

Modern Blasphemy: Earth is Not a Globe

BY: MAYESVARA DASA

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The following is a response to an article by Rajasekhara dasa Brahmachari entitled "[Flat Earth Theory - Completely Flattened](#)", posted on Sampradaya Sun February 25 2016. It is also a response to an article by Krishna dasa entitled "[Bhu-mandala](#)".

MAYA

There are many objections to the Flat Earth theory raised by Rajasekhara Prabhu in his article, so I will have to split this response into different parts. The following paper or *Part One* will give some context to this discussion, and explain what the *Srimad Bhagavatam* actually describes to be the shape, situation and location of Earth to the rest of the Vedic Universe.

Without being clear on the *Srimad Bhagavatam's* description of Earth we will have no basis to evaluate and judge information about the Earth coming from non-Vedic sources. In later parts we can discuss anomalies in the globe conception, arguments for a flat Earth, and of course, Srila Prabhupada's quotations on the subject.

Rajasekhara dasa:

"It is surprising that someone who claims to understand Vedic science would support their theory with wholly unscientific evidence. Obviously Mayesvara has no genuine scientific understanding judging by the evidence he is presenting in support of his 'Flat Earth' speculation. In fact he appears to be an intellectual midget posing as some kind of spiritual colossus with his concocted version of Shrimad Bhagavatam 'As It Is'. This is simply a deceitful trick to influence innocent minds that his version of the Bhagavatam is somehow bona-fide and on the same level as Shrila Prabhupada's Bhagavad-gita As Is Is."

The difficulty for anyone hearing this concept of a flat Earth for the first time is that a whole set of conditioned responses are immediately set into motion. Next to the cross, the globe is perhaps the most iconic image in the modern world. To question the authenticity of the globe is the modern blasphemy. Rajasekhara Prabhu, you believe in the globe, but have you personally went out into outer space to see what it really looks like? I don't think so! So let's just stop for a moment and consider our smallness and lack of personal experience. Rajasekhara Prabhu you have not personally seen the globe with your own eyes. Isn't that interesting. Now you may think that you have seen the globe, but really, all that you've ever seen is an image of the globe that has been presented to you by government agencies such as NASA, the education system, and various media channels (we'll come to the other world space agencies presently). So, here you are, unquestioningly believing the education and the images that you have been presented all your life about the nature and shape of the Earth, and along comes Mayesvara dasa to inform you that the whole thing is fake and that you've been lied to. So what does the false ego say? The false ego says: who is the upstart guy Mayesvara that thinks he knows something more than me and the rest of the world to question the very shape and nature of the planet we live on. Obviously he must be 'a midget trying to be a colossus' because how otherwise could Rajashekha *das brahmachari* be subject to such a colossal deception as to think the world is round when it is actually flat.

But remember you have never personally seen the world from outer space with your own eyes; so for the moment, a least exercise just a little humility that maybe you don't know as much as you think you do. And please exhibit just a little curiosity in regards to what I'm trying to communicate because the nature of the Lord's illusory energy is vast, and you cannot say that you've

seen the end of it: *na vai maharaja bhagavato maya-guna-vibhuteh kastham*

"The great Rsi Sukadeva Gosvami said: My dear King, there is no limit to the expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead's material energy." (SB 5.16.4)

Just possibly, the globe Earth concept is part of the Lord's maya that he now wishes to remove with the construction of the Mayapur Vedic planetarium which will reveal the true form of Bharata-varsha as it rests on the great horizontal plane of Bhu-mandala. Why the true form of Bharata-varsha has been hidden will take some time explain, so I ask the reader to bear with me.

Rajasekhara Prabhu, when I presented you with just one of the many videos analyzing just a few of the many examples in which NASA had faked the pictures of the Earth, you immediately lapsed into Stockholm Syndrome, defending your mental captors whilst stigmatizing a good Christian person (Rob Skiba) as demoniac simply because he wants to remove the delusion from the eyes of the world by exposing the massive deception that NASA has perpetrated against you and your 7.4 billion brethren:

Rajasekhara dasa:

"Rather than quote from demons and what he sees on You-Tube, Mayesvara should concentrate on bona-fide shastric souces of information"

In the same breath Rajasekhara Prabhu appeals to the same demoniac non-shastric, non-bonafide sources to support his globe:

"However, I say forget NASA, what about the Indian Space Mission (ISRO) & their photographs of the Earth. What about the Chinese & Japanese Space Missions, what to speak of the Russians, who were the first to put a man in Earth's orbit. You can only 'orbit' an 'orb', not a flat plain. The Russians say the Earth is a round globe. All these countries, India, Japan, China, and Russia, have sent probes to the moon. No one has reported a 'Flat Earth'. On the contrary, they have all agreed that the Earth is a round globe...What about all the countries that have also launched satellites into Earth's 'orbit' including; Britain, Germany, France, Brazil and even North Korea, to name just some. ...They are in fact unanimous that the Earth is a round globe."

So you trust the world's governments that are collectively responsible for 42 million abortions a years, and the slaughter of approximately 50 billion animals. The largest industries in the world are connected to war, intoxication, and illicit sex, all aspects of Kali-yuga government Do you not believe Srila Prabhupada when he says that world is presently run by asuras, and that truth is not found in them *na satyam tesu vidyate* (Bg 16.7).

THE APPEARANCE OF THE HOLY NAME

For what reason do you think the incarnation of the Holy Name has appeared in the world? Srila Prabhupada explained on numerous occasions that the external reasons for the Lord's present appearance in the world are the same as those that precipitated His appearance 5,000 years ago. The following verse and purport are an example of many such statements:

"When the world is overburdened by unnecessary military arrangements and when various demoniac kings are the executive heads of state, this burden causes the appearance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. (SB 10.1.17)

Purport

As the Lord says in Bhagavad-gita (4.7):

*yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati bharata
abhyutthanam adharmasya tadatmanam srjamy aham*

"Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion—at that time I appear Myself." When the residents of this earth become atheistic and godless, they descend to the status of animals like dogs and

hogs, and thus their only business is to bark among themselves. This is dharmasya glani, deviation from the goal of life. Human life is meant for attaining the highest perfection of Krishna consciousness, but when people are godless and the presidents or kings are unnecessarily puffed up with military power, their business is to fight and increase the military strength of their different states. Nowadays, therefore, it appears that every state is busy manufacturing atomic weapons to prepare for a third world war...**rogues and thieves in the guise of protectors arrange for a voting system, and in the name of democracy they come to power by hook or crook and exploit the citizens. Even long, long ago, asuras, persons devoid of God consciousness, became the heads of state, and now this is happening again.** The various states of the world are preoccupied with arranging for military strength. Sometimes they spend sixty-five percent of the government's revenue for this purpose. But why should people's hard-earned money be spent in this way? **Because of the present world situation, Krishna has descended in the form of the Krishna consciousness movement.** This is quite natural, for without the Krishna consciousness movement the world cannot be peaceful and happy."

(Srimad Bhagavatam 10.1.17 and Purport)

Srila Prabhupada explains here that just as the asuras had gained control over the Earth 5,000 years ago, so now '*this is happening again*.' Of course, Krishna has ultimate control over all aspects of material existence, but since he allows the living entities to exercise free will, the asuras naturally become stronger at certain points thereby creating massive disturbances in the world. Such is the present condition of the world. When irreligion or 'Satanic influence' becomes prominent, at that point Krishna appears to re-establish dharma. Hence the appearance of the Sound Incarnation of Godhead or Nama Avatar:

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare

As will be explained over the course of these various replies to Rajasekhara Prabhu's article, the globe Earth deception is actually part of asuric science to hide the actual feature of Krishna's creation. It is part of the same asuric science which teaches that creation came from a big bang, and that life evolved by chemical evolution. The temple of Vedic Planetarium in Mayapur Vedic Planetarium is based on the theological cosmography of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and is one of Srila Prabhupada's main projects to counteract the prevailing materialistic world view of life and the cosmos.

THE EARTH ACCORDING TO SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM

The *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s depiction of the universe, however, immediately creates a clash of world-views that most people may prefer to avoid, and that includes many of the followers of Srila Prabhupada who find it difficult to understand or conceptualize the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*'s depiction of Earth and its relation to the greater universe. We have all grown up with an image of Earth as a rotating ball in space, and we're pretty happy with that. But how did we get that image and conception of a globe into our heads? Is the globe-shaped Earth an authentic image, and is the Earth truly a round planet rotating in space around the sun? Will it come to be, that one of the most earth-shattering events in our life is the discovery of the real nature of Earth itself?

Ok, so before we look at the evidence of the Earth's shape from the world's space agencies that Rajasekhara Prabhu finds so credible, let's go immediately to our own shastric sources of information; because as followers of Krishna, our understanding of Earth ultimately comes from *Srimad Bhagavatam*, not the American, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, or even Indian Space agencies. At least Srila Prabhupada instructed that the Temple of Vedic Planetarium in India should be built according to the version of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Once we are clear on what *Srimad Bhagavatam* is explaining, we will be in a better position to evaluate and judge the authenticity of the images and description of Earth coming from these various governments and space agencies.

The problem as I see it, is that most devotees do not understand the Vedic cosmology, particularly the shape and location of Earth on the Bhu-mandala; and the few who do understand it, do not have the requisite faith to present as it is. I use the term *as it is*, not because I'm trying to put myself on a level with Srila Prabhupada as Rajasekara Prabhu accuses me of doing, but be-

cause Srila Prabhupada taught us to take the straightforward meaning of *Srimad Bhagavatam* and not to speculate or interpolate on the text.

BHU-MANDALA

So how does *Srimad Bhagavatam* describe our Earth? Our particular universe is divided across the middle by a flat horizontal plane called Bhu-mandala, which literally means the Earth circle. In Vrindavana, for example, pilgrims go on the *Vraja-mandala* parikrama which refers to walking around the holy places of Sri Vrindavana dham in a circular motion. *Vraja-mandala* is thus a circular area on a horizontal surface. Like-wise, Bhu-mandala is a huge horizontal circle that divides the universe into higher and lower planetary systems. There are altogether fourteen planetary systems in the universe; six planetary systems are above Bhu-mandala and seven below it. Bhu-mandala itself has various divisions of land and oceans stretching for millions of miles along its four billion mile diameter. This huge horizontal plane dividing the universe from higher and lower levels is basically what the Vedas describe as Earth. What we call our 'Earth' is situated in an area of Bhu-mandala called Bharata varsha. Bharata-varsha is a just a tiny part of the Earth circle and is not the total Earth itself. The total Earth area is called by the name Bhumi or Bhu-mandala. Bharata-varsha is a place name of an area within the Earth circle or Bhu-mandala. They should not be confused.

JAMBUDWIPA

So where is Bharata-varsha located on the Earth circle? *Srimad Bhagavatam* explains:

"The planetary system known as Bhu-mandala resembles a lotus flower, and its seven islands resemble the whorl of that flower. The length and breadth of the island known as Jambudvipa, which is situated in the middle of the whorl, are one million yojanas [eight million miles]. Jambudvipa is round like the leaf of a lotus flower." (*SB 5.16.5*)

[One mistake to be noted here for our BBT editors is that Jambudwipa is only 100,000 yojanas in breadth (800,000 miles) not eight million as in the above translation. This figure of 800,000 miles is confirmed in later verses]. In any case, here Sukadeva Goswami describes that Bhu-mandala has seven main islands, and the central island (where we are) is called Jambudwipa. We learn later in Sukadeva Goswami's description that these seven islands stretch for millions of miles from the centre of Bhu-mandala. It is a little difficult to conceptualize this description, but basically, if one was to look down from above the North Star onto the great plane of Bhu-mandala, it would look like this from above with seven concentric islands surrounded by seven oceans; the following images are from *Vedic Cosmos* by Danavir Goswami:



Such an image may not mean much, or seem relevant to anyone looking at it for the first time; but basically it is depicting the huge circular horizontal plane of Bhu-mandala on which the continents of our own Earth rest. In the above sloka from Sukadeva Goswami he says that Jambudwipa is the name of the first or central island of Bhu-mandala. The name Jambudwipa is relevant to us because that's where we are situated. Sukadeva Goswami describes Jambudwipa as 'round like a lotus leaf' (*samavartulau*—equally round, or having a length and breadth of the same measurement; *yatha*—like; *punkara-patram*—a lotus leaf)

Now before we present a computer generated image of Jambudwipa itself, let's just be clear what Sukadeva Goswami means by comparing its shape to 'round like a lotus leaf,' and why this shape is relevant to a discussion about the flat Earth. What does a round lotus leaf look like? Well here is one:



A lotus leaf is round and flat like a plate, not round like a ball. So according to *Srimad Bhagavatam*, Jambudwipa is round like a lotus leaf, and Bharata-varsha (where we are), rests on the same flat plane as the rest of Jambudwipa. In other words, according to Sukadeva Goswami, the continents of our Earth rest on a horizontal plane; they do not curve around a globe-like circular ball. Indeed there is no place in *Srimad Bhagavatam* where Sukadeva Goswami describes Bharata-varsha as a globe in space. We will come back to this point presently.

So keep this image of the lotus leaf in mind as we turn now to Jambudwipa. The image is very appropriate because Jambudwipa is a round circular continent surrounded by water.

"Jambudvipa is also surrounded by an ocean of salt water. The breadth of Jambudvipa is 100,000 yojanas [800,000 miles], and the breadth of the saltwater ocean is the same." (*SB 5.20.2*)

So what does Jambudwipa look like? The following image of Jambudvipa is again from a documentary called *Vedic Cosmos* by Danavir Goswami. Looking from above, Jambudvipa looks something like this with the golden Mount Meru in its center:



Here we can see why Sukadeva Goswami's comparison to a lotus leaf is very appropriate. The 800,000 mile round island of Jambudwipa is like the lotus leaf and it is surrounded by water in the form of the salt water ocean. This ocean also has a breadth of 800,000 miles and completely surrounds Jambudvipa in a huge circle. Past the blue ocean, we can see the start of another concentric circle representing a further island (*dvipa*). A series of these concentric circular islands and oceans continue for millions of miles along this central part of the 4 billion diameter plane of Bhu-mandala. Eventually one comes to the shell of the universe which is round-shaped like an egg and encloses everything within it.

In the above illustration we can also notice various lines going from east to west along the circular island. These represent various mountain ranges that divide Jambudwipa into nine sections called *varshas* in Sanskrit.

"In Jambudvipa there are nine divisions of land, each with a length of 9,000 yojanas [72,000 miles]. There are eight mountains that mark the boundaries of these divisions and separate them nicely." (SB 5.16.6)

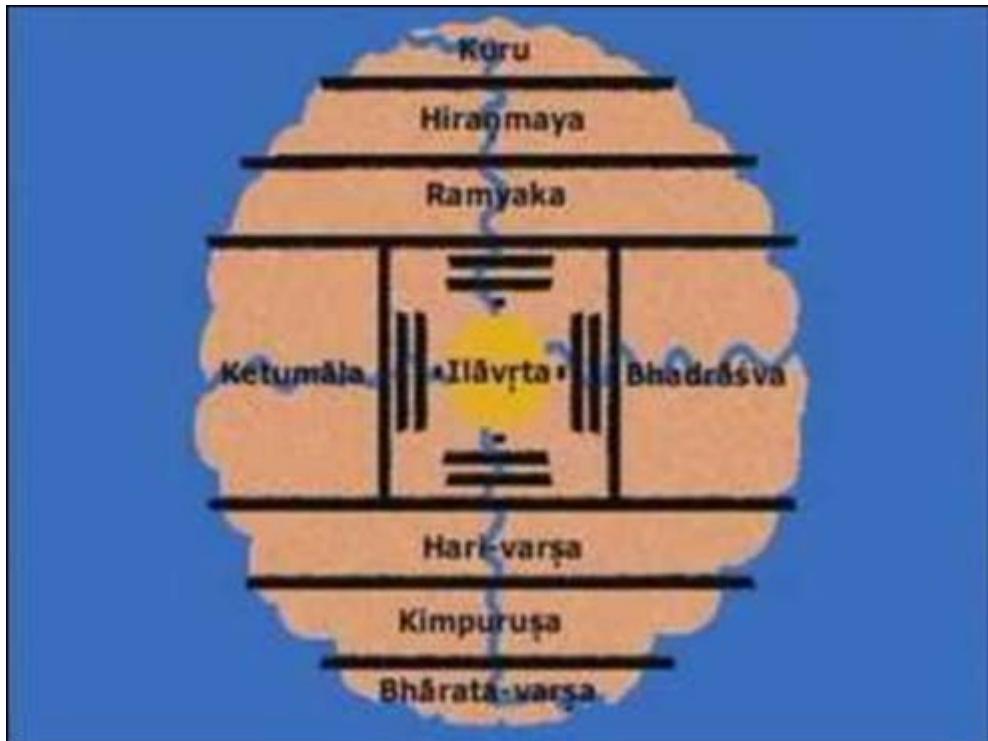
Ok, so thus far we have been informed that Jambudwipa is a huge circular island continent that is 800,000 miles in breadth, and divided into nine sections that are 72,000 miles long. Now where is our Earth situated on this great Island? First let us note that directions in the universe are measured from Mount Meru which marks the very centre of the universe. Mount Meru is again situated in the very center of Jambudwipa in a place called Ilavrta-varsha. So as we move south away from Meru, we pass Hari-varsha, then Kimpurusha varsha, until we eventually come to Bharata-varsha:

"Similarly, south of Ilavrta-varsha and extending from east to west are three great mountains named (from north to south) Nisadha, Hemakuta and Himalaya. Each of them is 10,000 yojanas [80,000 miles] high. They mark the boundaries of the three varshas named Hari-varsha, Kimpurusha-varsha and Bharata-varsha [India]."

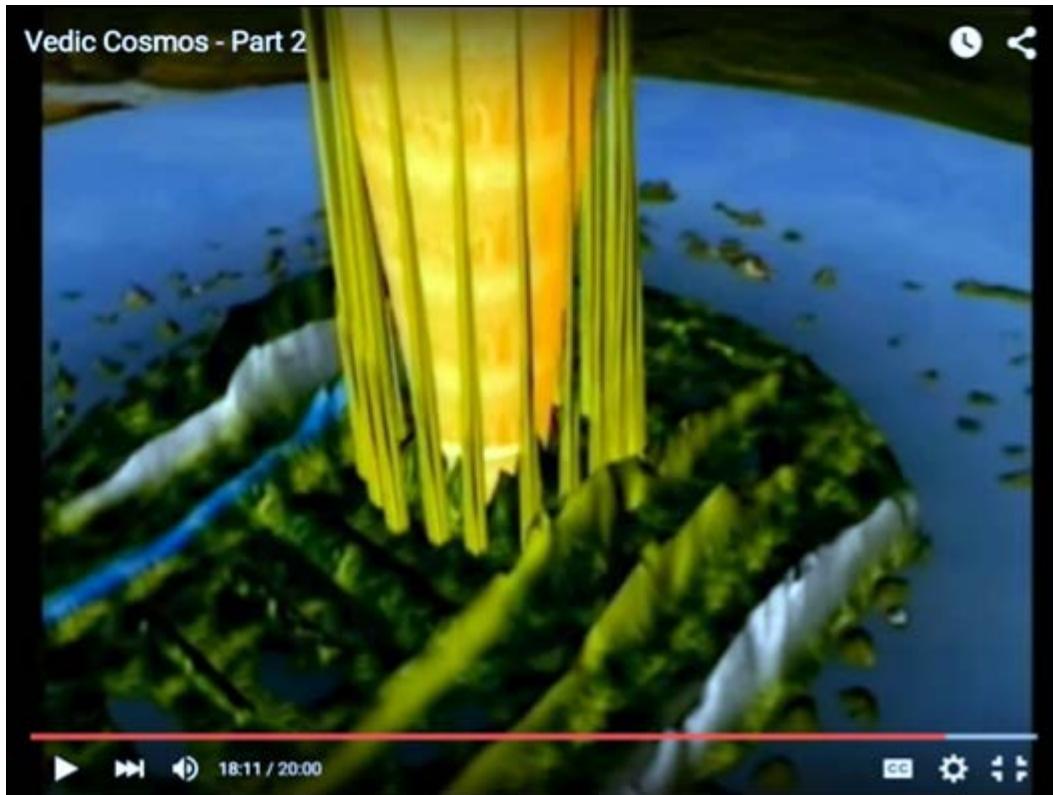
BHARATA VARSHA

The continents of our known Earth are thus located in a *varsha* (region) of Jambudvipa called Bharata-varsha which is on the southern side of the great circular island. For most people (and

that includes devotees) the above image and description appears alien and irrelevant because we have not been taught to recognize the location and shape of Earth on this kind of map or illustration. We have been presented with images of Earth as a lonely globe in dark space, not a place located on a horizontal plane and surrounded by a huge land mass and an ocean that continues for 800,000 miles. We have been taught that we live on a globe and that the globe Earth has been circumnavigated and fully explored. The truth that *Srimad Bhagavatam* explains is very different. If we take a closer look at a map of Jambudvipa, we can see its division into nine regions:



First note the very wonderful symmetrical arrangement of Jambudvipa. Indeed like everything else in Krishna's creation, symmetry is prominent in the layout of the universe itself. The above diagram shows an aerial view of the circular island of Jambudvipa with Bharata-varsha (where we are) in the south. The black lines that cross the image represent huge mountain ranges that divide one varsha from another. These mountain ranges dividing Jambudvipa are more clearly illustrated in the image below:



The above picture shows Jambudvipa with the golden Mount Meru in the center. The rows of mountains around its base rise to a height of 80,000 miles. These huge mountain ranges divide Jambudvipa into nine *varshas* (regions). Earth is one of nine islands situated in the area called Bharata-varsha which is depicted in the bottom right of the illustration.

THE DIVISIONS OF BHARATA VARSHA

So now let us take a closer look at Bharata-varsha itself. The description of Bharata-varsha is given in the 5th Canto of *Srimad -Bhagavatam*, in sections of the *Mahabharata*, as well as in other Puranas (Vedic history). Bharata-varsha has a total land area of 72,000 miles and sits in the southern region of the larger area of Jambudvipa (800,000 miles). Just as Jambudvipa is divided into nine sections, so Bharata-varsha itself is further divided into nine sections of which our Earth is only one part. This is described in various Puranas such as *Vishnu Purana*, *Brahmanda Purana*, and *Markandeya Purana*. In the *Markandeya Purana* it is stated:

"Kraushtuki spoke. Adorable Sir! Thou hast fully described this Jambudvipa...Therefore tell me, O brahman, about this Bharata in detail, and what are its divisions, and how many they are, and what is its constitution accurately; it is the country, and what are the provinces and the mountains in it, O brahman?"

Markandeya spoke. Hear from me the nine divisions of this country Bharata they must be known as extending to the ocean, but as being mutually inaccessible. They are Indra-dvipa, Kaserumat, Tamra-varna, Gabhastimat, and Naga-dvipa, Saumya, Gandharva and Varuna; and this is the ninth dvipa among them, and it is surrounded by the sea. This dvipa is a thousand yojanas from south to north."

Srila Prabhupada's quotes from the *Siddhanta-Siromani* to confirm the existence of these divisions of Bharata-varsha: see *Caitanya-caritamrita*, Antya-lila, 2.10)

In the above quote from the *Markandeya Purana*, Markandeya Rsi says that the region of Bharata-varsha which we know as Earth is 8,000 miles from north to south and is completely surrounded by the sea. To the east and west of our Earth are eight other areas of Bharata-varsha presently unknown to us. Markandeya Rsi's measurement of the Earth's diameter is very close to the modern calculation of approximately 7,920 miles, and his depiction of the Earth being completely surrounded by water is, of course, exactly how Earth can be experienced by any of us living here.

For the vast majority of us who have not yet taken a ride on a rocket ship or a UFO to confirm by personal experience whether the Earth is round or flat, we can at least experience by direct perception that wherever we go by land, sea, or air, the horizon below us is always flat.

THERE IS NO CURVATURE ON THE EARTH

One can take an airplane, for example, from London to Mumbai which is 4,460 miles away; and one will travel at the same distance of 30,000 feet above the surface of the Earth for the entire 9 hour journey. In other words, one flies across a completely horizontal surface for nine hours. This is true for any flight from end of the world to the other – one flies parallel to a horizontal surface for the entire journey. For the record, airplanes do not factor for any curvature of the Earth (as evidently there is none).

We should note also that water always finds a level; and since 70% of the Earth's surface is water, it should be understood that the water levels on all the oceans of the world are on the same horizontal level. Rajasekhara Prabhu pointed out that the Panama Canal requires locks because there is a 20 cm difference between the mean water level of the Atlantic Ocean on one end of the canal and the Pacific Ocean on the other end. There are indeed very slight differences in water levels here and there due to wind and current action, but one glaring mistake we have to point out in Rajasekhara Prabhu's argument is that he seems to have overlooked the small fact that if the Earth is indeed globe-shaped then it will have a huge curvature on its surface. We can calculate the rate of curvature drop over a 48 mile area (the length of the Panama Canal) and it certainly amounts to more than a measly 20 centimetres. The curvature drop rate over an area of 50 miles is actually 1,666.6 feet, not 20 centimetres.

So let us first look at the method for calculating the Earth's curvature. The Pythagorean Theorem gives approximately 8 inches per mile as the curvature on a sphere 25,000 miles in circumference. This is a generally accepted formula. However, simply giving the curvature in inches per mile can be misleading. If it was just 8 inches for every mile that would make a calculation for a downward sloping straight line rather than a curve. To calculate the Earth's supposed curvature we must also use spherical trigonometry, and figuring a 25,000 mile circumference ball, 8 inches is correct, *but varying inversely with the square of the mile*. This means that calculation is squared for each successive mile because on a round globe each mile is curving away from the other, not just sloping (obviously the further one travels on a circle, the more one is going to dip). Thus, after 2 miles the curvature drop would be 32 inches; after 3 miles 72 inches; 4 miles 128 inches; 5 miles 200 inches; and so on.

The following table will show at a glance the amount of curvature, in round numbers, in different distances up to 100 miles. The rule, however, requires to be modified after the first thousand miles.

Statute Miles Away	Math	= Drop
1	$1 \times 1 \times 8 =$	8 Inches
2	$2 \times 2 \times 8 =$	32 Inches
3	$3 \times 3 \times 8 / 12 =$	6 Feet
4	$4 \times 4 \times 8 / 12 =$	10.6 Feet
5	$5 \times 5 \times 8 / 12 =$	16.6 Feet
6	$6 \times 6 \times 8 / 12 =$	24 Feet
7	$7 \times 7 \times 8 / 12 =$	32.6 Feet
8	$8 \times 8 \times 8 / 12 =$	42.6 Feet
9	$9 \times 9 \times 8 / 12 =$	54 Feet
10	$10 \times 10 \times 8 / 12 =$	66.6 Feet
20	$20 \times 20 \times 8 / 12 =$	266.6 Feet
30	$30 \times 30 \times 8 / 12 =$	600 Feet
40	$40 \times 40 \times 8 / 12 =$	1,066.6 Feet
50	$50 \times 50 \times 8 / 12 =$	1,666.6 Feet
60	$60 \times 60 \times 8 / 12 =$	2,400 Feet
70	$70 \times 70 \times 8 / 12 =$	3,266.6 Feet
80	$80 \times 80 \times 8 / 12 =$	4,266.6 Feet
90	$90 \times 90 \times 8 / 12 =$	5,400 Feet
100	$100 \times 100 \times 8 / 12 =$	6,666.6 Feet
120	$120 \times 120 \times 8 / 12 =$	9,600 Feet

From this table we can see that every mile has a curvature drop of a certain amount of feet which would make seeing objects in the distance impossible. If the Earth were truly a globe, then from wherever one stands, the Earth would be curving in all directions and things in the distance would fall below one's line of sight. When a car on a motorway, for example, goes around a bend it disappears from one's vision; the same should be true for objects and places that are tens or hundreds of miles away from one's horizon line, that is, they should disappear from one's line of vision as they disappear around the circumference of the Earth. This, however, is not the fact; distant shorelines, landmarks, lighthouses, ships, etc., can all be seen on the horizon when according to the mathematical formulas for calculating the curvature of the Earth, they should have fallen hundreds or thousands of feet below one's line of vision. As mentioned, when things do eventually fall away from sight this is due to the vanishing point on the horizon and not because of so-called curvature. Think of an airplane that drops below our horizon line even though it continues to fly at 30,000 feet above the Earth's surface. Railway lines are another example of something that disappears in the horizon, even though they lie on a flat surface. The absence of a curvature drop on the horizon line clearly indicates a flat Earth rather than a curved Earth. The example of the Suez Canal to prove the non-curvature of the Earth was missed on Rajasekhara Prabhu completely:

Rajasekhara dasa:

"Mayesvara's first piece of evidence in support of his 'Flat Earth' theory is the 'lock-less Suez Canal', which is perhaps the only canal out of many millions in the world where locks are not required. The scientific explanation is very simple. There are no locks on the Suez Canal because the Mediterranean Sea and the Gulf of Oman, both have the same mean sea level and the land in between is a flat desert plain without hills and just a few meters above sea level. Therefore, the Suez Canal does not require locks because the water level between the two oceans is constant."

Firstly, my usage of the term 'flat Earth' comes from the description of Bharata-varsha's location at the southern side of Jambudwipa. Jambudwipa rests on the horizontal plane of Bhu-mandala, the great 'Earth circle' that divides the universe into higher and lower divisions. According to this description, the continents of our Earth are lying on a horizontal plane and not curving around a floating globe in space.

Secondly, flat-Earth does not mean an absence of highlands and lowlands, so obviously most canals in the world will still require locks as the boats go from highland to lowland and vice versa. I provided the example of The Suez Canal as an example of the non-curvature on the Earth's surface. You have missed the point of the argument entirely. If you are on a globe then it's curving, right! It's a big curve! And you can work out the calculation for the curvature on a ball of 25,000 miles in circumference. If the Earth was a curved shape like a globe, then over a length of 120 miles (the length of the Suez Canal) there would be a curvature drop of 9,600 feet from one side of the canal to the other. But the Suez Canal runs for 120 miles without any curvature at all. It's completely horizontal from one end to the other. There are numerous other examples of areas in the world which are completely flat for thousands of square miles.

Again, we should take note that water always finds a level; and since 70% of the Earth's surface is water, it should be understood that the water levels on all the oceans of the world are on the same horizontal level. The slight differences in water levels here and there are due to wind and current action, but otherwise ships sail across the same horizontal level from one end of the world to the other. One sails from London to Australia along the same flat surface of the sea. The ships do not curve around a ball. The disappearance of ships on the horizon line is due to a phenomena called the vanishing point and is not due to any curvature on the Earth. We can explain this further in later posts if the discussion continues.

We should also carefully note that the above description by Markendaya Rsi that the Earth is part of a series of islands completely surrounded by sea, is completely at variance with the idea that the Earth is a planet and completely surrounded by space (not water).

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE PANDAVAS OVER JAMBUDWIPA

So according to *Markandeya Purana* and *Vishnu Purana*, as well as other Puranas, Bharata-varsha has a total area of 72,000 miles and is divided into nine areas of which our Earth is but one part measuring 8,000 miles from north to south. Neither India, nor even the entire surface of our known Earth can therefore be identified as the full extent of Bharata-varsha. If Bharata-varsha is measured at 72,000 miles then obviously there are more parts to it that we are not presently aware of. This concept makes no sense on a globe model of the Earth but it is perfectly reasonable on a flat Earth model. It means that to the east and west of Earth's continents there are more land areas belonging to Bharata-varsha; and to the north of Earth's continents is the next varsha of Jambudvipa known as Kimpurusha-varsha. Our Earth is 1,000 yojanas or 8,000 miles from south to north. Theoretically, therefore, when we get to the northern part of our Earth, we are almost in reach of Jambudvipa itself. According to *Srimad Bhagavatam* we are in fact part of Jambudvipa, but are just separated by water and other mental and physical obstructions imposed by *devas*.

The *Srimad Bhagavatam* and *Mahabharata* states that only 5,000 years ago, the Pandavas were ruling this entire area from their capital in present day India. Now we no longer have access to this area. *Srimad Bhagavatam* specifically states that only 5,000 years ago, Maharaja Yudhisthira's sovereignty was over the whole of Jambudvipa:

"News even reached the celestial planets about Maharaja Yudhisthira's worldly possessions,

the sacrifices by which he would attain a better destination, his queen, his stalwart brothers, his extensive land, his sovereignty over the planet earth, and his fame, etc." (SB 1.12.5)

Maharaja Yudhisthira is one of the eternal associates of Krishna that periodically incarnate on the Earth in order to re-establish *dharma*. Yudhisthira along with his four brothers Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva are known as the Pandavas. Together they serve Krishna's mission to annihilate the demons when they become a burden on the Earth. In the above verse the Sanskrit word for Yudhisthira's sovereignty over the planet Earth is *jambudvipadhipatyam*. The place name of Jambudvipa is clearly mentioned. King Yudhisthira's sovereignty was over the whole of Jambudvipa, not just India which is in Bharata-varsha. Srila Prabhupada translates the above verse *jambudvipadhipatyam* (SB 1.12.5) as Yudhisthira's 'sovereignty over the planet Earth.' Srila Prabhupada would translate words in that way because he had the understanding that Earth was a much larger domain than what we experience now. Srila Prabhupada may have used the nomenclature of the day to call Earth a planet, but what *Srimad Bhagavatam* means by planet, and what NASA depicts as a planet are two entirely different things. This understanding makes sense when we consider the more detailed description given in *Mahabharata* of the Pandavas conquest of areas in Jambudvipa on behalf of their brother Yudhisthira. For example, we hear of Arjuna conquering Kimpurusha-varsha and taking tribute from the residents of Hari-varsha. This is an area of hundreds of thousands of miles. The details of the conquest of Jambudwipa are given in section 1.8 of "[Sailing to Jambudwipa](#)".

In another fascinating purport to *Srimad Bhagavatam* 1.16.12, one will see how Srila Prabhupada uses the words 'Earth', 'world', and 'Jambudvipa' interchangeably to describe the vast territories of Jambudvipa covering hundreds of thousands of miles that were conquered by Maharaja Pariksit the grandson of Arjuna who ruled the empire after Yudhisthira.

The verse in question narrates the conquest of Maharaja Pariksit over Jambudvipa, naming specific places. These are not place names within India; they are the place names of Jambudvipa. Bharata-varsha (where our Earth is situated) is mentioned almost incidentally. One should note again that these areas of Jambudvipa cover an area of 800,000 miles:

"Maharaja Pariksit then conquered all parts of the earthly planet—Bhadrasva, Ketumala, Bharata, the northern Kuru, Kimpurusha, etc.—and exacted tributes from their respective rulers." (SB 1.16.12)

These verses from *Srimad Bhagavatam* prove conclusively—at least to followers of Vedic history or Puranas—that what we know as the Earth was once connected to the rest of the 800,000 mile island of Jambudvipa. Such a conception completely rules out, and immediately demolishes, any idea of the Earth being a globe rotating in empty space. We should also immediately reject the many foolish explanations that try to place these huge areas of Jambudvipa either within India and its surrounding area, or within the Earth itself. Speculations abound in this regard and display a complete lack of faith and understanding of Vedic cosmology. These speculations most probably began with the first English translators of the Vedic texts and their complete misunderstanding and distortion of the text has unfortunately been repeated verbatim by most if not all Hindu commentators on Vedic geography in the modern age. Completely ignoring the huge land measurements ascribed to Jambudvipa in the various Vedic literature, foolish speculators try to interpret these areas as regions in and around India.

It is very difficult for the conditioned mind to accept (without speculation or interpolation) what the Vedic texts describe as a huge land mass to the north of our land and oceans. But even if one cannot accept the truth of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s description, at least one should have enough intellectual integrity to accurately represent what the text is describing rather than trying to interpret the text to make it conform to one's very limited understanding of reality.

LOOKING AT THE EARTH THROUGH THE VEDIC SATELLITE (SHASTRA CAKSUSA - THE EYE OF SCRIPTURE)

Of course, texts from ancient scriptures mean nothing to those opposed to, or completely disbelieving in the Vedic authority, but if any sincere follower of Vedic authority has any doubts on the matter of the greater Earth region described in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* and *Mahabharata*, I suggest undertaking a serious study of the hoax that NASA has pulled over the eyes of the world for

the last 50 years in its presentation of the Earth as a globe rotating in space. Once one sees through the deception that NASA has created, the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*'s description of the greater Earth begins to make sense. The fake Earth images from outer-space began with the fake moon landings of 1969-72. NASA's adventures in space are the longest running sci-fi movie in history; but very few realize it is all just a movie. Welcome to the Truman Show (a 1998 movie about a man who lives in a film studio without knowing it). Movies aside, it should not be thought that Sukadeva Goswami is some pious but ultimately primitive Indian sage, who was limited in his conception of geography and cosmology due to not being able to see the 'real' Earth through the lens of a modern technologically-advanced satellite from deep in outer space. No! There are no satellites in outer space. It is a hoax! But the colossal nature of the hoax will take time to establish. You can start by having a look [here](#).

So what does Earth look like on a flat Earth model? A close up of Earth's position in Bharata-varsha is shown in the illustration below:



Before we begin to explain the above image, I would like to immediately point out that I believe the depiction of the Earth as a globe here is wrong. In fact, the paper "Sailing to Jambudwipa" was written as a response to this conception and I refer the reader to [this link](#), which presents the argument in greater detail.

An important point to note, however, is that the above illustration from *Vedic Cosmos* correctly shows Earth's relation to Jambudwipa as it is described in the Puranas. The animated image of a globe-shaped Earth floating on water and surrounded by other land features is, of course, a shock to the mind accustomed to perceive images of the Earth as a lonely globe floating in dark, empty space. However, the idea presented in the above image (based on the Puranas description of other land areas within the vicinity of our Earth's continents and oceans) is not something that any of us can personally confirm or deny. Which one of us, for example, has personally gone into outer space to confirm the actual position of Earth as a rotating globe in space? And which one of us has personally crossed the Arctic and Antarctica regions to see if there is actually more land to be discovered? All of us rely on images of Earth from agencies such as NASA. In section 2.2 of Sailing to Jambudwipa these official images are called into question. Although most people would

not feel any need to call these images and accounts into question, a follower of *Srimad Bhagavatam* has to call these images into question because according to *Srimad Bhagavatam* there are indeed other lands and other humans in the vicinity of the place we call Earth. They rest on the same salt water oceans as our own. Theoretically, if we set a northern course, we could sail to Jambudvipa on the same ocean. The recent expose of NASA's so-called images of Earth by members of the flat-Earth society not only uncovers the greatest hoax in history, but opens up a whole new understanding and appreciation of *Srimad-Bhagavatam's* flat-Earth concept.

The above image from *Vedic Cosmos* of the globe-shaped Earth floating on Jambudvipa's salt water ocean would appear credible and acceptable to the intelligence if it simply depicted the continents of Earth as lying flat on the salt water ocean, not floating like a ball on top of it. The correct depiction of Earth lying flat will resonate with the soul's innate comprehension and intuition of the truth of Krishna's creation. Such a depiction would actually correspond with our perception of reality; for as we fly or sail over land and oceans we find Earth to be perfectly flat in all directions. There is no observable or measurable curvature of the Earth anywhere.

It appears from the above image from *Vedic Cosmos* video that the actual description of Bharata-varsha given in *Srimad Bhagavatam* has been interpolated to fit a pre-conceived and ill-conceived notion of the Earth according to NASA – an image that has been indelibly marked in our minds as the authentic image of Earth's shape. Here, by the way, we have a spectacular clash of world views which is not a debate for the faint-hearted. If NASA's claim to be photographing Earth from outer space is authentic, then according to the followers of *Srimad Bhagavatam* they would show other regions of land in the vicinity of Earth's continents - these being the eight other regions of Bharata-varsha that stretch over an area of 72,000 miles on the same salt water ocean as our own. From an even further distance in space they would see the huge circular island of Jambudvipa itself, and looking even further from outer space they would see the huge tracts of land forming the other concentric islands surrounding the central island of Jambudvipa. It has to be one or the other. Either both NASA and other space agencies are lying, cheating, and deceiving people with their so-called images of a globe Earth rotating in dark empty space, or the *Srimad Bhagavatam* is a nice fairy story to entertain its Vedic followers with nothing more than fantastic myths and legends.



In the above image from *Vedic Cosmos* we see the small Earth with the other islands of Bharata-varsha to the east and west. To the north is the great Himalaya Mountain. This mountain range divides Bharta-varsha from neighbouring Kimpurusha-varsha. This Himalaya is obviously not the one we know in India. This Himalaya is 72,000 miles long and rises to a height of 80,000 miles high. The distinction between these two mountains is very important in our understanding of the flat Earth model of *Srimad Bhagavatam*.

MIS-TRANSLATIONS AND MISUNDERSTANDING OF VEDIC TEXTS

The original Christian translators of Vedic texts were lacking in both faith and understanding of the Vedic Cosmos; being thus unable to accommodate the idea of a mountain that is described as 80,000 miles high and 72,000 miles long, they simply dismissed it as mythological and assumed that the Himalaya separating Bharata-varsha from Kimpurusha-varsha must be referring to the one in India. In fact they did the same thing with all the place names of Jambudwipa – they simply dismissed the huge measurements of Jambudwipa as mythological and tried to squeeze this 800,000 mile area of Jambudwipa into the small area of India. Thus Jambudwipa simply disappeared into mythology; and the Hindu scholars have been dutifully following this erroneous understanding ever since.

We see this erroneous understanding even in our own cosmological scholars in ISKCON. For example, a simple question can be raised: "If Bharata-varsha is part of the huge island of Jambudwipa, then where is the rest of Jambudwipa to be seen from our tiny little ball globe?" Being unable to reconcile the description of *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s huge flat-Earth concept with the modern understanding that Earth is a globular planet floating in dark lonely space, the answer is usually given that Jambudwipa is not visible to our senses because it is in another dimension. But Jambudwipa is not in another dimension. The rest of Jambudwipa can be found to the north of our known Earth continents, in other words, across the Arctic. This is how Sukadeva Goswami describes it: To the north of Bharata-varsha is the great Himalaya that brings us onto the rest of Jambudwipa. This makes sense if we consider the Earth as resting on a horizontal plane that continues beyond our known Earth area; however, it makes absolutely no sense if we stick to the illusion that we are on a 25,000 mile round ball in space.

SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM DOES NOT DESCRIBE BHARATA-VARSHA AS A GLOBE-SHAPED PLANET IN SPACE

Now please carefully note here: Nowhere in *Srimad Bhagavatam* is the place that we know as Earth (Bharata-varsha) described as a planet floating in space as we have been indoctrinated to believe both by non-Vedic and so-called Vedic sources. The following is a post from Uttamasloka Prabhu a disciple of Srila Prabhupada that clarifies the point:

In the 5th canto there is the description of the sky and outer space, ie: the *antariksa*. There are two chapters - 21-22 - which describe the motion of the sun and other planets - *grahas*. Nowhere in those chapters is there any mention of 'earth', or Bhu-mandala, or Bharata-varsa being one of the *grahas*/planets in the *antariksa*. Why not?

