mahā-rasa-svarūpakam
sadāśritānghri-pankajam sārīri-sad-gurum varam
bhajāmy aham gadādharam supaṇḍitam gurum prabhum

I worship the greatly learned and exalted spiritual master, Gadādhara Prabhu. He alone has revealed the exalted glories of the Vraja-gopis' confidential *nikunja-seva* in the groves of Vrndavana. He is distributing the *sakhis'* ecstatic conjugal love, and He himself is the form of *maha-rasa*. I always take shelter of his lotus feet, that great *sad-guru* who blesses all living entities.

5. mähāprabhor mahā-rasa-prakāsānānkuram priyam
sadā mahā-rasānkura-prakāsanādi-vāsanam
mahāprabhor vrajāṅganādi-bhāva-moda-kārakam
bhajāmy aham gadādharam supaṇḍitam gurum prabhum



I worship the greatly learned spiritual master, Gadādhara Prabhu. Being so dear to Mahaprabhu, it seems he has sprouted from the manifestation of Gaura's ecstatic love. He is an abode of ecstatic love, and He delights Mahaprabhu by inciting within Him the ecstatic emotional love experienced by the damsels of Vraja.

6. *dvijendra-vṛnda-vandya-pāda-yugma-bhakti-var dhakam
ni jeṣu rādhikātmatā-vapuḥ-prakāśanāgraham
aśeṣa-bhakti-śāstra-śikṣayojjvalāmṛta-prabam
bhajāmy aham gadādharam supaṇḍitam gurum prabhum*

I worship the greatly learned spiritual master, Gadādhara Prabhu, who expands the mellows of devotional service and whose lotus feet are worshiped by the best of *brāhmanas*. Among his confidential associates, he reveals his actual form as Śrīmatī Rādhika. On the basis of all the *bhakti-sastra*, Gadadhara teaches about the nectarean ecstatic conjugal love of the Vraja-gopis (*ujjala premamṛta*).

7. *mudā ni ja-priyādika-svapāda-padma-sīndhubhir
mahā-rasārṇavāmṛta-pradeṣṭa-gaura-bhaktidam
sadāṣṭa-sattvikānvitam ni jeṣṭa-bhakti-dāyakam
bhajāmy aham gadādharam supaṇḍitam gurum prabhum*

I worship the greatly learned spiritual master, Gadādhara Prabhu. With delight he is giving *gaura-bhakti*, which reveals the nectarean ocean of *maharasa* flowing from the lotus feet of Syama's dearest *gopi* Rādhikā. Gadādhara Prabhu is always decorated with the eight *sattvika-bhāva*, and distributing pure *bhakti* to his worshipable Sri Kṛṣṇa.

8. *yadiya-rīti-rāga-raṅga-bhaṅga-digdha-mānaso
naro 'api yati tūrṇam eva nārya-bhāva-bhājanam
tam ujjvalākta-cittam etu citta-matta-śatpado
bhajāmy aham gadādharam supaṇḍitam guram prabhum*

I worship the greatly learned spiritual master, Gadādhara Prabhu. One whose mind becomes anointed by the colorful waves of spontaneous devotional service as delineated by Gadādhara Prabhu, quickly attains the highest level of devotional service. He becomes like a maddened bumblebee whose mind is anointed with the mellow of *ujjala-rasa* (conjugal love).



9. mahā-rasāmṛta-pradam sadā gadādhārāṣṭakam
paṭhet tu yaḥ subhaktito vrajāṅgaṇa-gaṇotsavam
sācī-tanuja-pāda-padma-bhakti-ratna-yogyatām
labheta rādhikā-gadādhārāṅghri-padma-sevayā

These eight verses glorifying Gadadhara Prabhu award one the nectar of *maha-rasa*, and they are a festival for Vraja-gopis. Anyone who regularly reads these verses and serves the lotus feet of Gadādhara Prabhu, who is Rādhikā, will attain the jewel of pure *bhakti* for the lotus feet of Sacinandana Gaurahari.

Gaura-Gadadhara ki jai! Sri Narahari Sarakara Thakura ki jai!

3. Bāli Maṭha

Location—The Bāli (pronounced *bow-ree*) Maṭha is in the Markandesvara-sahi area behind the Baḍa Oriya Maṭha, a five minute *rickshaw* ride from Markandesvara Sarovara.

Main Deities

It is said that Srila Abhirama Thakura (Abhirama Gopala), who is Sridama in *kṛṣṇa-līla*, established this classic temple, which now desperately needs renovation. The Deities are Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā Madana-mohana *vijaya-vigraha*, Patita-pavana Jagannatha Deva, many *salagrama-silas*, and a *murti* named Abhirama Gopala. Natwarpaani Pujika is the head *pujari*.

Pastimes:

I. The Flute and the Bull Whip

Abhirama Thakura belonged to the lineage of Sri Caitanyadeva. In *rama-līla* he was Bharata, in *kṛṣṇa-līla* he was Sridama-sakha, and in *gaura-līla* he was one of the twelve *gopals* and an intimate devotee of Sri Nityananda Prabhu.

One day while overwhelmed in the ecstasy of *sakhya-rasa*, Abhirama wanted to play a flute like a cowherd boy. After searching the forest he found a log which even sixteen men could not lift. Astounding everyone, Abhirama lifted the log, fashioned a flute and played it beautifully. In the mood of a cowherd boy, Abhirama Gopala carried a bull whip named “*Jaya Mangala*.” Anyone he thrashed with that whip became instantly infused with *kṛṣṇa-prema*. It is said Srinivasa Acarya received pure love of Kṛṣṇa in this way.

Abhirama Thakura had an amazing power by which he tested the purity of a Deity or a person. If a Deity or person was not genuine, he would crack



in pieces when Abhirama offered his obeisances before him. In this regard, Abhirama Thakura glorified the purity of the Ganga in his *Ganga Stotra* (6): “I, Sridama-sakha, am wandering all over the earth to find that object which can withstand my obeisances. But my dear Mother Ganga, even after I offered you obeisances twelve times, you still remained unaffected and happy. Indeed, I am truly impressed with your extraordinary spiritual wealth.”

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. Abhirama was learned in all the scriptures, and also music, song and dance. Abhirama Thakura used his home exclusively for preaching and serving Vaisnava pilgrims; not for any mundane activities. His house, resounding always with *kirtana* and *hari-katha*, was often visited by pure devotees.

Sridama-sakha Jaya Mangala Abhirama Gopala Thakura ki jai!

II. Kṛṣṇa Balarama Visit Navadvipa

One day in Goloka Vrndavana, Kṛṣṇa, Balarama and the *sakhas* were playing a game of hide and seek. In the middle of the game, Kṛṣṇa decided to go to Navadvipa to sport and play. Kṛṣṇa and Balarama then gathered all Their friends and advented in Navadvipa. Somehow or other, Kṛṣṇa forgot Sridama because he was hiding in a cave and was not seen. After a while, Kṛṣṇa noticed that Sridama had been left behind so He sent Balarama in the form of Nityananda Prabhu back to Vrndavana to collect Sridama.

When Nitai discovered Sridama’s hiding place, He said, “Sridama, come on! We have all gone to Nadia to play there!”

Sridama asked, “Who are you and what is this Nadia?”

Nitai: “I am your Lord Balarama. Can’t you recognize me?”

Sridama: “You cannot be my Balarama. You are too small.” [In Kali-yuga, humans are half the size of humans in Dvapara-yuga]

Nitai: “If you do not believe Me, then run away as fast as you can. If I cannot catch you within ten paces, then you will know I am not Balarama.”

Sridama: “All right! Catch me if you can!”

Sridama ran quickly away, but Nityananda Prabhu immediately caught him. Sridama said, “Now listen, you all left me behind and went to Navadvipa without me. I feel very hurt by this neglect, and do not want to go to Navadvipa to play with you all.”

After a lot of coaxing from Nitai, Sridama agreed, manifested an expansion of himself as Abhirama Thakura and went to Navadvipa with Nityananda Rama.



Sri Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Nityananda Balarama ki jai!
Gaura Mandala Vraja Bhumi ki jai!

4. The Jagannatha Temple (Sri Mandira)

Location—The temple of Jagannatha Swami, Baladeva and Subhadra is the crown jewel of all Oriyan temples and the centerpiece of the whole town of Jagannatha Puri. The Jagannatha Temple is the life and soul of every local resident who directly or indirectly benefits from it. Non-Hindus absolutely cannot enter the temple, and even N.R.I. (non-resident Indians) should be careful about two points. Follow the proverb of “when in Rome do as the Romans,” which means dress like a local Indian not a fancy “westernized Indian.” Secondly, if you only speak English then learn the name of your *gotra* (family lineage) so you can answer when pressured by prying *pandas*.

Main Deities

Lord Jagannatha is sometimes described as having a seven-fold form (*saptadha murti*) because seven different Deities share the *simhasana*, including Jagannatha Swami, Baladeva, Subhadra, Sudarsana, Laksmi-devi and Sarasvati (Jagannatha’s wives), and a small wooden Jagannatha representing Nila Madhava (replica of the Deity worshiped by the Sabaras). From left to right on the main altar (*ratna simhasana*) stand Baladeva (white), Subhadra (yellow), Jagannatha (black) and Sudarsana (tall square pillar). Laksmi-devi and Sarasvati stand on Jagannatha’s right and left respectively.

The word *sudarsana* means transcendental vision. The Deity of Sudarsana serves to purify and spiritualize the eyes so one can actually see Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra. Without his mercy you will see the Jagannatha Deity as a wooden *murti*. By the mercy of Sudarsana one receives the proper vision to understand that Jagannatha is Vrajendranandana Syamasundara. You can circumambulate the Deities from 8:30 a.m.—9:30 a.m.

Other Deities

Within the boundary walls of the Jagannatha temple there are about thirty-five temples built by various rulers. These temples and small shrines contain the *murtis* of eighty different forms of God and the demigods, including Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Nila Madhava, Sri Kṛṣṇa, Venu Madhava, Ksira-cora Gopinatha, Gurundi Gopala, Saksi-gopala, Bala Mukunda, Arpana Gopala, Sad-bhuja Gauranga, Ananta Vasudeva, Ramacandra, Sita, Laksmiana,



Hanuman, Sugriva, Bara Bhai Hanuman, Tapasvi Hanuman, Mahavira Hanuman, Laksmi-Narayana, Maha-Laksmi, Satya Narayana, Surya Narayana, Cakra Narayana, Bimala-devi, Vamanadeva, Laksmi-Nrsimha, Yajna Nrsimha, Gaudiya Nrsimha, Purana Nrsimha, Kasivisvantha, Panca Mahadeva, Bedha Lokanatha Siva, Isanesvara Siva, Harisahadeva Siva, Patalesvara Siva, Markandesvara Siva, Agnisvara Mahadeva, Ksetrapala Mahadeva, Muktesvara Mahadeva, Siddhesvara Mahadeva, Bhadrakali, Budhi Maa, Durga Madhava, Maha Vajresvari, Kutum Candi, Sitala-devi, Sarvamangala-devi, Bhubanesvari-devi, Sarasvati, Savitri, Gayatri, Jhadesvari-devi, Uttara Durga, Bata Ganesa, Kanci Ganesa, Nrtya Ganapati, Indra, Navagraha, and more...