Because 'earth' is not a globe in the *antariksa*, or it would have been clearly described as such and included with the other planets orbiting around Meru. But it is not. The only planets mentioned are: sun, moon, rahu, mercury, venus, mars, jupiter and saturn. That's it.

The *antariksa* is clearly described as being above Bhu-mandala and as being the same in length and breadth as Bhu-mandala, ie: 4 billion miles in diameter. The celestial svargas are also described as being the same size, length and breadth-wise, and they are positioned above the *antariksa*. The *antariksa* is thus 'above' Bhu-mandala and 'below' the celestial svargas - in between them both.

The positions of the planets relative to one another are also given. They are stacked up vertically in the *antariksa* along with the stars/constellations. There is no mention about an 'earth globe' being part of this arrangement or that it is in the *antariksa*. Nothing whatsoever. Why not? Earth is also not described that way in chapter 23 which describes the form of the dolphin.

So if the earth is a globe, then where exactly is it 'floating'? Why is its position in the antariksa not mentioned at all? And there is certainly no mention of it 'spinning' or hurtling through space along with the sun and other planets. The sun moves clockwise around Meru, as do the other planets and constellations and the kala-cakra. So how does the sun cause night and day for the so-called earth globe if it is floating 'somewhere' above Jambudvipa and it isn't spinning at 1,000 mph? And why are we assuming that Bharata-varsa is a globe but not the other 8 vardas of Jambudvipa? How is it that they are part of the flat round area of Jambudvipa, which is described as being flat and 'round' like a lotus leaf, but Bharata-varsa deviates from that for no particular reason?

And what about the lower seven realms, which are clearly described as 'subterranean', and accessible via tunnels located on Bhu-mandala? Are we to believe that they are within the so-called earth globe? That isn't likely since their dimensions are given as 80,000 miles in height and breadth and each one is 80,000 miles below the other. That clearly cannot be within an earth globe that is 8,000 in diameter. And they are not described as grahas either. They don't orbit Meru, nor are they in the antariksa.

We cannot simply conclude that the earth, ie: Bharata-varsa, is a globe simply because the word bhugola is found in the texts. All of the relevant information must be properly reconciled to arrive at the final and correct conclusion.

GOING TO THE NORTH OF THE WORLD

So if Earth is not described as a planet in space, then how is it described? Well quite simply, it is described as being part of the same terrain as the rest of Jambudwipa. For comparison think of Australia which is also a continent completely surrounded by water and divided into six states. As one travels from the south to the north of Australia, one proceeds from Victoria through New South Wales to Queensland; and although one passes through different states, one still traverses the same horizontal plane. The same is true when heading from the south of Jambudwipa to the north. Bharata-varsha is in the south and even though one travels north through Kimpurusha-varsha and Hari-varsha and finally to Mount Meru in the center, this is all situated on the same horizontal plane. According to the description of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, if we, for example, were to keep travelling north across the Arctic, we would not be going north around a globe; rather our compass would keep pointing north (past the so-called north pole) and we would keep going along the same horizontal plane until we came to the mainland of Jambudwipa. The compass would keep pointing north because that is the direction of Mount Meru. Meru (not the so-called North Pole) is the central point in the greater Earth (or Bhu-mandala) from which all directions are measured.

One mental problem we all have with the idea of going to the north of the world is that we are all accustomed to looking at a globe; we have thus been led to believe that going north means moving in a vertical direction around the top of a ball. However, one can also go north on a horizontal plane. A city has its northern and southern end, as does an entire country. If I go from the south of London to the north of London or from the south of England to the north of England, I traverse on a horizontal plane not a vertical one. We need to start re-orientating our intelligence to understand directions according to *Srimad Bhagavatam*.

According to *Srimad Bhagavatam*, if we were to keep travelling north across the Arctic, the first thing we would meet is the huge 80,000 mile high Himalaya that separates our Bharata-varsha from the next part of Jambudwipa which is called Kimpurusha varsha. Earth's situation to the rest of Jambudwipa looks like this:

WHY FAKE THE GLOBE?

Both *Srimad Bhagavatam* and *Mahabharata* assert that the Pandavas were entering into this area and indeed governing all of his vast area of Jambudvipa from their capital in India. Access to Jambudwipa was possible at that point, but about 5,000 years ago we entered into the Kali-yuga period (the age of fighting and hypocrisy) and our particular place in Bharata-varsha became isolated from the mainland of Jambudvipa. It is mentioned in various Puranas that the *yugas* (four repeating cycles of time that bring about variations in people's mind, behaviour, and environ-

ment) only affect Bharata-varsha and not the other varshas of Jambudvipa were pious people live happily enjoying the results of their previous karma. For that reason we are put into a kind of quarantine. As the Kali-yuga progressed, the Vedic empire was broken up, people in different parts of the world became isolated, and the whole atmosphere degraded. Consequently the Vedic knowledge was withdrawn, including knowledge of our relation to the other parts of our world as well as the greater knowledge of the world's relation to Jambudwipa. Jambudwipa became the stuff of mere myth and legend: the Greek Olympus; The Nordic Asgard; the Buddhist Shambhala.

Rajasekhara Prabhu asked why would anyone fake the globe. Actually the deception starts with Mayadevi herself. The general ignorance and materialism prevailing in Kali-yuga is part of *maya*'s arrangement to further facilitate the soul's illusion of a life devoid of God. In Kali-yuga the crude and base desires of the human beings are allowed free reign. Knowledge of the soul, God, and the creation is gradually covered over so that the more perverse aspects of material existence can be experienced, and their severe karmic reactions ignored by the materialistic people destined to take birth at this time. Knowledge and experience of God's wide creation along the Bhu-mandala and throughout the universe is withdrawn and the expanded flat Earth is gradually replaced by such illusions as the globe model. The globe model is a spell-like speculation that literally traps one in a bubble—a prison planet floating alone in lifeless Godless empty space. Since there is no God, whoever controls the prison planet controls your being. Such are the fearful illusions that follow as a result of turning from God and the truth. The materialist is given over to the deceptions, untruths, and illusions created by atheistic agencies such as NASA. Such agencies are empowered by the Lord's own *maya* potency to bewilder souls adverse to God consciousness. The deceivers, however, are themselves subject to the greater deception of *maya*:

"The killer of the soul, whoever he may be, must enter into the planets known as the worlds of the faithless, full of darkness and ignorance." (*Sri Isopanishad, mantra 3*)

The sankirtana movement of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is a brief chance in the onward march of Kali-yuga for the soul to take advantage of the Vedic knowledge and to re-establish his eternal relationship with God. The Vedic planetarium is a very important project of the sankirtana movement to enlighten the people in Earth's region of Bharata-varsha about their real position in the cosmos, and ultimately about their real home in the Kingdom of God.

JAMBUDWIPA IS NOT IN ANOTHER DIMENSION

So let us put aside for a moment what we assume the Earth to look like, and just take in the actual description of Bharata-varsha. If we present the Earth as a globe in space, it means we haven't listened to, comprehended, or represented (re-presented) the *actual description* given by Sukadeva Goswami and the other Vedic sages who provide geographical descriptions of Bharata-varsha in many places throughout the Puranas. At least from the descriptions of Earth provided, we are not hearing anything that remotely resembles a globe-shaped planet.

The problem for most of us in conceptualizing what Earth looks like is because we have been convinced that we are on NASA's ball in space. If we are to believe *Srimad Bhagavatam* and take Sukadeva Goswami at his word, then we are actually not that far from our earthly neighbours on Bharata-varsha, and from our more pious neighbours on Jambudvipa. In reality we are only a few thousand miles away. We are surrounded by the same salt water ocean. Think about that; the salt water ocean surrounding Jambudvipa is the same salt water ocean that surrounds our own continents. This is because we are actually part of Jambudvipa, but just separated by ocean and ice (Arctic and Antarctica). The idea that Jambudwipa is in another dimension and not visible to our senses is defeated by the following verse from *Srimad Bhagavatam*:

Similarly, the branch of the Ganges known as Alakananda flows from the southern side of Brahmapuri [Brahma-sadana]. Passing over the tops of mountains in various lands, it falls down with fierce force upon the peaks of the mountains Hemakuta and Himakuta. After inundating the tops of those mountains, the Ganges falls down onto the tract of land known as Bharata-varsha, which she also inundates. Then the Ganges flows into the ocean of salt water in the south. Persons who come to bathe in this river are fortunate. It is not very difficult for them to achieve with every step the results of performing great sacrifices like the Rajasaya and Asvamedha yajnas. (SB 5.17.9)

So here it is explained that the same sacred Ganges water that is seen by Brahma at Brahma Purī (atop Mount Meru) is likewise seen by ISKCON devotees in Mayapur. Like Brahma, we offer obeisances to Ganga in Mayapur before taking a dip three times. Where is the Ganga that flows through Mayapur coming from? She is coming from the transcendental realm via the southern side of Brahmapuri which rests on the top of Mount Meru. Where does she flow to? She flows into *the ocean of salt water* in the south? What is the ocean of salt water. It is the 800,000 mile ocean that surrounds Jambudwipa. That is our salt water ocean. It is not in a different dimension or 'higher realm' or anything of the sort. It is the same salt water we swim in, and sail upon; it's just that we only get to see a small part of it. But it is otherwise clearly within our dimension and physicality. If we were to keep sailing on the salt water ocean in any direction we would reach other parts of Bharata-varsha and Jambudwipa. At the present moment a 'superior force' to quote Prabhupada prevents us from going further.

THERE IS MORE EARTH TO BE DISCOVERED

Listen carefully:

Tamala Krishna: They go due west and they hit India from Los Angeles, but according to our calculation, that's not possible.

Prabhupada: **You can go further, but you cannot go. That is condition. You are restricted. The same, that you are bound up. If an animal can go further... But he cannot, because he is bound up.** *Ahankara-vimudhatma kartaham iti manyate*[Bg. 3.27]. He is thinking, "I am free." He is not free. So what is the value of his education? This is the real point.

Tamala Krishna: They'll want to talk about another point.

Prabhupada: What is that?

Tamala Krishna: They'll want to talk about the point that the point on their compass that points west while they're flying in the airplane, and they keep it going west, and they eventually land in India from Los Angeles.

Prabhupada: You are flying west or east—you do not know. You are controlled.

Tamala Krishna: They say, "No, our compass shows it. And you accept the compass."

Prabhupada: **That's all right. You are going west, but do you think where you think that the west is end, that is not end. You can go further.**

Tamala Krishna: They say it never ends because we're going around the planet.

Prabhupada: No, that is his dog's mentality, going round. That is dog. He is thinking that "This is the area. Now I..." **He's controlled by superior power, that "You cannot go."** An example is... There are so many. There are so many stars, moons, and we'll go there. But he cannot go.

Tamala Krishna: They say, "We accept this premise, that we are limited."

Prabhupada: But then limited, you cannot say final.

Tamala Krishna: "But we say within our limited means we can understand that..."

Prabhupada: And limited means if you understand that "I am bound up. I am going round the law," that is all right. But don't say that "Beyond this limit there is nothing."

Tamala Krishna: No, they don't.

Prabhupada: No.

Tamala Krishna: But supposing that within this limit we accept that we are limited.

Prabhupada: That is all right.

Tamala Krishna: But we say that we're going west and...

Prabhupada: **That's right, west up to this point, rascal, not more than that. Why don't you understand this? West you have gone. That's all right. But up to this point, no more. You cannot go.** You don't say that there is no more after this western...

...That you can go further, but you cannot go. Therefore you are thinking, "This is end of the position." The same dog mentality. He is within that small area. He is thinking, "There is no more, other space." That example is another, that bull. His eyes are closed, and he crushes the oil mill, going. He's thinking he is going three hundred miles.

Tamala Krishna: They keep the eyes blinded so he won't...

Prabhupada: Yes.

Tamala Krishna: ...understand what's going on.

Prabhupada: **Because in one place, simply going round, going round, it makes one mad. So those eyes are closed. He is thinking, "This is the end of world." ...Kupamanduka, the frog in the well, he is thinking that "This is the whole water area."**

Tamala Krishna: Then what is it? If it is not what I am thinking, then what is it?

Prabhupada: That I am explaining. Take it.

Tamala Krishna: But we can't explain it. That's the problem.

Prabhupada: No, no, why cannot explain?

Tamala Krishna: That's the problem...They can go from New York, that direction, or they go from Los Angeles, the other way. Either way, they come to India, and they say, "That proves the world is round 'cause we can go like this or we can go this way." But we say, "No, you can only go this way." But the compass shows I am going due east...

Prabhupada: So we don't say differently. You can go this way.

Tamala Krishna: But we don't say that. Because there's no round, we say... Simply it's a lotus. It's not...

Prabhupada: No, I... **It is the same example. Just as animal is bound up, so he's going this round or this round, the same thing. But you cannot go beyond that.**

(Discussion about Bhu-mandala, July 3, 1977, Vrndavana)

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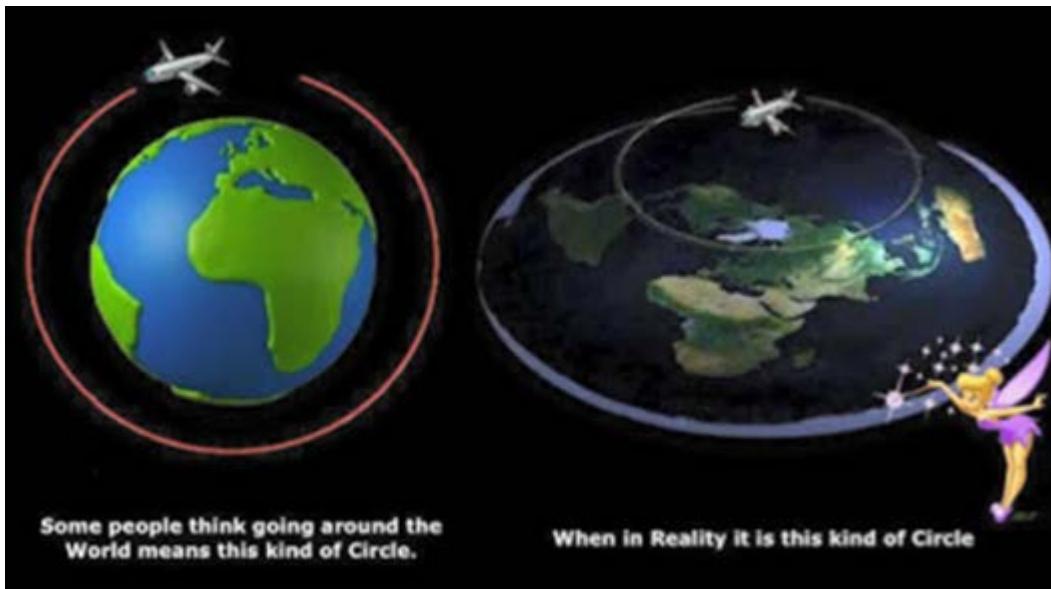
In the above conversation, Srila Prabhupada agrees with Tamala Krishna Goswami that from America one can go to India either in a westerly or easterly direction, but he insists this circumnavigation of the Earth is not the limit of going east or west. One can go further east and west, but like an animal bound to a stake with a rope and with blinkers on his eyes, he is kept moving in a limited circle; and that's all the animal gets to experience of a much greater environment.



Taking this example, I would argue that we are similarly like the animal bound within a limited jurisdiction and blinkered to the vision of the greater Jambudvipa. We can go further east and west but we are restricted by certain illusions, diversions, and indeed physical obstructions that prevent us from doing so. By the way, one can go around the world on the flat earth. Like this:



Or fly around like this:



Rajasekhara Prabhu wrote in his article "*Flat Earth Theory – Completely Flattened*":

"Contrary to Mayesvara's claim, there is no flat plain that is 72,000 miles long anywhere to be seen. 72,000 miles is almost one fourth the way to the Moon. Not even the millions of airline pilots flying to every point on the compass have ever reported such an incredible phenomena as a 'Flat Earth' that is 72,000 miles long. The airline industry navigates the entire Earth based on the Earth being a round globe, otherwise they could never circumnavigate the entire globe as they do every day if the Earth was flat. Their planes would simply go off course and never reach their destination."

Rajasekhara Prabhu, have you not read *Srimad Bhagavatam*? Or is it that you do you not believe *Srimad Bhagavatam*? It is stated quite clearly that Bharata-varsha is 72,000 miles long:

"In Jambudvipa there are nine divisions of land, each with a length of 9,000 yojanas [72,000 miles]. There are eight mountains that mark the boundaries of these divisions and separate them nicely." (*SB 5.16.6*)

"Similarly, south of Ilavrita-varsha and extending from east to west are three great mountains named (from north to south) Nisadha, Hemakuta and Himalaya. Each of them is 10,000 yojanas [80,000 miles] high. They mark the boundaries of the three varshas named Hari-varsha, Kimpurusha-varsha and Bharata-varsha [India]." (*SB 5.16.9*)

Here Sukadeva Goswami explains that Bharata-varsha is one of the nine varshas of Jambudwipa and the length of Bharata-varsha is 72,000 miles. To the north of Bharata-varsha is a mountain called Himalaya which is 80,000 miles high and separates Bharata-varsha from our neighbour Kimpurusha-varsha. Obviously none of this fits into your globe understanding. So why do airplanes not fly further afield if Bharata-varsha is actually 72,000 miles long? They do not fly further because certain karmic obstructions imposed by *devas* prevent us from travelling further. And why do satellites from outer space not show the great scale of the Flat Earth? Quite obviously because they don't have satellites in space. So Rajasekhara Prabhu what is required from you is not taking time out to write another post denouncing me; rather you should take time out to embark on some serious research in order to understand the **colossal deception that has been perpetrated by NASA**.

They have not and **will not go into outer space**.

UNITING THE UNIVERSE WITH HARINAMA SANKIRTAN

So let's recap: According to the above description by Markandeya Rsi, there are eight other land areas of Bharata-varsha (covering an area of 72,000 miles) somewhere in the vicinity of our known Earth's oceans. Although 'mutually inaccessible' they are not far away. Of course this only makes sense on a flat Earth model with expanded planes. It makes no sense from the perspective of a globe. We shall explain with examples in later posts why this globe image is actually an artificial creation from the special effects department of NASA. We live on a flat Earth, and there is a lot more to be discovered or rather re-discovered. This is the version of the Puranas and the one most consistent with the science that proves the Earth is on an expanded flat plane, not a rotating ball in space.

Somehow, we've become separated from the mainland of Jambudvipa. The possibility of rediscovering it exists, and it doesn't involve taking spaceships to other Earth-like planets that are similarly floating in space. We do not need rocket ships to find the other regions of Jambudvipa because according to *Srimad Bhagavatam* we are not on a rotating globe-shaped planet at all. We are already standing on part of the flat 800,000 mile circular island of Jambudvipa, and are literally only a few thousand miles away on the same stretch of salt water ocean that surrounds our continents from the mainland of Jambudvipa. We have difficulty to conceive of this because of the ball Earth concept. The Temple of Vedic planetarium is meant to enlighten the world about the real facts of Krishna's creation. As the world becomes purified by Nama Sankirtan, and the asuric influence in the world is destroyed, I would foresee that a physical connection with Jambudwipa will be re-established. This is predicted by Srila Prabhupada in the following purport:

"One may raise the question how all three worlds became inundated with love of Krishna, since Caitanya Mahaprabhu performed kirtana only in the Navadvipa area. The answer is that Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is Krishna Himself. The entire cosmic manifestation results from the Lord's first setting it in motion. Similarly, since the sankirtana movement was first set in motion five hundred years ago by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's desire that it spread all over the universe, the Krishna consciousness movement, in continuity of that same motion, is now spreading all over the world, and in this way it will gradually spread all over the universe. With the spread of the Krishna consciousness movement, everyone will merge in an ocean of love of Krishna." (*Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Adi-lila 13.32*)

THE FLAT EARTH MOVEMENT AND ISKCON

The flat Earth idea is usually equated with primitive and pre-scientific ideas. A common expression to equate certain ideas with stupidity is to say, "And people used to think the world was flat." In most people's minds, a flat Earth conjures up pictures of boats falling off the edge. However, almost all ancient cultures and religions (including the Vedic culture) taught that the world was flat and motionless, and that the sun and moon rotated around the stationary Earth. This system is referred to as the geo-centric system. The opposing idea of Earth as a moving planet rotating the sun began to take hold in the modern era with Copernicus (1473-1543), Galileo (1564-1642), and Newton (1642-1726). This movement of the Earth around the sun is referred to as the heliocentric system. The word comes from the Greek words *helios* (sun) *kentron* (center). Although the heliocentric view of Earth rotating around the sun has always been contended, it was the idea that one the day. Until now...

In just a few years, there has been an almost instant revolution in ideas about the flat Earth with an accompanying explosion of interest in the concept. It has been perhaps one of the most popular internet topics of 2015 and will continue to gain momentum in the coming years. Actual science in the sense of empiric observation, hypothesis, and demonstration has now come back to take the side of a geo-centric and flat Earth model. There have been some truly revolutionary books and documentaries produced which blow apart many of our ideas about the globe-shaped Earth. Interestingly, part of this revolution has involved taking a hard look at the authenticity of the photos and videos from the Apollo moon-landings (1969-1972), as also those subsequent images and videos circulated by NASA that depict the Earth as a rotating ball in space. Srila Prabhupada denounced the moon-landings as a colossal hoax and the subsequent images of Earth provided by NASA are clearly part of the same deception.

It is also interesting timing that this revolution in thinking about the flat Earth is occurring simultaneously with the construction of the Mayapur Vedic Planetarium whose cosmology clearly describes an expanded flat-Earth called Bhu-mandala. Many centuries of Western astronomical propaganda has instilled a false belief in all of us that a flat-Earth concept is un-scientific and idiotic;

moreover, satellite images of a globe-shaped Earth taken from outer space are presented as conclusive proof that the Earth is round not flat. As will be explained in later posts, however, no such authentic image or video of a globe-shaped Earth rotating on its axis in outer space actually exists. The images we've been presented of the globe-shaped Earth have either been clearly exposed as fake, or as openly admitted by NASA, merely computer generated images of Earth pieced together from composites of photos of land areas taken from so-called 'low orbit.' Basically what you see of the Earth from supposed outer-space is no more what you see of Earth when looking out of an airplane window; namely, some land, sea, and clouds with a flat horizon in all directions. The curved lens camera used on NASA's images is a simple and disingenuous method to create a round or curved shape to the land below. In actuality, the horizon is flat in every direction as can be directly perceived by anyone from a height of 35,000 feet whilst sitting in an airplane. Amateur cameras sent to a height of 120,000 feet also show the same flat horizon and no curvature anywhere. If studied carefully, with respect and without fear and prejudice, the many exposes of NASA's deceptive imagery of Earth, as well as the hundreds and thousands of scientifically presented arguments for the flat Earth model will help support the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*'s depiction of an expanded flat Earth.

The concept of a flat Earth is a huge paradigm shift and raises many questions which I can't hope to answer here. For those interested, I refer the reader to the various websites, books, and documentaries available on-line which present evidence and arguments for the flat Earth concept. Perhaps a good introduction is Eric Dubay's *200 Proofs that Earth is not a Spinning Ball* which can be read on-line. A word of caution is necessary though in searching through the thousands of available videos debating the subject. Amidst the many compelling arguments presented for the flat Earth from various sources, there are also certain limitations and inevitable speculations (at least from the perspective of anyone who accepts the *Srimad Bhagavatam* as the ultimate authority). It is difficult for advocates of the flat Earth, for example, to understand the exact shape and location of the flat Earth in relation to the rest of the universe. Where is its edge? What does it rest on? What lies beyond the boundaries of the flat Earth? The sun and moon are also placed much closer to the Earth than in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*'s description. One therefore, has to exercise caution in reading through these arguments, appreciating that sincere as one may be in arguing for a flat Earth, one of the four defects of conditioned nature is the inevitability of making mistakes. Apart from that, there are many hundreds of sound arguments presented in favour of a flat Earth. Indeed, where the flat Earth advocates excel, is in demonstrating the impossibility of Earth being a round ball floating in space. Thus the strength of the arguments in these books and videos lies not in presenting what Earth looks like (which is highly speculative in the absence of an overall Vedic perspective) but in pointing out incongruities of the rotating globe-shaped Earth idea. Inspiring also is the courageous and revolutionary spirit present in those persons challenging the politics and spirit behind the round globe Earth concept presented first in the modern era by Copernicus and solidified recently by NASA. The flat-Earth society, as well as the rest of the world, are not yet aware of what lies beyond the perimeter of our known Earth. It is the duty of the TOVP to inform them.

The flat-Earth concept is a huge and highly relevant internet debate that exploded in 2015 and I believe Krishna has inspired and empowered it to coincide with the opening of the Mayapur Vedic Planetarium. Many of the arguments presented by supporters of the flat Earth lend support to *Srimad-Bhagavatam*'s description that Earth is flat land on a flat plane; it is not spinning in space like a ball. I feel we have much to learn from this debate that will aid in our own understanding of how to properly depict Earth according to the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*'s description.

In part two of this presentation we can look at the quotations from Srila Prabhupada on the globe and the flat-Earth provided by Rajasekhara Prabhu.

Modern Blasphemy: Earth Is Not a Globe, Part Two

BY: MAYESVARA DASA

May 19, 2016 — IRELAND (SUN) —

(1.1) A DISPARITY BETWEEN VEDIC AND MODERN CONCEPTS OF THE EARTH

The following is a response to Rajasekhara dasa's articles: "[Flat Earth Theory - Completely Flattened](#)" and "[Whose Version Should You Believe?](#)". Part One of "Modern Blasphemy" can be found [here](#).

In this article we will look at the statements of Srila Prabhupada on the flat-Earth issue. In the above two articles, Rajasekhara dasa presents a number of quotations in which Srila Prabhupada states that the shape of the Earth is round and globe-shaped. There are other available conversations in which Srila Prabhupada seemingly rejects the idea of the flat-Earth concept. Certainly, from many of the available conversations and purports, Srila Prabhupada spoke as if he naturally assumed that Earth was a globe. Rajasekhara dasa wants to take certain quotations from Srila Prabhupada as infallible proof that the Earth is indeed a globe in space, and any idea to the contrary is offensive to Srila Prabhupada, heretical, and anathema.

However, Rajasekhara dasa's immovable position does not take into consideration that the whole question of the Earth's shape and location became a serious issue and source of contention in July 1977 when Srila Prabhupada was for the first time presented with maps of the Vedic cosmos based on the *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s cosmology. We shall look at some of these conversations presently; and as we shall see, by July 1977, it became very evident to everyone involved in the research for the Planetarium (Srila Prabhupada included) that a major disparity exists between the modern conception of the Earth as a globe in space, and Sukadeva Goswami's description of Bharata-varsha's shape and location on the Bhu-mandala (where our Earth is situated). According to Sukadeva Goswami, Bharata-varsha is one of the nine sections of Jambudwipa, the central island of Bhu-mandala (the great circular horizontal plane that crosses the universe dividing the universe into higher and lower sections). There is no description by Sukadeva Goswami of Bharata-varsha being a globe in space. Srila Prabhupada instructed his disciples to investigate this disparity and a conclusion was not reached. In September 1977 Srila Prabhupada entered Samadhi. The discussion continues...

So bear in mind that most of what Srila Prabhupada said regarding a globe-shaped Earth came *before* March/July 1977 when the TOVP discussions began in earnest. It was only when Srila Prabhupada's disciples presented the first maps of Bhu-mandala in July 1977 that the question of Bharata-varsha as flat or globular became a very real and serious question. The question of the Earth's shape had been posed before, to which Srila Prabhupada gave various replies, but only at this point in 1977 when the maps of Bhu-mandala were drawn did anyone have a means of comparing one model against the other – and to everyone's disconcertment, the two models did not match up.

(1.2) BHARATA-VARSHA AND THE BHU-MANDALA

Although, Srila Prabhupada was not an astronomer, astrologer, cartographer, astro-physicist, or a specialist in any of the other fields of modern cosmological ideas, he was very much interested to counteract the prevailing materialistic science that advocates a godless, impersonal universe. Srila Prabhupada thus founded the Bhaktivedanta Institute so that his disciples and followers could be trained in the spiritual science of the Vedas and thereby present an alternative scientific paradigm based on theistic principles. As with many topics of discussion, whether it was on science and philosophy, government and military, farming and business, or music and the arts, Srila Prabhupada's procedure was to give the essential theology and philosophy of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, with the directive that his disciples learn to apply this knowledge in to details of their respective fields of study (including, of course, cosmology). Consider, for example, the following letter from 1976:

"Now our Ph.D's must collaborate and study the 5th Canto to make a model for building the Vedic Planetarium...So now you all Ph.D.'s must carefully study the details of the 5th Canto and make a working model of the universe. If we can explain the passing seasons, eclipses,

phases of the moon, passing of day and night, etc. then it will be very powerful propaganda.

I am sending this letter to you, and you can make photocopies of it and send to our other Ph.D.'s and begin serious research into the matter in detail."

(Letter to Svarupa Damodar, 27 April 1976)

So here we have a very direct instruction from Srila Prabhupada to study the *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s Fifth Canto and present it scientifically. It is significant that Srila Prabhupada himself did not provide 'a working model of the universe'; rather, he requested his disciples to do so. As we shall see presently, the same directive was given in 1977 when Srila Prabhupada requested diagrams to be made that would illustrate the layout of the Vedic cosmos. Since it was first initiated by Srila Prabhupada in the 1970's, the study of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s Fifth Canto has remained somewhat of a mystery, and certainly (as of May 2016) the question of Earth's shape and location has not yet been satisfactorily concluded by either the Bhaktivedanta Institute or the Temple of Vedic Planetarium (TOVP); indeed, many questions regarding the situation of the Earth remain unanswered. Thus, it cannot be settled up that Srila Prabhupada would have definitively accepted the globe-Earth model as final; or that he would have explicitly rejected the horizontal plane model. In other words, we have to assume that Srila Prabhupada is himself still waiting for the results of research into the Vedic cosmos – including of course, the controversial topic of the Earth's shape and location.

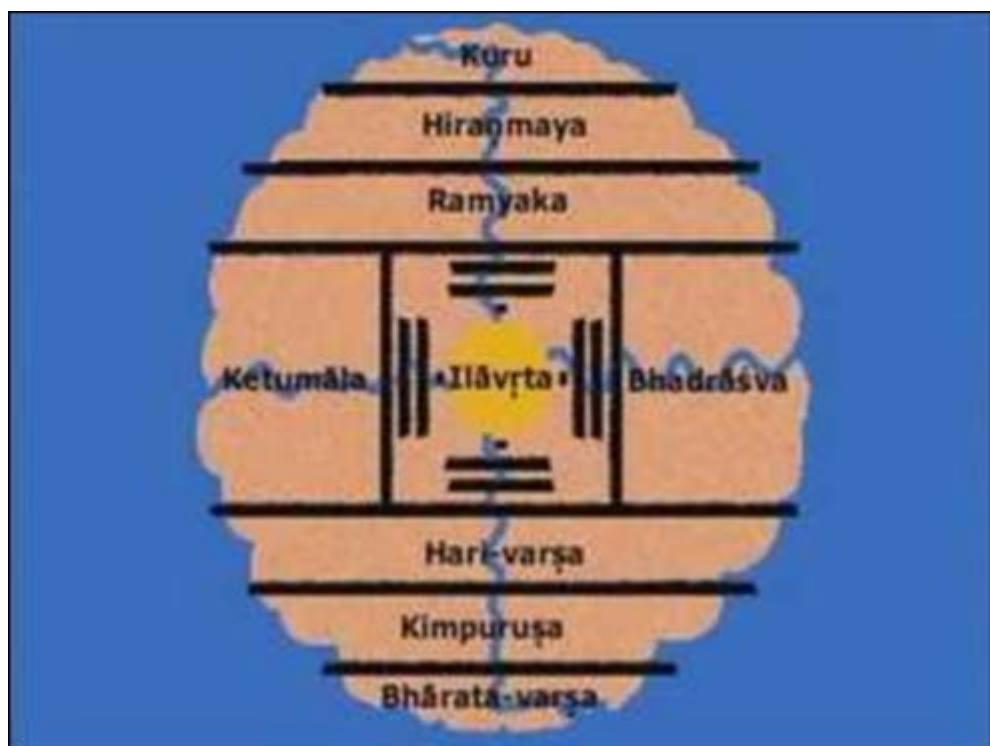
The horizontal plane model purports that the Earth is not a globe floating in space, but rather is part of the vast horizontal plane of Bhu-mandala. To put it dramatically, there are vast areas of inhabited land and ocean that continue beyond are known continents and oceans. This is exactly how *Srimad Bhagavatam* describes it. We have presented a summary of this model in "[Part One of Modern Blasphemy – The Earth is Not a Globe](#)" and at greater length in a paper called "[Sailing to Jambudwipa](#)".

So where is our Earth on the Vedic map, and what does it look like? It is not actually as we all assume it to be - a round globe floating in space! In the image below we see the central island of Bhu-mandala called Jambudwipa:



Here we see the round-shaped island of Jambudwipa surrounded by the blue-coloured saltwater ocean. Both the island and its surrounding ocean are 800,000 miles in breadth. The golden coloured Mount Meru stands in the centre of Jambudwipa. Our Earth is an area called Bharata-varsha which is the southernmost part of Jambudwipa. According to Sukadeva Goswami, Bharata-varsha is 72,000 miles long, and makes up a small part of a much greater landscape; he does not describe it as a globe of 24,901 miles in circumference and floating in space. According to Sukadeva Goswami's description, there are much greater areas of inhabited lands and oceans surrounding our known Earth area that have yet to be discovered, or rather, *re-discovered*. According to the Vedic histories (Puranas) our Earth area was once politically and socially connected to this greater land-mass of Jambudwipa (see sections 1.7-1.9 of *Sailing to Jambudwipa*). Such a description is at complete variance with the idea that Earth is a small rotating globe in space.

So, if *Srimad Bhagavatam* does not describe Bharata-varsha as a globe in space, then how is it described? Actually, that is very straightforward if one simply accepts the literal translation. Bharata-varsha is just a small part of the same horizontal terrain as the rest of Bhu-mandala! In the image below we see an aerial map of Jambudwipa (the central island of Bhu-mandala) divided into nine sections with Bharata-varsha in the south:



Thus, going north from Bharata-varsha along the same plane one comes into Kimpuruṣa-varsha and from there to Hari-varsha etc. These areas cover hundreds of thousands of miles and are inhabited by other types of living entities including human. A brief description of these areas is given in *Srimad Bhagavatam* Canto Five. Although it is not indicated here on the map, the Markendeya Purana further describes that Bharata-varsha itself is also divided into nine further sections or islands with each section being completely surrounded by water and inaccessible to the other. Bharata-varsha is thus divided into nine sections of which our known Earth area is only one. Since Bharata-varsha is altogether 72,000 miles, we can infer from this that there must be eight other areas of Bharata-varsha to the east and west of our own Earth. This is the idea presented by Da-navir Goswami in his *Vedic Cosmos* documentary, and one which seems to make most sense. Each of these other eight areas would thus be approximately equivalent in size to our known Earth area and lie somewhere further to the east and west of our known Earth along the same horizontal plane (see section 2.5 of *Sailing to Jambudwipa: Our Limited Understanding of East and West*). Going north from our own part of Bharata-varsha we come into the next varsha of Jambudwipa called Kimpuruṣa-varsha. Thus, after crossing the so-called North Pole, we would not circumnavigate around a globe, but rather, we would proceed further along the same plane until we came to the other areas of Jambudwipa.

From the above map we see that as one goes north from Bharata-varsha to kimpurusa-varsha one traverses the same horizontal plane as one would when going, for example, from Southern to Northern Europe. The Earth's position on the horizontal plane would thus look something like this:



In the above picture we see circular island of Jambudwipa with the nine divisions of Bharata-varsha on the southern side. These divisions are represented here as nine islands (each about the size of our Earth) with our own Earth area depicted as a small round globe. Actually the continents of our Earth should be lying flat on this plane (as we experience in reality) and not as depicted in the animation, curving around a globe floating on water. As we can see from the diagram, however, Earth is certainly not a ball in space, but a small area of a much greater world that surrounds us in every direction.

The *Srimad Bhagavatam* and *Mahabharata* describe how the Pandavas, and later their grandson Pariksit Maharaja, controlled this vast area of Jambudvipa from their capital in India. A question thus inevitably arises for Rajasekhara dasa and other advocates of a round-shaped Earth: *Where is the round Earth in relation to Jambudvipa?* If Earth is a 24,901 mile round ball in space, where is the rest of the 800,000 mile Jambudvipa to be found? Where is Jambudvipa and the rest of the Bhu-mandala in NASA's pictures?

The depiction of Earth as a globe ball in space does not make any sense in the light of *Srimad-Bhagavatam's* description. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* describes that Earth is part of Bharata-varsha and literally next door to Kimpurusha-varsa. Bharata-varsha is surrounded by Jambudvipa's salt-water ocean; not by space. Past the northern point of our known Earth (Arctic) is an 80,000 mile high mountain over which the Pandavas crossed to control the 800,000 mile land mass of Jambudvipa. None of this makes any sense from the understanding of Earth as a globe in space; but it makes perfect sense with the understanding that Earth continues on a horizontal plane. So which version of reality is correct?

The problem for many followers of the Vedas in conceptualizing the flat-Earth or horizontal plane

conception of *Srimad Bhagavatam* is because of starting on a wrong premise. We begin with the certain belief/assumption/premise that the Earth is actually a globe floating in space. This is the image that has been presented to us for all of our lifetime, and particularly beginning with the iconic images of Earth from the moon presented by the so-called Apollo moon-landings of 1969-72. We may feel there is no need to think or believe otherwise; and to do so is only to invite scorn and ridicule. Thus when the followers of *Srimad Bhagavatam* don't see any sight of Jambudwipa in the photos and videos of Earth from outer space, they may prefer to assume that it must be in another dimension and that the Earth really is as NASA presents it to us - a rotating ball in dark lonely lifeless space. This may be a convenient way of disposing with the huge disparity between the Vedic and the modern conception of the Earth, but it is unworkable for the following reason: *Sukadeva Goswami does not describe the rest of Jambudwipa as being in another dimension.* Although special qualification is certainly required for entering other parts of the universe, the passage to Jambudwipa is not like going through Professor Digory Kirke's wardrobe and ending up in Narnia. The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is actually very precise in its description of the size and shape of Jambudwipa and its distance from where we are. Sukadeva Goswami describes it using our measurements and dimension. He describes its physicality in the dimension that we understand. In other words, he wishes to inform the reader (here in this part of the Earth) of more parts of the Earth that are literally a few thousand miles away to the north.

Sukadeva Gosvami explained the Vedic cosmography to King Pariksit who was sitting by the bank of the Ganges in India - which of course is part of our known Earth. In other words, Sukadeva Gosvami is explaining the position of Jambudwipa relative to a person here on Earth. It's just like someone sitting by the Thames River and explaining the position and distance of England to Europe:

"The great Rsi Sukadeva Gosvami said: My dear King, there is no limit to the expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead's material energy. This material world is a transformation of the material qualities [sattva-guna, rajo-guna and tamo-guna], yet no one could possibly explain it perfectly, even in a lifetime as long as that of Brahma. No one in the material world is perfect, and an imperfect person could not describe this material universe accurately, even after continued speculation. O King, I shall nevertheless try to explain to you the principal regions, such as Bhu-goloka [Bhuloka], with their names, forms, measurements and various symptoms."

(*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 5.16.4)

We do not, therefore, require any fanciful ideas of other dimensions to account for Earth's position to Jambudwipa. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* uses commonly understood distances and dimensions that are intended to help us here in Bharata-varsha to understand where and how far other places in the universe are from us. We should, therefore, take the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*'s description of the Earth's relationship to Jambudwipa as it is. According to Sukadeva Goswami, the rest of Jambudwipa is past our northern land areas and oceans. Our limitation in reaching Jambudwipa is not because (as we have been falsely taught) that we live on a globe, and are thus restricted to simply circling around its outer circumference. Rather, our inability in reaching Jambudwipa is due to being presently denied access by certain forces to those places beyond the Arctic and Antarctica. As Srila Prabhupada argued in a fascinating conversation with Tamala Krishna Goswami (Discussion about Bhu-mandala, July 3, 1977, Vrndavana) we cannot go further east and west because we are like an animal bound by a rope that is restricted to moving within a limited sphere (see section 2.5 *Sailing to Jambudwipa*). Which one of us has personally crossed the Arctic or Antarctica to see, if indeed, there are further expanses of land on the same plane? Rather, we have all most likely been convinced by so-called satellite images that show the **Arctic and Antarctica** to the north and south of a globe-shaped Earth. On closer inspection, however, the images are all merely computer generated images, and not one real photo showing the true extent of Arctic and Antarctica actually exists:

In the 1959 book by Amadeo F. Giannini called *World Beyond the Poles: Physical Continuity of the Universe*, an argument is made by the author that military expeditions by Admiral Byrd and others revealed 'indeterminable land extent beyond both poles,' and that 'there are no northern or southern limits to the Earth.'

The relegation of Jambudwipa to invisibility or to other dimensions is to my mind a lack of faith in the *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s actual description of our precise location and position in relation to the rest of Jambudwipa. Taking the literal description of Sukadeva Goswami, we should understand

that the Earth is thus not a ball in space; but rather, a small part of a greater horizontal plane that stretches across the middle of the universe. This plane is called Bhu-mandala.

So in the light of two completely opposing depictions of reality, followers of *Srimad Bhagavatam* have to seriously consider the following possibility: what if the premise of a round Earth is wrong; not only wrong, but a deliberately manufactured fake presentation of reality. In my opinion, the greatest success of the recent flat-Earth advocates has been in successful discrediting the images and videos of so-called Earth from outer space as inauthentic and indeed, fraudulent. We have looked at some of these images in section 2.2 of *Sailing to Jambudwipa*. There are thousands of other on-line videos and articles dedicated to exposing the same fraudulent images. Such investigation not only exposes the greatest lie of all time, but also opens up a serious possibility that the Earth may indeed extend further into vast areas as *Srimad Bhagavatam* describes.

The depiction of Bharata-varsha's shape and location on the Bhu-mandala thus immediately creates a clash of world-views not only with modern science, but it also creates a disparity between many of Srila Prabhupada's own statements that the Earth is a globe in space, and his translation of *Srimad Bhagavatam* which describes Earth as being on the horizontal plane of Bhu-mandala, (what others may call the flat-Earth model). I prefer to use the words 'horizontal plane' because that more accurately describes the *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s description. I believe this disparity can be easily resolved by considering Srila Prabhupada's own directive on the issue which was to instruct his own scientifically-minded disciples to basically figure out the cosmology of the *Srimad Bhagavatam* and present it in a scientific manner to the modern world. As we shall see presently, in the conversations entitled *Discussions About the Bhu-mandala* (Vrindavana, 3-5 July, 1977), Srila Prabhupada presented himself as a layman on the issue of cosmology, and left the details of the Vedic cosmos for his disciples to figure out.

(1.3) SRILA PRABHUPADA AND COSMOLOGY

From available conversations which we will present later in this paper, Srila Prabhupada by his own admission was not a specialist in Bhagavata cosmology. Indeed, in 1977 when the designs for the Vedic Planetarium were just beginning, Srila Prabhupada had sent some of his disciples to search around India for Vedic astronomers who could help with drawing the maps that would depict the Vedic cosmos. Srila Prabhupada himself acknowledged his own limitations. Speaking of his difficulty in conceiving the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*'s description of the universe:

Prabhupada: And it was not possible for me to digest. (laughs) Somebody else helped me to... **I am a layman. I do not know.**

Tamala Krishna: How did you write it?

Prabhupada: That somebody, Krishna, helped me. That He manufactured... ...When I was writing, I was praying Krishna that "I do not actually accommodate all this knowledge. Please help me." Yes. That's all right.

(*Room Conversation, June 18, 1977, Vrindavana*)

Srila Prabhupada again mentioned to one astronomer:

Prabhupada: I have tried to translate it as far as possible, but I am not satisfied.
(*Conversation with India Astronomer, April 30, 1977, Bombay*)

Actually, Srila Prabhupada's translation of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* was perfect, but it appears there was some difficulty to visualize what Sukadeva Goswami was describing. Srila Prabhupada had sent some of his disciples to locate Vedic astronomers around India who could help with drawing a map for the Vedic planetarium but the result was disappointing. He then basically left it to his disciples to figure it out taking guidance from Krishna:

Tamala Krishna: And what to do? How to get...?

Prabhupada: Krishna will help.

Tamala Krishna: Hm?

Prabhupada: Krishna will help. He has no idea.

(*Conversation with India Astronomer, April 30 1977, Bombay*)

Srila Prabhupada again suggested advertising in newspapers for Vedic astronomers to help:

Prabhupada: "Astronomer knowing the planetary system," you can advertise. "Expert astronomer who knows the planetary systems as described..."

Tamala Krishna: "...in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*."

Prabhupada: Hm.

Tamala Krishna: Yeah, we can advertise. Instead of having somebody going all over India.
(*Conversation with India Astronomer, April 30 1977, Bombay*)

From these conversations it is obvious that Srila Prabhupada was requesting help in order prepare maps that depict the Vedic Universe. To their credit, the devotees involved done a marvellous job in preparing a map for the Bhu-mandala which was eventually presented to Srila Prabhupada in July 1977. However, as we shall see presently, when the issue of the Earth's shape and location was presented to Srila Prabhupada, a direct answer to the question of whether Earth was round or flat remained unanswered. Certainly, Srila Prabhupada himself did not retain the same staunchness as in previous conversations where he spoke very definitively of the Earth as globe-shaped.

(1.4) THINK!

When Srila Prabhupada saw the maps of Bhu-mandala, and was presented with Tamala Krishna Goswami's direct questions about the shape of the Earth, it became apparent that the Earth of *Srimad Bhagavatam* was not the same as everyone had assumed. As pointed out to Srila Prabhupada by Tamala Krishna Goswami, the Earth of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is not 'round' as depicted by NASA. In the following conversation, Tamala Krishna Goswami shows his clear comprehension of *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s description of Earth's position on the Bhu-mandala:

Tamala Krishna: Look at the earth. Now, this is a real question that we still have to answer. **They picture the earth round, and we say, no. Bhu-mandala is like a lotus, like this, and the earth is only one part of one island in Bhu-mandala, and it's not, you know, it's not round(?)**. It doesn't look like that. And all the pictures they take of the earth when they go up in their satellites show round. And we're going to tell them that it's not. This is a very tricky question. In other words, if this is the picture of the world, like this, and we say that... If we take an airplane from here, from Los Angeles. Now, supposing we go to India, which is here. So there's two ways to go. One way, you can go like this, and the other way, you can go like that. But if the earth is not a round globe, then how is it sometimes people go from Los Angeles via Hawaii to Japan and then India? So we can't figure this out. We have experience, those of us who have flown, that actually the plane went from Los Angeles to Hawaii to Tokyo to Hong Kong and then to India. So it doesn't work out in our maps so far, right? We can't figure it out. This thing has to be very complete in its answers. Otherwise everyone will laugh at us. We can't leave any loopholes.

Prabhupada: **So are you thinking on this?**

Bhakti-prema: In the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*... According to *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, it is (indistinct).

Prabhupada: **Find out from our side, according to Bhagavatam.**

(*Bhu-mandala Diagram Discussion, July 2 1977, Vrindavana*)

In the above conversation Srila Prabhupada is attentively listening to what Tamala Krishna Goswami and the other devotees have ascertained to be the real fact of the matter: I'll repeat Tamala Krishna Goswami's words:

"They picture the earth round, and we say, no. Bhu-mandala is like a lotus, like this, and the earth is only one part of one island in Bhu-mandala, and it's not, you know, it's not round(?). It doesn't look like that. And all the pictures they take of the earth when they go up in their satellites show round. And we're going to tell them that it's not."

Tamala Krishna Goswami then goes on to explain the inconsistency which this creates with the globe conception. Srila Prabhupada is clearly understanding what the issue is, and then he asks Tamala Krishna Goswami, "Are you thinking on this?"

This is a very important instruction: "Are you thinking on this?" So here is our mandate from Prabhupada "to think on this." Think on what? We have to think about the inconsistencies that arise between the *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s description of the Earth as resting on the horizontal pla-

ne of Bhu-mandala, and the modern presentation of the Earth as a globe in space. And what is Srila Prabhupada's directive? He says, "Find out from our side according to Bhagavatam." The most recent acharya, therefore, gives a clear directive: "Find out from our side according to Bhagavatam." In other words, Srila Prabhupada is not giving the answer to questions regarding inconsistencies between the two world views of the Earth's shape and nature; rather, *he is requesting an investigation in order to find the answer*. The statement 'Find out from our side, according to Bhagavatam' would obviously include further research into the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (shastra), as well as the commentaries by previous acharyas (guru), and of course from other devotees of Krishna who may have knowledge in this field (sadhu). Therefore, an argument for the horizontal plane model based on research into the Fifth Canto hardly puts one in the bracket of 'jumping over guru' or being an offender as Rajasekhara das has accused.

So this is a very important later conversation when considering Srila Prabhupada's earlier statements about the globe-shape of the Earth. It shows Srila Prabhupada was now aware that the *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s description of the Earth was different from the globe version, and so we should note carefully his response here. He doesn't confirm, "Yes it is a globe." Rather he gives an instruction and says, "*Find out from our side according to Bhagavatam*." So there you have it. We have to find out from our side according to Bhagavatam. That is Srila Prabhupada's instruction. Certainly Srila Prabhupada at the time was not presented with some of the really amazing arguments and presentations coming from the flat-Earth advocates that would confirm the *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s description that Earth is indeed on a horizontal plane and not a globe in space. The topic wasn't current at the time. Nor was the information available that we have now regarding NASA's skulduggery in faking images of the Earth from outer-space. I believe if Srila Prabhupada was here now, a very good case could be presented to him that Bharata-varsha is not a globe in space, but is indeed part of the horizontal plane of Bhu-mandala as described in *Srimad Bhagatavam*.

In any case, whilst Srila Prabhupada asks us to 'think' about this subject, Rajasekhara Prabhu, without a clear understanding of Srila Prabhupada's directive and intention, and in a misplaced attempt at fidelity to Srila Prabhupada, would literally have us all 'stop thinking' on the subject. Consider the following rant:

"The entire presentation of Mayesvara on the Shrimad Bhagavatam is null & void and equal to milk that has been touched by the lips of a serpent. One who hears the invalid explanations on Shrimad Bhagavatam given by Mayeshvara is simply going to be bewildered and ultimately die a spiritual death due to having consumed poison along with the milk."

And to Acintya Govinda das, an Australian devotee who also advocates the flat-Earth model, Rajasekhara dasa, again, sounding more like a reincarnation of a medieval inquisitor hurls the following damnation at the globe blasphemer:

"You have attempted to contradict Shrila Prabhupada's teachings in a futile attempt to prove that the Earth is flat. All those who promote the 'Flat Earth' doctrine are diametrically opposed to the teachings of Shrila Prabhupada and are **thus committing the most serious offense, for which there is no redemption in this lifetime**. To contradict the Acharya, simply based on one's own pea-sized brain and completely limited sense perception is suicidal."

(1.5) 'BLIND ACCEPTANCE OF SOMETHING DOES NOT GIVE EVIDENCE OF INTELLIGENCE'

Despite the ravings of Rajasekhara dasa, I believe Srila Prabhupada would appreciate that his disciples and followers are seen to be thinking about the subject, and that may mean questioning things that appear to be inconsistent in his own presentation. We have the example of Pariksit Maharaja who rejected the process of atonement offered by Sukadeva Goswami. Prabhupada writes:

"When Pariksit Maharaja inquired how a human being could free himself from sinful activities so as not to be forced to go to hellish planetary systems after death, Sukadeva Gosvami answered that the process of counteracting sinful life is atonement. In this way Sukadeva Gosvami tested the intelligence of Maharaja Pariksit, who passed the examination by refusing to accept this process as genuine. Now Pariksit Maharaja is expecting another answer from his

spiritual master, Sukadeva Gosvami."

(SB 6.1.10)

We see here in this purport how Srila Prabhupada appreciates that Pariksit Maharaja was using his intelligence to question the logic of Sukadeva's presentation and not just docilely accepting everything that Sukadeva Goswami said. I believe Srila Prabhupada would similarly also appreciate some questioning of his belief that the Earth is a globe. Why do I say this? Because Srila Prabhupada's main concern was that the TOVP present the Vedic cosmology according to *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Srila Prabhupada himself admitted his own limitations in understanding the cosmology of the Fifth Canto and directed his disciples to make the necessary research to understand the thing correctly and present it in a scientific manner.

Srila Prabhupada's own translation of *Srimad Bhagavatam* describes the horizontal circular Earth (Bhu-mandala), and Srila Prabhupada decisively stated to take the version of the Bhagavatam. Considering these final discussions on the topic in July 1977, Srila Prabhupada seemed to leave the final decision on the round or flat-Earth to his disciples to intelligently figure this out, and then present it to the world via the Temple of Vedic Planetarium (TOVP).

By Srila Prabhupada's own admission, he did not seem to have a complete conception of the Fifth Canto's cosmology, and that would obviously include Bharata-varsha's shape and location to the rest of Bhu-mandala; this explains why Srila Prabhupada always spoke in the conventional understanding that the Earth is a globe. But the Bharata-varsha of *Srimad Bhagavatam* is not a globe in space; it is only one tiny area of the complete Earth plane which is called Bhu-mandala. To say, therefore, that the *Srimad Bhagavatam* describes a horizontal plane model of the Earth is not going against Srila Prabhupada's translation; although it does seemingly contradict some of his earlier statements about the Earth being round.

Again we have to apply the attributes of intelligence to this question:

"Doubt, misapprehension, correct apprehension, memory and sleep, as determined by their different functions, are said to be the distinct characteristics of intelligence.

(SB 3.26.30)

Purport:

Doubt is one of the important functions of intelligence; blind acceptance of something does not give evidence of intelligence. Therefore the word samshaya is very important; in order to cultivate intelligence, one should be doubtful in the beginning. But doubting is not very favorable when information is received from the proper source. In Bhagavad-gita the Lord says that doubting the words of the authority is the cause of destruction."

Here Srila Prabhupada says that we should exercise our faculty of doubt as a function of intelligence, and admonishes the mentality of blind following. Both attributes of intelligence have to be applied to this question of the Earth's shape and location because obviously a disparity exists between the *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s description of Bharata-varsha as a horizontal plane and Srila Prabhupada's description of Earth as a globe. In the above purport, Srila Prabhupada also cautions that we should not doubt information from the proper source or authority. Now the question that rises here is whether doubting Srila Prabhupada's words (the authority in this case) about the shape of the Earth will become a cause of destruction to the disciple or follower. Such is the course that Rajasekhara dasa threatens to anyone advocating the horizontal plane model. Yet we see, from the available conversations that Srila Prabhupada himself was deferring his own understanding to the authority of *Srimad Bhagavatam* (sastra) and ultimately to the great sage Sukadeva Goswami the speaker of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Srila Prabhupada thus instructed his own disciples to try and understand Sukadeva Goswami's description. In other words, Srila Prabhupada is not presenting his own understanding or pronouncements on this topic as final. He is requesting his disciples and followers to present the version of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. That is what we are attempting in the horizontal plane model – presenting the literal description of Sukadeva Goswami's Bhu-mandala, and explaining with examples from empiric observation how the flat-Earth science indeed confirms Sukadeva's description that Earth is situated on a horizontal plane, and is not a ball floating in space as presented by NASA.

Raising a doubt about Srila Prabhupada's understanding of the Earth's shape and location on the

Vedic map of the cosmos is not motivated by the false ego of thinking oneself more intelligent than the guru. Think of a family driving on an adventure somewhere with their loving father. As the father takes a particular turn, the boy looks at the map and says "Dad, I think you need to check the map. We may be going in the wrong direction" Now both the boy and the father and the rest of the family wish to go to the desired destination, so the father in this scenario would have no reason to be upset by the boy's honest uncertainty and questioning; nor should the other family members get angry if they are forced to stop to take a second look at the map. Likewise, if the members of ISKCON are all committed to accurately presenting the *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s cosmology in the Temple of Vedic Planetarium, then the issue should be made open for discussion. Srila Prabhupada himself encouraged discussion of his books from different "angles of vision," an expression he used on countless occasions:

"Therefore, I recommend you to read books more and more and try to understand the subject matter from different angles of vision and be always discussing it with your godbrothers"
(Letter to Bhargava, Los Angeles, 13 June 1972)

"And I am very much stressing nowadays that my students shall increase their reading of my books and try to understand them from different angles of vision. Each sloka can be seen from many, many angles of vision."

(Letter to Tribhuvanatha dasa, Los Angeles, 16 June, 1972)

Whilst this is not an open invitation for promotion of speculative ideas that depart from, or contradict the Vedic teachings, it does certainly encourage a congenial atmosphere in which members of ISKCON can freely discuss ideas from different angles of vision. It certainly does not endorse the type of *crimethink* and *crimestop* proposed originally by Big Brother, and more recently by Rajasekhara dasa who threatens 'spiritual death' and 'no redemption in this lifetime,' for anyone who hears about or promotes the flat-Earth concept:

Crimestop - Orwell's definition: "The faculty of stopping short, as though by instinct, at the threshold of any dangerous thought. It includes the power of not grasping analogies, of failing to perceive logical errors, of misunderstanding the simplest arguments if they are inimical to Ingsoc, and of being bored or repelled by any train of thought which is capable of leading in a heretical direction. In short....protective stupidity."

(1.6) TAMALA KRISHNA GOSWAMI'S QUESTIONS SRILA PRABHUPADA ABOUT THE EARTH

Srila Prabhupada himself acknowledged to Tamala Krishna Goswami that the nature of the Earth was a difficult subject. Contrary to the mood of Rajasekhara's protestations on the issue we have raised, we have the following examples from 3-5 of July 1977 of how gracious Srila Prabhupada was in accepting the doubts raised by Tamala Krishna Goswami on this very issue. Beginning on 3rd July 1977, in answer to a series of questions by Tamala Krishna Goswami about the shape of the Earth, Srila Prabhupada did not give a definitive answer, but said that whether the Earth is round or flat should be decided by the version of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, not by the changing theories of Western astronomy.

Tamala Krishna: Do we accept the contour of the continents? Do we accept the general continents?

Prabhupada: We accept nothing of their theory. They are prejudiced and nonsense. Formerly they were speaking that the world is flat. Now they have changed: "It is round." So what is the value of his estimate? And you'll find in that book, "probably."

Tamala Krishna: That was the most frequent word used.

Prabhupada: Yes. So what is the value of their knowledge?

(Discussion about *Bhu-mandala*, July 3, 1977, Vrindavana)

Here as in other places when the question was raised by Tamala Krishna about the shape of the Earth, Srila Prabhupada didn't give a decisive yes or no as to whether Earth is flat or round like a ball. He says, that the materialists sometimes say it is flat, then change their minds and say it is round. He concludes that we should reject their speculations and present the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*'s version instead:

Yasoda-nandana: Prabhupada, what is the shape of this tiny portion of earth or whatever pla-

ce we are on? What is the shape of this, whatever you call...

Prabhupada: Ask them. Why don't you ask them? Sometimes they say flat, sometimes they say it is round. Why don't you ask them, the scientists?

Yasoda-nandana: We don't accept what they say.

Prabhupada: No, no. Formerly they were under the impression the world is flat. And now they are saying round. So what they'll say after few years?

Yasoda-nandana: They are not consistent. That's a fact. They're very inconsistent in their theories.

Prabhupada: Ask them which is correct. "Probably" this is correct.

Bhakti-prema: When someone asks this question, first one would reply.

Prabhupada: I answered it. You people say like that, so which is correct? Flat or round?

Tamala Krishna: They will say "What does the Bhagavatam say?"

Prabhupada: Huh?

Tamala Krishna: They may reply to us, "All right, we are rascals. So please tell us what is the fact."

Prabhupada: That is, we are...

Tamala Krishna: That's what he's asking. What should be shown? Actually we're a little stumped by... I mean...

Prabhupada: Yes, you must have proper answer as far as possible.

Tamala Krishna: We just read... We got a version from South India, and we've even found that there are different conceptions of what the Bhagavata is saying. But the Puranas, they give some Puranic references.

Bhakti-prema: It is written the world... The earth is round and flat.

Prabhupada: Hm?

Bhakti-prema: Earth is round and flat both, together.

Prabhupada: Yes.

Bhakti-prema: First we should reply it is acintya. This should be the reply. "Inconceivable."

Yasoda-nandana: If it is inconceivable, then they will say how we can conceive it?

Prabhupada: **Take the version of Bhagavatam.**

(Discussions about Bhu-mandala, July 5 1977, Vrindavana)

Rajasekhara Prabhu and Antardwipa Prabhu (current head of cosmology at the TOVP as of May 2016) have tried to work this conversation to support the idea of a dual flat-Earth/round Earth conception; but that is not what is being conveyed. There is no elaborate philosophical discourse anywhere either from Srila Prabhupada or in the commentaries of the previous acharyas on the fifth Canto to support the idea that the Earth manifests as both a round planet and a flat plane. It is an absurd conception. Srila Prabhupada's reply of 'yes' to Bhakti-prema's statement that the 'Earth is round and flat together' may simply be a figure of speech acknowledging the statement of the speaker without necessarily implying an agreement. Bhakti-prema himself is only presenting it as one of the different conceptions that he had come across and even then without a proper understanding of what it meant. If anything, Srila Prabhupada's affirmation of Bhakti-Prema's statement that "Earth is round and flat both, together" supports the Vedic description that the circular Earth (Bhu-mandala) is lying flat and round like a roundabout, not round like a ball. Certainly that is the nature of Bhu-mandala of which our Earth is only one tiny part. It should be carefully noted that when the Vedas talk about the Earth, they are referring to Bhu-mandala, not to Bharata-varsha which is only a small part of the Earth. Since, Srila Prabhupada never before or after, spoke of Earth as being simultaneously a round planet and a flat plane, any attempt to deduce a supporting argument from this conversation is simply a massive interpolation.

The important point in this discussion is Srila Prabhupada's directive to *take the version of Bhagavatam.*' In other words he is not offering his own understanding of the Earth as conclusive, but rather, directing his disciples to basically figure out what is being described by Sukadeva Goswami. I think this statement should be regarded as holding greater authority than some of his earlier statements and purports in which he speaks of the Earth as a round globe. Srila Prabhupada mood in the conversations of 1977 also seemed to indicate a freedom to his disciples to intelligently figure it out. This mood certainly comes across in the various conversations in 1977 regarding the depictions for the Vedic planetarium, and such a mood is consistent with his previous letter to Svarupa Damodar Goswami (27 April 1976) requesting his disciples to make a study the *Srimad Bhagavatam's* cosmology.

From these last available conversations on the topic in early July 1977 it appears Srila Prabhupada was not necessarily committed to the idea of presenting Earth as a ball-shaped globe. In the

above conversation Srila Prabhupada states very decisively that we should 'take the version of Bhagavatam.' This of course puzzled the devotees because they couldn't ascertain whether it was depicted as flat or round. This led to some more interesting exchanges with Tamala Krishna Goswami who wanted to get to the bottom of the issue.

In the wonderful exchange between guru and disciple that ensued on that occasion, we hear Srila Prabhupada and his beloved disciple Tamala Krishna Goswami discuss back and forth about the shape of the Earth. Tamala Krishna Goswami who wanted nothing other than to present an accurate depiction of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*'s description of Earth, felt forced to press Srila Prabhupada again and again for a specific answer regarding the shape of the Earth.

Tamala Krishna: I mean I'm sorry I have to take this thankless task to ask all these questions.

Tamala Krishna Goswami describes this exchange in his published Diary (TKG'S Diary, July 3 1977). He writes of feeling that his attitude had been a little offensive for heavily questioning said there was no wrong as they were simply discussing and trying to understand a difficult subject. Again we should mark Srila Prabhupada's philosophical approach to the question and his appreciation for the questions of Tamala Krishna Goswami. Compare this to the fanatical raving of Rajasekhara dasa who threatens 'no redemption in this lifetime' for anyone questioning the holiness of the globe.

Actually Tamala Krishna Goswami's love for Srila Prabhupada comes across very clearly in these discussions; his only intention being how to accurately depict the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*'scosmography as it should appear in the Vedic planetarium. From TKG's Diary:

"When Srila Prabhupada awoke after a night's rest, he opened his eyes and said, "They go from Los Angeles. You all think over it. Then I shall tell you." Srila Prabhupada was referring to the question which we had not yet solved: **If the world is not a globe but part of Jambudvipa**, which is the center of the huge, lotus-like Bhumandala, how does an airplane fly from Los Angeles to Hawaii to Tokyo and on to India? **The scientists explain by saying that the airplane circles the globe. But according to Srimad-Bhagavatam, there is no planet Earth as the scientists say, floating in space.** Rather, there is Bharatavarsha with its seven continents and oceans and Himalayan Mountains. After challenging us thus, Srila Prabhupada went back to sleep. When he again awoke, Prabhupada began to reveal the answer. "They are bound up and cannot go beyond a point. They are conditioned and are forced to return. They can only go so far and not farther." I told Prabhupada that we accepted that point, but it still did not answer the question. Prabhupada replied, however, that it did. "You are prejudiced. You are conditioned with preconceptions of how everything is." He was saying that my difficulty to understand was due to my acceptance of the scientists' assumptions. "It is just like a bull grinding, going around in a circle. He is tied up and simply going around. So everyone is tied up. They cannot go beyond a point, and they cannot move in any way they like, just like the bull only has certain limits to his movement. How can a frog in the well understand the ocean?

...After lunch, Srila Prabhupada spoke again about the planetary system. In trying to understand the fact of flying from Los Angeles to India, I had an energetic discussion with Srila Prabhupada. **I left feeling very perplexed with Prabhupada's admonition, "You are prejudiced."** **Later in the afternoon, I was still feeling disturbed, mainly because of my argumentative attitude during the earlier discussion. I felt that perhaps I had been offensive in questioning too much; thus, I came in and apologized.** Srila Prabhupada said there was nothing wrong; we were merely discussing a difficult subject. **After some time, Prabhupada called me back to the room and said, "Why you are thinking this way, that I am offended?" My mentality seemed to disturb Prabhupada.** He said, "Now the atmosphere is disturbed. I cannot translate." The emotions produced by this situation were very difficult to understand. Perhaps I will realize their implications as I become more Krishna conscious.

Instead of translating, Prabhupada had me call the others: Bhakti Prema Swami and Yasodanandana Swami. A conversation ensued, similar to the one Srila Prabhupada had with me after lunch. **Our question of how the Bhagavatam's description of Jambudvipa can accommodate traveling west from Los Angeles to reach India seemed to remain unan-**

swered. Prabhupada stressed, however, that we were overly concerned with such a minor issue, just "a drop of water" (Prabhupada's description of the Pacific Ocean). "With your experimental logic you cannot understand. It is inconceivable. Just accept the sastra. True understanding only comes by the mercy of the spiritual master. You cannot adjust the description of the Bhagavatam within the limits of your knowledge.

(TKG' Diary, July 3 1977)

We should note here the spirit of Tamala Krishna Goswami who questioned Srila Prabhupada, not with the intention of proving him wrong, but with the intention of coming to the right understanding so that *Srimad Bhagavatam* would be glorified. Srila Prabhupada appreciated Tamala Krishna's questioning him on the round/flat-Earth debacle and stated that it was a difficult topic and he did not take offence.

(1.7) THE FAKE MOON LANDINGS AND THE FAKE EARTH

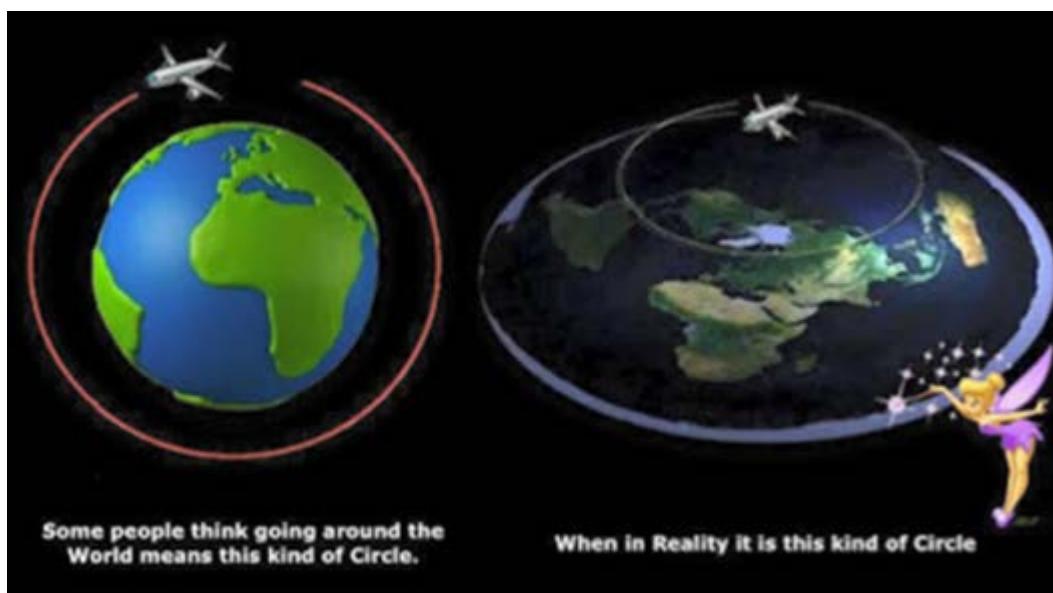
What is also really interesting here in all of these discussions on the Vedic Planetarium is Tamala Krishna Goswami's reaction and attitude to the whole thing:

"Yet when they take a flight, they say, "We go around the earth." But we say, "You cannot go around the earth." So far, our understanding... So far—unless we have not completely understood yet—it is like a lotus, Jambudvipa, and the whole Bhumandala is like a lotus. So how do... You cannot fly around Bharatavarsa, or earth. Yet every day the whole science of aeronautics, of flying, is based upon the fact that they're flying around different places of the earth. And everyone who sees this, that, our description, is going to ask this question. It's a very important question to answer, and Bhakti-prema has not yet answered it. None of us can. We are avoiding it at this point until we get further information. **There must be an answer, but we have not yet been able to give the answer. I have absolute faith in these, the Vedic description. I am completely convinced. I just know that I have not understood perfectly yet. Therefore the answer's not apparent. But it's definitely a question that they will raise."**

(Conversations with Srila Prabhupada, June 30, 1977, Vrndavana)

To his credit, Tamala Krishna Goswami, very sincerely expressed to Srila Prabhupada his 'absolute faith' in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*'s description of Earth's depiction, but admitted that he was unable to explain such things as the existence of photographs that show a round Earth floating in space. Tamala Krishna Goswami was also struggling to understand the fact that we can sail and fly around the world from east to west or from west to east and come back at the same spot which seems to indicate evidence for a globe-shaped Earth.

However, in the paper *Sailing to Jambudwipa*, we have already looked at the concept of sailing and flying around the Earth from a horizontal plane perspective. It works just as well.



And the moon landing images and subsequent satellite images of Earth from outer space can clearly be established as fake.

Regarding the moon-landings of 1969-72, Srila Prabhupada was probably the first person to denounce the whole escapade as a colossal hoax with power and money as its motivating factor. Flying in the face of what the rest of the world believed, Srila Prabhupada denounced the moon-landings of 1969-72 as a complete fake. He did not accept either the photos or videos as evidence:

Tamala Krishna: What about these pictures we have seen on the television showing them jumping on the moon?

Prabhupada: That you can make in laboratory. That is not very difficult.

Tamala Krishna: Colossal hoax...

Candanacarya: How are they able to perpetuate such an enormous hoax?

Prabhupada: Enormous hoax for the fools, not for the intelligent persons.

Hari-sauri: They never fooled you, Srila Prabhupada.

Prabhupada: Huh?

Hari-sauri: They never fooled you. (Prabhupada laughs)

Candanacarya: That means that some people must know the actual truth about the hoax in the American system, so if we can find them...

Prabhupada: So you are knowing that. State it.

(Morning walk, June 4 1976, Los Angeles)

Prabhupada: And they are going to moon. They are going nowhere, simply taking laboratory photo, studio photo, and cheating. Why this cheating can go on? You do not know. That's all. (June 28, 1977, Vrindavana)



So for all those followers of Srila Prabhupada who believe that the Earth is a round planet floating in dark space, ask yourself this question: in the light of Srila Prabhupada's assertion that NASA faked the moon-landings, will you continue to accept the photos of the Earth from the surface of the so-called moon as evidence of a round Earth? Do you actually believe that an American astronaut was standing on the surface of the moon taking snap shots of the Earth planet (370,300 miles) away? Think again! After nearly fifty years of research and investigation into the moon-landings, there is massive evidence to vindicate Srila Prabhupada's position that the moon-landings were a hoax. I would personally encourage that an expose of this hoax should form one of the major exhibitions at the TOVP. In the above conversation, Srila Prabhupada says in reply to Candanacarya dasa that if you know who can explain this moon hoax then you 'state it.' So that's what we should do at the TOVP. We should state boldly to the world that the moon-landing was a hoax, and we should have the exhibitions to prove it. But as well as exposing the moon hoax, we have to also expose the series of bogus Earth photos from so-called outer space beginning in 1969 and continuing to the present day.

Astonishing as it sounds, the photos of Earth from outer space are not real. This would take some time on the reader's part to research, and is beyond the scope of our present paper. A few examples of these fake Earth photos are included in section 2.2 of *Sailing to Jambudwipa*. NASA wrongly figured that since the sun and the moon appear round, the Earth must be of a similar shape. The *Srimad Bhagavatam* describes otherwise. Unfortunately, no one in Srila Prabhupada's entourage at the time, made the connection between the fake moon landing and the fake Earth photo from the fake moon set. The images of the round Earth in space had perhaps become so

quickly engraved in everyone's mind that the question of doubting its authenticity never even arose, even when the first 'photographic evidence' of Earth from outer space came from an obviously faked moon-landing that never set foot out of a television studio.

However, the fake moon landing and the so-called photos of Earth from the surface of the fake moon definitely calls into question the authenticity of all subsequent images of Earth as presented by NASA and other space agencies. How these first images of the Earth were faked is presented in Bart Sibrel's documentary: *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Moon* which clearly shows the astronauts caught red-handed faking the shots. Subsequent photographs have also been subject to minute analysis, and demonstrated to be fraudulent. The images of our Earth from outer space are nothing more than computer generated images. Videos of astronauts (*astro-nots*) in outer space are just fantastic productions from the special effects department of NASA. The modern so-called satellite images and video footage from the International Space Station are just further renditions of the same hoax that began in 1969.

I'm following Srila Prabhupada's advice here that if the military, government, and media agencies continue to present this moon hoax as a fact then we shouldn't accept any of the propaganda that they send out - and that would include all subsequent space propaganda of *astro-nots* on their famous space walks with a so-called round planet thousands of miles below their feet. These images and videos are easy to create in special effects studios.



Prabhupada: Why if one is settled up that he's a rascal, we should not hear anything. And why not? He has not gone to the moon. They are insisting, "Yes, we have gone," by false propaganda. Why the one who makes false propaganda and one who says nonsense, we have to believe? Immediately, whatever he says, reject. There's no argument. You have proved yourself rascal so we don't accept any statement.

(*Conversation about Bhu-mandala, July 5, 1977, Vrindavana*)

Since the same agency that faked the moon landing continues to present this lie to the public, I share Srila Prabhupada's cynicism about the integrity of NASA, and have every reason to doubt whatever presentations they make including the whole International Space Agency saga.

I've no doubt that after a thorough inspection of the exposes of the fake photos and videos of Earth as a round-globe from outer space that Srila Prabhupada would have equally dismissed

them as fraudulent. Thus taking the *shastras* description of the actual relationship between Bharata-varshas position to Jambudvipa, as well as the observable science refuting a heliocentric and globe-shaped Earth, and not forgetting the innumerable exposes of NASA's fake Earth images from outer space, we have every reason to suspect the present depiction of the Earth as a globe. In the light of such a presentation, I would be confident that Srila Prabhupada would reconsider his previous statements that the Earth is a round planet in space.

(1.8) VARAHADEVA LIFTED THE BHU-MANDALA NOT AN EARTH GLOBE

We have a very important example in this regard of Srila Prabhupada changing his understanding in the light of alternative evidence. When it was pointed out, for example by Bhakti-prema dasa in the conversation of June 28, 1977 (Vrindavana) that Varahadeva lifted the entire Bhu-mandala and not simply what we think of as the Earth globe, Srila Prabhupada accepted his version because it was backed up by the *shastra*:

Devotee (2): Srila Prabhupada, previously we painted in the art department... Just like Varaha lifted the earth, and the earth was a globe, and we showed also a globe of the earth. How does that relate to this? Previously, when we painted, we showed the earth a ball. So now the artists will be very confused. How it fell in the Garbha Ocean as a ball?

Yasodanandana: It depends on what we mean by earth. The Western conception of earth is just five continents and a few oceans, but according to Bhagavatam, earth means Jambudvipa, because earth is connected with Jambudvipa.

Devotee (2): So whole Jambudvipa fell.

Bhakti-Prema: Bhagavata describes the height of Himalayas, eighty thousand miles.

Prabhupada: No, about this earth globe.

Bhakti-Prema: About the earth it describes four billion miles.

Tamala Krishna: That means Jambudvipa.

Bhakti-Prema: No, that means complete earth, four billion miles. That is eight lakhs miles, Jambudvipa.

Tamala Krishna: Four billion is the universe.

Bhakti-Prema: Bhu-mandala.

Tamala Krishna: Bhu-mandala. Oh, the Bhagavatam describes Bhu-mandala as earth.

Prabhupada: Oh.

Yasodanandana: Bhumi.

Bhakti-Prema: ...has come right from the ocean, from the bottom of the ocean.

Prabhupada: **So explained there. Then this question is solved.**

Tamala Krishna: Yes. The whole Bhu-mandala fell.

Bhakti-Prema: So the universe is round, and from bottom of the Garbhodaka ocean to top of Satyaloka there is four billion miles. Then the again, from east to west again is another four billion miles. Because Bhu-mandala is situated in between the earth.

Prabhupada: Explain. He'll explain.

(June 28 1977, Vrindavana)

Here we see an example of Srila Prabhupada's humility wherein he defers to the research study of his disciple Bhakti-prema who explains that it was the whole bhu-mandala that fell into the Garbhodaka Ocean, and not (as assumed) some tiny Earth globe. Srila Prabhupada even refers the other devotees to his disciple's opinion: "He'll explain!" This is an example of Srila Prabhupada (guru) favouring the understanding of his disciple (sadhu) above his own understanding. Bhakti-prema's understanding is indeed confirmed in the *shastra*: *Srimad Bhagavatam* 3.13.41 states: *ca sau*karam bhu-mandale natha data dhrtena te, in the form of a boar you lifted Bhu-mandala on your tusk.



inline image 6 Varahadeva lifting the flat-Earth (Bhu-mandala) 19th C. Patna

Despite this change of mind, there are many earlier statements in Srila Prabhupada's archives about Varahadeva lifting the Earth 'planet.' So which version should we present in order to be loyal to Srila Prabhupada? When a speaker gives a lecture about Varahadeva lifting the Earth, should they refer to the Earth as a globe or a horizontal plane? Should we regard Sadaputa Prabhu as a heretic for presenting the following conclusion in his book on Vedic Cosmography:

"In the pastime of Lord Varaha's lifting the earth from the ocean, the earth is frequently depicted by artists as our familiar earth globe. However, the Sanskrit verses of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* describing this pastime do not use any words denoting a sphere when referring to the earth, and the *Visnu Purana* indicates that Lord Varaha lifted Bhu-mandala as a whole. The relevant passage states that after lifting the earth from the waters, Lord Varaha divided it into seven great continents, as it was before, thus indicating that the earth that was lifted included the seven dvipas of Bhu-mandala (VP, p. 65). The Vaisnava commentator Vamsidhara, in his commentary on SB 5.20.38, he also points out that the earth lifted by Lord Varaha is Bhu-mandala (see Appendix 1).

In the Fifth Canto the earth is directly described as the vast disc of Bhu-mandala. The word *bhu-golam*, or "earth-globe," generally refers to the sphere of the universe, and the *Bhagavatam* seems to make no direct reference to the earth as a small globe.

(*Vedic Cosmography and Astronomy VCA 3.C Planets as Globes in Space*)."

Prabhupada previously instructed his disciples to depict Varaha lifting a globe-shaped Earth; so should we lose all our faith in Srila Prabhupada because he got a detail wrong? Let's not be childish here. Yes, Srila Prabhupada is our glorious acharya and guide, but the Founder-Acharya of ISKCON taught us to follow sadhu, guru, sastra. On the question of the Earth, Srila Prabhupada directed us to the shastra. We therefore want to check the shastra with what guru says, and we want to also consider the understanding of the sadhus. We do this not with the intention of contradicting or diminishing Srila Prabhupada, but to make sure that we have got everything right and thereby reveal the actual truth and glory of *Srimad Bhagavatam* to the world. This is really what Srila Prabhupada wants.

(1.9) IS AN ACHARYA OMNISCIENT?

Srila Prabhupada's translation of *Srimad Bhagavatam* describes Earth (Bharata-varsha) as resting on the horizontal plane of Bhu-mandala, but Srila Prabhupada himself spoke as if he was living on a globe-shaped planet. So that disparity has to be discussed. Was Srila Prabhupada right in his translation, but wrong in his understanding of the Earth as a globe? That is an important question that we have to address. Ultimately everything has to be confirmed by shastra, and that was Srila Prabhupada's own stated position to Tamala Krishna when the question of a round or flat-Earth came up: 'take the version of Bhagavatam.'

The presentation of the flat-Earth obviously raises questions about Srila Prabhupada's understanding of Bharata-varsha's shape and location in relation to Bhu-mandala, which in turn raises the question about Srila Prabhupada's understanding of the very Earth that he flew around many times. We may question was Srila Prabhupada a victim of ignorance and illusion and that he did not understand the very nature of the *Srimad Bhagavatam* cosmology which he was personally translating? Could he possibly be in such a big illusion that he was also fooled by the asuric science into thinking he was on a globe when he was really on the great horizontal plane of Bhu-mandala. Why did Prabhupada not know this? If this understanding of the Earth is true, why is this important information regarding the Earth's situation not a central teaching of the parampara? Surely Srila Prabhupada would have been aware of the conclusions of the disciplic succession and stated it loud and clear. Such questions inevitably arise. The seeming deficiency in Srila Prabhupada may cause a crisis of faith in an immature follower who thinks that guru must perfectly know everything in every conceivable subject. Srila Prabhupada himself clearly rejected this conception of guru as the following conversation testifies:

Prabhupada: Yes. Pure devotee does not aspire anything, simply to be engaged in loving service to the Lord, wherever it may be. It doesn't matter. Jayadvaita: They know everything and they are perfect in everything. But sometimes, from our material viewpoint, we see some discrepancies. Just like we think that ... Prabhupada: Because material viewpoint. The viewpoint is wrong; therefore you find discrepancies.

Jayadvaita: So we should think that we have the defect.

Prabhupada: Yes. Acarya is explained, bhakti-samsanah: "One who's preaching the cult of devotional service, he's acarya." Then why should you find any discrepancy?

Jayadvaita: Because we see ... For instance, sometimes the acarya may seem to forget something or not to know something, so from our point of view, if someone has forgotten, that is an imperfection.

Prabhupada: **Then you do not understand. Acarya is not God, omniscient. He is servant of God. His business is to preach bhakti cult. That is acarya.**

Jayadvaita: And that is the perfection.

Prabhupada: That is the perfection. Hare Krishna.

Jayadvaita: So we have a misunderstanding about what perfection is?

Prabhupada: Yes. Perfection is here, how he is preaching bhakti cult. That's all.

Satsvarupa: Prabhupada, in one purport in the *Bhagavad-gita*, you write that a disciple of a bona fide spiritual master is supposed to know everything.

Prabhupada: Yes, if he follows the spiritual master.

Satsvarupa: But how could he know? ... What does that mean, "everything?"

Prabhupada: Everything means whatever his guru knows, he should know, that much. Not like God, everything. Within his limit, that's all. If he tries to understand whatever his guru has said, that much is "everything."

Otherwise, "everything" does not mean that we know everything, like God, like Krishna. That is not possible. If he regularly chants and

follows the regulative principles, follows the orders of guru, then he knows everything. That's all. Not very much ... knows everything, then what is the use of reading books when he knows everything? You cannot expect anyone to know like Krishna, everything.

Jayadvaita: Krishna says in the Bhagavad-gita that one who knows Him knows everything.

Prabhupada: Yes. Because if he knows that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then he knows everything. That's all. Not that he should know as Krishna. Yasmin vijnate sarvam eva vijnatam ... If he accepts Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Absolute Truth, then he knows everything. That is finish.

Jayadvaita: That knowledge itself is complete.

Prabhupada: Yes.

Satsvarupa: If there's some material information that such a person doesn't know, that's not really knowledge anyway.

Prabhupada: I did not follow.

Satsvarupa: If he doesn't know how many people live in ...