Jagannatha Mandira Parikrama

Sri Jagannatha's temple has two compound walls and four entrance gates in the outer wall opening in the four directions. The east and main gate, Lion Gate (Simha-dvāra) has two crouching stone lions flanking it. The south gate, Horse Gate (Aswa-dvāra) has a pair of galloping horses carrying Jagannatha and Baladeva on their backs with all Their martial glory. The west gate, Tiger Gate (Vyaghra-dvāra) has two stone tigers, and the north gate, Elephant Gate (Hasti-dvāra) has a huge stone elephant.

You may choose to first see Jagannatha Swami, Baladeva and Subhadra in the main temple and then do *parikrama* or vice versa. Our Mandira *parikrama* begins at the main gate called the Lion Gate, Simha-dvara, which opens east on Grand Road (Ratha-yatra road). Entering the gate, keep to your left and walk clockwise around the temple visiting the numbered places in the sequence listed below. Besides sequential numbering, the places are grouped by directions from east to southeast, then south, southwest, northwest, north and lastly northeast. Gauranga Mahaprabhu passed through the Lion Gate everyday on His way to see Jagannatha Swami.

If you are truly identifying with the mood of Mahaprabhu and fully attached to Lord Jagannatha, you may forego the *parikrama*, and let your nectar-thirsty bumblebee eyes follow your pure heart immediately into the temple for a *darsana* of your dearly beloved Jagannatha Swami. In the following pastime, Sri Caitanyadeva shows how His pure loving heart would not allow His legs to move an inch away from Jagannatha; thus making *parikrama* impossible.



Lord Gauranga Defeats Advaita Acarya

One day in Jagannatha Puri, Mahaprabhu met Advaita Acarya and asked, “Today, when you went to the temple to see Lord Jagannatha, what did you do?”

Advaita Acarya replied, “Before taking *darsana* of Lord Jagannātha, I did *parikrama* around the Deities five or seven times.”

Upon hearing the word *parikrama*, Mahaprabhu smiled and said, “Acarya! You are defeated, defeated!”

Advaita Acarya: “And how am I defeated? Prove it to me and I will accept defeat.”

Gauranga: “Listen clearly how you are defeated. You did *parikrama* of Jagannatha Swami and then took *darsana*. To do *parikrama* you have to walk behind Lord Jagannātha, and at that time You are bereft of the Lord’s *darsana*. However, when I take *darsana* of Jagannatha Swami, My eyes do not move anywhere else. I do not look to the left or right, nor do I do *parikrama*. I only gaze on the beautiful lotus face of Jagannatha Swami.”

Folding his hands submissively, Advaita Acarya said, “Surely, in this way You have defeated me. No one in the three worlds can speak with such astonishing eloquence. I speak the truth. There is definitely no one like You.” (Cb. 3.10.9-18)

Nevertheless, for those pilgrims who may opt for a bit of preliminary purification before taking Jagannatha’s *darsana*, a concise, guided *parikrama* route is provided below. Of the one hundred or more Deities and places contained within the temple compound, the nineteen most important ones are listed here.

Nāḍa Gaura hasya prema vicitra lila ki jai!

EASTERN AREA (Lion Gate)

1. Aruna Stambha (Sun Pillar)—This expertly carved, thirty-four foot high, sixteen-sided monolithic pillar, which formerly graced the Sun Temple in Konark, stands directly outside the Lion Gate on Grand Road. This single-stone column supports a figure of Aruna, the elder brother of Garuda and the charioteer of the Sun God Suryadeva.

You should stand behind this pillar, respectively gaze at the Nila-cakra and flags billowing atop Jagannatha’s temple, and then offer your humble obeisances.

Jagannatha Swami ki jai! Sri Mandira ki jai!

Bhagavan Suryadeva ki jai! Bhakta Aruna ki jai!



2. Patita Pavana Jagannatha—Immediately on your right upon entering the Lion Gate, you honor the Deity of Patita Pavana Jagannatha carved in the wall. The Puri king Ramacandra Deva (1732-1743) was prohibited from entering the temple due to marrying a Muslim girl. Hence, he installed this Deity to facilitate his daily *darsana* of Lord Jagannatha.

Since this Deity can be viewed from the street outside the Lion Gate, non-Hindus can also receive the full blessings of Jagannatha Swami by seeing Him here. In this regard, one disciple said that Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura did not like to go too near Lord Jagannatha for *darsana*. He even said once, “It is better to see Patita Pavana Jagannatha just at the outside of the temple at the Lion Gate.” (*Lion Guru*)

Patita Pavana Jagannatha ki jai!

** Note—Non-Hindus can get a good view inside the temple precincts from the rooftop of the Emar Maṭha building (aka Raghunandana Library) located directly opposite the Lion Gate. As you climb the stairs you will pass through the library and have to pay ten rupees for the view if the librarian is awake.

3. Fate Hanuman—*murti* on the left just opposite Patita Pavana Jagannatha.
Vajrāṅgabali Hanuman ki jai!

4. Bāiṣi Pāhāca—22 steps leading up from the Lion Gate to the main compound. You should humbly touch these stairs, sanctified by the lotus feet of Jagannatha Deva, Lord Gauranga and all Their *bhaktas*, and put the dust on your forehead before treading forth. The steps are sanctified because Jagannatha, Baladeva, Subhadra and Sudarsana pass over them during Ratha-yatra. *Sri Jagannatha bhakta-pada dhuli ki jai!*

5. Ramacandra Temple— Upon reaching the top of the stairs, turn left and it is just on your left. The *Ramayana* is being continually recited in front of the temple.

Maryada Purusottama Bhagavan Sri Ramacandra ki jai!

6. Gaudiya Nṛsimha—on the left just next to # 5. Before entering Jagannatha’s temple, Gaudiya Vaisnavas stop here to worship and pray to Nṛsimhadeva to cleanse their hearts so they can view Jagannatha Swami with the eyes of pure love. Srila Kṛṣṇādas Kavirāja Gosvami describes Sri Caitanyadeva’s daily *darsana* here: “Above the twenty-two steps is a Deity of Lord Nṛsimhadeva. Everyday, Mahaprabhu offered obeisances



to Lord Nṛsiṁha before going to the Jagannatha temple, and recited the following verses again and again.

*namas te nara-simhāya, prahlādāhlāda-dāyine
hiranyakaśipor vakṣaḥ, śilā-ṭanka-nakhālaye
ito nṛsiṁhaḥ parato nṛsiṁho, yato yato yāmi tato nṛsiṁhaḥ
bahir nṛsiṁho hṛdaye nṛsiṁho, nṛsiṁham ādim śaranam prapadye*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto You, Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva, who floods the heart of Prahlada with constant joy. With the chisel of Your fingernails, You split open the stone-hard chest of Hiranyakaśipu.

Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva is here, there and wherever I go see My Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva. He is outside and within my heart. Therefore I take shelter of Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva, the original Supreme Personality of Godhead. (Cc. 3.16.50-53)

Bhagavan Narasimhadeva ki jai! Bhakta Prahlada ki jai!

SOUTHEAST AREA

7. Jagannatha Temple Kitchen—located in *agni-kon*, the southeast corner of the compound. For kitchen details read chapter three.

Jagannatha maha-prasadam ki jai!

8. Kalpa Vaṭa—This sacred, wish-fulfilling (*kalpa-vrksa*) banyan tree has been standing here since time immemorial and is not destroyed during the devastation, *pralaya*. It is a custom of barren women to spread a *sari* beneath this tree. If a fruit falls within a reasonable time period, they go home knowing they will obtain a child. The *Kapila Samhita* says one will be free from the sins of a hundred lives by worshiping and circumambuling this holy tree. *Kalpa Vaṭa ki jai!*

SOUTH AREA

9. Sad-bhuja Gauranga—This beautiful six-armed Deity of Sri Caitanyadeva is right near the south gate, the Horse Gate. It is said that Sad-bhuja Gauranga appeared in the dream of a *pujari* named Ananta Mahapatra, ordering him to install a Deity like this. The Puri king was informed of the dream, and then he installed a Deity of Sad-bhuja Gauranga.

Sri Sad-bhuja Gauranga ki jai!



10. Mukti Maṇḍapa—situated near the south gate. This 16 pillar, 38 feet square platform is modeled after a *sastric yajna-mandapa*. With the support of the Rani of Raja Mansingh, the Puri King Ramacandra Dev built this *mandapa* five-hundred years ago.

Mukti Maṇḍapa is also called Brahmasana because Lord Brahma once sat here advising Visvakarma during the temple construction. Today it is the seat of selected scholars who deliberate on various Vedic texts and rituals. They also solve problems concerning temple matters and advise the common people in religious details and social customs.

Sri Brahmaji ki jai! Mukti Maṇḍapa ki jai!

SOUTHWEST AREA

11. Yajna Nrsimha Temple—just near # 10, it was built by King Codaganga Dev before constructing the main temple of Jagannatha. *Skanda Purana* (28.1-2) says Jagannatha first appeared in the form of Nrsimha. But King Indradyumna was too terrified to look at this ferocious form of God. Brahma then prayed to the Lord and He assumed the happy peaceful form of Jagannatha.

This ancient four-armed Deity of Lord Nrsimha is five feet tall. He holds a disc and conch in His upper two hands, and sits on a lotus holding Laksmi-devi on His lap. It is said that Yajna Nrsimha empowered Sridhara Swami to write *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā*, his commentary on the *Srimad Bhagavatam*.

Sri Sri Laksmi Yajna Nrsimha ki jai! Srimad Bhagavatam ki jai!

Sridhara Swami ki jai!

12. Rohini Kunda—*Skanda Purana* says that water gushes from this *kunda* at the time of the universal destruction, and it remains within the *kunda* at the time of creation. Once a crow named Kaka Bhusanda fell in the *kunda* and then magically arose with a divine four-armed form.

Rohini Kunda ki jai! Kaka Bhusanda ki jai!