Jayadvaita: Just like Gaurakisora could not write. So it appeared that he did not, there was something that he did not know, although he knew Krishna.

Prabhupada: Yes. He knows everything. Otherwise how Bhaktisiddhanta accepted him as guru? He knows Krishna. That's all.

Naline-kanta: What the spiritual master says, that is also perfect?

Prabhupada: Yes. Because he does not say anything concocted. Whatever he says, he says from sastra and guru.

(April 8 1975, Mayapur, Morning Walk)

So here Srila Prabhupada rejects the idea that he is omniscient or all-knowing like Krishna. Srila Prabhupada explains that the perfection of guru is in teaching Krishna bhakti, not that he has to be an expert in all aspects of the material universe. Srila Prabhupada says here that the bona-fide guru repeats guru and sastra. So when Srila Prabhupada states that the Earth is round like a globe, should we instinctively assume that he must be repeating the standard version of guru and sastra? In the case of the shape and location of the Earth, we have to remember that when the discrepancy between the Vedic and modern conception was pointed out to Srila Prabhupada, he directed his disciples to take the *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s version (shastra). In this case, he did not present his own understanding as authoritative because by his own admission he was a layman in Vedic cosmology.

Srila Prabhupada was convinced of life in other regions of the universe and this is the essential point for us to take. Srila Prabhupada referred to these other areas as 'Earthly planets,' but according to *Srimad Bhagavatam* the humans live along the seven dwipas of Bhu-mandala. The dwipas are not planets floating throughout space; they are a series of islands that rest on the same horizontal plane of Bhu-mandala. The continents of our known Earth are surrounded by these other areas, but the fake pictures of the Earth as a lonely globe in outer space has completely confused and bewildered everyone about the actual situation of Earth, and how its land and oceans continue further along the flat or horizontal plane of Bhu-mandala.

On this point, we can also refer to an earlier conversation from 1976 wherein Srila Prabhupada did indeed speak of the Earth as a dwipa (island). As is the case with many subjects that Srila Prabhupada taught, we have to consider that Srila Prabhupada sometimes answered questions with seemingly contrary replies. In the following conversation, he was asked directly is the Earth round like a ball, or round like a plate? Here we have a direct answer that the Earth planet should be depicted as an island (dvipa) indicating the roundness of a plate, not a ball:

Satsvarupa: Srila Prabhupada, are the planets shaped liked balls or more like plates? Because it's, it's hard to understand, 'cause they're called dvipas, "islands." Their roundness is the roundness of a plate or like a ball?

Prabhupada: Which one?

Satsvarupa: The earth planet?

Prabhupada: If it is like a tree, then these things can be as dvipa, island.

Tamala Krishna: Wow. You know...

Prabhupada: Eh?

Tamala Krishna: The scientists are getting smashed to bits by your statements, Srila Prabhupada. This destroys their whole theory. Orbs, round spheres. I think that this Mayapura building, we must build a big planetarium in it.

Prabhupada: Yes. That, that I am going to do, Vedic planetarium.

(Morning Walk, March 18, 1976, Mayapur)

So here Srila Prabhupada is saying the Earth is round and flat like an island. Tamala Krishna Goswami shows his comprehension by saying this "destroys their whole theory of orbs, round spheres." Contrary to Rajasekhara dasa's insistence that Srila Prabhupada always spoke of the Earth as a globe, there are instances such as the conversation above when he spoke of the Earth as a dwipa. So at the least we can say that there is some ambiguity in Srila Prabhupada's reply to this question of the Earth's shape, and that also gives one room to at least consider the horizontal plane conception. It certainly does not leave room for Rajasekhara dasa's dogmatic insistence that we must present the Earth as a globe because "Prabhupada says." Especially important is Srila Prabhupada's own instruction to take the *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s version and he left it to his disciples to work out what that meant.

Though perhaps lacking in specific details, Srila Prabhupada in his books, lectures, and conversations, conveyed a few major and essential teachings regarding Vedic cosmology: namely, that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, that Krishna created the world in the manner described in *Srimad Bhagavatam*, and that there are other forms of life everywhere in both the material and spiritual universe. Accepting these essential points, we may have to second check, Srila Prabhupada's statements about the globe, but we should not take that as a sign that Prabhupada was ever bewildered by asuric science that presents a godless and impersonal world. Regarding the true nature of the Earth, Srila Prabhupada directed us time and again to the *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s literal description and indeed his own translation reveals the truth of the matter:

"Under no circumstances can the words of persons bewildered by the illusory energy of the Lord deviate the intelligence of those who are completely surrendered souls."
(*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 3.2.10)

I don't think Srila Prabhupada had a false ego in which he was unable to second check his understanding of the detail of things. In order to resolve the inconsistencies arising in regard to the Earth's shape, we've heard how Srila Prabhupada specifically instructed Tamala Krishna Goswami to "Find out from our side according to *Srimad Bhagavatam*." Why did he ask Tamala Krishna Goswami? Why did he not give the answer himself? Obviously, because he did not know the precise answer; thus Srila Prabhupada requested his disciples to research the issue! In quite a few of these later conversations he did not give his own understanding but repeated the same instruction: *Take the version of Srimad Bhagavatam*. The version of Bhagavatam obviously includes the commentaries made by the previous acharyas who provide the paramapara understanding.

Regarding the paramapara teachings on the nature of Bharata-varsha, it is not mentioned anywhere by the acharyas that Bharata-varsha is a globe in space. Such a conception was introduced by the Western translators of the Vedic texts who could not accommodate the idea of the Bhu-mandala, and thus imposed a foreign idea of a globe onto the Vedic concept of the bhu-mandala or bhu-gola which is just another name for the same thing. In a third part of this paper we will address Srila Prabhupada's own usage of the word bhu-gola. Ultimately the covering of the real feature of the bhu-mandala has to do with the progression of Kali-yuga and the withdrawal of Vedic knowledge from the materialistic people born in this age. As explained in the following analogies from *Srimad Bhagavatam*:

"In the evening twilight during the rainy season, the darkness allowed the glowworms but not the stars to shine forth, just as in the age of Kali the predominance of sinful activities allows atheistic doctrines to overshadow the true knowledge of the Vedas."
(SB 10.20.8)

During the rainy season the roads, not being cleansed, became covered with grass and debris and were thus difficult to make out. These roads were like religious scriptures that brahmanas no longer study and that thus become corrupted and covered over with the passage of time."
(SB 10.20.16)

The correct understanding of the Vedic cosmos thus appeared momentarily lost. Nonetheless, Srila Prabhupada's instruction to construct a Vedic Planetarium based on the cosmology of *Srimad Bhagavatam* may be taken as an indication of Krishna's desire to revive and reveal this information to the world once again - hence the importance of the Temple of Vedic Planetarium. However, if the TOVP management simply continue to try and convince everyone that they are indeed

living on a ball in space, the whole purpose of the TOVP will be lost as people will remain in blissful ignorance about the true expanse of the Earth they live on. Since Sukadeva Goswami describes Jambudwipa to the north of our Earth, is it not the duty of the TOVP to seriously investigate the possibility of an expanded Earth concept? Rather than glibly dismissing the idea, and favouring instead the ball in space (with Jambudwipa conveniently relegated to other dimensions), perhaps those responsible for the TOVP should take seriously what Sukadeva Goswami is describing. Or is the whole description mythological after all? If the TOVP simply reinforces the already existing false construct of reality, pilgrims to the temple will remain bound to the prison planet conception; thus, rather than gaining freedom by acquiring faith in Krishna's actual creation, they will remain fearfully bound to the prison planet illusion that is perpetrated and governed by their asuric rulers.

(2.0) DETERMINING WHAT IS REAL ON THE BASIS OF SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM: A LESSON FROM TAMALA KRISHNA GOSWAMI

"Completely rejecting all religious activities which are materially motivated, this Bhagavata Purana propounds the highest truth, which is understandable by those devotees who are fully pure in heart. *The highest truth is reality distinguished from illusion for the welfare of all.* (SB 1.1.2)

Unravelling the globe deception is part of distinguishing reality from illusion for the benefit of all. Canto 1, chapter 5, verse 11 of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* predicts that this literature will bring about a revolution in the impious lives of this world's misdirected civilization (*janatagha-viplavo*). The Mayapur Vedic Planetarium is based on the cosmography of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and was one of Srila Prabhupada's main projects to counteract the prevailing materialistic world-view of life and the cosmos. The horizontal plane concept of *Srimad Bhagavatam* is certainly a revolutionary concept that brings transcendental peace to the mind by revealing the truth of Krishna's creation, and thereby exposing the lies and deceptions of asuric science and government.

Upon researching evidence for the flat-Earth, and the faking of images of the globe from outer space, it quickly becomes obvious that we are living in an artificially manipulated reality of stupendous proportions, and one must be prepared for a major shock to the system. Listening to the many arguments in favour of the flat-Earth, it may come as a great shock to discover the extent of how our present experience of reality has been manipulated by a very clever ruling class. Srila Prabhupada himself referred to the present world governments as asuric (demonic).

Since the TOVP is a key element in the mission bequeathed by Srila Prabhupada, the depiction of Earth within that Planetarium is meant to vastly impact those who live on the Earth. This is meant to be a show-down between the Vedic and asuric description of life and the universe. The horizontal plane model changes everything because it shows the true design of Krishna's creation and thus exposes the colossal lie that the asuras have perpetrated for the last few hundred years (in changing from the geo-centric to the heliocentric system) and particularly since the 1960's with the advent of NASA and the mind-boggling deception it has perpetrated on the world.

The vast majority of people have been taught to scoff at the flat-Earth idea as primitive and unscientific, and have been indoctrinated otherwise into believing the pseudo-science and fake images that support the globe model. Rajasekhara dasa has presented a few conversations from Srila Prabhupada in which he also seems to scoff at the flat-Earth concept; but as we have seen, the issue of the Earth's shape and location is more complex than a few cursory comments from Srila Prabhupada may indicate. The recent expose of NASA's so-called images of Earth by members of the flat-Earth society not only uncovers the greatest hoax in history, but opens up a whole new understanding and appreciation of *Srimad-Bhagavatam's* horizontal Earth concept. Distinguishing reality from illusion means to see through the eyes of scripture in order to avoid being misled by the contemporary asuras who are bewildering everyone with false ideas and images of the creation, and thereby creating a false construct of reality that supports atheistic and impersonal explanations for the origin and purpose of life.

A doubt in the horizontal plane model obviously arises when one considers the very possibility and likelihood of covering the real feature of the Earth. Could the asuras be really so bold and expert as to fake the very idea of Earth itself? Actually, this potency has more to do with the arrangement of maya: due to the progression of Kali-yuga, Vedic knowledge is withdrawn and maya engages various agents to bewilder everyone about the nature of reality. For example, by the

process of mental speculation and psudeo-science (Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton) one can easily become bewildered about what is real and what is unreal regarding the Earth's true nature. Most people have never conducted their own research into the validity of such ideas such as heliocentricity and gravity, but simply accept the standard version of reality. More recently, by the usage of photography and television (*tell-lie-vision*), the asuras can make anything appear possible; and what to speak of more advanced technology such as holographic images that are yet to come. Bear in mind, by the grace of maya, asuras are also expert in creating illusion. Consider the following lila between Varahadeva and Hiranyaksa as they fought for the Earth:

"O descendant of Kuru, Brahma, the most independent demigod of the universe, accompanied by his followers, came to see the terrible fight for the sake of the world between the demon and the Personality of Godhead, who appeared in the form of a boar.
(SB 3.18.20)

PURPORT

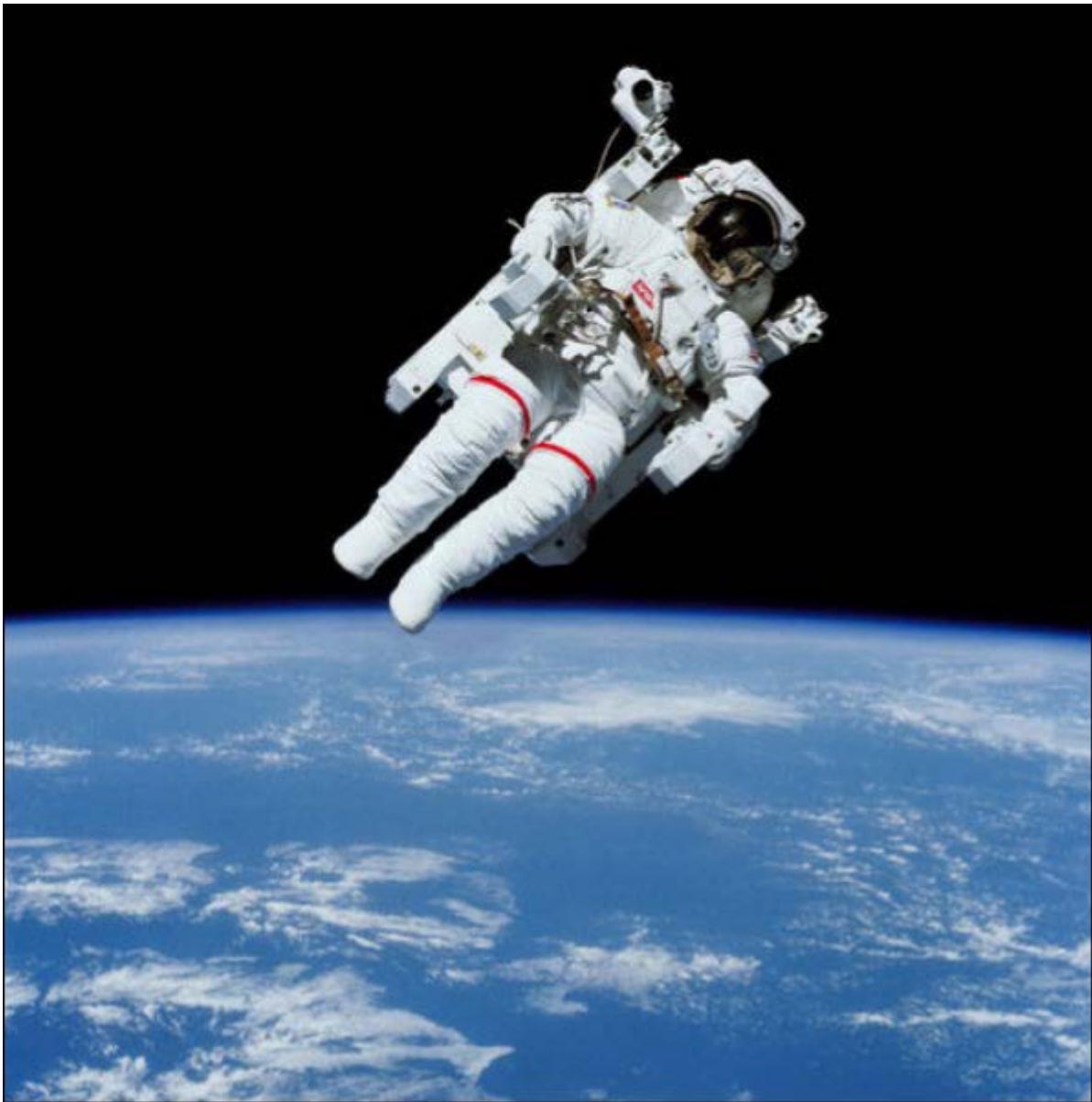
The fight between the Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the demon is compared to a fight between bulls for the sake of a cow. The earth planet is also called go, or cow. As bulls fight between themselves to ascertain who will have union with a cow, there is always a constant fight between the demons and the Supreme Lord or His representative for supremacy over the earth."



"Lord Brahma continued: My dear Lord, there is no need to play with this serpentine demon, who is always very skilled in conjuring tricks and is arrogant, self-sufficient and most wicked."

(SB 3.18.20)

Here Brahma refers to Hiranyaksa as *maya-vinam* - skilled in creating illusions. Bear this in mind the next time you see astro-nots in space: are they actually in space looking down upon the globe earth, or have they simply created the illusion of being in space using clever special effects and other tricks in studios here on Earth? Why not investigate the truth of the thing?



"The demon, however, employed many conjuring tricks against the Personality of Godhead, who is the Lord of yogamaya. At the sight of this the people were filled with alarm and thought that the dissolution of the universe was near."
(SB 3.19.17)

The words used here are *athorudhasrjan mayam yoga-mayesvare harau* , meaning that although the demon Hiranyaksa could also create maya or illusions (*athorudhasrjan mayam*), his illusions could not defeat Lord Hari who is described as *yoga-maya-isvara* , the Lord of illusion. In the above verse Krishna is glorified as *yoga-mayesvare harau*. We should understand that same *yoga-mayesvare* is presently appearing in the form of the Hare Krishna maha-mantra in order to again save the world from the Hiranyakas who are bent on destroying it:

"*kali kale nama rupe krsna avatara
nama haite haya sarva jagat nistara*

In this Age of Kali, the holy name of the Lord, the Hare Krsna maha-mantra, is the incarna-

tion of Lord Krsna. Simply by chanting the holy name, one associates with the Lord directly. Anyone who does this is certainly delivered."
(*Caitanya Caritamrta, Adi-lila*, 17.22)

As the sun rises dispersing darkness, so the sound incarnation of Godhead (Hare Krishna mantra) is presently dispersing all illusions, deceptions, and untruths that have upheld the asuric system of government for the last few thousand years.

"Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion—at that time I descend Myself.

To deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I Myself appear, millennium after millennium."

(*Bhagavad-gita As It Is* 4.7-8)

Through the medium of *Srimad Bhagavatam* and the Temple of Vedic Planetarium, the Lord of all mystic yoga is dispersing the asuric illusions that cover the true nature of the Earth. If one listens without prejudice, the flat-Earth revolution can also be appreciated as a movement directly inspired by Krishna to help usher in the truths of a new Vedic era.



Varahadeva kills the demon Hiranyaksha and saves the Earth (Bhu-mandala)

Let's go back now to July 1977 in order to learn a lesson from Tamala Krishna Goswami about how to best present the Earth of *Srimad Bhagavatam* in the new Temple of Vedic Planetarium. Although struggling to find an answer as to how people can sail and fly around the world, as well as being perplexed by the so-called images from outer-space that depict Earth as a globe, Tamala Krishna Goswami's integrity, and faith in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*'s description of Earth, is displayed by his willingness to wait for a suitable explanation that was consistent with the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*'s description, not that he favoured continuing to present the Earth as globe-shaped Earth simply because it appears to match our present experience of reality. In other words, he was willing to challenge that very model of reality which is being presented to us from non-Vedic sources:

Tamala Krishna: Our question was mostly coming out of how to draw what the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is saying. We're not supporting any kind of mundane argument, nor do we have any doubt in *Bhagavatam*. We're simply trying to understand the *Bhagavatam*...

Prabhupada: *Bhagavata* is there. You try to understand.

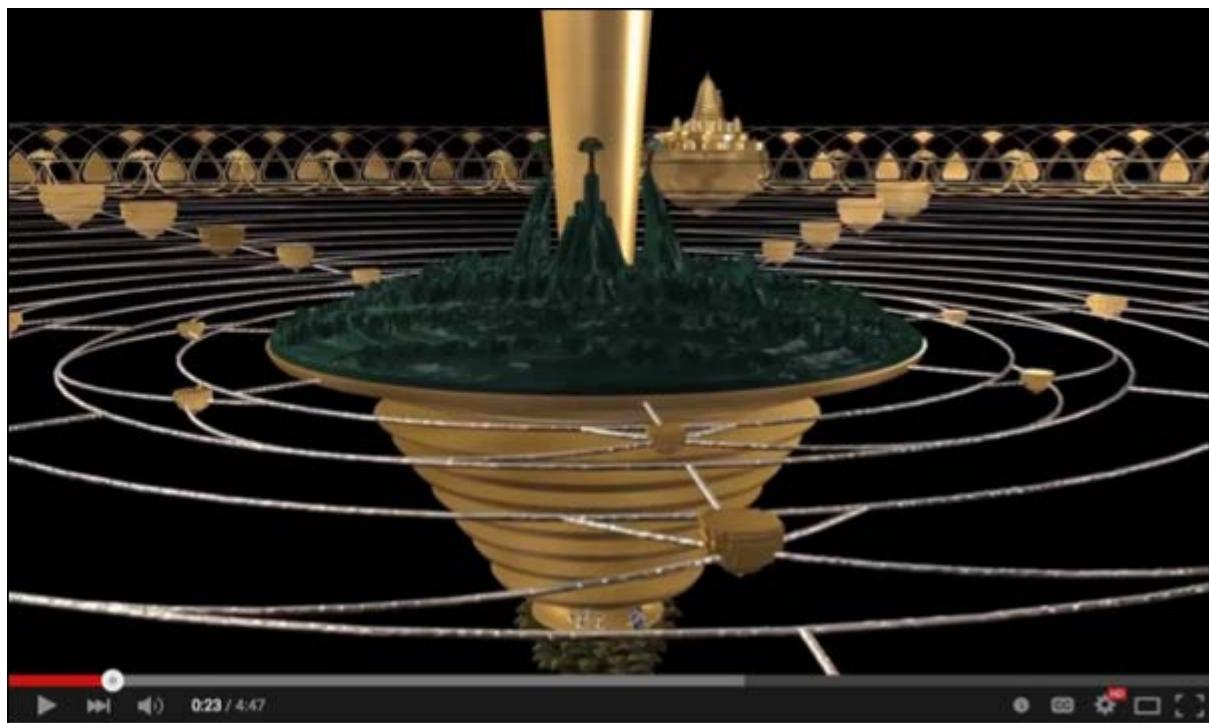
Tamala Krishna: We're not siding with the preconceptions that we had before. We'll throw them away. We're trying to accept the *Bhagavatam*. Everything has to be according to the *Bhagavatam*.

(Conversation about *Bhu-mandala*, July 5, 1977, Vrindavana)

In this same spirit, I think the followers of Srila Prabhupada should be courteous and open to listening to the many quite fascinating arguments in favour of the flat-Earth, which at least are consistent with what *Srimad-Bhagavatam* describes. These arguments, of course, would have to be adjusted (were necessary) in line with the complete Vedic understanding of things.

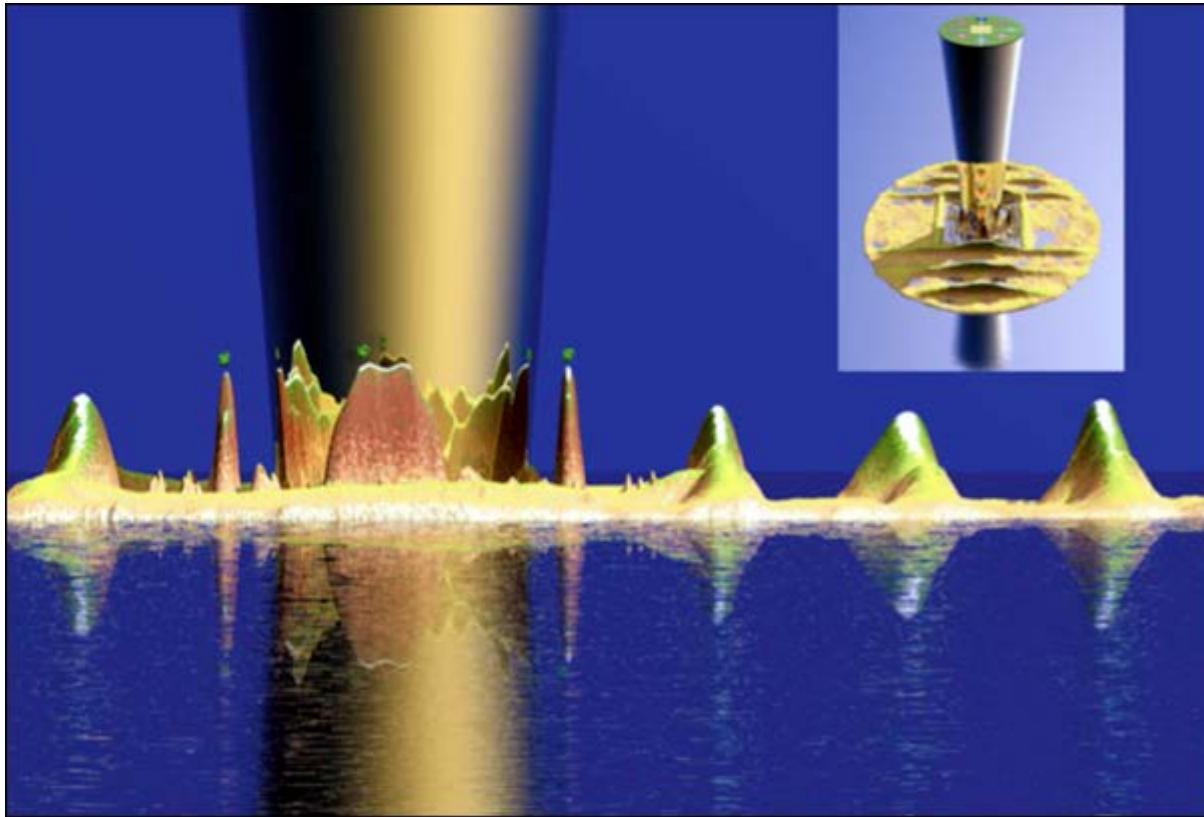
(2.1) THE FLAT-EARTH AND THE TEMPLE OF VEDIC PLANETARIUM EXHIBITIONS

Contrary to Rajasekhara dasa's claim that the horizontal plane model is some kind of schismatic and heretical idea, it is ironic that the horizontal plane model will be the one exhibited in the main dome of the Temple of Vedic Planetarium which itself is based on sketches that were first prepared and presented to Srila Prabhupada in 1977. This is a screen shot from the official TOVP animation called *Vedic Planetarium Chandelier* which depicts Earth's position on the central island of *Bhu-mandala* called Jambudwipa:



Here we see the 800,000 mile round circular island of Jambudwipa with the golden Mount Meru in the centre. In this video, Antardwipa dasa (present head of the TOVP cosmology) narrates the following: "Here we can see Jambudwipa the central island of *Bhu-mandala*, and Bharata varsha is situated on the southern side of that." In other words Bharata-varsha (of which our Earth is one section) is situated on the same horizontal plane as the rest of Jambudwipa. You won't see a globe-shaped Earth depicted here for the simple reason that *Srimad Bhagavatam* does not describe Bharata-varsha as a globe.

Below is another image by a renowned disciple of Srila Prabhupada called Sadaputa dasa who pioneered much of the research on Vedic cosmology within the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. The image below shows a side profile of Jambudwipa:



In the small inset picture we again see the round island of Jambudwipa with Meru in the center. Bharata-varsha or what we call Earth is one section of this land-mass. The main picture shows a side profile of Jambudwipa surrounded by the salt water ocean. Meru is the golden mountain to the left of center of the picture and at the base are side profiles of the main mountains that divide Jambudwipa into nine separate varshas (Bharata-varsha which contains our Earth is one of the nine varshas or sections of Jambudwipa). My apologies to the reader who may not be familiar with these images and what they represent, but this has more to do with the failure of our society to educate its members about the actual shape and location of Bharata-varsha to the rest of the Bhu-mandala or Earth sphere. However, it should be clear, that the concept of the horizontal plane model of the Earth is not some deviant idea, but rather, it is completely consistent with the *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s description.

Despite accurately depicting the *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s description of Bharata-varsha's relationship to Jambudwipa in various animated presentations, both Sadaputa dasa and the current TOVP management are going with the idea that Bharata-varsha is simultaneously manifest as a globe in space (the so-called Earth planet). Thus the TOVP proposes a secondary exhibition which will depict the Earth as a globe. I shall state some further arguments against this secondary exhibition in a later paper, but a few facts should be mentioned here. Nowhere in the verses of *Srimad Bhagavatam* or indeed any of the Puranas is the place name *Bharata-varsha* described as a globe or a planet. With the exception of Srila Prabhupada, none of the acharyas in their commentaries on the Fifth Canto of the *Srimad Bhagavatam* describe Bharata-varsha as a globe. Bharata-varsha is consistently understood to be simply a small section of a much larger area called Bhu-mandala which is a huge horizontal plane crossing the universe.

The attempt by the current TOVP cosmology department to present the Earth as a globe is based primarily on selected extracts from secondary literature such as the *Surya Siddhanta*, but the acharyas in their commentaries on the Fifth Canto do not reference such books to support the purported idea that Bharata-varsha is a globe. In any case, it is impossible that the authorized Vedic sages quoted in texts other than *Srimad Bhagavatam* could be describing something different from the *Srimad Bhagavatam* itself which is the essence of all the Vedic scriptures. *sarva-vedithasanam saram* (SB 1.3.41). I have debated previously with representatives of the TOVP that the references to such books are simply based on interpolations of the texts to support a preconceived and ill-conceived idea that the Earth is indeed a globe in space when *Srimad Bhagava-*

tam itself gives no such description. Perhaps in another paper we can present some of the details of that debate.

My argument is not, therefore, with the main exhibition in the central dome of the TOVP, but with the introduction of the globe concept in the secondary exhibition. The result of this globe model in a secondary exhibition will be that the actual location of Bharata-varsha to Jambudwipa as displayed in the main exhibition of the TOVP will be rendered practically meaningless. A secondary exhibition of the 'globe-Earth' wherein the main 'scientific preaching' will take place, will effectively obscure the true nature of Bharata-varshas location to the rest of Jambudwipa; and Jambudwipa will thus (again) be conveniently disposed to being in another dimension. The reality of the Earth which *Srimad Bhagavatam* reveals will remain hidden; namely, that the Earth continues on the same plane into vast areas of land occupied by other living entities. The central dome exhibit will thus appear to the uneducated public as merely a spectacular display of Vedic mythology with no practical relevance to their 'real' situation on the so-called Earth globe.

The secondary exhibition depicting Earth as a globe also completely ignores the Vedic history which states that only 5,000 years ago, the Pandavas were ruling this vast area of Jambudwipa from their capital city in India. If Earth is a globe, then where did the rest of Jambudwipa suddenly go? It makes no sense at all. Does anyone at the TOVP actually believe this history? As yet, none of the spokesmen can answer this simple question. The real fact is that Bhu-mandala is the Earth, not Bharata-varsha; Bharata-varsha is only one tiny section of the great Earth circle that stretches across the universe. We've just been cut off from the rest of the plane.

So although claiming to present *Srimad Bhagavatam*, the present head of the TOVP cosmology department will not actually defend the horizontal plane or flat-Earth conception of *Srimad Bhagavatam* in their scientific preaching. The horizontal plane model involves a complete revolution in understanding and perception which unfortunately those involved in the TOVP do not appear to have made. Rather, they prefer to defend the present concept that Earth is a globe which has neither scientific justification (see section 2.4 of Sailing to Jambudwipa), and is perpetuated using only pseudo-science, hoax images, and videos supplied by NASA's special effects department.

The horizontal plane on which Earth rests continues to the next varsha of Jambudwipa; indeed it stretches in all directions to the shell of the universe. This means that our world continues for much, much further than people are being told, and the information that there is more land mass all around us is being denied them. It is the duty of the TOVP to inform people of this reality. But whose version of the Earth do the TOVP believe in more - Sukadeva Goswami, or NASA?

If the proposed presentation of Bharata-varsha as a globe goes ahead and is introduced into the TOVP exhibitions, it must only be to appease modern science to some degree. My feeling is the management of the TOVP don't want to rock the boat by having to present to the rest of the world that the Earth of *Srimad Bhagavatam* is part of a massive horizontal plane, and thus coming into a huge contention with the world's governments, education systems, military/space agencies, etc. - well basically the rest of the world! The TOVP management are perhaps afraid of rejecting the globe concept for fear of looking foolish in the eyes of the world. The idea of the TOVP thus engaging in a Varahadeva-style epic battle with Nasasura (NASA) to expose their globe hoax is unfortunately not likely to happen any-time soon; sadly, the present TOVP cosmologists are themselves victims of NASA's propaganda.

Although the main dome of the TOVP will thankfully display the *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s literal description, the secondary exhibition will unfortunately display the 'so-called' situation of the Earth as a globe in space. Perhaps, somewhere down the line the truth of the matter will be made apparent. Ironically, as the TOVP seeks to defend the globe in space idea, the rest of the world is waking up to the huge deception that NA\$A has pulled ever since the first fake moon-landings of 1969-72). The internet is practically over-run with amazing people from all over the world exposing this colossal globe-Earth hoax and the pseudo-science supporting it. The proof of the flat-Earth or horizontal plane model is such a monumental discovery that it can shatter peoples faith in the credibility of scientists and governments practically overnight. Whereas we should be leaders in presenting the new Earth paradigm, the proposed secondary presentations for the new TOVP will simply reinforce the false Earth deception. Our main preaching base to the world will become reactionary rather than revolutionary.

We may concede that the introduction of a globe into the TOVP may also be a sincere attempt to justify Srila Prabhupada's statements that the Earth is a globe. However, in order to do this, those responsible for making the argument have to make concocted, interpolated, and convoluted arguments based on secondary sastra that depart fundamentally from the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. In my correspondence with a TOVP spokesman I found that they could not maintain consistency and integrity trying to reconcile interpolations from secondary sources with the straightforward description given in the primary source of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. The result I found to be a mammoth speculation on the part of the current TOVP presentation. *But that of course is my opinion*.

Since Srila Prabhupada himself wanted the TOVP based on *Srimad Bhagavatam*, one has to consider would Srila Prabhupada himself be satisfied with presenting a globe model in the TOVP since it can be otherwise presented that the rotating globe in space model is not only at variance with the *Srimad Bhagavatam's* description of Bharata-varsha, but is not even scientifically verifiable (see section 2.4 of Sailing to Jambudwipa). Aside from demonstrably fake pictures and videos of a round globe, there is otherwise no way to observe or measure a curvature on the Earth. One has to consider, therefore, would Srila Prabhupada approve of the horizontal plane model of *Srimad Bhagavatam* if that could be demonstrated to conform to the *Srimad Bhagavatam's* description, as well as being adequately able to explain day and night, seasons, eclipses, etc.

As mentioned Srila Prabhupada himself didn't give direct explanations for these phenomena, but instructed his disciples to study the *Srimad Bhagavatam* and provide adequate explanations. We cannot rule out a horizontal plane model from this research directive given by Srila Prabhupada. We must also bear in mind that Srila Prabhupada wasn't interested in cheap popularity from prevailing materialistic conceptions of cosmology. Srila Prabhupada wanted the TOVP presentations based on *Srimad Bhagavatam* regardless of what the modern scientists say and that disregard may well include rejecting the globe idea. It must be emphasised, however, that Srila Prabhupada did wish to present a model that scientifically explained the above phenomena. The horizontal plane must also be able to adequately explain day and night, seasons, etc., and this will require a collective effort to garner the relevant information.

My feeling is that those responsible for the exhibitions in the TOVP lack a certain faith and realization in the *Srimad Bhagavatam's* literal description; otherwise if one accepts *Srimad Bhagavatam's* straightforward description that to the north of our known continents and oceans is another area called Kimpurusha-varsha leading onward to Mount Meru, *then why would one continue to present the Earth as a globe?* Where is Kimpurusa-varsha, Hari Varsha, and the 800,000 mile high Mount Meru situated on the globe? *Srimad Bhagavatam* is a huge paradigm shift that even those responsible for the TOVP have not yet made. *Therein is the problem!* It seems those responsible for the exhibitions are somewhat lacking in the faith or realization of the thing being described. Yes, the TOVP can present a visual depiction of Bharata-varsha's place on the Bhu-mandala in videos, pictures, and other exhibits, but it seems they lack the realization to appreciate that this means our Earth extends along a horizontal plane and is surrounded by other inhabited lands. Due to either lack of faith or realization there is a reluctance to defend the *Srimad Bhagavatam's* model and all that entails. Instead, the policy is to take the safe option of defending the existing globe model which is nothing but a product of the speculations of Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton. Some simply research will reveal that none of the so-called science supporting the globe rotating in space can actually be supported. Like Darwin's theory of evolution, the whole idea of the globe is one huge speculation that is propped up and maintained by propaganda alone.

To defend the globe exhibition in the TOVP, its defenders may keep insisting that "Prabhupada said it was a globe," but Srila Prabhupada's last word on the issue was to take *Srimad Bhagavatam's* version and the Bharata-varsha in *Srimad Bhagavatam* is definitely not a globe. As a result of nearly fifty years research on the subject, the situation of the Earth on the Bhu-mandala is becoming very clear. It is not a globe.

It is interesting that although Srila Prabhupada had himself requested the help of other Vedic astronomers to help in the conceptualization of the planetarium's depiction of the universe, he was not satisfied with the understanding among the Vedic astrologers that he spoke to. The problem was that no one took the *Srimad-Bhagavatam's* description *literally*:

Tamala Krishna: No, he doesn't. He never thought about it. No one reads the Bhagavatam as

a scientific book, Srila Prabhupada. That's the point. Except for Your Divine Grace, they are thinking it's story, "It is stories."

Prabhupada: Yes, they do not believe.

Tamala Krishna: No. And therefore no one takes it seriously. Modern people don't take it seriously.

Prabhupada: There was a Gosai. He was reading Caitanya-caritamrta. So the description of the planetary system there is. He used to say to his audience, "Actually these things are not there. These are imaginary descriptions." He was such a fool. So the whole world has taken like that, "symbolic, imagination."

Tamala Krishna: And he was lecturing on Caitanya-caritamrta. I think you mentioned that one of your Godbrothers once said to you, "You really believe that there is such a place, Krishnaloka, Vaikunthaloka?" He was himself...

Prabhupada: Bon Maharaja did not believe. No... Nobody ever thought of it.

Tamala Krishna: You are the only representative, the lone representative of religion left on this planet, Srila Prabhupada.

(*Conversation with Astronomer, April 30 1977, Bombay*)

But if we are to take the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* literally, and not simply as some 'story-book,' then the description clearly points to a flat-Earth or horizontal plane concept with the rest of Jam-budvipa somewhere to the north of our known oceans and continents. This means having to accept that the image of the globe-Earth as it has been presented to us is false, and that there are actually greater areas of land in the vicinity of Earth's oceans that expand for millions of miles along the horizontal plane of Bhu-mandala.

The TOVP's primary business is to enlighten people about the topmost place which is Goloka Vrndavana. Second to that is to enlighten people about their location and status within the Vedic Cosmos. It is the duty of the TOVP to inform people of the huge land masses that surround our known Earth area. Let us not continue the deception, but rather strive courageously to reveal the truth of Krishna's creation.

Apart from these few criticisms on the theory supporting a globe exhibition in the TOVP, I would like to say that the TOVP is an extremely important project for the spiritual awakening of people throughout the world; and regardless of differences in opinion, my sincere appreciation is extended to all involved for all the hard work and effort in the construction of this magnificent Temple.

CONCLUSION

Our main source of evidence for Srila Prabhupada's understanding of the round/flat-Earth discussion must come from his final discussions on the Vedic Planetarium of July 1977 when the topic was first seriously being researched and discussed. Srila Prabhupada, on that occasion, did not come to an unequivocal answer regarding the *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s description of Earth as round or flat, but requested further research into the matter. The issue was never resolved and the question thus remains open for discussion.

We must also bear in mind that for a pure devotee of the Lord like Srila Prabhupada, whether the Earth is round or flat is not the most essential thing; the important thing is to serve Krishna in any circumstance. However, Srila Prabhupada wanted the TOVP to be built in order to present the cosmology of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, and so the question of the Earth's shape is an issue for the many reasons already discussed above.

The Earth Is Not a Globe, Part Three

BY: MAYESVARA DASA

Jul 24, 2016 — IRELAND (SUN) —

DEFINITIONS, DESCRIPTIONS, AND TRANSLATIONS OF THE NAMES BHU-GOLA,
BHU-MANDALA, AND BHARATA-VARSHA

SECTION 1.0 — INTRODUCTION

With reference to the relevant verses in Srimad Bhagavatam, the following paper will show conclusively that the description of Earth presented by the great Vedic sage, Sukadeva Goswami is not that of a globe-shaped planet floating in space. It will demonstrate, on the contrary, that the continents of our known Earth area are but a small part of a vast Earth plane known as the Bhu-mandala. In the course of this paper, we hope to impress upon the reader the rather startling declaration that the images of Earth as a globe in space, presented by such agencies as NASA and the European Space Agency, are not real images of the real Earth.

In [**Part One of Modern Blasphemy, The Earth is Not a Globe**](#), we presented a description of the horizontal plane model of the Earth as described in Srimad Bhagavatam. In [**Part Two**](#) we looked at some of the issues involved in the disparity between the Srimad Bhagavatam's description of the Earth as a vast continual plane, and the modern conception of Earth as a globe in space. In this final part or *Part Three*, we will look at some specific quotations from Srila Prabhupada regarding his translation and explanations of the names Bhu-gola, Bhu-mandala, and Bharata-varsha as 'Earth planet' or 'Earth globe.' The main points discussed in this paper are as follows:

- 1) A definition and description of Bhu-gola
- 2) A definition and description of Bhu-mandala
- 3) A definition and description of Bharata-varsha
- 4) An explanation of how the Earth disappeared
- 5) A proposal for how the Earth will reappear

SECTION 1.1 — COMMENTARIES ON THE FIFTH CANTO COSMOLOGY

This third paper may also be considered a response to Rajasekhara dasa's article, "[**Refuting the Video Presentation, 'Bhu-mandala Versus the Bhu-gola'**](#)", and specifically an article called "[**Total Demolition of Mayesvara's Bogus 'Flat Earth' Theory**](#)", in which Rajasekhara dasa once again springs onto stage like Monty Python's Spanish Inquisition to level further charges of heresy against blasphemers of the holy globe:

The most distasteful part of Mayesvara's 38-page article is his **cunning deception**, when he says: "it is not mentioned anywhere by the acharyas that Bharata-varsha is a globe in space". However, contrary to Mayesvara's **diabolical attempt at deception**, each and every one of the previous Acharyas have clearly stated that the Earth Is a globe.

Rajasekhara dasa then goes on to present various quotations from Srila Prabhupada and other acharyas that do indeed speak of an Earth globe. Unfortunately for Rajasekhara dasa, he has not taken the time to study what Srimad Bhagavatam itself defines as Bhu-gola; nor what the acharyas understood as Bhu-gola; nor why translators of the acharyas works are themselves confused about what Bhu-gola means, and have thus mistakenly rendered Bhu-gola as Earth globe.

The translations provided by Rajasekhara dasa are from an ISKCON publication called "[**Commentaries on the Fifth Canto Bhagavatam Cosmology by Vaishnava Acharyas**](#)" (edited by Dhanavir Goswami a disciple of Srila Prabhupada). Rajasekhara dasa presents the following compilation of quotations in support of the idea that the Earth is a globe:

Commentary of Shrila Shridhara Swami (SB.5.16.1) C.p1 In the previous chapter, while narrating the story of King Priyavrata, mention was made of the divisions of the **globe into islands**.

Commentary of Vijayadvaj Tirtha (SB.5.16.1) C.p2 The knowledge of the **world-globe** and its particulars is illustrative of Sri Narayana's greatness and hence is essential for liberation.

Commentary of Viraraghava (SB.5.17.1-3) C.p9 Thus having heard the episode of Priyavrata and his progeny, King Pariksit asks about the particulars of the division of islands etc. which were only briefly mentioned. Earth's length (extent) and the **world (globe)** etc.

Commentary of Viraraghava (SB.5.17.4) C.p14 After having been questioned, the sage-son of

Badrinarayana replies that, "as the forms of the Lord are infinite, it is impossible to deal with them exhaustively by mind or words. Still, I promise to explain in more detail the **earth globe**."

By simply reading these translations alone, it would seem evident that Rajasekhara dasa has won his case for the so-called Earth globe. However, when one looks at the actual details behind Sri-mad Bhagavatam's definition and description of Bhu-gola itself, as well as following the detailed commentary of the acharyas that help explain this description, it is quite clear that all concerned are not describing Earth as a small globe-shaped planet floating in space. The confusion in translation arises because the acharyas are commenting on the description of Bhu-mandala, otherwise known as Bhu-gola (see section 1.2 below), which has been translated as 'Earth globe,' but is not in fact the assumed Earth globe of 24,900 mile circumference; it is rather the great Earth 'circle' of 4 billion miles diameter. In sections 1.2 and 1.3 with reference to the specific verses from Sri-mad Bhagavatam describing Bhu-gola/Bhu-mandala, we will prove conclusively that the description of Bhu-gola does not correlate in any way with the so-called Earth globe. In Section 1.4, we shall prove conclusively that the description of Bharata-varsha also does not correlate in any way with the assumed Earth globe.

The actual description of the Earth in Srimad Bhagavatam is that of a vast circular plane 4 billion miles in diameter. In other words, the Earth described in Srimad Bhagavatam, does not curve in the shape of a globe, nor does it float in space; rather, the Earth is described as a continual plane that crosses the center of the universe. It is, in fact, the largest feature in the Vedic universe, which is perhaps the reason why one of Bhumi's names is Mahi (the great). In the central region of this massive plane are seven islands and oceans measuring 202,800,000 miles upon which the human beings and other varieties of life live. Bharata-varsha (where the continents of our own Earth are situated) is just a tiny area on this vast landscape.

We should mention from the outset, that in his enthusiasm to find translations featuring the words Earth-**globe**, Rajasekhara dasa conveniently overlooks how the translator uses the word 'Earth-**circle**' interchangeably with the Earth-**globe**:

I wish to know comprehensively the details of the **Earth-circle** by extent, characteristics, and names. (Comment by Viraraghava on SB 5.16.1-3)

The words "yata etat" recall the divisions created by Priyavrata in the **Earth-circle**. The purport is: the seven seas were formed by the mud scooped (dug) out by the sharp wheels of Priyavrata's chariot. The mud which was scooped out settled solidly as boundaries and became the seven islands. (Comment by Vijayadhvaja Tirtha on SB 5.16.2)

In the commentary below, the words Earth 'globe' and Earth 'circle' are used interchangeably in the same paragraph to describe the same thing:

Thus having heard the episode of Priyavrata and his progeny, King Pariksit asks about the particulars of the division of islands etc., which were only briefly mentioned. Earth's length (extent) of the world (**globe**) etc...Their details such as name, measure, identifications, etc., and their differences were briefly indicated by you, the glorious one. I wish to know comprehensively the details of the Earth **circle** by extent, characteristics, and names. (Comment by Viraraghava Acharya, SB, 5.16.2)

The question thus arises: Does Srimad Bhagavatam describe the Earth as a circle, or a globe? Moreover, is the description of the Earth in Srimad Bhagavatam correlate to the modern conception of the Earth globe as a 24,900-mile planet floating in space? In other words, is it describing the same thing as the image and description of the Earth that we are all familiar with looking at, such as the images of Earth provided by NASA? The obvious think to do would be to look at the description of the so-called Earth globe provided by Sukadeva Goswami and see if they match up. On the basis of Srimad Bhagavatam we will question the authenticity of such images as the one below (figure 1) reputedly taken from the Apollo 17 spacecraft in 1972 as American astronauts (or astro 'norts'), supposedly made their way to the moon; a trip to the moon which according to Srila Prabhupada, never in fact, took place.



Figure 1

In SB 5.16.2, King Pariksit asks Sukadeva Goswami to describe in detail, the measurements, names, and characteristics of the Earth (Bhu-mandala). The measurements (manataha) and characteristics (lakshanataha) are, of course, essential in any description of a thing being described; and as it turns out, the Bhu-gola being described is not, in fact, a so-called Earth globe of 24,900 mile circumference supposedly floating in dark space. Clearly, unmistakably, and unquestionably, the fifth Canto is *describing* the great cosmic Earth circle called Bhu-mandala or Bhu-gola, a horizontal plane of four billion miles diameter that crosses the center of the universe dividing it into upper and lower sections. Incredibly, or should I say, *foolishly*, Rajasekhara dasa simply grabs a few quotes from an English translation of the acharyas commentaries wherein the Sanskrit words Bhu-mandala and Bhu-gola are rendered into English as Earth 'globe.' Without checking to see if, the 'measurements' and 'characteristics' of the thing being described actually match up with NASA's description of 'Planet Earth,' Rajasekhara dasa simply assumes that it must be the case. As it turns out, there is no comparison whatsoever between the two versions.

The translator of the book *Commentaries on Fifth Canto Bhagavatam Cosmology* is himself uncertain of what is being described since he constantly switches from the word 'circle' to 'globe.' As we shall see in Sections 1.2 and 1.3 neither Bhu-mandala nor the seven islands of Bhu-mandala are globe-shaped, and anyone familiar with the layout of the Bhu-mandala landscape would not use that term. The image below (figure 2) shows the inner portion of Bhu-mandala with its series of seven islands and oceans that radiate in concentric circles for a distance of 202,800,000 miles, and bearing no resemblance whatsoever to the size, shape, and characteristics of the continents of our known Earth area.

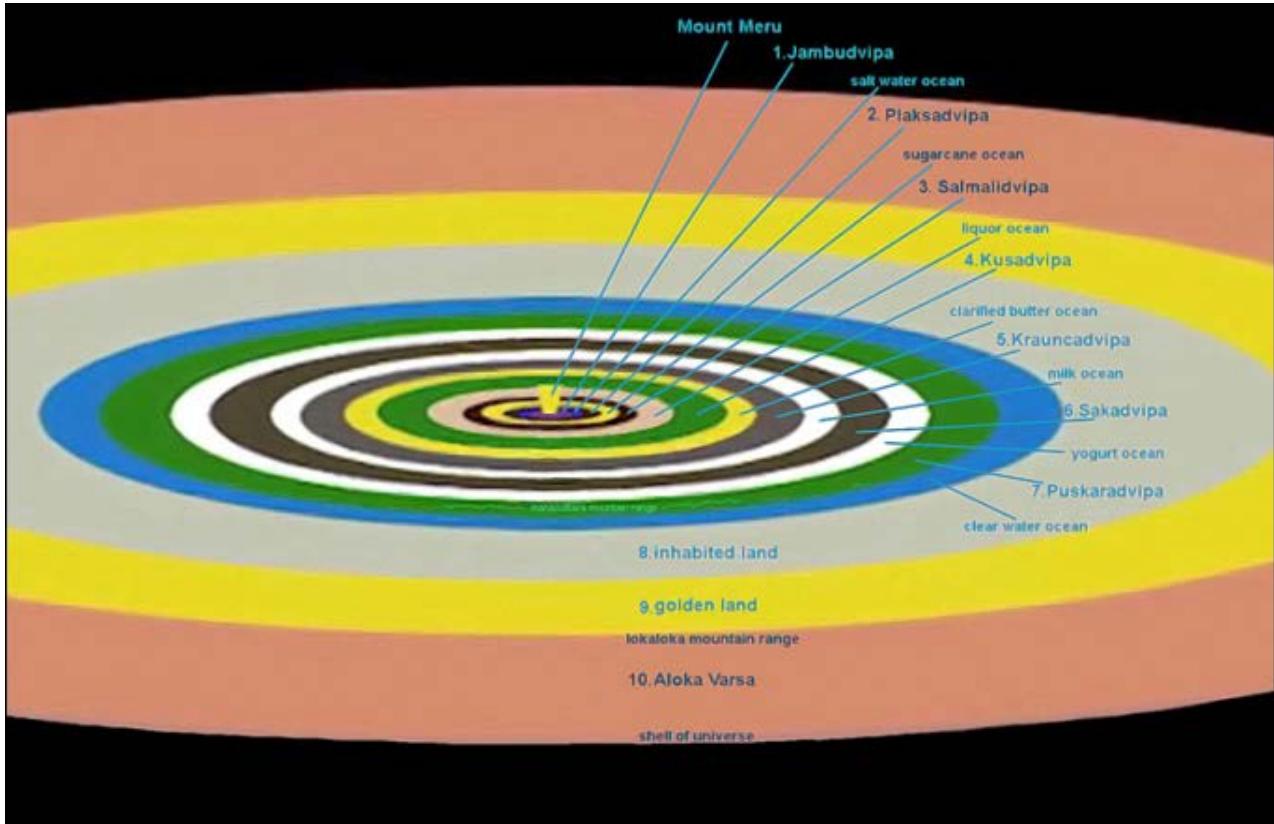


Figure 2

Surprisingly, Danavir Goswami, the editor of the book, has allowed the translation of the words *Bhu-gola* and *Bhu-mandala* as Earth 'globe,' despite Sukadeva Goswami's clear description of the *Bhu-mandala* as a vast circular plane measuring four billion miles in diameter. Ironically, the cover image of the book depicts the flat-Earth by showing the inner portion of *Bhu-gola* with the seven islands and oceans lying flat on a horizontal plane with the fixed pole star in the center above it, and the other stars circling around it:

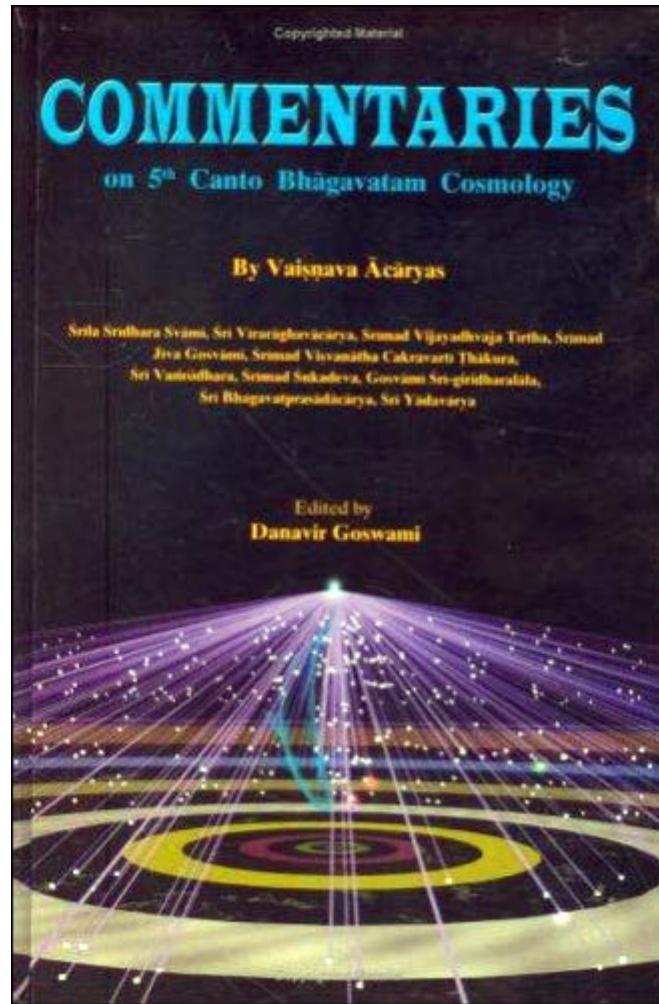


Figure 3

We shall look later in more detail at the seven islands and oceans of the Bhu-gola, but before we do that, we need to first define our terms according to the description given in Srimad Bhagavatam. What are the Sanskrit names 'Bhu-gola' and 'Bhu-mandala' actually referring to?

Upon gaining a proper definition and description of the terms Bhu-gola and Bhu-mandala in Sections 1.2 and 1.3, we will be in a better position to assess whether the name Bhu-gola is indeed referring to the assumed Earth globe, or whether it is describing a completely different conception of the Earth. Contrary to Rajasekhara dasa's assertion (but with the notable exception of Srila Prabhupada) neither the Srimad Bhagavatam, nor the previous acharyas in their commentaries on the fifth Canto, ever describe the Earth as a 24,900-mile globe-shaped planet floating in space. A contentious purport by Sri Vamsidhara Acarya to SB 5.20.38 is often presented as proof for a small globe Earth, and we shall discuss this commentary presently. In addition, Srila Prabhupada's many statements about the Earth being 'a globe' and 'a planet' have to be considered in the light of the later discussions in June/July of 1977 when the first maps of the Bhu-mandala were actually presented to Srila Prabhupada. During these discussions on the Bhu-mandala, the glaring disparity between the Puranic and modern depictions of the Earth were eventually pointed out to Srila Prabhupada by his disciple Tamala Krishna Goswami. Srila Prabhupada responded by asking him to investigate the issue; but the issue was never resolved. We have discussed this episode in detail in as we discussed in [Part Two of Modern Blasphemy](#).

The disparity between these the Vedic and modern world-views still needs to be resolved; and this will obviously require an informative discussion. Like any topic under discussion in Krishna consciousness, it requires a mood of genuine devotion to Krishna so that true knowledge and realizations can be imparted from one sincere devotee to another:

"The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are fully devoted to My service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss from always enlightening one another and conversing about Me." (BG 10.9)

Discussions in Krishna consciousness require, at least, a preliminary level of respect for others who may have a different understanding of certain subjects from one's own. Srila Prabhupada stated that the verses from Srimad Bhagavatam can be seen from 'many angles of vision.'

"Therefore, I recommend you to read books more and more and try to understand the subject matter from different angles of vision and be always discussing it with your godbrothers" (Letter to Bhargava, Los Angeles, 13 June 1972)

That does not necessarily mean that everyone's angle of vision is correct; but at least friendly and respectful exchanges should be honored in pursuance of the Srimad Bhagavatam's stated goal, which is to ascertain the highest truth of life for the welfare of all:

"This Bhagavata Purana propounds the highest truth, which is understandable by those devotees who are fully pure in heart. The highest truth is reality distinguished from illusion for the welfare of all. Such truth uproots the threefold miseries." (SB 1.1.2)

Rather than taking Srila Prabhupada's advice to engage with other devotees of Krishna in an amiable discussion of his books, and respecting that there will be 'different angles of vision,' it is unfortunate that Rajasekhara dasa delivers his counter-arguments with such sanctimonious fervour and ill-will. In the words of Rajasekhara dasa:

"...All my articles on this subject have been in support of the version presented by Shrila Prabhupada and the Vaishnava Acharyas, I am not presenting my own speculations, as Mayesvara does. I am simply repeating the words of the previous Acharyas.

The basic problem with Mayesvara das is everything he says is his own mental concoction – it is his own personal 'take' on the 5th canto – which he foolishly proclaims is the real 'as it is' version. Mayesvara's version is not supported by any acharya in Vedic history – so please be warned! As I said in a previous article – 'milk touched by the lips of a serpent simply becomes poisonous'. Those who hear the outrageous speculations of Mayesvara can become contaminated, very similar to those who read the mayavadi commentaries. Such persons may lose faith in Shrila Prabhupada and the previous Acharyas and that is the most harmful effect of listening to gross speculators like Mayesvara and other 'flat earth' protagonists.

My advice is simply take shelter of Shrila Prabhupada and the previous acharyas and be safe from offensive speculations on the subjects like the Shrimad Bhagavatam, which are far beyond the conception of ordinary human beings like Mayesvara das and other 'flat earth' believers. It is also my contention that all those who promote the 'Flat Earth' doctrine are diametrically opposed to the teachings of Shrila Prabhupada and the previous Acharyas and are thus committing the most serious offense by promoting publicly their false doctrine, for which there is no redemption in this lifetime. To contradict the Acharya in a public forum, simply based on one's own pea-sized brain and completely limited sense perception, is definitely suicidal."

It is simply astonishing that someone with so little comprehension of the subject, can speak with such self-assured priggishness. If the self-righteous Rajasekhara dasa would simply follow the *description* of the Bhu-gola, it is patently obvious what the acharyas are describing. Descriptions *describe* things. A description enables one to recognize the characteristics of a particular item or subject, which then enables one to either compare similar things, or to differentiate between dissimilar things. In *The Description of Jambudwipa* (title of the sixteenth chapter of the Fifth Canto) there is nothing describing Bharata-varsha as a 24,900 mile planet Earth in space. There is nothing in the original *description* or in the subsequent commentaries that correlates or compares to the descriptions provided by modern scientists for the so-called globular Earth planet floating in space; and as we shall see, none of the acharyas refer to such an entity in their commentaries, nor do they refer to secondary texts such as Surya Siddhanta to make a claim for such an entity. There is *one* purport (which we shall discuss presently) by Sri Vamsidhara Acharya to SB 5.20.38 which is often touted as proof of a small Earth globe, but is actually nothing of the sort. Otherwise, the facts speak for themselves. Rajasekhara dasa, please *read the description* of the Bhu-gola presented by Sukadeva Goswami, as well as the subsequent commentaries upon the original text by the acharyas coming in disciplic succession. They do not describe the Earth (Bhu-gola) as a small globe floating in space; and the Bhu-gola is otherwise

described as a huge cosmic plane crossing the universe.

Rajasekhara dasa completely ignores the fact that as early as text five of the 16 chapter, the acharyas are already talking about a landscape of hundreds of thousands of miles for the island of Jambudwipa, and that is only for the first and smallest island of 'the Bhu-gola' (the so-called Earth-globe in question):

Comment by Sridhara Swami: Kuvalayam means Bhu-mandala which is itself a lotus. Its sheaths are seven islands, among them, the first sheath is Jambudwipa, one lakh yojana (100,000 yojanas or 800,000 miles) wide (extant = area).

Comment by Vijayadhvaja Tirtha: This is one lakh [100,000 yojanas or 800,000 miles in extent.

Comment by Jiva Goswami: Though the word "niyuta" literally means one million, somehow it denotes one lakh (100,000), being proximate to that.

Comment by Visvanatha Cakravrati: Vai-definitely, Kuvalaya-earth's field, that itself is a lotus; its sheaths are its regions. The inner sheath of the seven islands, the visible Jambudwipa is one lakh yojana (100,000 yojanas) [800,000 miles wide, i.e. in area].

In this way, all of the acharyas describe the plane of Bhu-mandala beginning with a description of the central island of Jambudwipa, then gradually moving out across the vast expanse of land. They are describing a landscape (Bhu/Earth) that crosses the universe; not a tiny globe in space. Unlike planets such as the sun and moon, which are separated by an ocean of space, these seven islands and oceans are resting on the Bhu-mandala plane, not floating in space, or separated from one another by empty space. According to the description they simply form a continual plane across the center of the universe. We shall discuss this point in more detail later under the heading: *Are the Sapta-dwipa Islands in Space?* (see section 1.3)

Jambudwipa is the first and central island on this Earth plane and is described as being circular like a lotus leaf, and measuring 800,000 miles in area (SB 5.16.5). In the center of this island is an 800,000 mile high mountain called Meru (SB 5.16.7). To the south of the island is Bharata-varsha (where the continents of our Earth are located) which has an overall area of 72,000 miles (SB 5.16.9; SB 5.16.6), not the assumed 24,900 miles of the so-called globe. The Earth globe according to NASA depicts, North and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, Arctic and Antarctica and has a circumference of 24,900 miles. But an area of 72,000 miles is already three times the size of the so-called globe, and that again is only one small area of the total landscape of Jambudwipa. To the north of Bharata-varsha is an 80,000-mile high mountain that separates Bharata-varsha from its neighbor Kimpurusha-varsha (SB 5.16.9). The Jambu tree itself is 8,800 miles in height and radius (almost the same distance from Moscow to Sydney in Australia, or one third the size of the so-called globe). Where is such a tree on the globe? Nothing in this description compares with the assumed globe of 24,900 miles. An actual satellite image from outer space showing Bharata-varsha's position on the Earth plane would look like this:

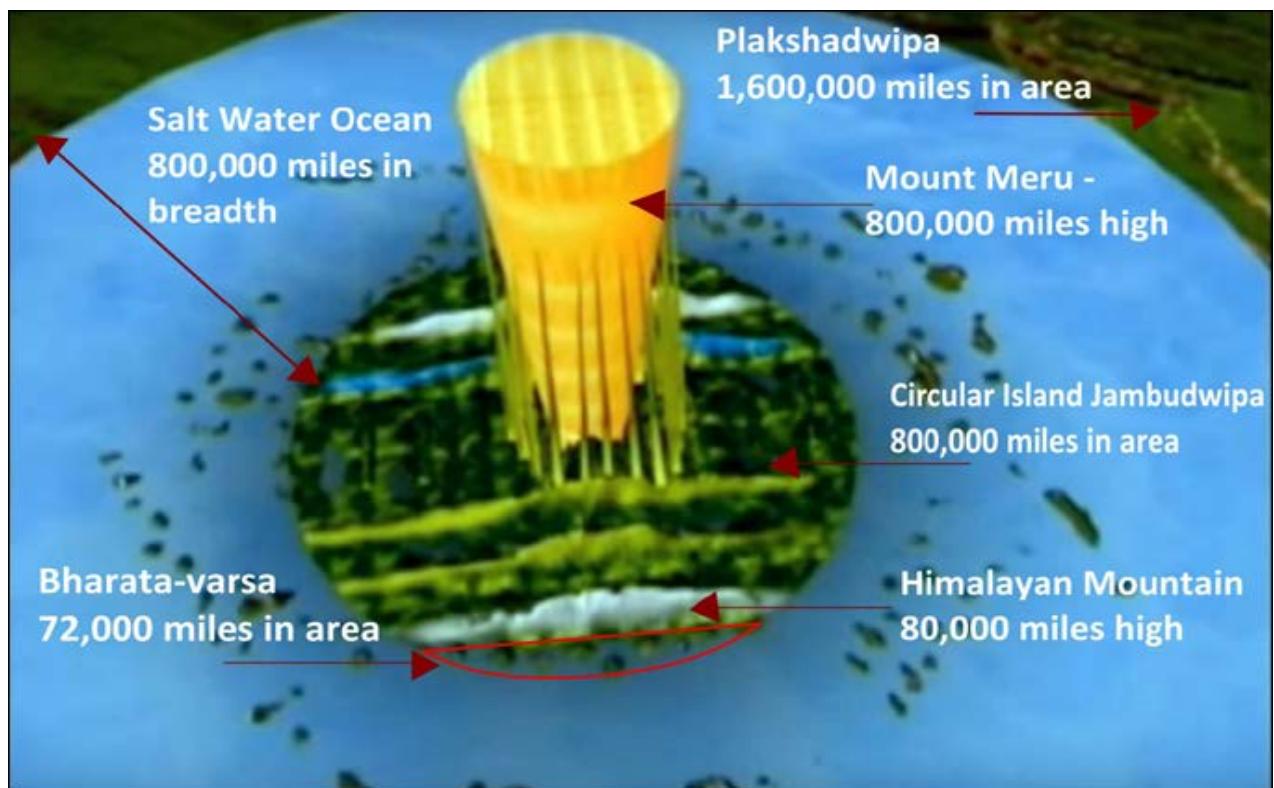


Figure 4

The plane of Bhu-gola continues further. Surrounding Jambudwipa is an ocean 800,000 miles wide (SB 5.20.2). After crossing Jambudwipa's salt water ocean one comes to Plakshadwipa which is 1,600,000 miles wide (SB 5.20.2). Plakshadwipa is surrounded by the Ikshu ocean and after crossing that one comes to Shalmalidwipa which is 3,200,000 miles wide (SB 5.20.7). This series of seven islands and seven oceans cover a total area of 202,800,000 miles and that is only a portion of the entire Bhu-gola. In this way, over the course of several chapters Sukadeva Goswami describes the incredible landscape of the flat-Earth or Bhu-gola which has an overall measurement of 4 billion miles.

For those who think and argue that the Bhu-gola in question is correlate with the Earth globe of popular conception, then where are all these features on such a globe? What has any of this got to do with the assumed 24,900 mile globe floating in space? All the measurements and distances from one place to another are carefully detailed by Sukadeva Goswami. Where is the measurements for the 24,900 mile space ball? Did Sukadeva Goswami just overlook a small detail? No! When Sukadeva Goswami and the acharyas talk about the Earth (Bhu-gola/Bhu-mandala) they are *not* talking about a globe in space. They are describing a circular plane that stretches across the universe, and they detail the measurements and features of all seven islands and oceans that stretch for hundreds and millions of miles forming the central area of the great Earth disc.

Considering the huge measurements of the seven islands and oceans of Bhu-gola, the concentric circular pattern of the islands, as well as the peculiar nature of the oceans surrounding each island, one can definitely conclude that the description of the Bhu-gola bears absolutely no resemblance to anything that we have been presented as a description of the so-called Earth planet or globe. One may think Sukadeva Goswami's description of the Earth is all very fantastical, and one may not believe or accept the description provided by Sukadeva Goswami as a factual reality, preferring instead to believe in the space ball presented by NASA; but one will not find evidence of such a globe in Srimad Bhagavatam. It simply doesn't exist. The acharyas, therefore, faithfully follow the description provided by Sukadeva Goswami with no mention anywhere of a 24,900 mile Earth globe floating in space. The acharyas commentaries faithfully follow the description of the seven islands and oceans comprising the great Earth plane or Bhu-gola, which is the great Earth 'circle,' not some tiny Earth 'globe.' With the exception of Srila Prabhupada, even the most recent commentators included in the book have not referred to the Earth in these terms.

As described below in sections (1.2) and (1.3), the innumerable references to Bhu-gola and Bhu-mandala found in the acharyas comments are referring to the Earth 'circle' of Bhu-mandala, or to the circular features of the islands upon the plane of Bhu-mandala. They certainly do not refer to some assumed globe. The translation of Bhu-mandala/Bhu-gola as Earth 'globe' is, in fact, categorically wrong. So now, I will support the claims made in the introduction by looking at the specific texts that define and describe the terms Bhu-gola, Bhu-mandala, and Bharata-varsha.

SECTION 1.2 — DEFINING OUR TERMS: DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTION OF BHU-GOLA

The correct definition and understanding of the word Bhu-gola is of major importance in clarifying whether the Earth described in the Vedic Puranas rests on an extended horizontal plane, or whether it is a round globe floating in space. The word Bhu-gola has been translated in various places to mean 'round Earth,' or globe, and is often cited as an example of how the ancient Vedic scriptures concur with modern science in describing the Earth as a globe. Srila Prabhupada also conveyed this understanding:

Prabhupada: Jagad-anda means universe. Brahmanda or jagad-anda. Anda. Anda means it is egg-shaped, round, egg-shaped. Therefore it is called anda, brahmanda. Bhu-gola. Gola means round. I have heard that before the science, the people were under the impression that this world is square. Is it not?

Devotees: Flat.

Prabhupada: Flat. Flat, yes. But in the Vedic shastra, millions of years ago it is mentioned: bhu-gola. Gola means round. Just see. And these rascals say that formerly people were not so intelligent. They are intelligent because they are thinking that this world is flat. And those who have spoken millions of years ago, "It is round," they will have less intelligence. Just see. Bhu, gola. Gola means round. Bhu-gola. Similarly, jagad-anda. Anda means round, just like egg. Anda means egg. Jagad-anda. This universe is egg-shaped. And we can see also, the sky is round. This is the wall of this universe. (Bhagavad-Gita Lecture 1.43, London, July 30, 1973)

Again:

Prajapati: One scientist, Galileo, he was making all kinds of inquiries into saying that the earth is round and so many things, and the church of that day, the rascal priests, they put him to death because he was saying things that were not in the scriptures. Since that time, especially the last hundred years, the scientists are... Prabhupada: No, the thing is that it is the government's duty to see that nobody is rascal, either the scientist is rascal or the priest is rascal. There must be real understanding. That is government's duty. Otherwise, if the priest says, "The scientist speaking against religion; therefore he should be hanged," so that is not good government. Government must see that whether the scientist is speaking the truth. That sense must be there. Yes, world is round. That is fact. Goloka. In Vedic literature it is Bhu-gola, jagad-anda. These words are there. We can see also it is round, jagad-anda. The universe is round. And Goloka. Or Bhu-gola. Bhu-gola, the Earth is round. So in the Vedic literatures... Therefore their knowledge is also imperfect because they do not refer to the Vedic literatures. It is already there. Bhu-gola. Bhu means the Earth; gola means round. It is already there. And the geography's called, according to Sanskrit, it is called Bhu-gola. Long, long ago, before Galileo. (Morning Walk, December 9, 1973, Los Angeles)

In these two conversations, Srila Prabhupada is clearly advocating the idea that the Earth described in the Vedas is not flat, but is round and globe-shaped. Srila Prabhupada uses the Sanskrit term Bhu-gola to make his point. The term Bhu-gola is also found in Srimad Bhagavatam. *Bhu* is one of the many Sanskrit names for Earth, and *gola* means round. Like many Sanskrit words, however, the word *gola* has multiple meanings and can simply mean circle, disk, or sphere, as well as globe or ball. A circle is not necessarily a globe (think of a hula-hoop, a frisbee, a plate, or a roundabout). So does Srimad Bhagavatam describe Earth as round like a roundabout, or round like a globe or football? As we shall see presently with reference to the relevant texts from Srimad Bhagavatam, the Bhu-gola is actually just another name for the Bhu-mandala, the great

cosmic circle that divides the universe into its higher and lower sections. And Bhu-mandala is most definitely round like a roundabout on a horizontal plane; not round like a globe in space. Confusion arises because the modern 'round' globe conception of a 'planet' Earth has become superimposed unto the Vedic conception of Bhu-gola or Bhu-mandala. And, as we shall also see presently, Bhu-gola does not in fact refer to Bharata-varsha at all (where the assumed Earth-globe is meant to be situated). Bharata-varsha is only just a very small area on the great horizontal plane of Bhu-mandala, and it is not anywhere described as a globe shape floating in space. Bharata-varsha lies flat on the plane of Bhu-mandala at the southern end of Jambudwipa (see section 1.4)

Without researching the actual facts, Rajasekhara dasa simply finds an English translation of the commentaries of the acharyas that renders the Sanskrit words Bhu-gola or Bhu-mandala as 'Earth globe' or 'round Earth,' and complacently believes that the argument in favour of a round Earth should end there without any further discussion. But what does Bhu-gola actually mean? Is it referring to NASA's space ball of 24,900-mile circumference, or is it taking about a 4 billion mile circular plane that crosses the center of the universe? Certainly, anyone translating the commentaries of the acharyas from Sanskrit to English can translate that *bhu* means Earth, and *gola* means globe, but does such a translation accurately represent the factual description of Bhu-gola? Moreover, do those who simply read the English translation know what the original verses of Srimad Bhagavatam are referring to? For the most part, the answer is no. The Vedic concept of Bhu-gola or Bhu-mandala is still (at this point) beyond most people's conception and faith. A follower of Srila Prabhupada may, therefore, generally find it easier and preferable to stick with the idea that Earth is a globular planet floating around in dark space; but that is only at the cost of totally disregarding the actual description of the Earth given by Sukadeva Goswami. True, Srila Prabhupada, also rendered the words Bhu-gola and Bhu-mandala as 'round Earth,' and 'globe,' and seemingly applied the term to the world we live in. However, as soon as the disparity between the Vedic and modern conceptions of the Earth were eventually pointed out to Srila Prabhupada, he immediately instructed his disciples to investigate the issue with the stipulation that they take the description in Srimad Bhagavatam as the final authority (see [**Part Two of Modern Blasphemy**](#)).

Actually, the topic should not remain a controversy if we simply take Srila Prabhupada's own instruction, which is to follow the version of Srimad Bhagavatam. So how does Srimad Bhagavatam describe Bhu-gola? This one verse from Srimad Bhagavatam should put to rest any further contentions that Bhu-gola is describing NASA's so-called Earth globe with a circumference of 24,900 miles. In Canto 5, Chapter 16, verses 1-2, Maharaja Pariksit requests his guru Sukadeva Goswami to describe the measurements and qualities of the seven islands and oceans of Bhu-mandala:

"King Pariksit said to Sukadeva Gosvami: O brahmana, you have already informed me that the radius of Bhu-mandala extends as far as the sun spreads its light and heat and as far as the moon and all the stars can be seen.

My dear Lord, the rolling wheels of Maharaja Priyavrata's chariot created seven ditches, in which the seven oceans came into existence. Because of these seven oceans, Bhu-mandala is divided into seven islands. You have given a very general description of their measurement, names, and characteristics. Now I wish to know of them in detail. Kindly fulfil my desire." (SB 5.16.1-2)

This is a very specific question requesting 'measurements' and 'characteristics', and the name Bhu-mandala is particularly invoked, along with its characteristic central feature of seven islands (sapta-dwipa) and seven oceans (sapta-sindava). In reply to this question, Sukadeva Goswami states that there is no end to the Lord's material energy, but that he will try to explain the principle regions of Bhu-gola. Here the name Bhu-gola is used synonymously with Bhu-mandala:

"The great Rsi Sukadeva Gosvami said: My dear King, there is no limit to the expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead's material energy. This material world is a transformation of the material qualities [sattva-guna, rajo-guna and tamo-guna], yet no one could possibly explain it perfectly, even in a lifetime as long as that of Brahma. No one in the material world is perfect, and an imperfect person could not describe this material universe accurately, even after continued speculation. O King, I shall nevertheless try to explain to you the principal regions, such as Bhu-goloka [Bhuloka], with their **names, forms, measurements and various symptoms.**" (Sb 5.16.4)

bhu-golaka-visesam—the particular description of Bhuloka; nama-rupa—names and forms; mana—measurements; laksanatah—according to symptoms; vyakhyasyamah—I shall try to explain.

How do we know the name Bhu-gola is used synonymously with Bhu-mandala? We know this because, as requested, Sukadeva Goswami goes on to explain the measurements and characteristics of the seven islands of Bhu-mandala up to the point of Lokaloka Mountain. These seven islands of Bhu-mandala were originally created by King Priyavrata as described earlier in Srimad Bhagavatam:

"When Priyavrata drove his chariot behind the sun, the rims of his chariot wheels created impressions that later became seven oceans, dividing the planetary system known as Bhu-mandala into seven islands." (SB 5.1.31)

After describing these seven islands and other features of Bhu-mandala up to the point of Lokaloka mountain, Sukadeva Goswami summarizes his description in SB 5.20.38. Therein he states that learned scholars who are free from mistakes, illusions, and propensities to cheat, have calculated that the distance from Mount Meru to Lokaloka is 125,000,000 yojanas (1 billion miles), which is a quarter of the overall size of **Bhu-gola**. Here again the word **Bhu-gola** is used synonymously with Bhu-mandala. The Sanskrit and English synonyms for this part of the verse are: panca-shat-koti—500,000,000 yojanas; gainitasya—which is measured at; **bhu-golasya**—of the planetary system known as Bhugolaka; turiya-bhagah—one-fourth; ayam—this; lokaloka-acalah—the mountain known as Lokaloka (SB 5.20.38).

The image below shows an aerial view of Bhu-mandala showing the concentric circular feature of the seven islands and oceans, and also indicating the distance from Mount Meru to Lokaloka Mountain as one billion miles which is a quarter of the overall diameter of the Earth plane or Bhu-gola in question. This image appeared in the original edition of Srila Prabhupada's Srimad Bhagavatam translation, and was sanctioned by him personally; but the image has unfortunately, and without explanation, been omitted from the latest 18-volume edition of Srimad Bhagavatam:

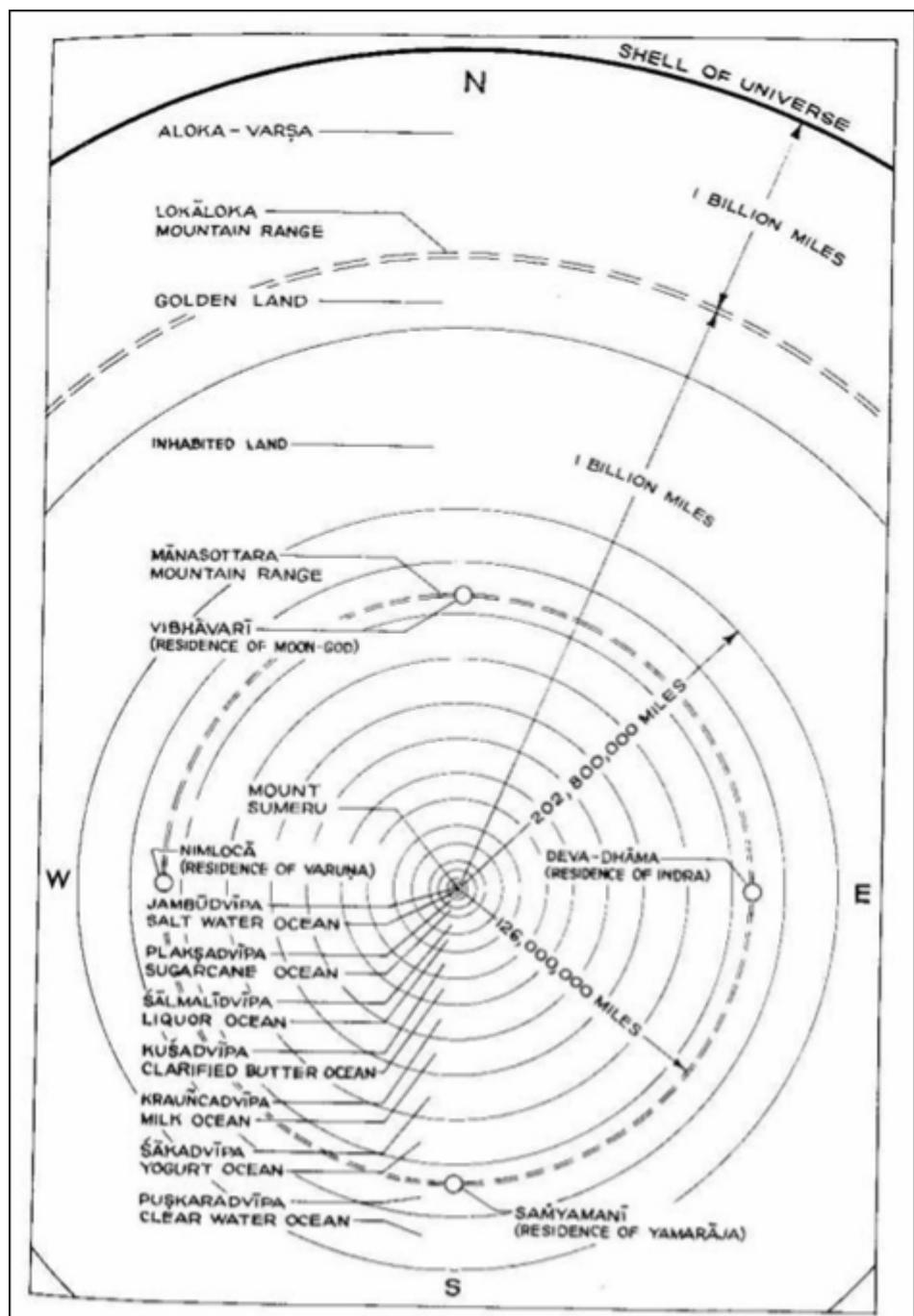


Figure 5

In the verse quoted above (SB 16.20.38), not only is Sukadeva Goswami clearly invoking the name Bhu-gola to mean the plane of Bhu-mandala, but he also gives the measurement from Mount Meru (the centre of Bhu-gola or Bhu-mandala) to Lokaloka mountain as 1 billion miles (or a quarter of the overall diameter of the universe). Now since this one area of Bhu-gola is 1 billion miles which is a quarter of the overall diameter of the universe, the Bhu-gola cannot possibly be referring to a so-called Earth globe floating in space with an alleged circumference of only 24,900 miles. In addition, since the seven islands and their surrounding oceans stretch for hundreds of millions of miles across the vast horizontal plane of the Bhu-mandala, they cannot be referring to the continents of our Earth. In other words, it is simply wrong to think that the word Bhu-gola is referring to, or describing, a small round globe in space such as that presented by NASA in their photos of Earth from so-called outer space. Such a description of Earth simply does not exist in the Srimad Bhagavatam, and as we have argued in previous papers, does not exist at all. The continents of Earth are resting on the flat horizontal plane of Bhu-mandala. The Earth is not, in fact, a globular planet floating in space.

So in both of these usages of the name Bhu-gola, Sukadeva Goswami uses it interchangeably with the name Bhu-mandala and gives its measurements in billions of miles. Bhu-gola is, therefo-

re, just another name for Bhu-mandala. Thus, Bhu-gola cannot possibly be equated with, or identified as the assumed Earth globe of 24,900 miles circumference. No description of a small Earth globe supposedly representing Bharata-varsha is actually given in any of the 18,000 verses of Srimad Bhagavatam or in any other Purana. Such an entity simply does not exist.

Out of thousands of commentaries on the Fifth Canto that faithfully follow Sukadeva Goswami's description of Earth as a huge cosmic circular plane, one purport to SB 5.20.38 by Vamsidhara Acharya, is often touted as proof of the small globe-Earth. I wish to emphasize again the figure of one purport, since there is no second purport anywhere mentioning such a thing. In any case, everything about this particular commentary is incongruous and contrary to the statements of the previous acharyas and even contradicts earlier commentaries by Vamsidhara himself about the huge measurements of Bhu-gola and Bharata-varsha. The argument is extremely convoluted and does not follow any Puranic description. For example, Jambudwipa is described as square, when Sukadeva Goswami describes it as round. Bharata-varsha is then described as triangular when all the *Puranas* agree that it is bow-shaped due to its position on the southern circular coastline of Jambudwipa. Bharata-varsha is then described as 450 yojanas or 3,600 miles, whereas Sukadeva Goswami gives the measurement of 72,000 miles, which is three times the size of the so-called Earth globe. Vamsidhara then says that the 'big Earth' is above the star belt, which again has no basis in shastra. The Earth is quite clearly below the star belt.