13. Bimala-devi temple—Bimala-devi is a four handed Deity standing on a lotus in the southwest corner of the inner compound. Bimala-devi, worshiped here as Adi-sakti (form of Durga), is the guardian deity for Sri Ksetra Dhama. Bimala-devi's position is of supreme significance because immediately after Jagannatha enjoys His *bhoga*, it is first offered to her; then it becomes known as *maha-prasadam*. As a source of spiritual purity and power, Bimala-devi kindly removes all impediments for her devotees. *Bimala-devi ki jai!*



NORTHWEST AREA

14. Nila Madhava—is the name of original Deity of Nilacala worshiped by some Oriyan tribal woodsmen known as the Śabarās. The original Deity disappeared and reappeared as Lord Jagannatha for the pleasure of King Indradyumna. This Nila Madhava Deity is a replica of the original. The full story of Nila Madhava reappearing as Jagannatha Swami is found in chapter two, History of the Appearance of Lord Jagannatha Story I.

Sri Nila Madhava ki jai!

15. Niladri Vihāra—This art gallery displays the pastimes of Jagannatha Swami and the Dasa Avataras.

NORTH AREA

16. Koilā Vaikuṅṭha—is near the north elephant gate (Hati-Dvara). During the Nava-kalevara ceremony, Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra are carved anew and the old *murtis* are buried here in a nine feet deep hole. The entire area is covered by fragrant *malati* creepers. This very ancient garden is said to be the place where the Śabara King Viśvāvasu worshiped the original Deity of Nila Madhava. *Koilā Vaikuṅṭha ki jai!*

17. Soṇā Kuā (golden well)—near the elephant north gate. During Snana-yatra, Jagannatha Swami is bathed with this well water.

Lord Jagannatha's Soṇā Kuā ki jai! Snana-yatra ki jai!

NORTHEAST AREA

18. Ānanda Bazaar—is near the northeast corner, on the right side after you climb the 22 stairs from the Lion Gate. Here you can purchase Jagannatha *maha-prasadam* and experience the bliss (*ānanda*) of tasting the Lord's unprecedented mercy remnants.

Jagannatha maha-prasadam ki jai! Ānanda Bazaar ki jai!

19. Snana Vedi—is situated in the far northeast corner. This raised, 75 feet square platform atop the boundary wall is the site of Jagannatha Swami's outdoor bathing ceremony (Snana-Yatra) preceding His annual Ratha-yatra festival. Every year, thousands of enthusiastic devotees gather on Grand Road to watch the beautiful bathing ceremony of the Lord of the universe. *Jagannatha Swami blissful Snana-yatra ki jai!*



TOUR OF THE MAIN JAGANNATHA MANDIRA

** Note—Brief information is given here to facilitate a quick tour of the Jagannatha Mandira. Later, in the secluded atmosphere of your hotel room, you can peacefully read chapter two and three to learn many interesting facts about the Jagannatha temple; the Deities and Their offerings, outfits, rituals and festivals; the incredible Deity kitchen and more. Of course, reading these chapters before visiting the temple will definitely deepen the impressions and effect of your tour.

The four sections of Jagannatha Swami's temple are listed here in the sequence you will see upon entering from the east side through the Lion Gate (Simha-dvara). The following entry beautifully describes the transcendental ambience one experiences within the sacred space of the Supreme Lord Jagannatha:

“While approaching the innermost sanctuary (Garbha Grha) of the Jagannatha Temple through the various halls and past the many pillars and carved panels, a devotee is subtly influenced by the sacredness of the architecture. He finds himself enclosed with the Supreme Lord in a dim, soothing atmosphere. His eyes find rest after the fierce light of the day outside. Not only is the lighting dim, but the air is filled with the scent of flowers, burning oil lamps and incense coming from the sanctuary. Gradually, his mood calms and his spiritual feelings are awakened as he approaches the Deities.” (*Jaya Jagannatha!*)

1. Bhoga Mandira (Bhoga Mandapa) Temple of Offerings

This is Jagannatha Swami's spacious food offering hall (18m by 17m), which contains beautiful sculptures and paintings of *kṛṣṇa-līla*.

2. Nāṭa Mandira (Nata-mandapa) Temple of Dance

This is a spacious music and dance hall measuring (21m by 20m).

3. Jagamohana (Mukhaśāla)

This is the visitors' hall or the main *darsana* area for pilgrims to see Lord Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra. It contains the famous Garuda Stambha where Gauranga Mahaprabhu stood while taking *darsana* of Vrajendranandana Jagannatha Deva.

4. Vimana (Bada Deula or Garbha Grha)

This is the inner sanctum or main altar (*ratna simhasana*) featuring the seven Deities of Jagannatha Swami, Baladeva, Subhadra, Sudarsana, Laksmi, Sarasvati and Nila Madhava.



Garuda-stambha: The Garuda-stambha (pillar) stands along the east (back) wall of the Jagamohana. It supports a *murti* of Lord Narayana's eagle carrier Garuda, who is admiring the Deity of Jagannatha Deva from this vantage point above the heads of the pilgrims. Devotees regularly hug this pillar and offer prayers while seeing Lord Jagannatha. By doing this they feel the blessings of the Lord's direct embrace. Locals say that an embrace gives relief from incurable diseases.

Gauranga Mahāprabhu used to stand here, and offer obeisances and prayers while reeling in ecstatic bliss gazing upon *sākṣāt* Vrajendranandana Jagannatha Swami. Mahāprabhu's divine finger prints are imprinted on the wall behind the Garuda-stambha. Srila Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvami describes Sri Caitanyadeva's *lilas*:

garuḍera sannidhāne, rahi' kare darāṣane
se ānandera ki kahiba ba'le
garuḍa-stambhera tale, āche eka nimna khāle
se khāla bharila āsru-jale

"Staying near the Garuḍa-stambha, Gaura-*raya* gazed upon Lord Jagannātha. What can be said about the strength of that love? On the ground beneath the column of the Garuḍa-stambha was a deep ditch, which filled with the water of Gauranga's tears." (Cc. 2.2.54)

"As Mahāprabhu viewed Lord Jagannātha from behind the Garuḍa column, hundreds and thousands of people in front of Him were seeing Jagannatha Swami. Suddenly, a woman from Orissa, unable to see Lord Jagannātha because of the crowd, climbed the column of Garuḍa, placing her foot on Mahāprabhu's shoulder. When he saw this, Caitanya Mahāprabhu's personal servant, Govinda, hastily got her down from her position. Mahāprabhu, however, chastised him for this.

"Mahāprabhu said to Govinda, 'O *ādi-vasyā* [uncivilized man], do not forbid this woman to climb the Garuḍa-stambha. Let her see Lord Jagannātha to her satisfaction.'

"When the woman came to her senses, however, she quickly climbed back down to the ground and, seeing Mahāprabhu, immediately begged pardon at His lotus feet. Seeing the woman's eagerness, Mahāprabhu said, 'Lord Jagannātha has not bestowed so much eagerness upon Me. She has fully absorbed her body, mind and life in Lord Jagannātha. Therefore she was unaware that she was putting her foot on My shoulder. Alas! How fortunate this woman is! I pray at her feet that she favor Me with her great eagerness to see Lord Jagannātha.'" (Cc. 3.14.23-30) Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati



Thakura always took *darsana* of Jagannatha from behind the Garuda-stambha.

Sacinandana Gaurahari ki jai! Sri Garudadeva ki jai!

Lord Gauranga Carana Mandira: There is a small shrine containing the imprints of Sri Gauranga's lotus-feet (*gauranga pāda-pīṭha*) in the courtyard of Jagannatha's temple. These impressions were made in the stone floor below the Garuda Stambha when it melted from contacting the ecstasy surcharged lotus feet of Mahaprabhu as He beheld Jagannatha Deva in the rapture of divine love. Later the stone was enshrined here.

sri gauranga pāda-pīṭha ki jai!

5. Atharanala Bridge

Location—This bridge is six kilometers from the Jagannatha Mandira at the entrance to Puri Dhama on Atharanala Road, the main road from Puri to Bhubanesvara. As mentioned earlier, you can see this holy spot now or later if you are leaving Jagannatha Puri via the Bhubanesvara airport or railway station.

Coming from the Lion Gate of the Jagannatha Mandira, turn left on Grand Road and go straight 1½ km. to Atharanala Road and turn left. You will pass Narendra Sarovara on the left and keep going for another six kilometers until the road passes over a bridge, the Atharanala Bridge.

Main Deities

There is a small pink, domed temple with green doors beside Atharanala Road, marking the place where Mahaprabhu rested before crossing Atharanala Bridge. Inside the temple, you will see a marble plaque enshrining the lotus footprints of Gauranga Mahaprabhu (*mahaprabhu pāda-pīṭha*).

Gauranga Mahaprabhu's padma carana ki jai!

Introduction—The bridge, built in the 13th century, contains 18 (*aṭhara*) arches and was used by Sri Caitanyadeva and His associates to enter Jagannatha Puri Dhama. Five hundred years ago, all the *gaura-bhaktas* of Nadiya walked continuously for one month to arrive in Sri Ksetra Dhama in time for Jagannatha's Snana-yatra ceremony. Atharnala Bridge afforded their first sight of the Jagannatha Mandira, with its beautiful dome and red flags billowing in the breeze, standing impressively on the right side up the river.



Pastime

I. The Flag that Incited Divine Love

Whoever reads this description of Gauracandra entering Nilacala-dhama will drown in the ocean of Kṛṣṇa *prema-rasa*. On the way to Puri, Gauranga got a glimpse of Jagannatha's temple dome in the distance. Seeing the red flags waving in the wind, Gaurahari succumbed to ecstasy and started loudly roaring and trembling. Staring at the flag, Gauranga uttered a verse:

*prāsādāgre nivasita puraḥsarah, smerā vaktrāravindo
mām ālokya smita suvadano, bāla gopāla mūrtiḥ*

“Look! Bala Gopala is standing on top of the temple smiling at Me, and that sweet smile is increasing the beauty of His fully blossomed lotus face.” (Cb. 2.4.409) Reciting this verse, Mahaprabhu fainted and then stood up, saw the flag, recited the verse and swooned again, drowning in the ocean of love. For six kilometers, Gauranga repeatedly offered *dandavats* until He arrived at Aṭharanala Bridge.

Surfacing to peaceful external consciousness, Mahaprabhu entreatingly said to His companions, “As true friends, you have done a great service to Me by bringing Me to My Jagannatha Swami. Now kindly tell Me whether I should go on alone or follow after all of you?”

Mukunda replied, “Please Prabhu, it is better that You go ahead of us.”

Then moving faster than a mad lion in the chase, Mahaprabhu ran across Atharanala Bridge and entered Purusottama-ksetra. (Cb. 2. chp. 4)

Bala Gopala ki jai! Prema Purusottama Gauranga Mahaprabhu ki jai!

6. Cakra Tirtha (Cakra Narayana Temple)

Location—It is located on Cakra Tirtha Road at the beach on the east side of Puri, 3 kilometers from the Jagannatha temple. The temple is a small white building with a red stripe, off Cakra Tirtha Road, behind the Z Hotel, down the beach near the ocean.

Main Deities

There are three Deities: Nrsimha, Cakra Narayana and Adi Narayana. A brown stone shaped like a *cakra* is worshiped here as Cakra Narayana. Nearby is a small temple of Jagannatha's father-in-law, Varuna-deva, the father of Laksmi-devi. Inside there are Deities of Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra, and Garuda holding Visnu.



Pastimes

I. The Father-in-law of God

During the *samudra-manthana-lila*, Laksmi-devi, the Goddess of Fortune, appeared from churning the ocean of milk. Because Laksmi-devi appeared from the ocean she is said to be the daughter of ocean, or the daughter of Varuna-deva who rules the seas. After Laksmi-devi appeared, she immediately married the Lord. Thus Varuna-deva became the father-in-law of God, Lord Jagannatha, whose consorts are Laksmi and Sarasvati.

Laksmi-Cakra Narayana ki jai! Varunadeva ki jai!

II. Three Logs Floating in the Ocean of Prema

On the beach, left of the temple is a well surrounded by a low wall, which is said to contain water from the Bhārgavī River. Formerly, a branch of this river known as Bānki Muhāna flowed into the ocean here. In Satya-yuga, during the month of March (Phalguna Sukla Govinda Dvadasi) a magnificent tree, floating in the Bay of Bengal (*samudra*), washed up the Bhārgavī River to this spot.

“The servants reported to King Indradyumna, ‘This tree is no ordinary log. It emanates a sweet fragrance and it glows with an uncommon luster. Looking closer, we found the four symbols of Lord Visnu upon it.’” (*Skanda P.*) Collecting that special log, King Indradyumna had a celestial craftsman carve the Deities of Jagannatha, Baladeva, Subhadra and Sudarsana.

Jagannatha, Baladeva, Subhadra and Sudarsana ki jai! Cakra Tirtha ki jai!

7. Beḍi Hanuman

Location—This small temple with a new red-granite roof and baby blue mosaic tile walls is on Cakratirtha Road, across the street from the Z Hotel, two minutes from spot # 6.

Main Deities

This ancient, popular temple is dedicated to a tall black stone Deity of Hanuman, now covered in red *sindhur*, who serves Lord Jagannatha by protecting the holy *dhama*. The word *beḍi* means chain or hair braid. For a handsome donation, the *pujari* will show you the chain carved on the right leg of the Deity. Generally, but not always, non-Hindus are barred entrance. But it is worth a try to obtain the wonderful benefit of seeing a pure devotee of Lord Rama.



Pastime

I. Puffed Rice Can't Match Lāḍḍus

The Puri residents of yore complained to Lord Jagannatha that cyclone whipped seas often washed away the town. Jagannatha Swami posted Hanuman here to protect Puri and prevent future inundations. The faithful were daily offering some puffed rice and *jaggery* to Hanuman but he longed for *lāḍḍus*. One day Hanuman leaped to Ayodhya to see his Lord Rama and receive some delicious *lāḍḍu maha-prasadam*.

Angry seas took advantage of Hanuman's absence and once again flooded the town of Puri. When Hanuman returned, Lord Jagannatha promised to daily give him *lāḍḍus*. But just to make sure that this mischievous monkey would not leap away again, Lord Jagannatha bound Hanuman's leg with a heavy steel ball and chain. The word *bedi* means bind with a chain. Henceforth, Hanumanji was called Bedi Hanuman.

Bhagavan Ramacandra ki jai! Bedi Hanuman ki jai!





OPTIONAL DAY TRIP ONE

Ālālanātha Visnu Temple

Location—The temple is a one hour taxi ride from Jagannatha Puri. You can also come here from Puri on a local mini-bus that leaves every hour or so from Narendra Sarovara. Western devotees are not allowed in the temple to see Ālālanātha, so don't even try. But from outside you can offer obeisances to the Deity and the temple *cakra*. Then you can do Mandira *parikrama* and take *darsana* of the incredible *prema-sila* of Gauranga Mahaprabhu, on the right side of the temple when entering the main gate from the road. This temple was built by King Madan Mahadev in 1128 a.d.

Main Deities

Lord Ālālanātha (or Alarnatha) is an ancient four-handed Visnu Deity believed to be installed by one of the Alvars. He is presently worshiped by the Jagannatha Mandira *pujaris*. At His feet kneels Garuḍa, His eagle-carrier with his hands folded in prayer. Ālālanātha's consorts Śrī and Bhū also accompany Him. The temple also features small Deities of Sri Kṛṣṇa's queens Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā. Bas reliefs of Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva grace the ceiling of one of the halls leading up to the main chamber.

The positioning of the four Visnu symbols on this ancient Deity seems to indicate that he is Janardana Visnu or Adi Visnu—the original form of Lord Visnu. But unlike Lord Janardana, Ālālanātha holds his right hand in the *abhaya mudra*; granting fearlessness and security to whomever takes his shelter. This *mudra* is only shown by Kṛṣṇa Deities and not *murtis* of Visnu or Narayana.

Pastimes

I. Lord Brahma Carves the Deity

According to a local tradition, the history of Ālālanātha goes back millions of years to Satya-yuga. Lord Nārāyaṇa spoke to Lord Brahmā from the sky, describing in detail the form of a deity Brahmā should carve and worship. Afterwards, Lord Narayana addressed Brahma, "Because you have worshiped Me here, this place will be known as Brahmagiri [Brahmā's hill]." With the passage of time, Brahmagiri became known as Alarnatha.

The present temple was built about eleven hundred years ago, and the *puja* was previously performed by South Indian *brahmins*. Because the *pujaris* were in the disciplic line of the great spiritual teachers known as the Ālvārs,



the deity became known as Ālvārnātha (“Lord of the Ālvārs”), which in time became Ālālanātha. Today, the place is also commonly known as Brahmagiri.

Brahmagiri ki jai! Govardhana Parvata ki jai! Giri Govardhana ki jai!

II. Ālālanātha Scalded by Sweet Rice

Once a *brahmin* named Śrī Ketana, whose service was to offer food to Lord Ālālanātha, had to go out to beg provisions for the Lord. He gave his young son Madhu the responsibility for making offerings in his absence after telling him to place Ālālanātha’s meals before Him and pray to the Lord to accept them. When the time came to make the first offering, Madhu brought the food to the Lord and prayed, “O my dear Lord, please accept this offering. I am just a boy and do not know how to offer properly.”

Madhu then played with his friends. When he returned, he saw that all the food was still on the plate.

“O my Lord,” he said, “why haven’t You eaten? If my father hears of this, he will be angry with me. Please eat.”

Madhu left, only to return and find the food still on the plate. With tears in his eyes, he again begged the Lord to eat.

When Madhu returned the third time, the Ālālanātha’s plate was empty. Madhu happily carried the empty plate to his mother.

“Where is the *prasādam*?” she asked.

“Lord Ālālanātha ate everything!” Madhu replied.

For three days Madhu and his family fasted because whenever Madhu offered the Lord His meal, He ate everything.

When Śrī Ketana returned and heard of the situation, he scolded his son, “What have you done with Lord Ālālanātha’s *prasādam*?”

“He ate it, father. I offered it just like you taught me.”

“He cannot eat,” Śrī Ketana replied. “He is just a stone deity.”

Śrī Ketana decided to see what was going on, so he hid behind a pillar while his son made an offering to the Lord. After Madhu had left, Śrī Ketana saw the Lord reach down and pick up a bowl of sweet rice. Śrī Ketana jumped from behind the pillar and caught hold of the Lord’s arm, spilling hot sweet rice on the Lord Ālālanātha’s body.

“Stop!” Śrī Ketana yelled. “What are You doing? Who ever heard of a Deity eating? If You eat everything, how will we live?”

Lord Ālālanātha replied, “O materialist in the guise of a *brāhmaṇa*, I never accept offerings from a faithless person like you, devoid of devotion. I accepted the offerings of Madhu because he offered them with simplicity and love.”



Today, the temple *pandas* point out several scars on the Lord Ālālanātha's body where He was scalded by the sweet rice.

Lord Ālālanātha ki jai! Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa suddha-bhakti ki jai!

III. Gauranga's Retreat

While Lord Jagannatha spent a fortnight in seclusion during His *anavasara* ceremony, Sri Caitanyadeva struggled with the most intense pangs of love in separation. Wrapped in Rādhā's *mahabhāva*, Gaura felt one moment without Jagannatha Kṛṣṇa to be like four million years. One can only imagine how Mahāprabhu suffered without seeing His Pranānātha for two long weeks. Even when Jagannatha Swami was granting daily *darsana* that was not enough to soothe the aching heart of Gauranga. Hence, every night Sri Caitanyadeva escaped from His tiny room at Gambhira to search for Sri Kṛṣṇa, hankering for His *darsana*.

Often late at night, Mahāprabhu ran to the Mandira hoping to get a glimpse of Jagannatha. Locked doors forced Gaura to climb the walls near Simha Dvara. Failing in His attempt, the golden Lord collapsed on the ground swooning in divine rapture. Sri Caitanyadeva, torn by the anguish of separation, then exhibited His extraordinary Kurma Caitanya *rupa*; arms and legs withdrawn into His torso, and head crunched down on His shoulders like a giant tortoise or pumpkin. This unique form of ecstasy in separation resembled the form of Lord Jagannatha.

Such astounding displays of divine love were occurring on a regular basis whenever Gauranga saw Lord Jagannatha. Now, it is inconceivable how, without any *darsana* whatsoever for two weeks, Sri Caitanyadeva survived in such an extremely tortuous state of misery. He could not, so Gauranga left Sri Ksetra, Purusottama Dhama, and walked twenty-four km. away to see Lord Ālālanātha. When Gauranga took *darsana* of Lord Alarnath, He did not see Him as Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa, but as Gopinātha Sri Kṛṣṇa, playing a flute. Sri Caitanyadeva's ecstasy of seeing Lord Ālālanātha in this way has its parallel in a pastime of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Therefore devotees in the line of Sri Caitanyadeva consider Lord Ālālanātha to be two-armed Sri Kṛṣṇa. *Viraha-bhāva Kurma Caitanya ki jai!*

IV. Ālālanātha and the Vraja-gopis

Some *acaryas* say the four-handed Visnu Deity of Ālālanātha is in the mood of Vrajendranandana displaying His *catur-bhuja* Narayana form to the *gopis*. Once during the spring *rasa* dance at Govardhana (*vasanta-kāle rāsa-līlā kare govardhane*) Kṛṣṇa disappeared from the scene. The frantic *gopis* searched everywhere and finally spotted Kṛṣṇa in a solitary grove,



nibhṛta nikuñja. Kṛṣṇa had assumed a four-armed Nārāyaṇa form to cover His emotions. The damsels of Vrndavana, being duped by Kṛṣṇa's disguise, said: *ihon kṛṣṇa nahe, ihon nārāyaṇa mūrti*, "He is not Kṛṣṇa! He is Narayana." The *gopis* then offered prayers and respects saying: *namo nārāyaṇa, kṛṣṇa-saṅga deha*, "Namo Narayana! Just give us Kṛṣṇa's association."