It appears that Vamsidhara is attempting to reconcile the description of Earth in Srimad Bhagavatam with what he refers to as 'the other small spherical dimension mentioned in the works on astronomy.' To do this he quotes that the Earth rests like a mustard seed on the hood of Ananta and infers that the shape of the mustard seed implies the spherical shape. However, as we shall see below in part iii of this first section, the verses from Srimad Bhagavatam clearly describe Ananta lifting the huge Bhu-mandala, which is neither small nor the round shape of a mustard seed. Bhu-mandala is a huge lotus-like formation that crosses the horizontal plane of the universe. Therefore, the comparison of the Earth to a mustard seed in this example is obviously not to demonstrate the shape of the Earth, but rather to glorify the incredible strength of Ananta-sesha who can hold such a massive weight on his head like a small seed. Vamsidhara then says that the story of Kardama Muni (wherein the word Bhu-golam is used) confirms the fact [of a small round Earth]. But as we will see in part ii of this section, the Bhu-golam mentioned in the story of Kardama Muni is the same (one and only) Bhu-gola described by Sukadeva Goswami as already presented above, and certainly does not describe a small Earth globe floating in space.

In any case, for all the commotion over a single purport, Vamsidhara does not even mention the idea that the Earth in question is actually floating in space. The only thing that is presented in the purport is a vast reduction in size of all the measurements of the Vedic cosmos. In short, this one purport by Vamsidhara is a complete anomaly, and certainly contradicts the original statements of both Sukadeva Goswami and the other acharyas who otherwise faithfully follow Sukadeva's description with no mention of a second so-called Earth globe. We cannot use one dissonant and irreconcilable purport by Vamsidhara, against the overwhelming congruity of the Vaishnava acharyas in their description of Earth as a vast horizontal plane.

For those who would otherwise argue that the Srimad Bhagavatam is indeed describing an Earth globe, please provide the verse reference that gives a description of the 'measurement' and 'characteristic' of the so-called 24,900 miles globe floating in space. Rest assured you will not find one. The most you will find are English translations of the words Bhu-gola, Bhu-mandala, and Bharata-varsha that have been rendered as 'Earth globe' or 'Earth planet,' but are not described as such in the original verses. Bharata-varsha is described as just a small area at the southern end of Jambudwipa, which rests on the great horizontal plane of Bhu-gola. Bharata-varsha is not Bhu-gola itself, nor is Bhu-gola the so-called Earth globe floating in space. Followers of Srimad Bhagavatam should learn the difference between these places, and not confuse names and descriptions.

A pizza by definition is circular flat bread with a topping of tomato sauce and various savoury garnishes. Whilst the toppings can be considered as part of the pizza, a slice of vegetarian pepperoni, for example, is not the pizza itself, and cannot be identified as such. To say that a slice of pepperoni is a pizza is clearly a mistake. Like-wise, to say that Bharata-varsha is the Bhu-gola is clearly a misnomer. Bharata-varsha is a small part of Bhu-gola, but it is not Bhu-gola itself. This mistake in understanding should be quickly corrected. In the above verses, we have just presented Srimad Bhagavatam's definition and description of Bhu-gola or Earth as a gigantic circular

area of 4 billion miles upon which rest the saptadwipa or seven islands of Bhu-mandala. The acharyas in their purports confirm this description. Jambudwipa, the central island of Bhu-gola, measures a mere 800,000 miles alone. Sorry, but the description of Bhu-gola provided in chapters 16-20 of the Fifth Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam is not the same thing as NASA's fake Earth globe of 24,900 miles. According to Srimad Bhagavatam, we live on a plane, not a planet. Don't kill the messenger! By confusing Bhu-gola with Bharata-varsha, one will just create a planet out of thin air; and Sukadeva Goswami's description of Bharata-varsha's shape and location to Jambudwipa will be misunderstood and misrepresented. The result will be that people will not learn the truth which Sukadeva Goswami is describing; namely, that the Earth is not a round globe in space, but rather continues along a horizontal plane that brings us into other inhabited areas of a much greater Earth.

Regarding Rajasekhara dasa's presentation that the acharya's commentaries are unquestionably describing NASA's space ball, it is painfully obvious that the so-called 'Earth globe' is none other than the Bhu-mandala. In his passion to win the argument Rajasekhara dasa conveniently overlooks the essential context of the question raised by King Pariksit in which it is very clear what the King is referring to; the king is asking about the seven islands of Bhu-mandala created by Priyavrata:

"King Pariksit said to Sukadeva Gosvami: O brahmana, you have already informed me that the radius of Bhu-mandala extends as far as the sun spreads its light and heat and as far as the moon and all the stars can be seen." (SB 5.16.1)

Here the name Bhu-mandala is specifically invoked. King Pariksit then asks:

"My dear Lord, the rolling wheels of Maharaja Priyavrata's chariot created seven ditches, in which the seven oceans came into existence. Because of these seven oceans, Bhu-mandala is divided into seven islands. You have given a very general description of their measurement, names, and characteristics. Now I wish to know of them in detail. Kindly fulfil my desire." (SB 5.16.2)

Later in section 1.2, we will look in detail at the actual description of the seven islands (saptadwipa) of Bhu-mandala/Bhu-gola, and prove conclusively that they are not referring to the continents of the so-called 24,900 mile globe in space. Saptadwipa refers to the seven islands and oceans that extend for 202,800,000 miles along the inner portion of the plane of Bhu-mandala. The translators of the commentaries by the acharyas (presented by Rajasekhara dasa) have rendered the Sanskrit word Bhu-mandala as "Earth globe," when it is in fact referring to the great Earth circle of four billion miles diameter. Thus, the following rendering of the Sanskrit translation of Bhu-gola as 'Earth globe' is incorrect:

Commentary of Shrila Shridhara Swami (SB.5.16.1) C.p1
In the previous chapter, while narrating the story of King Priyavrata, mention was made of the divisions of the globe into islands.

As described through chapters 16-20 of the fifth Canto, the seven islands created by Priyavrata Maharaja cover an area of hundreds of millions of miles. Sukadeva Goswami is, therefore, not talking about the creation of continents on the assumed Earth globe. He is talking about the formation of massive islands and oceans on the great Earth circle or Bhu-mandala. This is clear both from the verse description and the comments by the acharyas related to that description.

THREE FURTHER REFERENCES TO BHU-GOLA IN SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM

(i) Mother Yashoda sees Bhu-gola in the mouth of Krishna

With reference to these important verses cited above (SB 5.16.4 and SB 5.20.38), it should be clear that the Bhu-gola is the great circular plane that divides the universe and is otherwise known as Bhu-mandala. The Bhu-gola is also not to be confused with the universe itself, which is consistently referred to in the Srimad Bhagavatam as *anda*, or egg-shaped. Here we know for sure what shape the universe itself looks like because we all know the rounded shape of an egg. Variations of this name are brahmada and jagadanda. There is even one mention of anda-gola. There are several other names for the universe used in Srimad Bhagavatam such as visva and ja-

gat. The name Bhu-gola, however, is never used in the same context as the anda or universe itself. Bhu-gola, as defined and described by Sukadeva Goswami, is clearly only one of the fourteen levels within the universe; and, of course, the one most important to us because that is where we live. Bhu-gola is 4 billion miles in diameter, and is a circular horizontal plane upon which rest seven concentric islands and oceans including our own Jambudwipa whereupon the continents of our Earth lie in a small area in its southern region. However much one may want to quibble, Bhu-gola is definitely not to be confused with NASA's space ball; it is a categorical mistake to do so.

Now that we have a definition and description of Bhu-gola to work with, it should be straightforward to understand what is being described in the remaining few verses were the word Bhu-gola is used in Srimad Bhagavatam.

"When Krishna opened His mouth wide by the order of mother Yasoda, she saw within His mouth all moving and non-moving entities, outer space, and all directions, along with mountains, islands, oceans, the surface of the earth, the blowing wind, fire, the moon and the stars. She saw the planetary systems, water, light, air, sky, and creation by transformation of ahankara. She also saw the senses, the mind, sense perception, and the three qualities goodness, passion and ignorance. She saw the time allotted for the living entities, she saw natural instinct and the reactions of karma, and she saw desires and different varieties of bodies, moving and non-moving. Seeing all these aspects of the cosmic manifestation, along with herself and Vrindavana-dhama, she became doubtful and fearful of her son's nature." (SB 10.8.37.39)

Here the word Bhu-golam has been translated as 'the surface of the Earth.' So taking the only description of the Bhu-gola that we have, which is the one given by Sukadeva Goswami, the Bhu-golam can only be referring to the 4 billion diameter circle of the Earthly plane upon which the seven islands and oceans rest, as well as other prominent features along its plane. When Mother Yashoda saw the Bhu-gola within baby Krishna's mouth, she did not see the fake image of NASA's Earth globe floating in space; she saw the whole Bhu-mandala. The Earth globe floating in space exists only in the sci-fi movies produced by NASA and co. It is not found in the verses spoken by Sukadeva Goswami.

As mentioned previously, when Sukadeva Goswami wishes to be specific about the Lord's pastimes that take place in our own area of the Bhu-mandala, he does not use the names Bhu-gola or Bhu-mandala to indicate our supposed idea of a round globe in space; rather he invokes our own particular place name within the Bhu-mandala, which is of course, Bharata-varsha. Sometimes he will simply invoke the well-known place names within Bharata-varsha such as Mathura, Vraja, and Dwaraka. In either case, Sukadeva Goswami never equates the name Bharata-varsha with Bhu-gola or Bhu-mandala itself. Thus, in the above verse, the holy place of Vraja is invoked to specifically let us know that we are hearing about a pastime in Bharata-varsha. When Mother Yashoda looked within the mouth of baby Krishna, she saw within her child's mouth the whole universe (visva), including the general area of the Earth plane (Bhu-gola), as well as the specific area within Bharata-varsha (Vraja). From the above verse, there can be no justification to support the idea that Bhu-gola is here referring to a 24,900-mile circumference ball in space.

(ii) Kardama Muni and the Bhu-gola:

The word Bhu-gola is again used in the pastime of Kardama Muni which is recited in the third canto of Srimad Bhagavatam:

"After showing his wife the globe of the universe and its different arrangements, full of many wonders, the great yogi Kardama Muni returned to his own hermitage." (SB 3.23.43)

Here Srila Prabhupada's translation for 'globe of the universe' comes from the Sanskrit words bhuvo golam or Bhu-gola. The context of the verse, however, tells us that we are again hearing about the Bhu-mandala a round circular plane (not a round globe) as described by Sukadeva Goswami in the verses already mentioned above. The places that Kardama Muni visited with his wife Devahuti are all clearly places along the plane of Bhu-mandala, which is the great Earth circle, not a globe:

"In that aerial mansion he traveled to the pleasure valleys of Mount Meru, which were render-

ed all the more beautiful by cool, gentle, fragrant breezes that stimulated passion. In these valleys, the treasurer of the gods, Kuvera, surrounded by beautiful women and praised by the Siddhas, generally enjoys pleasure. Kardama Muni also, surrounded by the beautiful damsels and his wife, went there and enjoyed for many, many years.

Satisfied by his wife, he enjoyed in that aerial mansion not only on Mount Meru but in different gardens known as Vaisrambhaka, Surasana, Nandana, Puspabhadraka and Caitrarathya, and by the Manasa-sarovara Lake." SB 3.23.39-40)

These place names in and around Mount Meru are all clearly connected with Bhu-mandala. This is confirmed by Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura in his commentary on SB 3.23.43:

"Golam here means territory (mandala). Sva-samsthaya means "with its composition of islands and continents."

So again, there is no evidence to conclude here that the use of Bhu-gola in this verse is referring to NASA's space ball. It is the same, and only, Bhu-gola as described above by Sukadeva Goswami: a four billion mile wide circular plane that divides the universe between its six higher and seven lower divisions.

(iii) Ananta-Sesha and the Bhu-gola:

Rajasekhara dasa's hopeless confusion and bewilderment regarding the Vedic Earth is exemplified in his response to the following verse from Mahabharata:

"It is I who, assuming the form of Sesha support on my head this earth bounded by the four seas and decked by Meru and Mandara. Mahabharata."(3.188)

RESPONSE [by Rajasekhara dasa]: It should be seen here that there are only four seas mentioned and not seven oceans. The four seas are Southern Ocean, Northern Ocean, Eastern Ocean and Western Ocean, or in other words the Ocean of Salt that surrounds Jambhudweep in the four cardinal directions. Thus the general perception found in Mahabharata is that the Earth is a globe and there is only one Salt Ocean in the four cardinal directions."

So according to Rajasekhara dasa's ridiculous argument, Ananta-Sesha is holding NASA's Earth-globe with four oceans on his head! How does one begin to disentangle such mis-comprehension of the subject? Well, let's start by pointing out that Sukadeva Goswami describes Jambudwipa's salt-water ocean alone as measuring a mere 800,000 miles in breadth. How does such a vast ocean fit on the Earth globe of 24,900 miles?

"As Sumeru Mountain is surrounded by Jambudvipa, Jambudvipa is also surrounded by an ocean of salt water. The breadth of Jambudvipa is 100,000 yojanas [800,000 miles], and the breadth of the saltwater ocean is the same. As a moat around a fort is sometimes surrounded by gardenlike forest, the saltwater ocean surrounding Jambudvipa is itself surrounded by Plakshadvipa. The breadth of Plakshadvipa is twice that of the saltwater ocean—in other words 200,000 yojanas [1,600,000 miles]." (SB 5.20.2)

So where is the 800,000-mile salt-water ocean on NASA's space globe of 24,900 miles? Where is the 1,600,000-mile island of Plakshadvipa that surrounds the salt-water ocean? Where is the 800,000-mile high Mount Meru that 'decks the Earth?' One million dollar reward for the best answer! The problem here is that the concept of the plane of Bhu-mandala is so gigantic that it does not fit within the limited mundane sphere of Rajasekhara's tiny mind. With *complete disregard* to the actual description provided by Sukadeva Goswami of a salt-water ocean measuring 800,000 miles, he simply insists that the four oceans in question must be those on the assumed Earth globe. This response by Rajasekhara dasa is so patently ridiculous that it hardly warrants a response; but for the sake of clarifying the matter, let's proceed. First, the verse quoted from Mahabharata mentions that the Lord assumes the form of Sesha-naga and holds the Earth on his head. So let's look at the verses in Srimad Bhagavatam relating to Sesha holding the Earth. Again let's define our terms so we all know what is meant by the Earth of Srimad Bhagavatam:

"Lord Siva continued: All the great sages accept the Lord as the source of creation, maintenance and destruction, although He actually has nothing to do with these activities. Therefore

the Lord is called unlimited. Although the Lord in His incarnation as Sesha holds all the universes on His hoods, each universe feels no heavier than a mustard seed to Him. Therefore, what person desiring perfection will not worship the Lord? (SB 5.17.21)

siddha-ar�am—a mustard seed; iva—like; kvacit—where; sthitam—situated; bhu-mandalam—the universe; murdha-sahasra-dhamasu—on the hundreds and thousands of hoods of the Lord."

Here the name for Earth (Bhu-mandala) immediately tells us that Sesha is not holding the assumed Earth globe of 24,900-mile circumference. He is holding the entire Bhu-mandala. Srila Prabhupada translates the word Bhu-mandala as universe, but the Bhu-mandala as described in Srimad Bhagavatam (Canto 5, Chapters 16-20) is only the central plane of the universe.

Again Citraketu says:

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead holds all the universes on His heads like seeds of mustard. I offer my respectful obeisances unto You, that Supreme Personality, who has thousands of hoods." (SB 6.16.48)

bhu-mandalam—the huge universe; sarshapayati—become like seeds of mustard; yasya—of whom; murdhni—on the head; tasmai—unto Him; namah—obeisances; bhagavate—the Supreme Personality of Godhead, full with six opulences; astu—may there be; sahasra-murdhne—who has thousands of hoods.

Here the word Bhu-mandala has been translated as universe, whereas it is only referring to the middle plane of the universe. Bhu-mandala as already described is 4 billion miles in diameter.

Again the Kauravas say:

"O unlimited one of a thousand heads, as Your pastime You carry this earthly globe (bhu-mandala) upon one of Your heads. At the time of annihilation You withdraw the entire universe within Your body and, remaining all alone, lie down to rest." (SB 10.68.46)

tvam—You; eva—alone; murdhni—on Your head; idam—this; ananta—O unlimited one; li-laya—easily, as a pastime; **bhu**—of the earth; **mandalam**—the globe; bibharshi—(You) carry; sahasra-murdhan—O thousand-headed Lord

In these three verses, the word Bhu-mandala has been used to describe the part of the universe that Sesha holds on his hoods. Bhu-mandala is the middle section of the universe, or Earth-circle, and measures four billion miles in diameter. Although Srila Prabhupada translates Bhu-mandala as 'the earthly globe,' it is clearly not referring to the assumed globe of supposed 24,900-mile circumference. Names mean something; and we should understand the meaning of the names invoked. If in conversation, we refer to events in America, our shared understanding of what America means, tells us that the event is happening in America, not China. America is America, and China is China. They are two distinct places with different size land mass, populations, etc. We cannot start simply calling China by the name of America and hope that everyone will understand what we mean. Similarly, the name Bhu-mandala refers to a particular part of the universe. We should understand the meaning from the description given by Sukadeva Goswami in Chapters 16-20 of the Fifth Canto, and not confuse the term by relating it to some other imagined feature of the universe such as the supposed Earth globe of Bharata-varsha.

Ksiti-mandala is another way of saying Bhu-mandala and the name is also used in Srimad Bhagavatam in reference to Sesha holding up the Earth. As mentioned before, the Earth is addressed by many names and Ksiti is one of them. Thus, *ksiti-mandala* simply means Earth circle and is another way of saying Bhu-mandala. In the verse below, the name Ksiti-mandala is invoked to again describe Sesha holding the great Earth:

"Sukadeva Gosvami continued: This great universe, situated on one of Lord Anantadeva's thousands of hoods, appears just like a white mustard seed. It is infinitesimal compared to the hood of Lord Ananta." (SB 5.25.2)

Here Srila Prabhupada translates the word Ksiti-mandala as universe, but it is really only refer-

ring to the Bhu-mandala. In the Caitanya-caritamrta (Adi 5.119), Srila Prabhupada quotes this verse and translates the word *ksiti-mandalam* as globe sphere. Again, if we are to strictly follow the Srimad Bhagavatam's description of Bhu-mandala, it is not a globe sphere; Bhu-mandala is the great round circle of 4 billion miles diameter upon which all the land, oceans, and living entities are situated. The Bhu-mandala is clearly a circle or disc, not a globe. Again, I mention this because of the confusion that may arise in relation to the word *Bhu-gola* used in the next verse. The *Bhu-gola*, as we already established, is clearly just another name for Bhu-mandala, and is used here in the same context to describe the area that Ananta Sesha holds on the hoods of his heads:

"murdhany arpitaṁ anuvat sahasra-murdhno **bhu-golam** sagiri-sarit-samudra-sattvam

Because the Lord is unlimited, no one can estimate His power. This entire universe (*Bhu-golam*) filled with its many great mountains, rivers, oceans, trees and living entities, is resting just like an atom on one of His many thousands of hoods." (SB 5.25.12)

Here, Srila Prabhupada translates the word *Bhu-golam* as universe, but keeping in line with the three previous verses that describe Ananta Sesha holding the Bhu-mandala, it is a clear case that *Bhu-gola* and *Bhu-mandala* are referring to the same central area of the universe which contains the seven islands and their surrounding oceans as described by Sukadeva Goswami in Chapters 16-20 of Canto Five. The acharyas in their purports to these verses also confirm that Sesha is holding the Bhu-mandala. He is certainly not holding a globe of 24,900 miles circumference, and thus the name *Bhu-gola* cannot be used in connection with such an assumed creation.

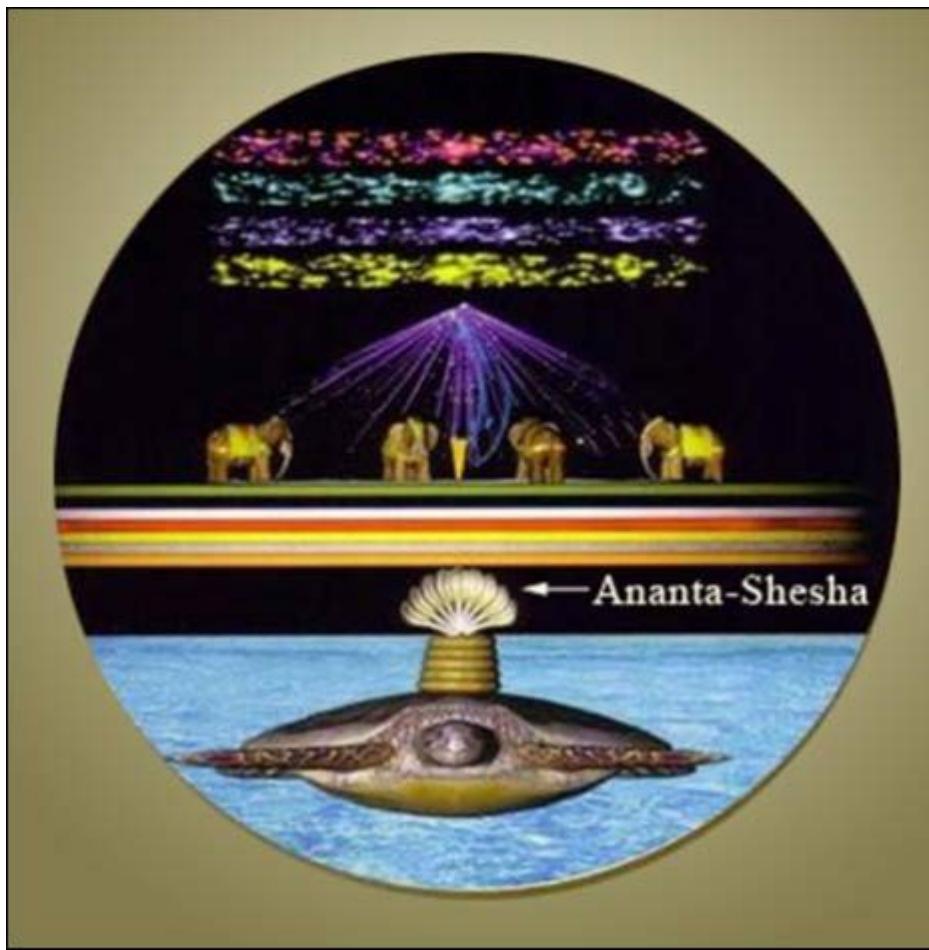


Figure 6

In the image above (figure 6) from the cover of Danavir Goswami's *Vedic Cosmos*, we see Ananta Sesha on top of Kurma holding the Bhu-gola or Earth circle on His hoods. Notice the horizontal shape of the Earth with its seven subterranean layers. Such a description of the Earth may appear so outlandish to the so-called 'scientific mind-set,' that even many devotees of Krishna try desperately to find evidence of a more 'scientifically palatable' Earth-globe in the Vedic literature,

even to the extent of 'faking' a globe by interpolation on verses from Sanskrit texts (see section 1.5 below). Srila Prabhupada himself was undaunted by the so-called scientists conception of the universe:

Prabhupada: We do not require to satisfy the scientists. We have to describe according to our book. That's all. If they can understand, let them understand. Otherwise... It is not our business to satisfy the so-called scientists. We are giving the real description. (Room Conversation, June 18, 1977, Vrindavana)

Note how Srila Prabhupada says here that 'we have to *describe* according to our book...We are giving the real *description*.' This simple instruction can be so easily lost. The Earth is *described* in a particular way by Sukadeva Goswami, and we *have to follow the description*. The fact is, there is no description of small Earth globe floating around anywhere in the pages of Srimad Bhagavatam or any other Purana. The conception of Earth as a globe in space has been simply artificially imposed onto the Bhu-mandala concept. Thus, under no circumstances can the name 'Bhu-gola' be used to support the idea that the Srimad Bhagavatam and other Vedic literatures are describing 'a globe Earth,' such as that presented by NASA. Such a description of an Earth globe does not exist in Srimad Bhagavatam. Yes, Bhu-gola means 'round-Earth,' but it is the round shape of a circle, not a globe; and Sukadeva Goswami has calculated the area of this Bhu-golasya in billions of miles, not some measly 24,900 miles, which is the reputed circumference of the so-called Earth globe. In short, Bhu-gola is not the reputed Earth globe and any further attempt to identify it as such is simply a case of misinformation and misunderstanding.

Perhaps the followers of Srila Prabhupada would have a little more faith in the Srimad Bhagavatam's description of the Earth, if they spent just a little more time investigating the cheating and skulduggery involved in NASA's depiction of the Earth.

If the details of this issue had have been pointed out to Srila Prabhupada, would he have adjusted his understanding of Bhu-gola to the Srimad Bhagavatam's description, or would he continue presenting an idea that is not supported by the texts of Srimad Bhagavatam? Since Srila Prabhupada was never presented with these shastric objections to his usage of the word Bhu-gola, we cannot say for sure what his reaction would be; but we do have his direct instruction to base the Vedic Planetarium on the description of Srimad Bhagavatam. Srimad Bhagavatam does not describe Bharata-varsha as a globe in space, nor does it equate the Bhu-gola with Bharata-varsha. Bharata-varsha is only one tiny area of Bhu-gola or Bhu-mandala, not the Bhu-gola itself.

Having thus pointed out how the Srimad Bhagavatam actually defines and describes Bhu-gola, and taking Srila Prabhupada's directive to present the TOVP according to the description of Srimad Bhagavatam, I would argue that it is the duty of all those involved in presenting the Vedic Cosmos, and especially those responsible for the TOVP, not to continue supporting and perpetrating the idea that Earth is a globe in space based on a misunderstanding and mistranslation of the word Bhu-gola. One must seriously question the integrity of anyone continuing this type of presentation when the obvious facts have been pointed out. Yes, Srila Prabhupada also spoke of the Earth as a globe, but we have to have consider what his reaction may have been if the verses verifying that Earth is a plane (not a planet) had been pointed out to him. We also have to consider the intention behind his usage of the word globe. Consider again the following statement cited earlier:

"Yes, world is round. That is fact. Goloka. In Vedic literature it is bhu-gola, jagad-anda. These words are there. We can see also it is round, jagad-anda. The universe is round. And Goloka. Or Bhu-gola. Bhu-gola, the earth is round. So in the Vedic literatures... Therefore their knowledge is also imperfect because they do not refer to the Vedic literatures. It is already there. Bhu-gola. Bhu means the earth; gola means round. It is already there. And the geography's called, according to Sanskrit, it is called Bhu-gola. Long, long ago, before Galileo." (Morning Walk, December 9, 1973, Los Angeles)

In this conversation, and in the translations of Srimad Bhagavatam wherein Srila Prabhupada uses the term Bhu-gola to argue in favour of a round-Earth, we have to consider his intention. Was his intention to establish as an irrevocable fact that the Earth is indeed a globe, or was his intention more to assert the superiority of the ancient Vedic literature over modern science, using the Earth as a mere example by arguing that the Vedas had the concept of a round Earth long before Galileo. For one point, Galileo can hardly be quoted as a favorable example for confirming

the truths of the Vedas since his heliocentric system is in complete opposition to the geocentric system of the Vedic cosmology. Thus taking more of the intention behind Srila Prabhupada's argument, which is to assert the superiority of the Vedic sages over modern scientists, I would argue that the Vedas are indeed more advanced than modern scientific speculations, not because they describe Earth as a round planet, but because they describe Earth as a round plane. Indeed, the horizontal plane model of the Earth is the one that most conforms to scientific observation. Apart from NASA's fake Earth pictures, there is otherwise no observable or measurable curvature on the surface of the so-called globe. It is flat in all directions; and even when looking from thousands of feet above, the horizon is always flat.



Figure 7

How far this horizontal Earth plane goes is clearly answered by Sukadeva Goswami. It continues in all directions for hundreds and millions of miles. At present, we have only access to the continents of our known Earth area, but Srimad Bhagavatam and Mahabharata confirm that our own Earth plane was once connected to a greater Earth area. We have presented evidence for this in a paper called *Sailing to Jambudwipa*.

SECTION 1.3 — DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTION OF BHU-MANDALA: EARTH OF SEVEN ISLANDS AND SEVEN OCEANS (SAPTA-DWIPA)

As one reads the Srimad Bhagavatam, it becomes apparent that the pastimes of the Lord and His incarnations which occur on 'Earth' actually do so over the whole of Bhu-mandala, and (unless otherwise stated) are not limited to the tiny region that we call our Earth – the assumed Earth globe. Again, we have to define our terms: what actually is the Earth according to Srimad Bhagavatam? What is Sukadeva Goswami referring to when he uses the name Bhumi? Is he talking

about the assumed Earth globe, or is he talking about Bhu-mandala? Hopefully, it should be clear from the following analysis that Sukadeva Goswami is most definitely referring to Bhu-mandala when he talks about the Earth, and not to some assumed Earth globe.

Just as Krishna has many names such as Hari, Govinda, Madhava, etc., so the Earth is called by different names such as Bhu, Prithvi, Mahi, Dhari, Gam, Ksiti, etc. One of the common ways of speaking about the Vedic Earth is the expression *sapta-dvipavatim mahim*, which defines Earth as 'The Earth consisting of seven islands.' This and similar sounding phrases occur many times in Srimad Bhagavatam. For example:

"The two great sons of Svayambhuva Manu—Priyavrata and Uttanapada—ruled the world, consisting of seven islands, just according to religious principles." (SB 3.21.2)

So what and where are these seven islands? In the purport to this verse, Srila Prabhupada identifies them as the continents of our known Earth:

"Srimad-Bhagavatam is also a history of the great rulers of different parts of the universe. In this verse the names of Priyavrata and Uttanapada, sons of Svayambhuva, are mentioned. They ruled this earth, which is divided into seven islands. These seven islands are still current, as Asia, Europe, Africa, America, Australia and the North and South Poles."

However, Chapter One of Srimad Bhagavatam's Fifth Canto is a narration describing the original creation of the seven islands and oceans of Bhu-mandala by Priyavrata Maharaja himself, and it is certainly not describing the formation of the continents America, Australia, etc.

"When Priyavrata drove his chariot behind the sun, the rims of his chariot wheels created impressions that later became seven oceans, dividing the planetary system known as Bhu-mandala into seven islands. (SB 5.1.31)

sapta—seven; sindhavah—oceans; asan—became; yatah—because of which; eva—certainly; krtah—were made; sapta—seven; bhuvah—of the Bhu-mandala; dvipah—islands. The names of the islands are Jambu, Plaksha, Shalmali, Kusha, Krauncha, Saka and Pushkara. Each island is twice as large as the one preceding it, and each is surrounded by a liquid substance, beyond which is the next island. (SB 5.1.32)

The seven oceans respectively contain salt water, sugarcane juice, liquor, clarified butter, milk, emulsified yogurt, and sweet drinking water. All the islands are completely surrounded by these oceans, and each ocean is equal in breadth to the island it surrounds. Maharaja Priyavrata, the husband of Queen Barhishmati, gave sovereignty over these islands to his respective sons, namely Agnidhra, Idhmajihva, Yajnabahu, Hiranyareta, Ghrtaprstha, Medhatithi and Vitihotra. Thus they all became kings by the order of their father." (SB 5.1.33)

Again, in Chapter 16 of the Fifth Canto, Pariksit Maharaja specifically requests Sukadeva Goswami to describe the seven islands and oceans in detail:

"My dear Lord, the rolling wheels of Maharaja Priyavrata's chariot created seven ditches, in which the seven oceans came into existence. Because of these seven oceans, Bhu-mandala is divided into seven islands. You have given a very general description of their measurement, names and characteristics. Now I wish to know of them in detail. Kindly fulfill my desire." (SB 5.16.2)

Here the words used *sapta sindhava* (seven oceans) and *sapta dwipa* (seven islands) are explicitly mentioned. They cannot, however, be equated with the continents of Earth for the simple reason that their vast size covering 202,800,000 miles is then clearly described by Sukadeva Goswami over the course of chapters 16-20. Sukadeva Goswami begins by stating that the central island of Bhu-mandala is called Jambudvipa and has a breadth of 800,000 miles in area. It is surrounded by an ocean of equal breadth. Each successive island and ocean along the horizontal plane of Bhu-mandala is measured at twice the size of the preceding one. The next island is called Plakshadvipa and being twice the size of called Jambudvipa has a breadth of 1,600,000 miles. Its surrounding ocean is equal in breadth to the island itself. The third island is called Shamalidvipa. It is 3,200,000 miles wide, twice as wide as Plakshadvipa and is surrounded by an ocean of the same size. The fourth island is called Kushadvipa. The width of this island is 6,400,000 miles,

or, in other words, twice the width of Shamalidvipa. It is surrounded by an ocean of equal breadth. The fifth island, Kraunchadvipa, is 12,800,000 miles wide and is surrounded by an ocean of equal size. The sixth island, Shakadvipa is 25,600,000 miles wide and is surrounded by an ocean of equal size. The seventh island, Pushkaradvipa, which is twice as wide as the previous island, is 51,200,000 miles wide and is surrounded by an ocean of clear water as broad as the island itself. In this way, Srimad Bhagavatam describes the seven islands and oceans of the greater expanded Earth. One can read some details about the geography and spiritual culture of the residents of these seven islands in Canto Five, Chapter Twenty of Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Therefore, the description here of the saptadvipa (seven islands) certainly does not conform to the minute size of America, Australia, etc, nor do the descriptions of the oceans surrounding these islands conform in any way to our own salt-water oceans:

"The seven oceans respectively contain salt water, sugarcane juice, liquor, clarified butter, milk, emulsified yogurt, and sweet drinking water. All the islands are completely surrounded by these oceans, and each ocean is equal in breadth to the island it surrounds." (SB 5.1.33)

It should also be noted that the seven islands and their surrounding oceans are actually in the form of a series of concentric circles that stretch out on the plane of Bhu-mandala for a distance of 202,800,000 miles; again a description that bears absolutely no resemblance to the known continents of our known Earth area. Each island and ocean is twice as large as the preceding one; again bearing no resemblance to the shape and size of our continents and surrounding oceans.

Unfortunately, we have very little in the way of illustrations to accurately portray the Bhu-mandala, but some idea can perhaps be grasped from the following image below. Here we see the seven islands forming a series of concentric circles as they stretch out along the plane of Bhu-mandala. Above the plane of Bhu-mandala we see the sun and moon and other planets:

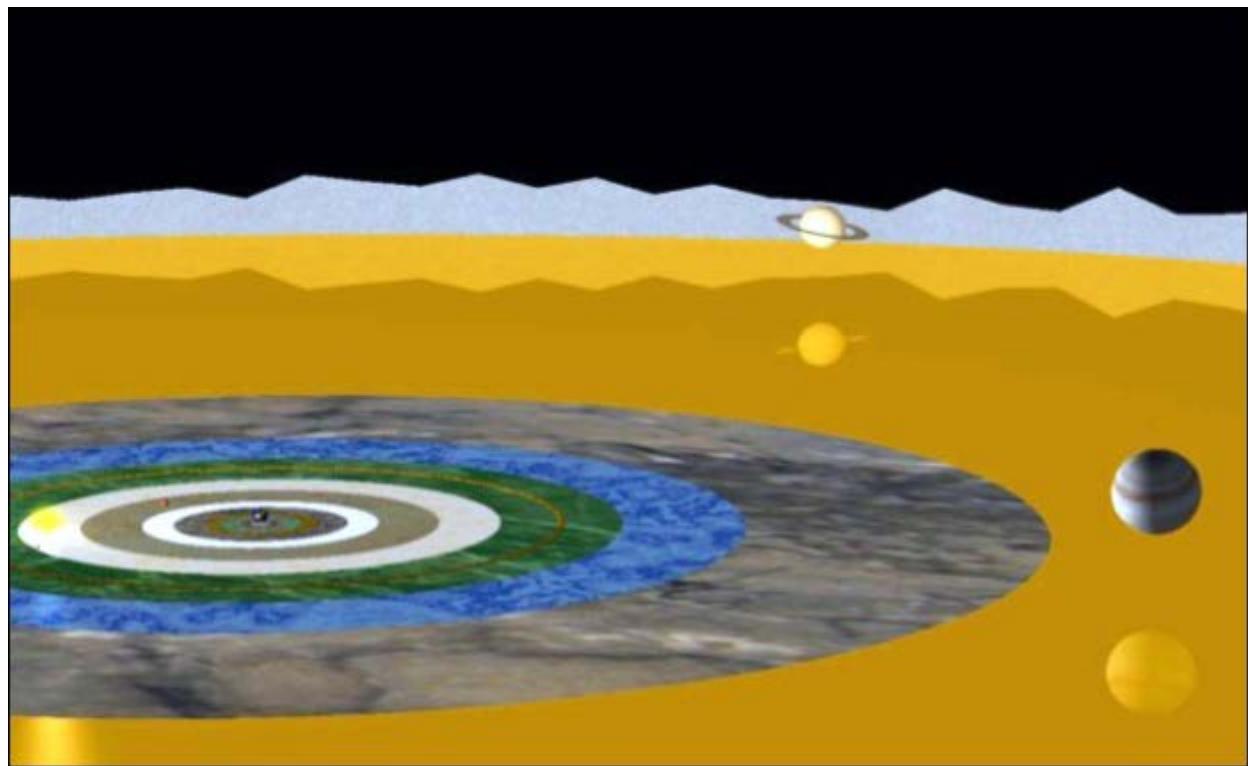


Figure 8

Again, the computer representation does not do justice to what is being described as the circles are supposed to represent seven concentric islands and seven oceans filled with beautiful landscapes and varieties of life. The whole thing looks more like a geometrical diagram than a geographical landscape. Though obviously difficult to convey detail on such a vast area, our computer animators need to make the landscape look more realistic giving the impression of a landscape upon which all the varieties of nature and forms of life exist.

Worse is the animation provided by the Temple of Vedic Planetarium itself where the seven islands of Bhu-mandala are represented as some wire-like structure surrounding the central island of Jambudwipa:

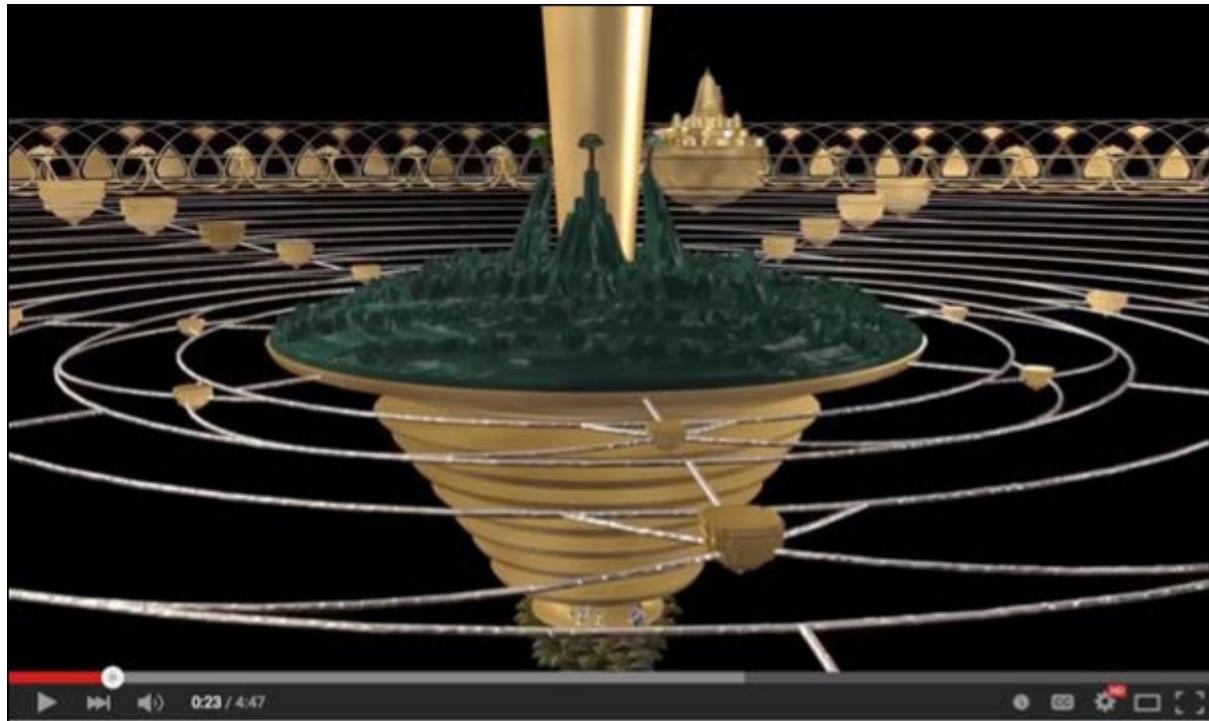


Figure 9

The Bhu-mandala is the plane where all the humans live. How is anyone going to get an idea of Bhu-mandala's landscape teeming with personal existence from this type of formless depiction? The Lord's creation is full of variety and form as explained in chapters 16-26 of the Fifth Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam. The plane of Bhu-mandala is a beautiful landscape that stretches across the center of the universe. That sense should be conveyed in the animation and, of course, in the final design for the main dome exhibition of the planetarium building. It is not my wish to criticize anyone, but for those involved in the creation of such images it must be pointed out that the formlessness of the computer animations are also suggestive of a lack of understanding of what is actually being described - a continual Earth plane that crosses the universe.

Perhaps more of an idea of the Bhu-gola landscape can be grasped from the image below of the city of Atlantis. The difference being that the seven islands of Bhu-mandala and their surrounding oceans would stretch for hundreds of millions of miles:



Figure 10

The above image more conveys a natural landscape containing land and water that supports varieties of life. Bhu-mandala with seven concentric islands and oceans looks more like this than the geometric images thus far presented.

If any devotees are skilled at computer animation and would like to assist in creating images of the Bhu-mandala, please contact me. Until then, please use your imagination to depict the seven islands of Bhu-mandala stretching out across the great Earth plane (Bhu-mandala). This great cosmic plane is what Srimad Bhagavatam describes as Earth, not some tiny little globe. Srimad Bhagavatam does not describe that our own Earth curves around in a ball-shape; rather, it describes our own known Earth area (Bharata-varsha) as continuing along a plane into these other areas of the greater Earth. For the last few hundred years, the existence of the greater Earth has been lost/hidden from the world, and the reality has been replaced by the false idea that the Earth is a tiny planet floating around in space. As explained in earlier papers, the covering of the real feature of the Earth must ultimately be due to the influence of maya. Since the on-set of Kali-yuga 5,000 years ago, the Vedic knowledge was gradually withdrawn as the age became more and more materialistic, and various speculations about the nature of life and reality were allowed to predominate.