Kṛṣṇa saw Rādhā approaching, smiled and tried the same trick. However, the inconceivable power of Rādhikā's pure love (*viśuddha-bhāvera acintya prabhāva*) forced Syama to assume His original two-armed form. (Cc. 1.17.281-292)

When the *gopis* were searching all over Govardhana for Syama, it is possible that they walked the twenty-four km. path around the hill before meeting "Narayana" at Paita-grama. Similarly, Mahaprabhu wandered all over Nilacala Dhama searching for Kṛṣṇa when Jagannatha Swami disappeared for two weeks. The lush green countryside between Puri and Ālālanātha, which is also a distance of twenty-four km, looks very much like the forests surrounding Govardhana Hill. Ālālanātha is situated in a hilly area known as Brahma Giri. The word *giri* means mountain, but it can also secretly refer to Giri Govardhana where Sri Kṛṣṇa showed His *catur-bhuja* Narayana form to the *gopis*.

In separation from Vrajendranandana Jagannatha, Mahaprabhu's heart burned like a brick kiln. Upon reaching Brahma Giri, Gauranga entered the temple and fell flat on the ground before Ālālanātha. As Rādhā's ecstatic pure love (*viśuddha-bhāva*) had once forced Syama to abandon His *narayana-rupa*, Gaurasundara's intense love made Ālālanātha Visnu show his sweet two-armed form. What was the intensity of Gauranga's *prema*? When Sri Caitanyadeva lay on the stone floor before Ālālanātha, the stone melted like butter to capture the impressions of Gauranga's head, chest, arms and legs. Those inconceivably, incredible impressions in the stone, which is called *Prema Sila*, can still be seen today at Ālālanātha.

In Puri, everyone saw Jagannatha as the Lord of the universe, the *dāru brahma* without legs, arms or neck. But Mahaprabhu saw Him as Vrajendranandana Kṛṣṇa, a sweet lovable boy standing attractively bent in three places, playing an enchanting song on His flute. Similarly, ordinary devotees saw Ālālanātha as four-armed Visnu, but Sri Caitanyadeva saw Him as Sri Kṛṣṇa playing a captivating flute song.

The presence of four additional Deities with Ālālanātha (Sri, Bhu, Rukmini, Satyabhama) gives further proof that Ālālanātha Narayana is actually Sri Kṛṣṇa displaying His *catur-bhuja* Narayana form to the Vraja-*gopis* during the *vasanta-rasa*. When Rādhā spoiled Syama's Narayana spoof during the *rasa-lila*, She stood directly in front of Kṛṣṇa while Lalita and Visakha stood



on either side of Him. Similarly, when Mahaprabhu stood before Ālālanātha, He was that same Rādhikā with that same *acintya-visuddha bhāva* standing before Kṛṣṇa posing as *catur-bhuja* Narayana. The same Lalita and Visakha were also standing here beside Mahabhava Mahaprabhu as Ramananda Raya and Svarupa Damodara Gosvami. Srila Rupa Gosvami poetically describes this lila:

*gopīnām paśupendra-nandana-juṣo bhāvasya kas tām kṛtī
vijñātum kṣamate durūha-padavī-saṅcārīṇaḥ prakriyām
āviṣkurvati vaiṣṇavīm api tanum tasmin bhujair jiṣṇubhir
yāsām hanta caturbhir adbhuta-ruciṁ rāgodayaḥ kuñcati*

Once [at Govardhana] Śrī Kṛṣṇa playfully manifested Himself as Nārāyaṇa, with four victorious hands and a very beautiful form. When the *gopīs* saw this exalted form, however, their ecstatic feelings were crippled. Even a learned scholar, therefore, cannot understand the *gopīs'* ecstatic feelings, which are firmly fixed upon the original form of Kṛṣṇa as Vrajendranandana. Alas! The wonderful feelings of the *gopīs* in ecstatic *parama-rasa* with Kṛṣṇa constitute the greatest mystery in spiritual life. (*Lalita-mādhava* 6.54)

*Catur Bhuja Ālālanātha Sri Kṛṣṇa ki jai! Ālālanātha Gopinatha ki jai!
Gauranga Mahaprabhu's prema-sila ki jai!*

V. Gauranga Prema Nama Sankirtana

After Snana-yatra, Lord Jagannatha remains in seclusion for two weeks. Gauranga feels extremely heart broken due to not seeing His Lord Jagannatha, so He gives up all association and runs to the Ālālanātha temple. The Purivasis come there requesting Lord Caitanya to return on the plea of greeting the arriving Bengali *bhaktas*.

Before touring South India, Gauranga spent a complete day and overnight here. Together with His devotees, Gaurahari chanted and danced here for sometime. The neighbors, astonished to see Mahaprabhu's ecstatic transformations, did not want to return home. Everyone including children, old men and women danced and chanted the holy names of Kṛṣṇa and Gopala. In this way they all floated in the ocean of love of Godhead.

From noon to night, Gauranga gave audience to many visitors, who all became Vaisnava devotees. Rasaraja Gauranga passed the night there in great pleasure, discussing Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with His devotees. The next morning Lord Caitanya departed for South India. The devotees remained in Ālālanātha, fasting all day until the next day, when they all unhappily returned to Jagannatha Puri. (Cc. 2.7.76-95)

*Prema svarupa Gaura-nataraja ki jai!
Gauranga Prema Nama Sankirtana ki jai!*



Sacred Places Nearby

1. Brahmāgiri Gauḍiya Maṭh: This temple, on the right side of the Ālālanātha temple, was established by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in 1926. The temple houses Deities of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa (Gopī-Gopinātha), and a small Lord Ālālanātha.

An Ālālanātha temple *panda* found the small Alarnatha Deity during excavation and had installed Him in the temple. One night the Deity appeared to the head priest in a dream and told him that He wanted to be worshiped by Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. The next day the priest presented the Deity to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta, who happened to be staying at the Gauḍiya Maṭh temple. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta loved Ālālanātha. He said that Brahmāgiri, the name of the immediate area, is the same as Govardhana Hill in Vṛndāvana, and that the small lake there—on whose banks Mahāprabhu rested—is the same as Rādhā-kuṇḍa, the most sacred lake in the universe.

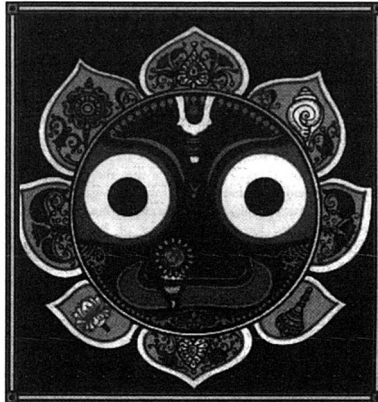
Brahmāgiri Gauḍiya Maṭh ki jai!

Srīla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura ki jai!

2. Raya Ramananda's House: A few km. away in Bentpur village near a rice mill is the birthplace of Rāmānanda Rāya. The friendly members of the Paṭṭanāyaka family, descendants of Gopinātha Paṭṭanāyaka, a brother of Rāmānanda Rāya, who reside there, will happily show the ceremonial sword that belonged to Rāmānanda Raya (a governor) and some old documents written on palm leaves.

Across the dirt lane from the Paṭṭanāyaka's home is a temple of Rāmānanda Rāya and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, depicting their meeting on the bank of the Godavari River.

Mahāprabhu Rai Ramananda prema milan ki jai!



OPTIONAL DAY TRIP TWO

Remuna Yatra: The Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha Temple

Location—The famous temple of Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha, the Kṛṣṇa Deity who stole condensed milk (*kṣīra*) for His devotee, lies in a small pastoral village named Remuna in the Balasore (Baleshwar) District of Orissa (Pin 750018). Balasore, halfway between Puri and Calcutta, is the nearest railway junction to Remuna. I took the following AC trains up and down and it was quite convenient and comfortable.

1. Puri to Balasore

Nilacala Express # 2875 Lv. Puri—10:55 a.m. Arrive Balasore—3:30 p.m.

2. Balasore to Gopinatha Temple Direct

Car taxi takes ½ hour or 25 seat mini-bus, Rupees 750 one way. Reserve return mini-bus now, and bus will return at 10 p.m. to take you to the railway station in Balasore. You have about six hours (4 p.m.—10 p.m.) to see Gopinatha, relish *kheer prasadam*, visit nearby sacred spots, honor full evening *prasadam* and return to Balasore.

3. Balasore to Puri

Sri Jagannatha Express # 8409 Lv. Balasore—11 p.m. Arrive Puri—4:30 a.m. just in time for Ṭhākuraḥji's *mangala arati*.

Contacts

1. ISKCON Remuna Panda—Sri Rama Pandita Dasa, mo. # 09437113363. He is friendly, well-informed and can personally arrange everything for your Remuna Yatra.

2. Gopinatha Temple Manager—Mukunda Dasa ph. 06782-224245 Gopinatha's last *darsana arati* is 9-9:30 p.m. and then full *maha-prasadam* is served to all pilgrims. I took *darsana* and *prasadam*, and then got the mini-bus back Balasore to catch the 11 p.m. train to Puri; definitely, a recommended program.

Main Deities

Between five and seven a.m. visitors can have full *darsana* of the Deity while the *pujari* bathes and dresses Gopinatha. You can clearly see cows, cowherd boys, the *asta-sakhis* and other personalities carved in the black stone bas-relief Deity of Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha. On Gopinatha's right and left respectively are free standing black stone Deities of Govinda and Madana-mohana brought from Vrndavana in 1938 by Baba Caitanyadasa. There are



also Deities of Rādhā Rasabihari, Lord Jagannatha and Mahaprabhu on one side and numerous *śālagrāma silas* on the other.

Remuna is called Gupta Vrndavana because Gopinatha had many pastimes here in the mood of Vrndavana with His intimate *vraja-madhurya premi bhaktas*. All Vaisnavas are welcome here for Gopinatha's special *darsana*, and the indescribably mouth-watering milk sweet known as *amṛta-keli*, prepared from condensed milk, cream, sugar and a smidgen of raisins.

Sacred Places Nearby

1. Sri Rasikananda Dev Gosvami's Samadhi (on the temple premises)
2. Mahadeva Siva Mandira (former site of Gargamuni's *asrama*)
3. Madhavendra Puri's Samadhi (five minute walk from temple)

Pastimes

Stories number I, II, IV come from a booklet entitled *A Glimpse of Lord Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha*, published in 2004 by the Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha Temple in Remuna.

I. The Appearance of Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha

One day in the forest of Citrakūta during monsoon time, Lord Rama noticed some cows munching on lush green grass. Relishing a sweet memory, Rama smiled slightly. Curious, Sita-devi asked what was making the Lord so joyful.

"I am remembering the pastimes I will perform in Dvapara-yuga as Kṛṣṇa in Vrndavana," answered Rama.

Sita begged, "Please, tell me those pastimes so I can enjoy them too?"

Rama said, "I will appear in Vrajabhumi as Yasodanandana Sri Kṛṣṇa, the beloved cowherd son of Nanda Baba and Yasoda-devi, and you will appear as Rādhikā, the tender child of Vrsabhanu and Kirtida. Instead of sporting on Citrakūta Hill, I will run behind the cows and play at Govardhana Hill with you and My friends like Subala, Sridama and Madhumangala. As we have this *kadamba* tree beside our cottage, similarly, in Vraja as Gopinatha I will relish many intimate conjugal delights with you and the *asta-sakhis* like Lalita and Visakha underneath the Keli Kadamba trees."

Sita-devi, her inquisitiveness fully aroused, softly asked Rama to show her that gorgeous form of Gopinatha. After some time, Rama collected a large black stone, and using an arrow He carved figures of trees, a mountain, a cobra, cows, girls and boys while recounting His blissful sports in Vraja. [Acaryas say that while Lord Rama was speaking, Sita empowered Him to form the Gopinatha Deity by touching His back.]



First Rama inscribed Gopinatha standing in a graceful three-fold bending form clutching a flute. Then on Gopinatha's left Rama formed Lalita-sakhi offering *tambula* with her right hand, and Visakha holding a tray of fruits and a water pitcher. Citra-sakhi (Sucitra) is holding a flower *mala* and Indulekha waits at Gopinatha's feet for *carana-seva*. On Gopinatha's right, Rama carved Campakalata with a *camara* fan; Ranga-devi with a tray of sandalwood paste; Tungavidya-sakhi clutching new cloth; and Sudevi preparing a flower bed. Thus Rama produced the *asta-sakhis* with their *sevas*. [Rādhā is not mentioned in this booklet.]

On either side of Gopinatha, Sri Rama engraved Kṛṣṇa's four dear friends: Subala, Madhumangala, Sanandana and Vidagdha along with three cows each. Three *jammu* (rose-apple) trees are visible above Gopinatha's head along with an engraving showing the destruction of the Mathura wrestlers Canura and Mustika, Kamsa's demoniac followers. Ananta Sesa is fanned out in the middle above the head of Gopinatha.

Sita-devi worshiped this Gopinatha Deity carved by her husband Rama until the time she was kidnapped. Lord Brahma then continued the *seva-puja* for the seven hundred year balance of Treta-yuga. When Rama and Sita were returning from Sri Lanka after the war, they stopped in a beautiful green forest called Ramania [today called Remuna]. To provide drinking water for Sita-devi, Rama pierced the earth with seven arrows summoning the River Ganga or Saptasara according to some. After a brief stay, Sita-Rama returned to Ayodhya Dhama.

Sita-Rama ki jai! Gopinatha ki jai!

II. Gopinatha Leaves Citrakūṭa

How did Gopinatha come from Citrakūṭa to Remuna? About eight hundred years ago, an Orissan Vaisnava monarch named King Langula Narasimha Dev came to Citrakūṭa on pilgrimage. He and his pious wife observed the worship of the Gopinatha Deity. In a dream that night the Deity appeared and requested the king, "My name is Madana Gopala. Please take Me to an enchanting place and worship Me."

Renaming the Deity, Jai Gopala, the king returned to his empire in Orissa. Upon reaching Remuna, Jai Gopala told the king in a dream, "I want to stay here because this lovely picturesque place, with all its milk laden cows and joyous cowherd men, reminds Me of the pleasure land of Vrndavana (Ramana Reti)." [The word Remuna comes from the word *ramana*, which means pleasing, charming or love's delights.]

King Langula Narasimha Dev then built a magnificent temple for Gopinatha in Remuna and instituted daily worship. Seeing all the *sakhis* engraved on



the Deity, the queen gave the Deity a new name—Sri Gopinatha.

Sri Citrakūṭa Dhama ki jai! Sri Gopinatha's Remuna Avirbhava ki jai!
Jai Madana Gopala ki jai!

III. How Sri Gopinatha became Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha?

About six hundred years ago, Sri Madhavendra Puri performed intense *nama-bhajana* and *Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa lila-smarana* while fasting beside Govinda Kunda at Govardhana Hill, Vrndavana. Maddened in the ecstasy of Kṛṣṇa's love (*preme matta*), Madhavendra Puri had no knowledge of day or night. Sometimes he stood or fell to the ground; he was out of his senses, completely unaware of his surroundings; deeply absorbed in *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Every afternoon, a cowherd boy appeared before the saint, smiling and offering him a pot of milk. The boy said, "The Vraja-gopis noticed your emaciated condition and told my mother. In our village, no one starves. I bring food to anyone who is not begging. What are you meditating on anyway, just drink the milk. I will return later to collect the milk pot." The innocent beauty and the sweet words (*madhura-vākya*) of that boy gave him so much satisfaction that Madhavendra forgot all hunger and thirst.

His heart full of wonder, Madhavendra Puri stayed awake most of the night. In a dream, the boy held his hand, led him into the jungle and said, "Kept in this *kunja*, I am experiencing great pain from the chilly cold, showering rain, severe wind and scorching heat. Please take Me out of this *kunja*, install me in a temple on Govardhana Hill and worship me nicely by cleansing me with lots of cold water. Being subjugated by your love (*prema-vaśe*), I am accepting your service. By seeing me, everyone will be delivered from the cycle of birth and death. My name is Gopala, Govardhana-dhārī, and I was installed long, long ago by the grandson of Kṛṣṇa, Vajra. Fearing a Muslim attack, my *sevaka* concealed me in this *kunja* and ran away."

Madhavendra Puri woke up startled and lamented, "Alas, I saw Sri Kṛṣṇa directly, but I did not realize it was Him." Absorbed in ecstatic love (*prema-āveśe*), he collapsed on the earth. Madhavendra cried for some time; but then he pacified and quieted his mind by executing the order of Gopāla. Collecting the townspeople, Madhavendra directed the excavation of the Deity. When they saw the Deity covered with dirt and grass, they were both amazed and fully pleased. They carried the heavy Deity to the top of Govardhana Hill and erected a *simhasana* with a stone seat and back support.

The village *brahmins* bathed Gopala with 900 pots of filtered Govinda-kunda water (*govinda-kunḍera jala ānīla chāniṇā*). Drum and bugle music, along with singing and dancing women accompanied the *abhiseka* and installation, which utilized all the milk, yogurt and ghee of the village.



Countless varieties of eatables, *sandesa* and sweetmeats, plus piles of *tulasi* leaves, flowers and nice garments were offered.

A huge *maha-snana* of *panca-gavya* and *panca-amṛta* was poured upon the Gopala Deity. The dressing, *bhoga* offering and *aratika* were performed with great pomp. The top of Govardhana Hill was entirely covered with all the stocks of rice, *dal* and wheat flour that the villagers had. Many *brahmins* cooked all the ingredients into mountains of food called *Annakūṭa*. Hungry Gopala voraciously ate all the mountains of rice, *chapattis*, *sabjis* and sweets; yet everything miraculously remained. All the festivalgoers then sumptuously honored Sri Gopalaji's *maha-prasadam*.

Day after day, Gopalaji enjoyed *Annakūṭa* festivals offered by all the villages in Vraja. It was a grand love festival. Srila Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvami says: *vraja-vāsi lokera kṛṣṇe sahaja prīti, gopālera sahaja-prīti vraja-vāsi-prati*: "The Vrajavasis have natural love for Sri Kṛṣṇa, and Gopala naturally loves the Vrajavasis in return." (Cc. 2.4.95)

Wealthy warriors from Mathura constructed a fabulous temple and endowed Gopala with lots of silver, gold, jewels, cows and agricultural land. After performing two years of continuous first-class service, Madhavendra Puri heard Gopala say in a dream, "My body is still very hot. Quickly, go bring *malayaja-candana*, sandalwood from Nilacala (Jagannatha Puri), and smear it over Me to cool My body." Thrilled with joy, Madhavendra Puri left the next moment and soon arrived in Remuna, Orissa.

Seeing the gorgeous worship of the Gopinatha Deity, Madhavendra Puri asked the *pujari* about the details of the *bhoga* offerings. The priest said every night they offer 12 pots of unprecedented, out of this world condensed milk that defeats the taste of heavenly ambrosia. Madhavendra thought that if he could taste that *kṣīra*, known as *amṛta-keli*, then he could offer the same to his Gopala Deity back in Vrndavana. But considering that he had made an *aparadha* by desiring to eat the Deity's *kṣīra*, Madhavendra Puri remembered Visnu to purify his mind and left the temple.

Srila Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvami comments (Cc. 2.4.124) that in reality Madhavendra Puri was a completely liberated *paramahansa* Vaisnava, who was so much relishing the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's love (*prema-amṛte tṛpta*) that he was totally beyond hunger and thirst (*kṣudhā-tṛṣṇā nāhi*).

Late that night, the Gopinatha Deity told the *pujari* in a dream, "I have cleverly kept one pot of *kṣīra* behind the curtain for Madhavendra Puri. Go into the village and give it to him." Hearing the story behind his receiving the *kṣīra*, Madhavendra become saturated with ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa. After honoring the *maha-prasadam* in great ecstasy, Madhavendra broke the clay pot into small pieces and bound them in his wrapper. Each day, he ate one



piece of that earthen pot, and immediately submerged in *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

After some time, Madhavendra Puri collected the sandalwood and camphor from Jagannatha Puri and stopped in Remuna while returning to Vrndavana. That night, his Giridhari Gopala came in a dream saying, "I have already received all the sandalwood and camphor. Now grind the camphor and sandalwood and smear it on Gopinatha's body. Because We are the same, it will reduce My body temperature." Per the Lord's order, Madhavendra Puri stayed in Remuna throughout the hot summer offering all the forty kilos of sandalwood paste to the Kṣīra-corā Gopinātha Deity.