Due to our conditioning/programming that the Earth is a globular planet in space, we have great difficulty in conceiving of the Earth as a continual plane. We tend to think of Earth as just one of many planets in space, when in fact Earth is the largest *plane*, (not planet) that stretches across the whole universe. Since none of us has been high enough to see the true feature of the Earth with our own eyes, we depend on information from secondary sources to provide an image. NASA provides one image of the Earth, and Srimad Bhagavatam presents something entirely different. Our immediate reaction upon hearing that the Earth is a continual plane is to consider how we do not see any such continual expanse of Earth in the satellite photographs provided by space agencies such as NASA, and thus we assume that the version of Srimad Bhagavatam must be wrong. The natural inclination of the mind is to think that the Vedic sages provided speculative and imaginative concepts due to their inaccessibility to modern technology such as spacecraft and satellites that can photograph and measure the Earth in its true feature. In fact, the very opposite is true. The Vedic sages such as Sukadeva Goswami are relaying accurate information about the Earth coming in parampara (disciplic succession) from the creator of the Earth, Sri Krishna Himself. It is the quasi-science of heliocentrity that is speculative; and the so-called photographs of Earth from spacecraft and satellites in outer space that are fabrications of deceptive agencies such as NASA who are employed by Maya to create illusion about the true nature and feature of the Earth.

This covering of illusion is for further deluding the atheistic and materialistic population of Kali-yuga who are generally adverse to religion. The Vedic literature provides important descriptions of the different places in the cosmos that one may attain in the next life according to the karmas

and desires created in this life. For a materialistic population that wants to disbelieve in any sense of God, or any sense of future consequence to one's actions, knowledge of past and future births is withdrawn. The detailed information provided in the Puranas of different forms of life and environments throughout the universe is also withdrawn. In this way, one is led to think that there is only one life, on this one 'planet.' A deluded population, thus, complacently lives with the motto that 'ignorance is bliss.' The Temple of Vedic Planetarium is meant to awaken the deluded population from this misconception of life.

Unfortunately, Rajasekhara dasa sides with NASA's presentation of an Earth globe, rather than looking at what the disciplic succession is actually describing via the commentaries of the previous acharyas on the Fifth Canto cosmology. The description of the Earth by Sukadeva Goswami as a vast circular plane, and the explanatory commentaries by the Vaishnava acharyas in no way matches the modern presentation of an Earth globe. It is simply astonishing that Rajasekhara dasa could be so entirely wrong in his understanding of the subject being described:

"However, contrary to Mayesvara's diabolical attempt at deception, each and every one of the previous Acharyas have clearly stated that the Earth Is a globe. The fact is – not even one Vaishnava Acharya has ever proposed a 'flat earth' concept. Neither Shrila Bhaktivinode Thakura or Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, or Shrila Jiva Goswami or any of the other Goswamis of Vrindavana, or Shrila Vishvanatha Chakravarty or any of the previous Bhagavatam commentators!"

Such a statement is based on complete ignorance of the thing being described. The flat-Earth is the plane of Bhu-mandala! In Srimad Bhagavatam, Sukadeva Goswami describes the plane of Bhu-mandala with its enormous, fabulous features including the central region of seven islands and oceans created by Priyavrata Maharaja, which cover an area of 202,800,000 miles. This description is what the acharyas are commenting upon. Just follow the description! I'm not making this up!

Thus, the seven islands and oceans, which form the central area of Bhu-gola and measure 202,800,000 miles, cannot possibly be identified as the continents of the assumed Earth globe as proposed by Srila Prabhupada in SB 3.21.2 and again in purport to SB 4.21.12 in relation to the pastime of King Prithu leveling the Earth:

"Maharaja Prithu was an unrivaled king and possessed the scepter for ruling all the seven islands on the surface of the globe. No one could disobey his irrevocable orders but the saintly persons, the brahmanas and the descendants of the Supreme Personality of Godhead [the Vaishnavas]." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 4.21.12)

Here it is stated *sapta-dvipaika-danda-dhrk*. Srila Prabhupada translates the verse to read that Maharaja Prithu possessed the sceptre for ruling all 'the seven islands on the surface of the globe.' However, are the seven islands on the surface of a globe, or are they on the surface of Bhu-mandala – the great cosmic circle of four billion miles diameter? That there should be no doubt that King Prithu was ruling over the entire Bhu-mandala, and not the assumed Earth globe, is confirmed in the following verses:

"After this, the king of all kings, Maharaja Prithu, leveled all rough places on the surface of the globe (bhu-mandalam) by breaking up the hills with the strength of his bow. By his grace the surface of the globe almost became flat." (SB 4.18.29)

Here it is specifically stated that in this pastime of Maharaja Prithu the whole of Bhu-mandala was leveled: *bhu-mandalam idam vainyah prayash cakre saman vibhuh*. Indeed, Maharaja Prithu's rule was over the vast area of Bhu-mandala, not just the continents of our known Earth area. Therefore, although Srila Prabhupada translates Bhu-mandala as Earth globe, the verse is not in fact describing an Earth globe; it is describing the Earth-circle or Bhu-mandala. Bhu-mandala has its own distinct, names, measurements, and features. These characteristics do not match any description of the assumed Earth globe, or to Bharata-varsha itself. Again, in verse 4.16.20 the name Bhu-mandala is again used to describe the extent of Prithu's sovereignty:

"This King, being uniquely powerful and heroic, will have no competitor. He will travel around the globe on his victorious chariot, holding his invincible bow in his hand and appearing exactly like the sun, which rotates in its own orbit from the south." (SB 4.16.20)

Here the word *bhuvo mandalam* is clearly used. Bhu-mandala is the Earth circle not an Earth globe. So getting back to SB 4.21.12 where it is stated: *Maharaja Prithu was an unrivaled king and possessed the sceptre for ruling all the seven islands on the surface of the globe*, are we talking about the islands of Bhu-mandala, or are we talking about the continents of the assumed Earth globe? The correct understanding of the words *sapta-dvipaika* is crucial in our understanding of the true dimensions and extent of the Earth. In the purport to the above verse from Srimad Bhagavatam 4.21.12, Srila Prabhupada again identifies these seven islands and oceans with the continents of our known Earth:

"sapta-dvipa refers to the seven great islands or continents on the surface of the globe: (1) Asia, (2) Europe, (3) Africa, (4) North America, (5) South America, (6) Australia and (7) Oceania. In the modern age people are under the impression that during the Vedic period or the prehistoric ages America and many other parts of the world had not been discovered, but that is not a fact. Prithu Maharaja ruled over the world many thousands of years before the so-called prehistoric age, and it is clearly mentioned here that in those days not only were all the different parts of the world known, but they were ruled by one king, Maharaja Prithu."

Of course, the continents of Earth are also included in the lands comprising *sapta-dvipa*, but as already stated very clearly in the above verses from Srimad Bhagavatam, the *sapta-dvipa* refers to the islands along Bhu-mandala. No other *sapta-dvipa* is mentioned in Srimad Bhagavatam. Since Prithu Maharaja's sovereignty was over all of Bhu-mandala, the *sapta-dvipa* mentioned here are obviously those created by Maharaja Priyavrata on the Bhu-mandala. They span an area of hundreds of millions of miles. The names, measurement, and characteristics of these seven islands and oceans do not in fact match up with the seven continents of Earth.

Please do not assume that my purpose and intention here is to find mistakes and faults in Srila Prabhupada. The purpose here is to fulfill Srila Prabhupada's stated desire to build the TOVP according to the description of Srimad Bhagavatam, and in order to do that, it has to be pointed out that the size and characteristics of Bhu-mandala's seven islands and oceans do not match up with the continents of the assumed Earth globe. Therefore, the verse cannot be used to support the idea that Earth is a globe. The verse is actually describing the general characteristic features of Bhu-mandala; it is not describing the specific features of any area in Bharata-varsha.

In any case, by ascribing the *sapta-dvipa* to the assumed Earth globe in the purport of SB 4.21.12, a planet has been created which does not exist in the original description. The verse is clearly describing Bhu-mandala, but Srila Prabhupada attaches this description of seven islands to the assumed Earth globe of Bharata-varsha. So please try to follow what has happened here: The original description of *sapta-dvipavatim mahim* 'the Earth with seven islands,' would simply place Bharata-varsha as a small area of Jambudwipa, one of the seven islands of Bhu-mandala. However, in Srila Prabhupada's translation, it appears that the seven islands now fit within the small area of Bharata-varsha. The result is that a conception of Bharata-varsha as a globe has thus appeared out of nowhere, and the real description of Bharata-varsha's true shape and location on the Bhu-mandala has been lost.

Rather than seeing the purport to Srimad Bhagavatam 4.21.12 as simply a mistake on Srila Prabhupada's part, we must rather take Srila Prabhupada's real intention here, which is to explain the extent of the Vedic Empire in ancient times. Modern history teaches that the world was primitive and unconnected in ancient times. Srila Prabhupada is trying to disprove this idea by stating that the Vedic empire stretched over not only India but across the entire world. Alternative historical research is indeed confirming this idea that the ancient world was connected. However, what is interesting in the above verse is the idea that the Vedic empire stretched over not only ancient India and the rest of our known world, but that it stretched over the whole of another unknown area of our Earth called Bhu-mandala.

In the three papers that we have presented on this subject: *Modern Blasphemy: Earth is not a Globe*, we have presented the hypothesis that the Earth is not a round singular globe in space, but is rather a small part of an extended Earth plane that stretches for billions of miles. Our inference is that Earth or Bharata-varsha is still connected to this Bhu-mandala, but due to being under the influence of Kali-yuga, we are quarantined and kept separate from the rest of the Bhu-mandala plane. Knowledge of the Bhu-mandala has been covered due to the influence of maya, and it has been replaced with the deluding quasi-science of Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, and New-

ton that seemingly provide scientific explanations to support the idea that Earth is a globular planet and rotates around the sun. Srimad Bhagavatam describes by contrast that the great plane of the Earth (Bhu-mandala) is stationary, and the sun revolves at a certain distance above the plane of Bhu-mandala. The two concepts are completely different. The Earth of Srimad Bhagavatam is most definitely not a globular planet in space.

As we search through the Srimad Bhagavatam, it is evident that the Earth of the Vedic Empire extends for hundreds of millions of miles and that all of these great Kings mentioned in Srimad Bhagavatam were ruling over the entire Bhu-mandala, and not the assumed Earth globe. The idea that a single king could rule over an area of hundreds of millions of miles is beyond the comprehension of the mundane mind that has little or no faith in Krishna and the prowess of his empowered devotees. Unfortunately, followers of Srila Prabhupada such as Rajasekhara dasa are unable to accommodate the place of Earth or Bharata-varsha on the horizontal plane of Bhu-mandala, and prefer instead to defend the quasi-science of the globe-Earth concept. Rather than acknowledging what the actual text is saying, the blind follower stays blind to the reality of the thing that is being described.

Whenever Srimad Bhagavatam speaks of Earth we should, therefore, understand that it includes these seven islands and oceans surrounding Mount Meru, an area that spans for millions of miles. The exact measurements of these islands and oceans are given in Srimad Bhagavatam and cover an area of 202,800,000 miles. This vast area is only a portion of the central plane of the universe, which has an overall diameter of 4 billion miles. This gives us some idea of the immense prowess of the Lord's devotees who are empowered to spread God consciousness throughout the universe. When reading Srimad Bhagavatam we hear of Vedic Kings like Ambarisha and Yayati empowered with superhuman prowess to rule this vast area of Bhu-mandala. Though Srila Prabhupada translations may create the impression that the Vedic Kings were ruling over a globe in space, the truth is they were ruling over the plane of Bhu-mandala, a flat-Earth that extend for hundreds of millions of miles.

"The Emperor Svayambhuva Manu, the son of Lord Brahma, who is well known for his righteous acts, has his seat in Brahmavarta and rules over the earth with its seven oceans." (SB 3.21.25)

The Sanskrit words used are shasti—rules; sapta—seven; arnavam—oceans; mahim—the earth. Here the Earth (*mahim*) is clearly associated with the Bhu-mandala with its characteristic seven islands, but in a later verse, Srila Prabhupada in his English synonyms translates the same word Mahim as globe:

"Svayambhuva Manu, with his wife, mounted his chariot, which was decorated with golden ornaments. Placing his daughter on it with them, he began traveling all over the earth." (SB 3.21.36)

In the word for word Sanskrit to English translations to this verse Srila Prabhupada translates *mahim* (the Earth) as 'the globe.' Thus, one may think that Svayambhuva Manu was travelling over a so-called Earth globe when actually he was ruling over, and travelling over the entire Bhu-mandala. This is confirmed in the following verse spoken by Kardama Muni to Svayambhuva Manu:

"If you did not mount your victorious jewelled chariot, whose mere presence threatens culprits, if you did not produce fierce sounds by the twanging of your bow, and if you did not roam about the world like the brilliant sun, leading a huge army whose trampling feet cause the globe of the earth to tremble, then all the moral laws governing the varnas and asramas created by the Lord Himself would be broken by the rogues and rascals." (SB 3.21.52-54)

Here the word used for Earth is *mandalam bhuvah* the Bhu-mandala. Although Srila Prabhupada translates Bhu-mandala as the 'Earth globe,' the Bhu-mandala is actually 4 billion miles in diameter, and is circular and horizontal, not globular. Thus, in reality Svayambhuva Manu was ruling over the entire Bhu-mandala, not a so-called Earth globe.

Dhruva Maharaja is another famous example of a Vedic King who ruled the entire Bhu-mandala:

"Thus Dhruva Maharaja, at the end, left his kingdom, which extended all over the earth

(**Bhu-mandalam**) and was bounded by the great oceans. He considered his body, his wives, his children, his friends, his army, his rich treasury, his very comfortable palaces and his many enjoyable pleasure-grounds to be creations of the illusory energy. Thus in due course of time he retired to the forest in the Himalayas known as Badarikashrama." (SB 4.12.16)

Ambarisha Maharaja is another example:

"Sukadeva Gosvami said: Maharaja Ambarisha, the most fortunate personality, achieved the rule of the entire world, consisting of seven islands, (**sapta-dvipavatim mahim**) and achieved inexhaustible, unlimited opulence and prosperity on earth. Although such a position is rarely obtained, Maharaja Ambarisha did not care for it at all, for he knew very well that all such opulence is material. Like that which is imagined in a dream, such opulence will ultimately be destroyed. The King knew that any nondevotee who attains such opulence merges increasingly into material nature's mode of darkness." (SB 9.4.16)

Lord Ramacandra:

"O Maharaja Pariksit, best of the Bharata dynasty, during the reign of Lord Ramacandra the forests, the rivers, the hills and mountains, the states, the seven islands and the seven seas were all favorable in supplying the necessities of life for all living beings." (SB 9.10.53)

King Yayati:

"Thereafter, King Yayati became the ruler of the entire world, consisting of seven islands, and ruled the citizens exactly like a father." (Srimad Bhagavatam 9.18.46)

Again:

"By the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead [acyuta-tejasa], the son of Yuvanashva was so powerful that when he became emperor he ruled the entire world, consisting of seven islands [**sapta-dvipa-vatim**], without any second ruler." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 9.6.33-34)

Lord Vamanadeva told Bali Maharaja:

"The Personality of Godhead said: O my dear King, even the entirety of whatever there may be within the three worlds to satisfy one's senses cannot satisfy a person whose senses are uncontrolled. If I were not satisfied with three paces of land, then surely I would not be satisfied even with possessing one of the seven islands, consisting of nine varshas. Even if I possessed one island, I would hope to get others. We have heard that although powerful kings like Maharaja Prithu and Maharaja Gaya achieved proprietorship over the seven dvipas (**sapta-dvipadhipatayo**) they could not achieve satisfaction or find the end of their ambitions." (SB 8.19.21-23)

Sometimes demoniac entities such as Ravana and Hiranyakasipu also capture the Earth, causing the Lord to personally incarnate and destroy them:

"As if in fear of Hiranyakasipu, the planet earth, which consists of seven islands, delivered food grains without being plowed." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.4.16)

Here the Earth is called Mahi, consisting of seven islands (*sapta-dvipavati mahi*). The devotees of Krishna should understand that it is this concept of Earth (not the CGI [computer generated image] of the so-called Earth-globe provided by NASA) that was invaded 5,000 years by asuras (demons) in the disguise of Kings. This demoniac take-over of the Earth eventually precipitated the incarnation of Lord Krishna and His eternal associates the Pandavas to diminish the burden of the Earth by annihilating the various demoniac forces:

"Once when mother earth (Bhumir) was overburdened by hundreds of thousands of military phalanxes of various conceited demons dressed like kings, she approached Lord Brahma for relief." (SB 10.1.17)

Here Bhumi means the personified Bhu-mandala or Earth Goddess. Krishna not only saved the Earth, but also being merciful to all living entities, He saved everyone including the demons who

had become a troublesome burden on the Earth:

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead descended to kill the demoniac kings who were the burden of the earth and to protect the saintly devotees. However, both the demons and the devotees are awarded liberation by the Lord's mercy. Thus, His transcendental fame has spread throughout the universe." (SB 11.5.50)

Krishna is so magnanimous that "*Both those who hated Krishna and those who loved Him attained eternal forms.*" (SB 10.90.47)

In this way, throughout Srimad Bhagavatam, Earth is actually defined as consisting of seven islands. Indeed, as mentioned above, the Vedic history of Earth states that Maharaja Priyavrata originally created its division into seven islands and oceans and (SB 5.16.2), and Sukadeva Goswami elaborately describes the shape, size, and characteristics of the *sapta-dwipa*. Srimad Bhagavatam also mentions how Arjuna once crossed this vast distance with Krishna:

"The Lord's chariot passed over the seven islands of the middle universe, each with its ocean and its seven principal mountains. Then it crossed the Lokaloka boundary and entered the vast region of total darkness." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 10.89.47)

From these descriptions, we can understand that we are not dealing with personalities who are restricted and limited to the small area that we know as India, or even to the tiny area of what we know as the Earth. Here it is stated that Krishna and Arjuna passed over *sapta dvipan sa-sindhums ca*, meaning the inner area of Bhu-mandala with its seven islands and seven oceans. Again, this does not refer to the continents and oceans of what we understand as the globe Earth. The *sapta-dwipa* is an area of 202,800,000 miles. The tendency of our ant-like mind is to immediately place such descriptions of the Earth, and of the Lord's pastimes on Earth, into the category of mythology; thus we fail to appreciate how such transcendental narrations of Lord Krishna and His eternal associates have any bearing on our tiny lives of bewilderment and struggle with the material energy.

In the next verse, the Earth (*bhuvah*) is again defined as *sapta-samudravatya dvipesu* consisting of seven islands and seven seas.

"Learned scholars chant about the transcendental qualities of Lord Rsabhadeva in this way: "Oh, this earthly planet contains seven seas and many islands and lands, of which Bharata-varsha is considered the most pious. People of Bharata-varsha are accustomed to glorifying the activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His incarnations as Lord Rsabhadeva and others. All these activities are very auspicious for the welfare of humanity." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 5.16.13)

These verses should make it abundantly clear that when Srimad Bhagavatam refers to the Earth, it is not talking about the assumed globe of 24,900-mile circumference floating in space. Such a conception does not exist in the verses of Srimad Bhagavatam. When Srimad Bhagavatam talks about where we are, it specifically invokes the place name Bharata-varsha (as in the verse above) which is a region to the south of Jambudvipa (the central island of Bhu-mandala).

ARE THE SAPTA-DWIPA ISLANDS IN SPACE?

In the Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-lila, Chapter Twenty, verse 218, it is stated:

"Within the universe (brahma-madhye) the Lord is situated in different spiritual manifestations. These are situated on seven islands (sapta-dwipa) in nine sections (nava-khanda). Thus Their pastimes are going on. (CC. Madhya 20.218)

PURPORT

The seven islands are mentioned in the Siddhanta-Siromani:

The seven islands (dvipas) are known as (1) Jambu, (2)Shaka, (3) Shamali, (4) Kusha, (5) Krauncha, (6) Gomeda, or Plaksha, and (7) Pushkara. The planets are called dvipas. Outer

space is like an ocean of air. Just as there are islands in the watery ocean, these planets in the ocean of space are called dwipas, or islands in outer space. There are nine khandas, known as (1) Bharata, (2) Kinnara, (3) Hari, (4) Kuru, (5) Hiranmaya, (6) Ramyaka, (7) Ilavrita, (8) Bhad rashva and (9) Ketumala. These are different parts of Jambudvipa. A valley between two mountains is called a khanda or varsha."

Here it may be argued that in the purport cited above, Srila Prabhupada refers to the saptadwipa as islands in space, again suggesting individual planets, rather than one continual Earth plane. However, if the dwipas were islands in the ocean of air, there would be a description of the space between them. For example, the distance in outer space between the planets is stated in chapter 22 of the Fifth Canto of Srimad Bhagvatam. This is not the case for the dwipas and oceans on Bhu-mandala which are described as forming one continuous plane. Unlike the planets such as the sun and moon, which are separated by an ocean of space, these seven islands and oceans are described as resting on the Bhu-mandala plane, not floating in space, or separated from one another by empty space. They simply form a continual land and seascape across the great central plane of the universe. Thus the description reads that after crossing Jambudvipa's 800,000 mile salt water ocean, one comes to Plakshadwipa which is 1,600,000 miles in breadth. Then after crossing the Iksha ocean which is a further 1,600,000 miles wide, one eventually comes to Shalmalidwipa which is 3,200,000 miles wide. In this way, one after the other, the seven islands and oceans form one continual plane with no mention of space between them.

For comparison, think of crossing our own continents and oceans: from America one crosses the Atlantic ocean and comes to Europe; after crossing Europe and South East Asia, one crosses the Indian Ocean and comes to Australia. These are all on the same plane with no 'outer-space' in-between them. If we had sufficient karmic accessibility, we could theoretically continue on our known Earth plane across the Arctic and Antarctica into the other areas of the greater Earth plane. As with our own continents and oceans forming a continual plane without space between them, the seven islands and oceans of Bhu-mandala form a continual plane, although their measurement is colossal by our relative standard. In any case, they are not described as islands floating in space. They are described as the features and varieties of the Bhu-mandala plane.

It must be remembered that Bhu-mandala is the 'earthy substance' upon which this whole landscape is resting. Bhu-mandala is not some nebulous feature in outer space. Sadaputa dasa a prominent disciple of Srila Prabhupada who pioneered research in the field of Vedic cosmology has also conjectured that the Bhu-mandala is the solar system. This cannot be supported because of the clear descriptions of Bhu-mandala as literally the solid 'Earthy' realm. It has substance, weight, etc. Ananta Sesha holds the entire "Bhu-mandala" on His head. It is one huge, massive area spanning 4 billion miles with an interior core of hundreds of thousands of miles containing seven subterranean realms wherein the great serpents and demons live. Just as a round table supporting household objects has form and solidity, similarly, the great Earth circle has form and solidity covering vast areas both along and below its surface. The sun, for example, does not penetrate through this dense Earth structure to provide light to the seven subterranean realms that continue for at least 560,000 miles below the surface of the Great Earth plane. It was from the *substance* of this earthy plane that Priyavrata Maharaja made the seven islands and oceans.

"When Priyavrata drove his chariot behind the sun, the rims of his chariot wheels created impressions that later became seven oceans, dividing the planetary system known as Bhu-mandala into seven islands. (SB 5.1.31)

PURPORT

Sometimes the planets in outer space are called islands. We have experience of various types of islands in the ocean, and similarly the various planets, divided into fourteen lokas, are islands in the ocean of space. As Priyavrata drove his chariot behind the sun, he created seven different types of oceans and planetary systems, which altogether are known as Bhu-mandala, or Bhuloka."

In the above purport Srila Prabhupada again says that the saptadwipa are islands in the ocean of space created by Priyavrata Maharaja. However, this is not a view supported by the previous acharyas who confirm that Priyavrata created the islands from the already existing plane of Bhu-mandala. The acharyas all consistently agree to this point. The following are the commentaries to SB 5.16.2:

"My dear Lord, the rolling wheels of Maharaja Priyavrata's chariot created seven ditches, in which the seven oceans came into existence. Because of these seven oceans, Bhu-mandala is divided into seven islands. You have given a very general description of their measurement, names and characteristics. Now I wish to know of them in detail. Kindly fulfill my desire." (SB 5.16.2)

Comment by Vijayadhvaja Tirtha: The words "yata etat" recall the divisions created by Priyavrata in the Earth-circle. The purport is: the seven seas were formed by the mud scooped (dug) out by the sharp wheels of Priyavrata's chariot. The mud which was scooped out settled solidly as boundaries and became the seven islands (land-fills)

Comment by Srivamsidhara: "There also"- i.e. in the middle of the world also. "By the depression of the chariot's wheels on earth" – i.e. due to the sharpness of the wheels periphery, the earth gets excavated/upturned, [i.e, pits are formed like craters and eventually they become large troughs and eventually seas.

Comment by Giridhari Lala: "There also you said that Priyavrata was circumambulating Mount Meru behind the sun and His chariot's wheels dug up all around the earth (mud), forming the seven seas, the Earth's general division into seven islands was indicated by you.

Comment by Bhagavatprasadacharya: "There" = on Earth also; the seven seas are formed by the seven big craters caused by the wheels of Priyavrata's chariot excavating mud. This Earth's seven islands, Jambu and so on, along with their divisions and subdivisions were indicated by you, O learned one!. This was briefly stated as, "The seven seas were created by the wheels upturning Earth which formed the seven islands of earth," was it not? I am desirous of knowing the earth's description entirely by magnitude, characteristic, and by name.

Here it is clear that the seven islands were formed upon, and from, the substance of the already existing Earth sphere. There is otherwise no landscape in outer space from which the islands and oceans could have been formed. So Bhu-mandala has substance. It is the 'Earthy' platform of 4 billion miles diameter upon which rest the inhabitants of Earth on their respective islands and surrounding oceans. The idea that Bhu-mandala represents our solar system and that the dwipas are planets in space is wrong because Bhu-mandala is a solid plane made of solid Earth. Upon the Earth the seven islands and oceans were formed. This is clear and apparent. As Neolithic people formed great circular monuments from the Earth upon which they stood, so Priyavrata created the colossal circular islands and oceans upon the greater Earth plane. The Earth is thus one vast solid landscape that crosses the center of the universe. Hence, my reason for pointing out earlier, the vague formless impersonal nature of the presentations and animation depicting the seven islands of Bhu-mandala.

Sukadeva Goswami and the acharyas describe the plane of Bhu-mandala beginning with the central island of Jambudwipa, then gradually moving out across the vast expanse of land. They are describing land (Bhu/Earth), not space. And certainly not describing NASA's space ball. Although the Vaisnava acharyas right up to the 18th and 19th century continued to faithfully follow the description provided by Sukadeva Goswami, everyone lost sight of the Vedic Earth concept because by this time, the words Bhu-mandala and Bhu-gola were being mistakenly translated by Christian translators as Earth globe, and in one stroke, the real Earth was disappeared (see section 1.5)

May I point out here that my purpose in presenting these arguments is not to compete with Srila Prabhupada, the Founder-Acharya of ISKCON with the intention of somehow surpassing him in learning. I can imagine comparisons to Vallabha Batta's foolish attempts to surpass Sridhara Swami. But this jiva is eternally indebted to Srila Prabhupada for mercifully coming into my life with the *Message of Godhead*, and my honest intention is to sincerely follow Srila Prabhupada's direction to present the Vedic cosmology according to Srimad Bhagavatam. I know that Srila Prabhupada wanted nothing more than that Srimad Bhagavatam be presented as it is spoken by Sukadeva Goswami. If people take my intentions the wrong way, then so be it. Krishna knows the heart! And may I caution the fault-finders such as Rajasehara dasa, that it would be wise to know the heart of another person before making any false accusations about their motives, or to condemn the source of inspiration for presenting this explanation of the Vedic Earth.

As the Hare Krishna mantra rises in the world dispersing the darkness of untruths, deceptions, and illusions, the truth of the world, and one's place within it will eventually be revealed. If one accepts Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then one should accept the real feature of Krishna's creation as it is described in Srimad Bhagavatam. Shocking as it sounds; the Earth created by Krishna is not a globe, but rather a vast plane that spans the universe.

CHAITANYA MAHAPRABHU AND THE EARTH OF SEVEN ISLANDS

The sankirtan movement (congregational chanting of the Holy Names of God) inaugurated by Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu in West Bengal five hundred years ago is not limited to the world as we know it - the so-called Earth globe. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's movement is universal. As explained in the following verses:

"The more the five members of the Pancha-tattva cause the rains of love of Godhead to fall, the more the inundation increases and spreads all over the world (tri-bhuvane — all over the three worlds)." Caitanya Caritamrita, Adi-lila 7.28

"In the activities of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the three worlds dance and chant (tri-bhuvana nace) having come in touch with love of Godhead. This is the characteristic of His pastimes." (C.C Antya 3.267)

"Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His associates of the Pancha-tattva distributed the holy name of the Lord to invoke love of Godhead throughout the universe (vishva) and thus the entire universe was thankful." (C.C Adi 7.163)

"The Lord is situated in all the universes in different forms just to please His devotees. Thus the Lord destroys irreligious principles and establishes religious principles." (CC Madhya 20.219)

Now, what is really interesting in Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's pastimes, is that pilgrims from all over the universe would come to meet Him at Jagannatha Puri in India, in order to pay their homage at His lotus feet, to witness His pastimes of chanting and dancing in ecstatic love of God, and perhaps also to hear some instruction. The Caitanya-caritamrita particularly mentions that pilgrims were coming to see Him from all of the seven islands of Bhu-mandala (sapta-dwipa) which would include, of course, our closest neighbours on Jambudwipa, as well as those from the other khandas of Bharata-varsha:

"Similarly, people who went to Jagannatha Puri from various provinces of India were fully satisfied after seeing the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu." (C.C Antya-lila 2.9)

"People from all over the universe, including the seven islands (sapta-dvipera loka—people from all of the seven islands within the universe), the nine khandas, the planets of the demigods, Gandharvaloka and Kinnaraloka, would go there in the forms of human beings." (Sri Caitanya Caritamrita Antya-lila 2.10)

Purport: "For an explanation of sapta-dvipa, see Madhya-lila, Chapter Twenty, verse 218, and Srimad-Bhagavatam, Fifth Canto, Chapters Sixteen and Twenty."

In the above purport Srila Prabhupada refers us the four chapters of Srimad Bhagavatam that describe the seven islands (sapta-dwipa) of Bhu-mandala. Thus, there can be no doubt that the verse is explaining that pilgrims from Jambudwipa and the other islands of Bhu-mandala were coming to visit Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. In case anyone is any doubt that the seven islands mentioned here are those of Bhu-mandala, in the purport Srila Prabhupada also refers us to Madhya-lila, Chapter Twenty, verse 218 wherein it is stated:

"Within the universe (brahma-madhye) the Lord is situated in different spiritual manifestations. These are situated on seven islands (sapta-dwipa) in nine sections (nava-khanda). Thus Their pastimes are going on.

PURPORT

The seven islands are mentioned in the Siddhanta-Siromani:

The seven islands (dvipas) are known as (1) Jambu, (2)Shaka, (3) Shamali, (4) Kusha, (5) Krauncha, (6) Gomeda, or Plaksha, and (7) Pushkara. The planets are called dvipas. Outer space is like an ocean of air. Just as there are islands in the watery ocean, these planets in the ocean of space are called dvipas, or islands in outer space. There are nine khandas, known as (1) Bharata, (2) Kinnara, (3) Hari, (4) Kuru, (5) Hiranmaya, (6) Ramyaka, (7) Ilavrita, (8) Bhadrashva and (9) Ketumala. These are different parts of Jambudvipa. A valley between two mountains is called a khanda or varsha."

Here the names of the seven islands are listed, including Jambudvipa. The idea being that residents of Jambudvipa and the other islands were somehow able to travel from their own regions into our Earth area. Remember these distances cover hundreds of thousands of miles, and the furthest island away (Puskaradwipa) is some hundreds of millions of miles away. Closer to home, it also mentions the names of the nine khandas or divisions of Bharata-varsha. Again these areas of Bharata-varsha stretch over an area of 72,000 miles, and so they are referring to places of the greater Earth that we have not yet discovered. Although we don't know of their existence, pilgrims from those places obviously know of our existence, and in disguise as ordinary humans they came to visit Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in Jagannatha Puri (India) only 500 years ago.

In the purport cited above, Srila Prabhupada refers to the *sapta-dwipa* as islands in space, suggesting individual planets, rather than one continual Earth plane. We have discussed this point in the previous section entitled: *Are the Sapta-Dwipa Planets in Space?*

Further verses from Caitanya-caritamrta confirm that contact with the other islands on the plane of Bhu-mandala has been on-going; only 500 years ago at Jagannatha Puri in India, Caitanya Mahaprabhu was receiving guests from all over the Bhu-mandala and beyond:

"Thus Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu lived at Nilacala [Jagannatha Purī] with His personal devotees, always merged in ecstatic love for Krishna." (CC Antya-lila, 9.4)

"People from the three worlds used to come visit Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Anyone who saw Him received the transcendental treasure of love for Krishna." (CC Antya-lila 9.7)

"The inhabitants of the seven higher planetary systems — including the demigods, the Gandharvas and the Kinnaras — and the inhabitants of the seven lower planetary systems [Patalaloka], including the demons and serpentine living entities, all visited Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in the dress of human beings." (CC Antya-lila 9.8)

"Dressed in different ways, people from the seven islands (sapta-dwipa) and nine khandas (nava-khanda) visited Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu." (CC Antya-lila 9.9)

"Prahlada Maharaja, Bali Maharaja, Vyasadeva, Sukadeva Gosvami and other great sages came to visit Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Upon seeing Him, they became unconscious in ecstatic love for Krishna." (CC Antya-lila 9.10)

Again it mentions *sapta-dwipa* in verse 9.9. As already explained, the *sapta-dwipa* are the islands created on Bhu-mandala by Priyavrata Maharaja (see SB 5.1.31-33) and include Jambudvipa. Here it states again that residents from Jambudvipa were in contact with Chaitanya Mahaprabhu only 500 years ago. In verse 9.10, it mentions that Prahlada Maharaja also came to visit Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Prahlada Maharaja is a resident of Hari-varsha which is on the mainland of Jambudvipa as described in Chapter 18 of the Fifth Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam. Somehow or other, these residents of Jambudvipa and the other islands of Bhu-mandala were able to go back and forth from Bharata-varsha. At present, the residents of Bharata-varsha are restricted from entering these areas, but the same restriction does not seem to hold for those outside of Bharata-varsha entering into this region.

The verses cited above raise an obvious question: if pilgrims from the 800,000-mile island of Jambudvipa were coming to see Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in India only 500 years ago, where is this massive Jambudvipa Island in relation to the so-called Earth globe? How do supporters of the globe explain this? Such a description of pilgrims coming from Jambudvipa to India certainly creates an elephant in the room for the supporters of the globe idea.

From the above verses, it is clear that in the 15th century when Krishna das Kaviraja Goswami wrote the Caitanya-caritamrta, that Vaishnavas or devotees of Krishna were still referring to the Earth as characterized by seven islands. This seems to be the accepted conception of the Vedic Earth that they believed in. Sri Caitanya Mahprabhu Himself also speaks of the Earth in these terms:

"The sun moves across the zodiac day and night and crosses the oceans between the seven islands one after the other." (Madhya-lila 20.387)

Here the words used are *sapta-dvipa-ambudhi*, seven islands and oceans. Thus Caitanya-caritamrta adheres to the commonly accepted Puranic description of the Earth, and there is otherwise no mention that Earth is globe-shaped. Moreover, the statements from Caitanya-caritamrta clearly expound that contact with the greater Earth or Bhu-mandala has been on-going despite knowledge of Bhu-mandala being practically expunged from the consciousness of modern Hindus. Knowledge of the horizontal plane model of Earth has, however, continued strongly in the Jain tradition, despite the lack of awareness in the rest of the world's population who have been indoctrinated into believing that they are on a ball spinning around in dark lonely space.

It is the responsibility of those involved for the presentations at the Mayapur Temple of Vedic Planetarium (TOVP) to first comprehend, realize, and then explain the real situation of the great Earth plane. Just as we are taught geography in school, and learn to understand about direction and distance, as well as the names, shapes, and characteristics of other places in the world, so the world should also know about the names, shapes, and characteristics of the places in the greater Earth area as described in Srimad Bhagavatam. This is one of the functions of the TOVP.

A person living in England would be considered ignorant if they did not know something about the geography of the world, and of the existence, distances, directions, etc., of other places in the world like India or America. The world, indeed, was once like that; and even the existence of America was unknown to Europeans before the chance discovery in 1492 by Christopher Columbus. Unfortunately, the people of our modern world are in a similar state of complete ignorance about lands that lay further along, and beyond, our known Earth area. The true feature of the Earth plane is unknown.

Sukadeva Goswami gives the names, measurements, and directions of these other areas from our own Earth area. Our closest neighbour is a place called Kimpurusha-varsha, which is further along the northern plane (across the Arctic region), by only a few thousand miles. Sukadeva Goswami describes this in summary. The plane then continues into the other varshas of Jambudwipa. The globe model of the Earth cannot accommodate this description. Unfortunately, the head of our present TOVP cosmology department (as of July 2016), due to lacking either the understanding or the faith in this concept, is committed to presenting and explaining the Earth as a globe in space. However, one simple question remains unanswered: If Bharata-varsha (where the assumed Earth globe is reputedly situated) is part of Jambudwipa; where is the rest of the 800,000-mile island of Jambudwipa described by Sukadeva Goswami?

One cannot take the easy way out by saying it must be in another dimension, because Sukadeva Goswami does not describe it as such. It is all within the same dimension. Indeed, we swim in the same salt-water ocean that surrounds the rest of Jambudwipa. Our oceans, however, form only a fraction of the over-all salt-water ocean, which is a further 800,000 miles in breadth. Again, this conception makes no sense from the description of Earth as a globe in space.

Whether one *likes* it or not, or *believes* in it or not, the horizontal plane model of the Earth is the only one that can accommodate the description of Sukadeva Goswami. Due to the almost impenetrable propaganda that the Earth is a globe in space, it may seem far-fetched to us now that the Earth actually continues on a vast plane. However, the revelation of Srimad Bhagavatam will provide the impetus for a new science that proves (1) the Earth cannot be a globe; and (2) the Earth is indeed on a horizontal plane. Furthermore, as predicted in Caitanya-caritamrta, the sankirtan movement will gradually spread from India, throughout the whole world and across the universe, suggesting that at some point in the future, contact with the other areas of Jambudwipa may be re-established:

"The sankirtana movement went on from one part of the town to another, as the Lord wan-

dered everywhere performing kirtana. In this way He inundated the whole world (tri-bhuva-na—all the three worlds) by distributing love of Godhead. (C.C. Adi 13.32)

PURPORT

One may raise the question how all three worlds became inundated with love of Krishna, since Chaitanya Mahaprabhu performed kirtana only in the Navadvipa area. The answer is that Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is Krishna Himself. The entire cosmic manifestation results from the Lord's first setting it in motion. Similarly, since the sankirtana movement was first set in motion five hundred years ago by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's desire that it spread all over the universe, the Krishna consciousness movement, in continuity of that same motion, is now spreading all over the world, and in this way it will gradually spread all over the universe. With the spread of the Krishna consciousness movement, everyone will merge in an ocean of love of Krishna."

SECTION 1.4 — IS BHARATA-VARSHA A GLOBE?

Now let us look at the verses describing Bharata-varsha itself, the place where the continents of our own Earth area are situated. There is no denying that Srila Prabhupada referred thousands of times to the Earth as a globe or planet, and I'm not trying to present an argument that Srila Prabhupada believed otherwise. Srila Prabhupada spoke very much as if he believed that the Earth on which he walked was round and floating in space; and there are many of his conversations, commentaries, etc, to support that notion. In conversation, Srila Prabhupada also seemingly rejected the idea that the Earth was flat. However, Srila Prabhupada's cherished book, the Srimad Bhagavatam, gives a completely different description of the Earth, and so an issue arises between statements of an acharya and descriptions in the sastra. I am merely pointing out what these differences are, so that an informed discussion can take place on the topic of the shape and location of the Earth. I believe this seeming contradiction can be resolved by taking Srila Prabhupada's own advice which is to follow the description of Srimad Bhagavatam. As explained in Part Two of this paper, Srila Prabhupada humbly presented himself as a layman in Srimad Bhagavatam's cosmology, and basically instructed his disciples to figure it out.

The only Sanskrit words in Srimad Bhagavatam that correspond to 'Earth' and 'round' are Bhu-gola, Bhu-mandala, Dhara-mandala, etc; all names which refer to the great Earth circle of 4 billion miles diameter. There is no name for Bharata-varsha itself which corresponds to 'round Earth,' 'planet,' or 'globe.' The only name for Bharata-varsha is of course 'Bharata-varsha' which means the district of Jambudwipa named after King Bharata. Bharata-varsha, therefore, does not mean or translate as 'Earth planet' or 'Earth globe' and is not described as such (see below). Thus in conversation when Srila Prabhupada attributes the name Bhu-gola to the round Earth (meaning the assumed globular planet of 24,900 mile circumference), the use of the Bhu-gola name is not actually correlative to the assumed Earth Globe. And there is actually no equivalent Sanskrit nomenclature or description that would identify Bharata-varsha as a globe in space.

Sanskrit words usually have a connection to the nature of a thing. Thus Bhu-mandala is the name of the area that is made of earth and in the form of a round or circular shape. The name is thus connected with the nature of the thing being described. Bharata-varsha by contrast has no such connotation. In fact, the word varsha tells us that it is merely a particular division of a larger landscape; and not a complete entity such as an entire globe.

In all of the historical narrations that are mentioned in Srimad Bhagavatam involving places upon the Bhu-mandala such as Varahadeva lifting the Earth, or Prithu Maharaja leveling the Earth, Srila Prabhupada conflates/identifies Bhu-mandala as the assumed Earth globe when they are in fact two completely different conceptions. For example in SB 3.13.41 we read:

"O Lord, as the peaks of great mountains become beautiful when decorated with clouds, Your transcendental body has become beautiful because of Your lifting the earth on the edge of Your tusks." (Sb 3.13.41)

Although we may have the idea here that Varahadeva was lifting NASA's globe in space, in fact the Lord was lifting the entire bhu-mandala. Here the word bhu-mandala is clearly used: sau-karam — the boar; *bhu-mandalena* — by the earth planet; atha — now; data — by the tusk; dhrte-

na— sustained by. Again:

"After this, the king of all kings, Maharaja Prthu, leveled all rough places on the surface of the globe by breaking up the hills with the strength of his bow. By his grace the surface of the globe almost became flat." (Sb 4.18.29)

Here again Srila Prabhupada uses the words 'surface of the globe,' and we naturally think of NASA's globe in space. In fact, the Sanskrit word for Earth that is used here is again a reference to the entire *bhu-mandala* as seen in the text itself: *curnayan*— making into pieces; *sva*— his own; *dhanuh-kotya*— by the power of his bow; *giri* — of the hills; *kutani*— the tops; *raja-rat*— the emperor; *bhu-mandalam*— the whole earth.