While visiting Remuna with His associates, Gauranga Mahāprabhu narrated the above story about Madhavendra Puri. Then He uttered the famous verse of Madhavendra Puri, which was originally spoken by Rādhā Thākuraṇī. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvami says this *sloka* is the best among *rasa-kavya* (mellow poetry) and worthy of deep consideration. At the end of his life Madhavendra Puri attained perfection (*siddhi-prāpti haila purīra ślokerā sahite*) by reciting this verse again and again.

*ayi dīna-dayārdra nātha he, mathurā-nātha kadāvalokyase
hṛdayam tvad-aloka-kātarām, dayita bhrāmyati kim karomy aham*

Śrīmatī Rādhikā said, "O You whose heart is most merciful to the wretched! O Master! O Lord of Mathurā! When will I see You again? Without seeing You, My heart is very much aggrieved. O most beloved one! In this state of bewilderment, what shall I do now?" (Cc. 2.4.197)

Upon reciting this verse, Mahāprabhu immediately fell to the ground unconscious in ecstatic love, losing all control over himself. Gaurācandra suddenly stood up and cried, laughed, roared and exhibited many ecstatic emotions, including *jāḍya*, which is memory loss induced by severe shock due to separation from the beloved. This verse opened the door of confidential *prema*, forcing Mahāprabhu to dance in ecstatic love, *prema-nāṭa*. Mahāprabhu soon returned to external consciousness, and then honored Gopinatha's *kṣīra prasadam* with all His associates. Gaurāhari passed the night in the temple relishing *nama-sankīrtana*, and then left the next morning after *maṅgala-ārati*. (Cc. 2.4.1-210 abridged)

*Śrī Kṣīra-corā Gopinātha ki jai! Prema Natarāja Gaurāhari ki jai!
Madhavendra Puripada ki jai!*

IV. The Amazing Tirobhava of Rasikananda

One day, an eighteen year old Orissan boy named Rasika Murari took initiation from Śrī Syāmananda Prabhu and received the name Rasikananda Dev Gosvami. After the departure of his beloved Gurudeva, Rasikananda



preached for forty years throughout Bengal and Orissa initiating thousands into Gaudiya Vaisnavism. He also displayed many mystic feats, including initiating a wild killer elephant and humbling a powerful *tantric* who rode on a tiger.

At the end of his life, Rasikananda had his disciples carry him into the temple for a last *darsana* of Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha. When the party entered the temple, Rasikananda suddenly disappeared into thin air. His disciples searched everywhere in vain and then fell dead on the ground [after performing an ecstatic *kirtana* according to some authorities]. As per his will, Rasikananda's clothes and belongings were buried in his *samadhi* on the temple premises.

Sri Kṣīra-corā Gopīnātha ki jai! Sri Syamananda Prabhu ki jai!

Sri Rasikananda Dev Gosvami ki jai!





OPTIONAL DAY TRIP THREE

Sākṣi-gopāla Temple

Location—The temple is 20 km. west of Jagannatha Puri in a town called Sākṣi-gopāla, which is also the name of the local railway station. It is reachable by taxi, bus or the Puri-Bhubanesvara train. Non-Hindus are strictly prohibited from entrance.

Main Deity

It is said that Vajranabha (Sri Kṛṣṇa's great-grandson) installed two Gopala Deities in Vraja Mandala: Sākṣi-gopāla and Madana Gopala (Madana Mohana). The Sākṣi-gopāla Deity here, being 5,000 years old, is an exceptionally special one. In Vr̥ndavana, all that remains of the original Sākṣi-gopāla temple is some old walls and pillars. Curious historians can see these ruins in Vr̥ndavana by walking north on the street in front of the old Govindaji Mandira, past the Pracina Dakṣiṇa Mukha Hanuman temple, and then look on the left behind some shops.

Pastimes

I. God Testifies for His Devotee

Once two *brahmins*, a young and old one, left their homes in Vidyānagara, South India, and visited many holy places before coming to Vr̥ndavana. Satisfied with the service of the young *brahmin* and feeling grateful, the old one promised him before the Gopāla Deity of Vr̥ndāvana to offer his youngest daughter in marriage. Hence, Gopālaḥ acted as a witness. When the two *brahmins* returned to Vidyānagara, the old *brahmin*, due to family constraints, reneged on his promise; flatly denying that he had ever made such a promise.

The younger *brahmin*, upset and dejected, returned to Vr̥ndāvana and told everything to the Gopala Deity. Out of love for His devotee (*bhaktavatsala*), Gopālaḥ, followed the young *brahmin* to Vidyānagara in South India to act as witness (*sākṣi*). All the way, that fortunate *brahmin* heard the joyful, tinkling sound of Gopālaḥ's ankle bells. In Vidyānagara, all the senior *brahmins* listened as Gopālaḥ testified to the promise of the elderly *brahmin*. Thus the marriage was rightfully performed.

Bhakta Vatsala Sākṣi-gopāla ki jai!

II. The Lover's Quarrel

In battle, King Puruṣottama Dev of Orissa once defeated the King of Vidyānagara. As spoils of war, the victor brought the Sākṣi-gopāla Deity



to Orissa and worshiped him in Kaṭāka. Thereafter, Gopalaji stayed a while in the Jagannātha temple in Puri until something went wrong. Whenever Jagannatha's *pujari* placed the early morning *bhoga* offering on the altar, Sākṣi-gopāla gobbled up all the sweets and savories; leaving only some dry fruit for Jagannatha Swami.

Pertaining to this, Srila Prabhupada said, "There was some disagreement between Jagannātha and Sākṣi-gopāla, a disagreement called *prema-kalaha*, a quarrel of love. In order to settle this love quarrel, the king of Orissa constructed a new temple for Sākṣi-gopāla about 20 km. from Jagannātha Puri." (Cc. 2.5.9 p.) Now Sākṣi-gopāla could eat to His heart's delight.

Sākṣi-gopāla's prema-kalaha lila ki jai!

III. Gauranga in Sākṣi-gopāla

One day Gauranga visited the temple and became filled with bliss upon beholding the beauty of Gopalaji (*gopāla-saundarya dekhi' hailā ānandite*). Overwhelmed in love, Gauracandra danced for some time and then offered many prayers to Gopala. That night, Mahaprabhu heard Nitai narrate the glories of the witness Gopala with great joy. Afterwards, while Mahaprabhu sat before the Gopāla Deity, all the devotees saw Gaura and Gopala having the same form. Gaura Gopala had the same complexion and both had gigantic bodies. Both wore saffron cloth and both were very grave. The devotees saw that both Mahāprabhu and Gopāla were brilliantly effulgent and had eyes like lotuses. They were both absorbed in ecstasy, and both Their faces resembled full moons. Nityānanda also noticed the similarity and then laughed along with the other devotees in great jubilation. (Cc. 2.5.134-139)

Sri Gaura Gopala ki jai!

IV. A Wish Come True

One day, the queen of Puruṣottama Dev desired to offer Gopalaji the costly nose pearl that she was wearing. The queen thought, "If there was a hole in Thakuraji's nose, then this maidservant of His could present this pearl. That night in a dream Sākṣi-gopālaji spoke to the queen: "In My childhood, mother Yasoda made a hole in My nose and set a pearl there. That hole is still there, so you can offer the pearl you desired to give Me."

The next morning, the excited queen and king went to the temple with the pearl. They joyfully fixed the pearl in Gopalaji's nose and then held a grand celebration (*mahā-mahotsava*) of dancing, singing devotional songs and distributing *maha-prasadam*. (Cc. 2.5.125-132)

Sākṣi-gopālaji's nāsā muktā lila ki jai!

OPTIONAL DAY TRIP FOUR

Sri Caitanya Daṇḍa-bhāṅgā Lila Kunja (ISKCON Daṇḍa-bhāṅgā Project)

Location—This sacred place where Nityananda Prabhu broke Gauranga's *sannyasa danda* in three pieces is located in the village of Candanpur on the main road to Bhubanesvara, ten km. from Puri. You can visit here last if you are leaving Jagannatha Puri via the Bhubanesvara airport or railway station. This unique pastime place of *gaura-lila* is being developed by ISKCON under the guidance of Srīman Sacinandana Dasa, a disciple of *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa* Srīla Gaura Govinda Swami. The word *nadī* means river. The river Bhārgī or Bhārgīnadī came to be known as the Daṇḍa-bhāṅgā-nadī after Nitai broke (*bhāṅgā*) Sri Caitanya's *sannyasa* staff (*daṇḍa*) and threw it there.

See their website at: www.dandabhanga.com

Main Deities

The local devotees can tell the most amazing stories about all the Deities in the two temples on the premises. This small but significant pastime place and ISKCON project has more Deities than many big temples combined.

Deities in the small temple: Small Deities of Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsana; Giriraja Sila; Laddu Gopala; Sri Gaura Nitai; Narasinghadev; and Sri Sri Rādhā Gopinatha.

Deities in the bigger temple: Large Deities of Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsana; Dvadasa-bhuja (12 armed!) Gauranga Mahaprabhu; Sri Madhava Deva with Laksmi-devi and Sarasvati; a Siva *lingam*; and three small and life-size *murtis* of His Divine Grace Srīla Prabhupada and Srīla Gaura Govinda Swami.

Pastimes

I. The Heart Breaking Danda (*daṇḍa-bhāṅga-līlā*)

On the way to Nilacala, Mahaprabhu visited many temples and holy places. When He saw the various Deity forms of the Lord, Gaurahari danced in ecstatic bliss. One day Sri Caitanyadeva left His *sannyasa danda* in the care of Nityananda Avadhuta. Running quickly down the road searching for His *prananatha*, Gauranga forgot Himself in the intense ecstasy of *viraha-prema*.



Gadadhara and others tried to follow Him.

Nityananda intentionally lagged behind, thinking, “How could Prabhu take *sannyasa* in My presence? How can I tolerate His rejecting His world-enchanting flute to take up a *danda*? I am continually suffering because of Gauranga’s cutting off His beautiful hair and taking *sannyasa*.”

When Nityananda’s grief reached the breaking point, He snapped the *danda* over His thigh, and threw the three pieces in the river. Nitai became slightly fearful over Mahaprabhu’s reaction so He deliberately walked slowly down the road.

When They finally met, Lord Caitanya asked Nityananda, “Where is My *danda*?” Nityananda remained silent. Curious over Nitai’s hesitancy to respond, Gauranga repeated the question, “Where did You put My *danda*? Not seeing it, I feel upset.”

Nityananda Prabhu said, “It just burns My heart to see that You have shaved Your head and taken *sannyasa*. As if that wasn’t enough, You started carrying a *danda*. I just could not tolerate the pain anymore, so I broke Your *danda* and threw it in the river.” Nityananda paused for a moment as His emotions swelled His heart. Finally, in a faltering voice, He said, “Just do whatever You want.”

Mahaprabhu angrily replied, “You *avadhuta*! You always do the opposite thing, something unpredictable. Don’t You know that all the demigods reside in My *danda*. What purpose have You served by breaking it? You are just a restless person; always unsteady and uncontrolled. You always act like a crazy man or a little boy. You never follow the rules of *dharma*. You are beyond the *varnasrama* system. Nitai, Your behavior is completely independent of any designated position. If I try to tell You anything, You immediately become furious.”

Lord Nityananda laughed and spoke in a choked voice, “It is true, I do not follow the rules and regulations of scriptures. You can judge whether I did good or bad; for You know everything. If it is true what You said about all the demigods in Your *danda*, then how on earth can I tolerate You carrying all of them on Your shoulder? You always worry about the welfare of others, but I simply see their misdeeds. But why should I fight with You? I admit that I have committed an offense. Please forgive Me. The whole world is delivered by once chanting Your name. You are the deliverer of the fallen, so please deliver Me by forgiving Me.

“But Gauranga, I must remind You that Your taking *sannyasa* has really shocked the devotees. Even to this day, they cannot believe that You shaved off Your beautiful locks. That hair, an enchanting crown above Your head, gave pleasure to one and all. My heart constantly burns



upon seeing the broken hearts of all Your devotees. For the benefit of the devotees I broke that *danda*, which was not a mere stick but rather a steel spike piercing our hearts. If You do not believe Me, just ask the devotees.”

Mahaprabhu remained silent as if unhappy, but within His heart He felt supremely pleased. Locana Dasa says that Sri Nityananda Prabhu broke Gauranga’s *danda* because He knew all the mysteries of Mahaprabhu. (*Caitanya Mangala Madhya* chp. 15)

Nitai-Gaura prema sambandha ki jai! Danda Bhanga lila ki jai!

II. Why Nitai Broke the Danda In Three Pieces?

This pastime is extremely mysterious and confidential as Srila Kṛṣṇadāsa Kaviraja Gosvami confirms: *daṇḍa-bhaṅga-lilā ei parama gambhīra, sei bujhe, duohāra pade yāora bhakti dhīra*, “The pastime of breaking Lord Gauranga’s *sannyasa* staff is very deep. Only one whose devotion is fixed upon the lotus feet of Gaura-Nitai can understand it. (Cc. 2.5.158)

In the purport, Srila Prabhupada says, “Nityānanda Prabhu, who was Mahaprabhu’s eternal servitor, believed that there was no need for Śrī Caitanya to carry the staff. To declare to the world that Mahāprabhu was above all regulations, Nitai broke it into three pieces.”

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explains the mystery of the *daṇḍa-bhaṅga-lilā* thus: “Mahāprabhu took *sannyasa* from a Māyāvādī, and Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* carry one *daṇḍa* only. When Sri Caitanyadeva ran ahead toward Jagannatha Puri, Nitai broke His *danda* into three parts and threw it in the Bhārgī River, later known as the Daṇḍa-bhāṅgā-nadī. There are four progressive stages within the *sannyasa asrama*—*kuṭīcaka*, *bahūdaka*, *haṁsa* and *paramahaṁsa*. *Sannyasis* at the stages *kuṭīcaka* and *bahūdaka* carry a *danda*. However, when one advances to the stage of *haṁsa* or *paramahaṁsa*, e gives up the *danda*.

“Srimati Rādhikā and Sri Kṛṣṇa appear together in Their combined form as Rasaraja Mahabhava Mahaprabhu. Therefore, considering the inconceivably unique position of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Nityānanda Prabhu did not wait for Him to attain the *paramahaṁsa* stage. Even though Gauranga had just taken *sannyasa*, Nitai reasoned that since Lord Caitanya is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He is automatically on the topmost stage way beyond *paramahaṁsa*. Consequently, seeing absolutely no need for Gauranga’s carrying the *sannyasa danda*, Nitai broke it into three pieces and hurled it into the river.” (Cc. 2.5.143 *Anubhāsyā*)

After reading these verses and purports and visiting Daṇḍa-bhāṅgā-nadī, I had a small realization about why Mahaprabhu’s *danda* was broken into three parts. The three pieces represent the three-fold bending form



(*tri bhanga lalitam*) of Sri Kṛṣṇa in Vrndavana. Now Sri Kṛṣṇa's three-fold bending form is here as the three pieces of Mahaprabhu's *danda* that is associating with Yamuna-devi (the Daṇḍa-bhāṅgā-nadī), who is the liquid *prema* expansion of Visakha-sakhi in Vraja. I see this as the esoteric meaning behind breaking the *danda* into three pieces.

Jai Nitai's daṇḍa-bhaṅga-līlā ki jai!

III. The Revelations of Sacinandana Dasa

In 2007, I visited the ISKCON Danda Bhanga Lila Kunja project and heard the following story from the coordinator, Sacinandana Dasa: "Daṇḍa-bhāṅgā-nadī is a direct manifestation of the Yamuna River, and the Bhargi River is a manifestation of Ganga. Our resident *babaji*, the revered Haridasa Sena (a descendant of Sivananda Sena) once related to me a *lila-sphurti* (pastime vision) that he had here.

"Babaji Maharaja told me, 'One day here, I saw Sri Caitanyadeva speaking to Yamuna-devi personified kneeling at His divine lotus feet. Mahaprabhu said, "Yamuna, you are My *nitya-sakhi*, so do not worry about My *sannyasa* form. You will always stay with Me in the form of your water (which Mahaprabhu kept in His *kamaṇḍalu*, water pot). Lord Nityananda will come here, break My *danda* in three, and put them in your sacred water (Daṇḍa-bhāṅgā-nadī Yamuna). I will then stay here with you, Yamuna-devi, in the form of My *danda* to award *kṛṣṇa-prema* to one and all.'" This is what Babaji Maharaja clearly saw and related to me.

"Maharaja, many *sastras* refer to this pastime, including the *Caitanya Sahasra Nama*, *Caitanya Candrodaya* (Act 6.v.25), *Caitanya Caritamṛta* (2.5.140-158), *Caitanya Mangala* and Murari Gupta's *Sri Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahakavya*. But the most astonishing point is that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is fully present, personally living here in the form of His *danda*. And even more amazing is that from here Mahaprabhu's *vraja madhurya-prema* will be spread all over the world. We hope all devotees will realize the supreme significance of this topmost *gaura lila-sthali*, step forward to help us, and most importantly come here and take the *kṛṣṇa-prema* that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is freely giving to one and all."

Kali-yuga Prema Avatara Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu ki jai!

Sri Caitanya Daṇḍa-bhāṅgā Lila Kunja ki jai!

ISKCON Daṇḍa-bhāṅgā Project ki jai!

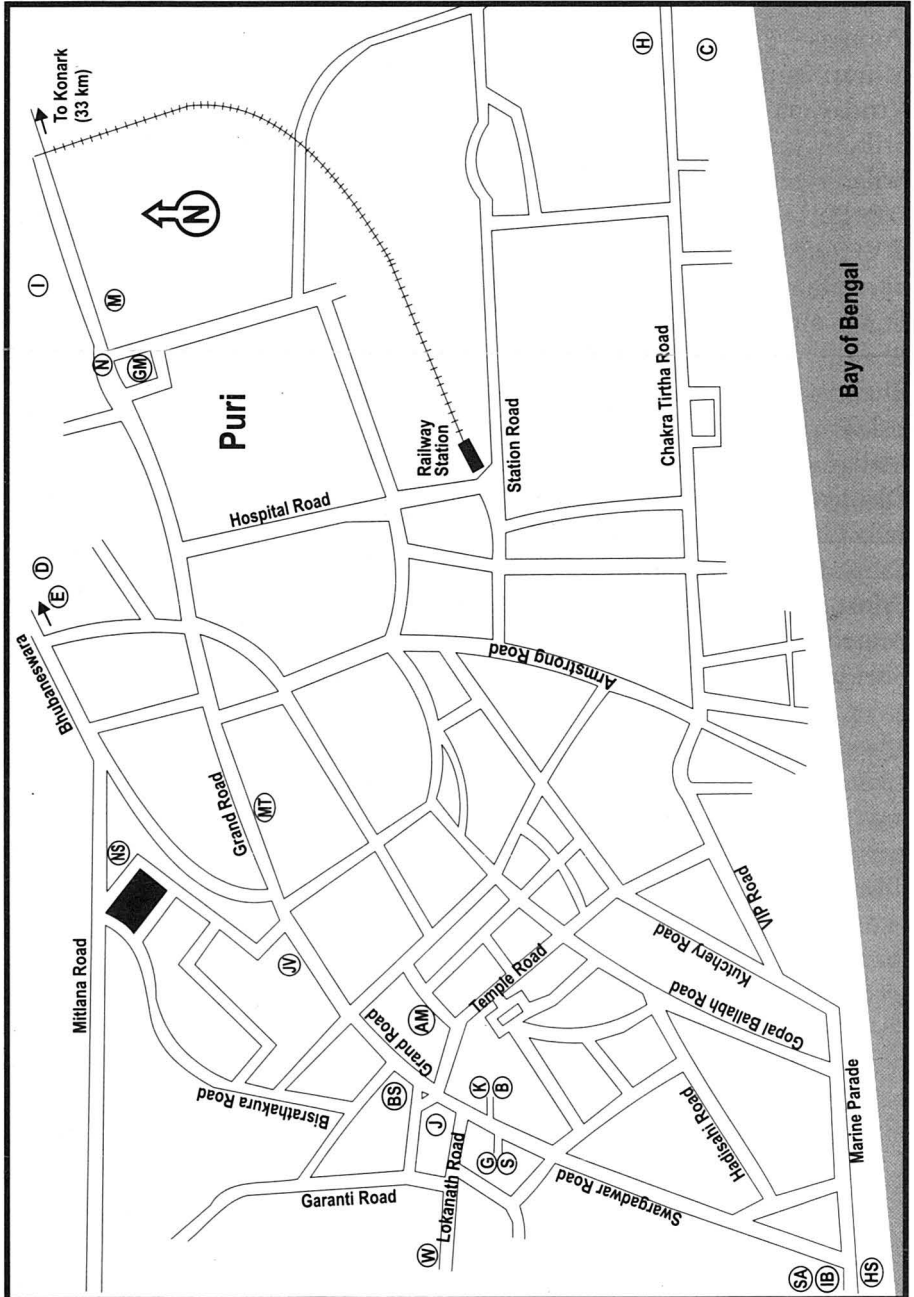


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Sri Jagannatha Swami



Ki Jai!



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