There are hundreds of examples of this where the *Bhu-mandala* or equivalent Sanskrit terms for *Bhu-mandala* have become conflated with an assumed Earth globe when there is in fact no comparison between the two. *The Bhu-mandala or Bhu-gola as described above is 4 billion miles in diameter and stretches across the center of the universe.* The *Bhu-mandala* is not the same thing as the assumed Earth globe. It is a great cosmic circle, not a globe. The *Bhu-mandala* is characterized by having seven islands and seven oceans measuring hundreds and millions of miles. The smallest island is called *Jambudwipa* and is a mere 800,000 miles in breadth. At the southern end of *Jambudwipa* is *Bharata-varsha* measuring 72,000 miles in area. An area of 72,000 miles in length and lying on a horizontal plane is not the same as an area of 24,900 miles in circumference and floating in space. *Bharata-varsha* is not described as a globe in space. It is described as part of the circular island of *Jambudwipa* which itself rests on the great circular plane of *Bhu-mandala*.

The confusion arises because Srila Prabhupada translates *Bhu-mandala* as Earth globe and then applies the name to *Bharata-varsha* (our supposed Earth planet). Like it or not, the result of this conflation is that an Earth globe has appeared out of nowhere. However, *Bhu-mandala* and *Bharata-varsha* are not the same entity. To identify *Bhu-mandala* (the Earth circle of 4 billion miles) with an assumed Earth globe of 24,900 miles is a misnomer. *Bharata-varsha* is not described as a globe in space, nor is it described as being synonymous with the *Bhu-mandala/Bhu-gola* itself. It is part of the *Bhu-mandala* as pepperoni is part of a pizza. Since the pepperoni is part of the pizza, and not the pizza itself, it would be incorrect to call a slice of pepperoni a pizza. Similarly, since *Bharata-varsha* is only part of *Bhu-mandala* it is incorrect to apply the name *Bhu-mandala* (round Earth) to *Bharata-varsha* (the country of Bharata). Due to merging two separate places (*Bhu-mandala* and *Bharata-varsha*), and then identifying 'the round Earth' with NASA's assumed globe in space, a single Earth globe conception has replaced Sukadeva's clear distinction between the great Earth circle of 4 billion miles diameter, and one of its small but very important features, namely, the varsha of Bharata.

Conflation happens when the identities of two or more individuals, concepts, or places, sharing some characteristics of one another, seem to be a single identity, ... (Wiki) In a letter to Svarupa Damodara, Srila Prabhupada wrote: "So now you all Ph.D.'s must carefully study the details of the Fifth Canto and make a working model of the universe." (Auckland, 27 April, 1976). But when we carefully study the details of the 5th Canto, we find there is no Earth globe. There is no verse, statement, concept, Sanskrit word, etc, that identifies *Bharata-varsha* as a globe in space. it simply doesn't exist. And so if the devotees are to create a 'model' that explains 'the passing seasons, eclipses, phases of the moon, passing of day and night, etc,' then it will be necessary to go back and look once again at the actual description of Earth given by Sukadeva Goswami, and not simply work from an assumed idea of an Earth-globe that comes from non-Vedic sources; or from interpolations on secondary texts such as *Surya Siddhanta* (see section 1.5).

The actual description of *Bharata-varsha*'s shape and location is given at the start of chapter 16 of the Fifth Canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. First Sukadeva Goswami says that *Jambudwipa* is 800,000 miles in breadth and is round like a lotus leaf: *samavartulah*—equally round, or having a length and breadth of the same measurement; *yatha*—like; *pushkara-patram*—a lotus leaf (SB 5.16.5). A round lotus leaf looks like this:



Figure 11

In other words Jambudwipa is like a huge round super-continent. This continent is then divided into nine areas:

"In Jambudvipa there are nine divisions of land, each with a length of 9,000 yojanas [72,000 miles]. There are eight mountains that mark the boundaries of these divisions and separate them nicely." (SB 5.16.6)

So let us just closely follow the description here: Jambudwipa has been described thus far, as an 800,000-mile round circular island divided into nine sections by various mountain ranges. The southern section of Jambudwipa is called Bharata-varsha (where our Earth area is located) and is measured at 72,000 miles. The image below shows an aerial view of Jambudwipa with its nine divisions, and Bharata-varsha in the southern direction:

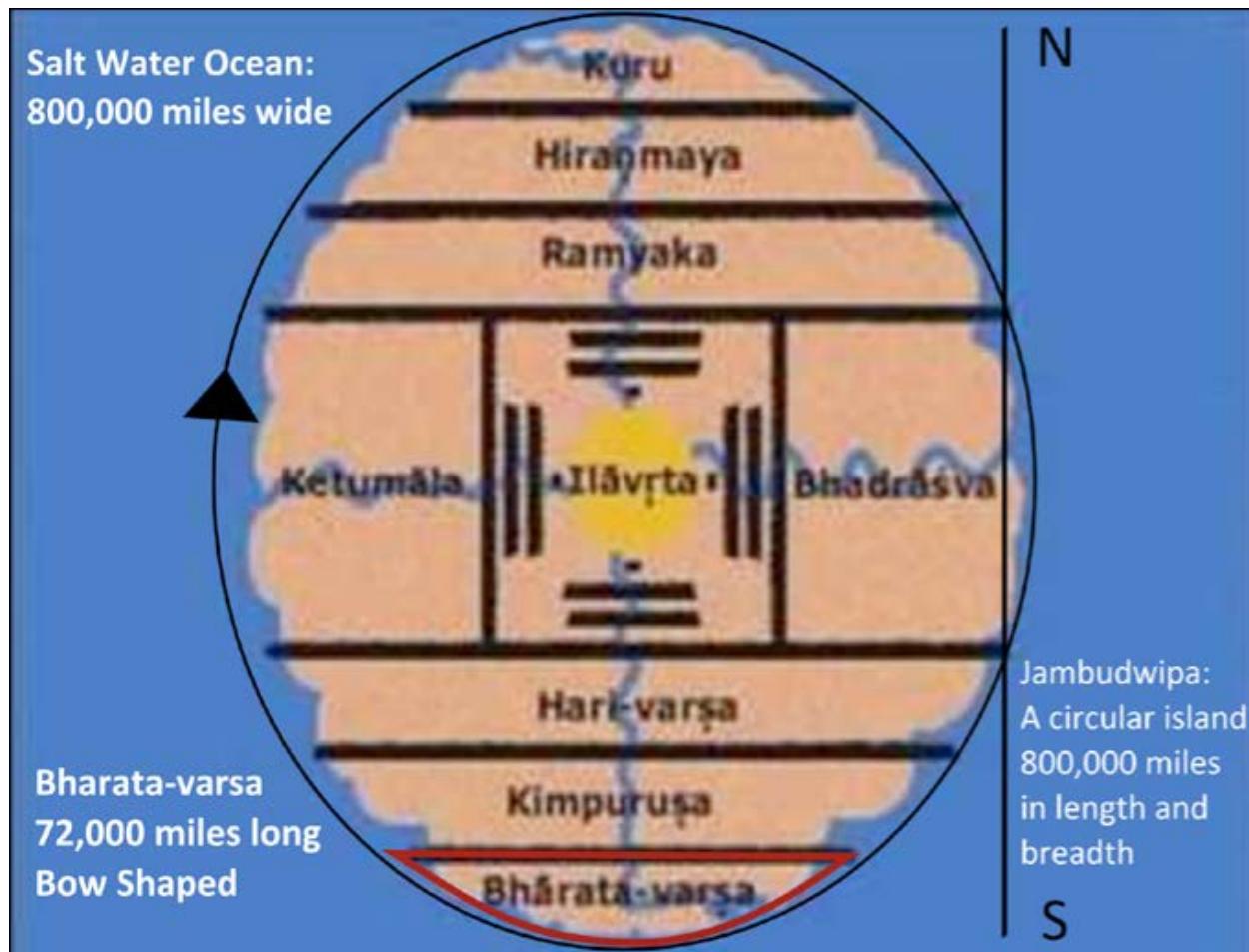


Figure 12

Bharata-varsha is thus part of the same plane as the rest of Jambudwipa. It is not a separate entity floating alone in space. Think of a round metal plate such as an India thali, which contains various divisions:



Figure 13

Although part of the plate rises to make a demarcation between each section, all of the sections remain part of the same plate; similarly, although Jambudwipa is divided by various mountain regions into nine regions, each of these regions remains an integral part of the complete island. Thus, Bharata-varsha is not described as a separate globe entity floating off on its own in space, rather Bharata-varsha is described as the southern part of Jambudwipa Island. This is explained in the next verse:

"South of Ilavrta-varsha and extending from east to west are three great mountains named (from north to south) Nishadha, Hemakuta and Himalaya. Each of them is 10,000 yojanas [80,000 miles] high. They mark the boundaries of the three varshas named Hari-varsha, Kimpurusha-varsha and Bharata-varsha [India]." (SB 5.16.9)

A more detailed image of Jambudwipa including other features such as Mount Meru in the center would look something like this:

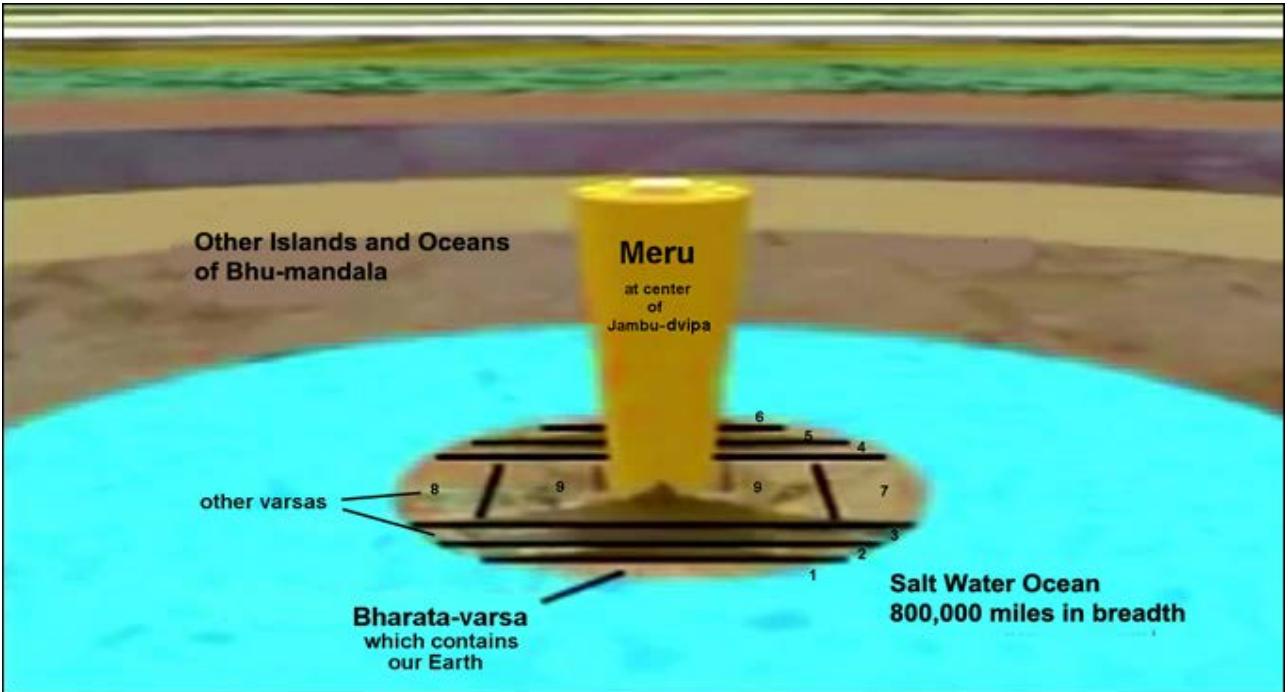


Figure 14

Where is NASA's globe in space in this description? If a tract of land is described as being 72,000 miles long, and at the southern side of a round island 800,000 miles in breadth, such a description obviously does not correspond to the description of Earth as a 24,900 mile globe floating in space!

Indeed, Bharata-varsha is not even included with the list of grahas or planets mentioned in Srimad Bhagavatam. All of these planets are named and their distance *above* the plane of Bhu-mandala is calculated. Bharata-varsha is resting on the horizontal plane of Bhu-mandala, not floating *above* it somewhere in space. The following is a brief from Uttamasloka dasa a disciple of Srila Prabhupada that we shall repeat again from a previous paper:

"Uttamasloka Prabhu: In the 5th canto there is the description of the sky and outer space, ie: the antariksa. There are two chapters - 21-22 - which describe the motion of the sun and other planets - grahas. Nowhere in those chapters is there any mention of 'earth', or Bhu-mandala, or Bharata-varsa being one of the grahas/planets in the antariksa. Why not? Because 'earth' is not a globe in the antariksa, or it would have been clearly described as such and included with the other planets orbiting around Meru. But it is not. The only planets mentioned are: sun, moon, rahu, mercury, venus, mars, jupiter and saturn. That's it.

The antariksa is clearly described as being above Bhu-mandala and as being the same in length and breadth as Bhu-mandala, ie: 4 billion miles in diameter. The celestial svargas are also described as being the same size, length and breadth-wise, and they are positioned above the antariksa. The antariksa is thus 'above' Bhu-mandala and 'below' the celestial svargas - in between them both.

The positions of the planets relative to one another are also given. They are stacked up vertically in the antariksa along with the stars/constellations. There is no mention about an 'earth globe' being part of this arrangement or that it is in the antariksa. Nothing whatsoever. Why not? Earth is also not described that way in chapter 23 which describes the form of the dolphin.

So if the earth is a globe, then where exactly is it 'floating'? Why is its position in the antariksa not mentioned at all? And there is certainly no mention of it 'spinning' or hurtling through space along with the sun and other planets."

So if anyone thinks they've found a description of the space ball in any verse of Srimad Bhagavatam then please let us know. Otherwise, let's take the description and perspective of Sukadeva Goswami and present that to the world. Srila Prabhupada's directive is to present the TOVP according to the description of Sukadeva Goswami. So there you have it. If anyone finds another

description, let us know. Good luck...

This, of course, may send alarm bells ringing that we will simply present ourselves to the world as a bunch of religious fanatics, completely oblivious to the real facts of modern science that explain and depict the Earth as a planet rotating around the sun. However, there actually is a science that can be used to support the horizontal plane model of a stationary Earth. The problem is that the science has been suppressed due to the ascendancy of the globe model. It thus behoves all interested parties to make a thorough investigation into the arguments for a flat-Earth, as well as taking some time to research the colossal hoax that NASA has pulled on the world in their depiction of the Earth as a globe in space. For those who can't immediately accept the validity of Sukadeva Goswami's description of the Earth, it may be easier to start by examining the validity of NASA's images and videos of the Earth from outer space.

When we look at the description of Bharata-varsha in context of the general description of Jambudwipa, it is clearly not describing a planet in space. Firstly, Jambudwipa is described as being round like a lotus leaf. Jambudwipa is resting on the surface of Bhu-mandala, which is the solid 'earthy' foundation upon which everything else rests. In other words, the hard solid 'earth' foundation upon which we stand continues for hundreds of millions of miles. Jambudwipa itself is just the central island of a series of seven islands and oceans that rest on the great Earth circle (Bhu-mandala). As a round plate rests on a round table, so the round island of Jambudwipa with its surrounding islands rests on the round circular foundation of Bhu-mandala. This is not a description of a small globe in space; it is the description of a particular feature upon the great Earth circle of four billion miles diameter.

Jambudwipa is thus resting on a surface, it is not floating in space. Bharata-varsha itself is one small part of that surface. The Sanskrit word varsha is not the same as graha (planet) as Prabhupada translates in the following verse:

"Of Rsabhadeva's one hundred sons, the eldest, named Bharata, was a great, exalted devotee qualified with the best attributes. In his honor, this planet has become known as Bharata-varsha." (SB 5.4.9)

varsham—planet; bharatam—Bharata; iti—thus; vyapadishanti—people call.

Here Srila Prabhupada translates the name Bharata-varsha as a planet; but this is not a verse describing the shape and location of Bharata-varsha, which would otherwise identify it as a planet as such. We have already presented the verses in which Bharata-varsha is described as a region of Jambudwipa. Perhaps in the purport here, Srila Prabhupada is just letting the uninformed reader know, that Bharata-varsha is the name of our own Earth region and so Srila Prabhupada uses the conventional word 'planet.'

"Learned scholars chant about the transcendental qualities of Lord Rsabhadeva in this way: "Oh, this earthly planet contains seven seas and many islands and lands, of which Bharata-varsha is considered the most pious. People of Bharata-varsha are accustomed to glorifying the activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His incarnations as Lord Rsabhadeva and others. All these activities are very auspicious for the welfare of humanity." (SB 5.16.13)

Here again, we may get the impression that Srila Prabhupada's translation of *bhuvah sampa-samudravatya dvipeshu* as the 'Earthly planet containing seven seas and islands' is indeed referring to NASA's globe, and that Bharata-varsha is simply a place name upon the globe, namely India. In fact, *bhuvah sampa-samudravatya dvipeshu* is the standard way of describing Bhu-mandala (the Earth circle with seven islands and oceans) as already discussed and described by Sukadeva Goswami in Chapter 20 of the Fifth Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam. These seven islands are hundreds of miles in area. The seven oceans are made of milk, ghee, liquor, etc. The sampa-dwipa is obviously a description of something very different from the assumed globe. Bharata-varsha is a 72,000-mile part of Jambudwipa itself, not simply a small part of the assumed globe called India. India is of course part of Bharata-varsha, as is the whole of our known Earth area; but even this is just a small percentage of the complete size of Bharata-varsha. Inferring from Sukadeva Goswami's calculation of the size of Bharata-varsha as 72,000 miles, there are other areas of Bharata-varsha that we have not even discovered yet.

Again, in this next verse, although we get a translation of Bharata-varsha as a planet, the verse

itself is not offering a description as such.

"Formerly this planet was known as Ajanabha-varsha, but since Maharaja Bharata's reign, it has become known as Bharata-varsha. (SB 5.7.3)

PURPORT

This planet was formerly known as Ajanabha because of the reign of King Nabhi. After Bharata Maharaja ruled the planet, it became celebrated as Bharata-varsha."

Srila Prabhupada translates Bharta-varsha as a 'planet' when the Sanskrit is only referring to Bharata as a varsha (*varsham bharatam iti*). The understanding of the word varsha as a division of Jambudwipa is otherwise clear from Sukadeva Goswami's description. Sukadeva Goswami is not describing a planet floating in space. He is describing a division of Jambudwipa, a circular land mass that rests on the plane of Bhu-mandala. Srila Prabhupada confirms this understanding elsewhere in a purport of the Caitanya-caritamrta:

"There are nine khandas, known as (1) Bharata, (2) Kinnara, (3) Hari, (4) Kuru, (5) Hiranmaya, (6) Ramyaka, (7) Ilavrta, (8) Bhadrashva and (9) Ketumala. These are different parts of Jambudvipa. **A valley between two mountains is called a khanda or varsha.**" (Sri Caitanya Caritamrita, Madhya-lila, 20.218)

It should be evident that the word varsha is clearly not referring to a planet; the Sanskrit word varsha simply refers to a division of land. Indeed, the Sanskrit dictionary defines varsha as a 'division of the Earth as separated off by certain mountains'.

THE NINE DIVISIONS OF BHARATA-VARSHA

As we have heard, Bharata-varsha is described as being an area of 72,000 miles (SB 5.16.6). Other Puranas such as Vishnu Purana, Vayu Purana, and Markendaya Purana, mention that this area is further divided into nine sections known as nava-dwipa (nine islands). The following verse from Srimad Bhagavatam confirms this division into nine islands:

"Of the one hundred sons of Lord Rsabhadeva, the eldest, Bharata, was completely devoted to Lord Narayana. It is because of Bharata's fame that this planet is now celebrated as the great Bharata-varsha..."

Nine of the remaining sons of Rsabhadeva became the rulers of the nine islands (nava-dwipa) of Bharata-varsha, and they exercised complete sovereignty over this planet. Eighty-one sons became twice-born brahmanas and helped initiate the Vedic path of fruitive sacrifices [karma-kanda]."

Again, the translation here of Bharata-varsha as 'planet' lends to the confusion. The text is not referring to the assumed planet of 24,900 miles circumference. Since Bharata-varsha is 72,000 miles in length (SB 5.16.6), then each of these nine areas of Bharata-varsha would be approximately 8,000 miles each. The measure of a thousand yojanas or 8,000 miles is also found in Vishnu Purana and other Puranas: In the Vishnu Purana it is stated:

"Hear about the nine division of Bharata: Indradvipa, Kasheru, Tamravarna, Gabhastiman, Nagadvipa, Saumya, Gandarva, Varuna, and the ninth, bordering the ocean, which is a thousand yojanas [8,000 miles] from north to south."

So what are these nine islands of Bharata-varsha referring to? Is this description of the ninth dwipa measuring 8,000 miles from north to south, a description of our own Earth area? In the *Vedic Cosmos* video, Danavir Goswami has presented the idea that these nine islands refer to our own Earth area, and eight other areas of equivalent size. The idea is presented in the image below, which shows our own Earth area and the other eight islands of Bharata-varsha situated at the southern area of Jambudwipa:

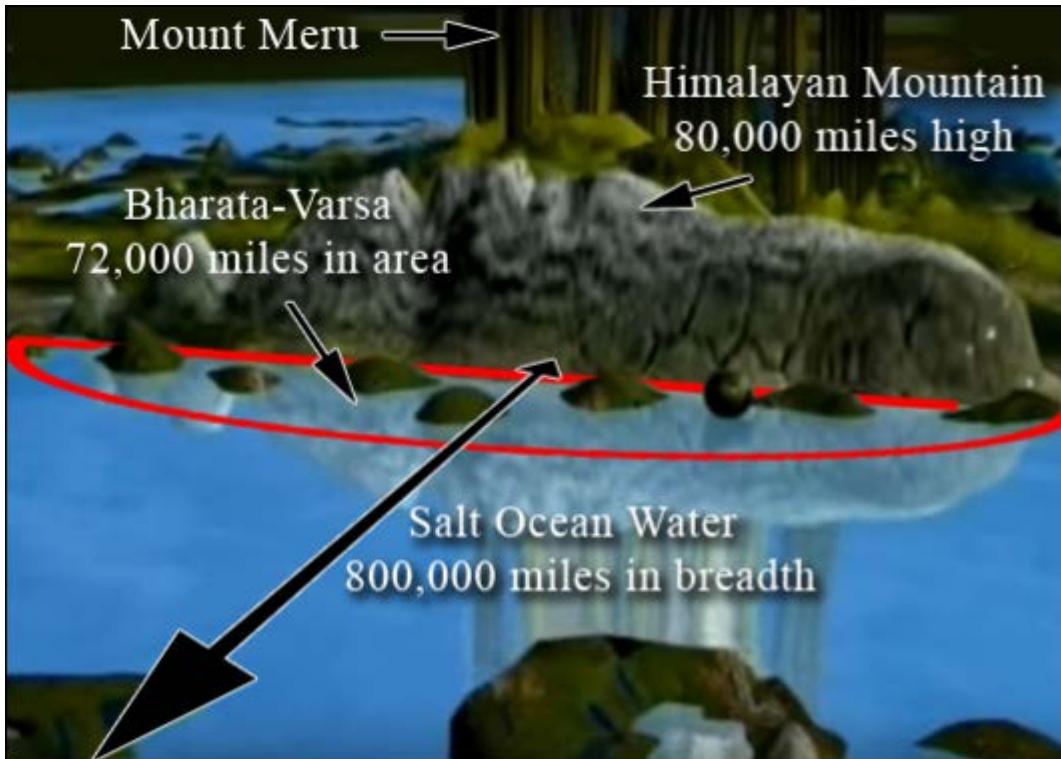


Figure 15

Here we see the nine islands or divisions of Bharata-varsha located at the southern side of Jambudwipa. Apart from the depiction here of the Earth as a globe-shaped ball floating on the salt-water water, this understanding of nava-dwipa makes the most sense to me. The continents of Earth, however, should simply be depicted lying flat on the horizontal plane and surrounded by the ocean, which is in fact how they appear to our perception. Indeed, wherever one flies in this world, one flies parallel to a horizontal plane at a cruising altitude of 30-35,000 ft. (and the pilots do not take any account for the so-called curvature of the Earth). We fly over a flat horizontal plane all the way from London to Sydney, but somehow we have become convinced that we are flying 'down under' a globe. The continents of the Earth, however, do not curve around a ball-shaped globe, but rather lie flat along a horizontal plane.

Although the continents of the Earth lie flat on the plane of Bhu-mandala, and are surrounded by ocean, these oceans continue as in the prior diagram from *Vedic Cosmos* above, and lead into other land areas of the Bhu-mandala. These other areas, however, are inaccessible at the present time. The formation of the icy regions of Arctic and Antarctica present formidable physical barriers to further travel. There are other restrictive forces imposed by devas to prevent access to these areas. However, beyond these regions are the greater lands of Bhu-mandala.

Srimad Bhagavatam describes Jambudwipa as being surrounded by a salt-water ocean of 800,000 miles. Since the continents of our own Earth area are surrounded by salt-water ocean, we can understand that our own oceans form only a tiny fraction of the complete salt-water ocean. It would also suggest that our oceans continue further than we realize. Otherwise, where is the rest of the salt-water ocean in the globe conception? Going in a northern direction, our oceans would lead us to the mainland of Jambudwipa itself; and going to the east and west, our oceans would lead us into the other eight areas of Bharata-varsha. These areas would be of equivalent size to our Earth, and somewhere in the vicinity of our known Earth area, but for whatever reason, we cannot access them. Although we see the Earth (in the area of Bharata-varsha) depicted above as being surrounded by vast areas of land and ocean, it appears that certain forces prevent us from travelling further than our present jurisdiction. Vayu Purana says:

*"bharatasyasya varshasya nava bhedan nibodhata
sagarantarita jneyas te tv agamyah parasparam*

Hear about the nine divisions of Bharata. They border the ocean and one cannot go from one to the other."

Vayu Purana also mentions other huge continents to the south of Bharata-varsha that have not been discovered yet. Again, this makes absolutely no sense if we conceive of the Earth as a globe. The identification of Bharata-varsha as simply the territory of India, or even the whole world itself makes no sense from the globe conception. Bharata-varsha is a much greater area than the globe accounts for. If Bharata-varsha is altogether 72,000 miles long and the Earth globe is calculated at 24,900 miles, then where is the other 47,100 miles? Can anyone answer?

Moreover, if the Earth is not a globe, the size of 24,900 miles circumference is questionable. What actually is the correct distance from north to south of our known Earth area? Is it 8,000 miles as various Purana describe? The indication seems to be that 8,000 miles is the furthest we can travel north and south before being checked by some force that obliges us to return. The standard measurement from North Pole to South Pole is a distance of some 12,000 miles, but these measurements based on Eratosthenes calculations for a globe are questionable. Moreover, the so-called North and South Pole are just arbitrary points designated by explorers in the early 1900's.

According to Sukadeva Goswami's description, the Earth plane actually continues beyond these points along the same horizontal plane and does not in fact curve around on itself as would be the case on a globe. There has been, in fact, no complete North-South circumnavigation around the so-called globe. Explorers to these so-called Polar regions simply go north to a certain point, and then turn back south as one would do when going north and back south in any country. The idea of going north and south around a globe is an illusion. The description of north-south travel on Bhu-mandala is always along a horizontal plane not a vertical one.

In any case, the description of these nine islands of Bharata-varsha completely shatters any idea that Bharata-varsha is a globe. They are described as islands being surrounded by seawater, not space, as would be the case with globular planets. They are further described as being situated to the south of Himavat, the 80,000-mile mountain that separates Bharata-varsha from Kimpurusha varsha. Where is such a mountain on the northern point of the so-called globe?

THE HISTORY OF BHARATA-VARSHA

I would now like to look at the subject of Bharata-varsha from a wider perspective to show the vast scale of the land area that we are dealing with, and the immense prowess of the Vedic Kings who are empowered representatives of the Lord capable of governing over these huge areas.

As Srila Prabhupada requested in his letter to Savrupa Damodara in 1976, we need to begin 'serious research into the matter in detail.' So what is the detail regarding Bharata Maharaja? Let us look for a moment at the family lineage in order to get some context of Bharata's sovereignty over this particular varsha of Jambudwipa. By looking at the family history we will get a better idea of what Bharata-varsha actually means. The Fifth Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam, wherein the Vedic cosmology is described, narrates the following history of Bharata's lineage: Priyavrata was the great devotee of Krishna who first created the dwipas on Bhu-mandala. The plane of Bhu-mandala was already existing, but Priyavrata acting under the inspiration of the Lord, created the beautiful symmetrical design of seven islands and seven oceans that span an area of hundreds of millions of miles. He was the first Emperor of this area covering hundreds of millions of miles. A devotee of Krishna should not take this narration as mythology. It is actually describing the governance of the universe by the Lords superhuman representatives. These are superhuman beings, and the concept of the Earth which they rule is supra-mundane (beyond or outside of the ordinary conception). Upon his retirement, Priyavrata Maharaja gave rulership of the seven islands of Bhu-mandala to his different sons. The rule of Jambudwipa, the central island of Bhu-mandala was given to his son Agnidra:

"Sri Sukadeva Gosvami continued: After his father, Maharaja Priyavrata, departed to follow the path of spiritual life by undergoing austerities, King Agnidra completely obeyed his order. Strictly observing the principles of religion, he gave full protection to the inhabitants of Jambudwipa as if they were his own begotten sons." (SB 5.2.1)

Again, the Jambudwipa mentioned here is the first and central island of Bhu-mandala and is the place where our Earth area is located. It measures 800,000 miles. Srimad Bhagavatam is here informing us about the ancient untold history of Earth; namely that its much much bigger than

we've been told and led to believe. This is important to grasp because the modern scientists have shrunk the conception of Earth to a tiny ball floating in space when that is not, in fact, the description given in the Puranas.

The history further narrates that King Agnidra fell in love with a celestial apsara named Purvacitti, and becoming distracted from his duty, he followed her to her own realm, bestowing the rule of Jambudwipa to his nine sons. Indeed the varshas of Jambudwipa are named after these nine sons:

"In the womb of Purvacitti, Maharaja Agnidhra, the best of kings, begot nine sons, named Nabhi, Kimpuruṣa, Harivarsa, Ilavrta, Ramyaka, Hiranmaya, Kuru, Bhadrasva and Ketumala." (SB 5.2.19)

"Because of drinking the breast milk of their mother, the nine sons of Agnidhra naturally had strong, well-built bodies. Their father gave them each a kingdom in a different part of Jambudwipa. The kingdoms were named according to the names of the sons. Thus the sons of Agnidhra ruled the kingdoms they received from their father." (SB 5.2.21)

After Agnidra left, the varsha of Jambudwipa that we now know as Bharata-varsha was governed by his son called Nabhi and was originally named after him. Nabhi then had a son called Rsabhadeva who is the incarnation of Godhead. Rsabhadeva had a hundred sons of whom the eldest was called Bharata. Bharata-varsha was then re-named after King Bharata:

"Formerly this planet was known as Ajanabha-varsha, but since Maharaja Bharata's reign, it has become known as Bharata-varsha." (SB 5.7.3)

Again, Srila Prabhupada translates as Earth planet when the Sanskrit is only referring to Bharata, as a varsha (varsham bharatam iti). The name Ajanabha here is a reference to king Nabhi, the original king of Bharata-varsha as mentioned above.

When we begin to look at the detail of what is being described here, it's simply events taking place on Jambudwipa, not on other planets. Prabhupada uses the word planet, for Bharata-varsha, but the actual word used in the Sanskrit is 'varsha' which means a division of Jambudwipa. The description of Jambudwipa as an 800,000 mile circular island is straightforward. Bharata-varsha is in the southern area of Jambudwipa and is 72,000 miles across a horizontal plane. It is not 24,000 miles in circumference and floating in space. We should also note here that the lineage from Priyavrata Maharaja to Bharata Maharaja is only five generations (Priyavrata, Agnidhra, Nabhi, Rsabhadeva, and Bharata). Thus it cannot be that the Bhu-mandala (Earth-circle) consisting of seven islands and seven oceans, suddenly shrinks from hundreds of millions at the time of Priyavrata Maharaja to a small planet in space by the time of Bharata. It remains the same horizontal landscape of Bhu-mandala throughout the lineage. Nor can it be the case that in just five generations, the prowess of these Vedic kings suddenly shrank from being able to control the central part of the universe, to being kings of a small tract of land known as India, (which has come to be identified exclusively as Bharata-varsha).

In fact, Srimad Bhagavatam and Mahabharata record that only 5,000 years ago, our known Earth area was also connected to this massive Vedic Empire. The Pandavas as well as Pariksit Maharaja continued to rule this vast area of Jambudwipa. It is stated in Srimad Bhagavatam that Yudhisthira ruled over all of Jambudwipa: *jambudvipadhipatyam ca* (SB 1.12.5). Maharaja Pariksit, the grandson of the Pandavas, continued as emperor of Jambudwipa until the Kali-yuga began.

"Maharaja Pariksit then conquered all parts of the earthly planet — Bhadrashva, Ketumala, Bharata, the northern Kuru, Kimpurusha, etc. — and exacted tributes from their respective rulers." (SB 1.16.12)

Here all the specific varshas of Jambudwipa are mentioned. Notice that Bharata-varsha is just casually mentioned as one of the areas that Pariksit Maharaja controlled. Again, Srila Prabhupada translates 'varshani' as 'parts of the earthly planet,' but the varshas of Jambudwipa are all clearly mentioned, and their total extent is 800,000 miles as described by Sukadeva Goswami. We are clearly not talking about NASA's space ball. There are many other important verses in Srimad Bhagavatam that demonstrate how Lord Krishna's pastimes were taking place on the greater Earth area of Bhu-mandala, and not the assumed Earth globe. For example, after meeting Krish-

na, King Mucukunda traveled north from Bharata-varsha into the mainland of Jambudwipa:

"Seeing that the size of all the human beings, animals, trees and plants was severely reduced, and thus realizing that the Age of Kali was at hand, Mucukunda left for the north." (SB 10.52.2)

"The sober King, beyond material association and free of doubt, was convinced of the value of austerity. Absorbing his mind in Lord Krishna, he came to Gandhamadana Mountain." (SB 10.52.3)

The Gandhamadana Mountain mentioned here is on the mainland of Jambudwipa, and is the main mountain range separating Ilavrita-varsha from Bhadrashva-varsha (See SB 5.16.10). The northern direction mentioned here is in the direction of Mount Meru which is the central point for measuring directions in the universe. Gandhamadana mountain is to the East of Mount Meru as shown in the illustration below:

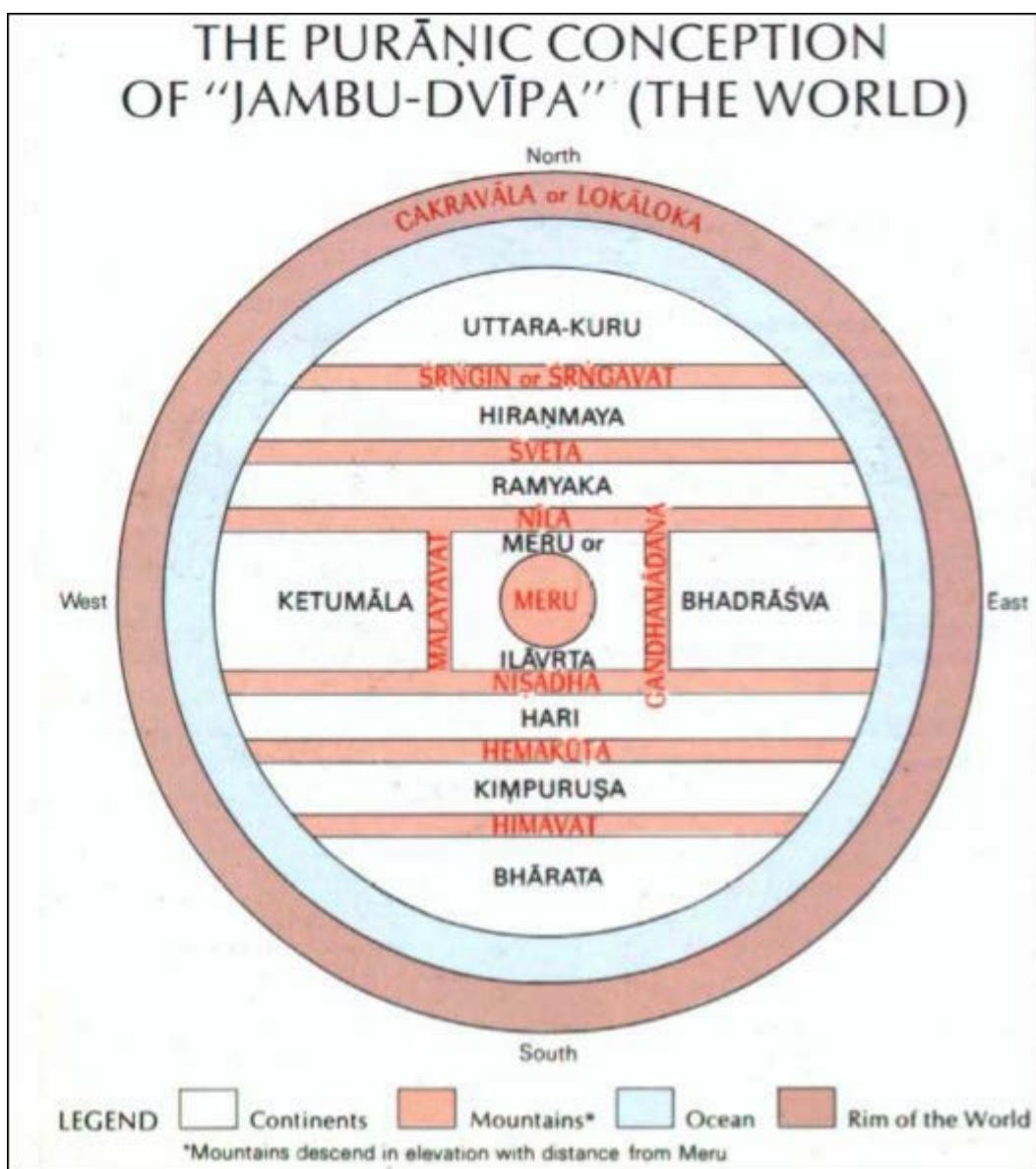


Figure 16

Thus leaving Bharata-varsha and heading in a northern direction, King Mucukunda entered into the greater Earth area of Jambudwipa and arrived at Gandhamadana mountain which is a distance of some hundreds of thousands of miles along the greater Earth plane.

Mahabharata also records the Pandavas pilgrimage to this area where they met Kuvera. Since our globe concept does not accommodate this historical concept of a greater Earth, the tendency of

the mind is to simply reject the Vedic history rather than consider the possibility that perhaps the globe concept is wrong; and that the continents of our Earth may indeed, be just a small part of continuous horizontal Earth-plane. Since any questioning of the globe model involves questioning the credibility of mainstream science, as well as the authenticity of government sources such as NASA, the tendency is to avoid controversy and simply accept the version of so-called official sources. However, in the light of such verses from Srimad Bhagavatam, a serious follower of the Bhagavat Purana has to seriously re-consider one's idea of Earth as a planet.

The historical narrations in Srimad Bhagavatam state clearly that our known Earth was once connected to the greater Earth of Bhu-mandala. Once the details of Srimad Bhagavatam are presented like this, the globe concept makes absolutely no sense. The only model that makes sense is the horizontal plane model. Otherwise, one is left flummoxed trying to explain where is the rest of Jambudwipa in NASA's so-called satellite images of the Earth globe from outer space. One is also stumped trying to explain how the Pandavas were governing an 800,000 mile island from their capital city in India? Where is the rest of the 800,000 island on a globe-Earth concept? Either you pass off Jambudwipa as mythological, or you may consign it to another dimension. But Sukadeva Goswami doesn't say that Jambudwipa is in another dimension; he gives the standard direction and mileage of Jambudwipa's distance from where we are here in our part of the world. It's in the northern direction and not far away; but lack of understanding and faith makes it so.

Srila Prabhupada could appreciate an intelligent presentation and change his opinion accordingly as was the case when Bhakti-prema explained that it was the whole Bhu-mandala that fell into the Garbo ocean, not an Earth globe. I believe a well-researched presentation on the horizontal plane model would also be heard with attention and appreciation by Srila Prabhupada. Since Srila Prabhupada has initiated the construction of the TOVP, it seems now is the time for this information of the Vedic Earth concept to reappear. Since the reign of Pariksit Maharaja 5,000 years ago when the Kali-yuga began, it appears that we got separated from these other areas of the Bhu-mandala, and knowledge of the Vedic cosmos was covered over by Maya. Now the Vedic conception is beginning to re-emerge and the science of the flat-Earth is again challenging the globe idea. It is no coincidence that as the Temple of Vedic Planetarium is being constructed in Mayapur, an overnight revolution in cosmology has taken place with advocates of the flat-Earth model shaking the very foundations of the quasi-science of Galileo and Newton that has supported the globe idea for the last few hundred years.

WHERE IS THE 80,000-MILE HIGH HIMALAYA MOUNTAIN?

In Srimad Bhagavatam, Sukadeva Goswami describes a mountain standing 80,000 miles high at the northern end of Bharata-varsha. This mountain separates Bharata-varsha from its neighbour Kimpurusha-varsha:

"Similarly, south of Ilavrita-varsha and extending from east to west are three great mountains named (from north to south) Nishadha, Hemakuta and Himalaya. Each of them is 10,000 yojanas [80,000 miles] high. They mark the boundaries of the three varshas named Hari-varsha, Kimpurusha-varsha and Bharata-varsha [India]." (SB 5.16.9)

During a discussion with Srila Prabhupada in July 1977 about the Bhu-mandala, his disciples raised the question of the 80,000-mile Himalaya Mountain. After describing the fantastic features of Jambudwipa with mountains reaching 80,000 miles high, Bhakti-prema asks the following question:

Yasodanandana: ...This Jambudwipa corresponds to this one here in this big map. "The length and breadth of this is 100,000 yojanas." That means from its north to the south and from the west to the east it's 800,000 miles, according to this fifth verse...

...And it describes, "In Jambudwipa there are nine divisions of land, each with a length of 9,000 yojanas, 72,000 miles: Bharata-varsha, Kimpurusha-varsha, Hari-varsha, Bhadra-varsha, Ilavrita-varsha, Ketumala-varsha, Ramyaka-varsha, Hiranmaya-varsha, and Kuru-varsha. There are eight mountains that mark the boundaries of these divisions and separate them nicely. Starting with the Himalayas"—that's the first mountain—"Hemakuta Parvata"—second mountain—"Nishadha Parvata"—third mountain—it goes...

Bhakti-prema: ...This is Kimpurusha-varsha. That is between Himalaya and Hemakuta mountain. And again Hari-varsha is between Hemakuta Mountain and Nishadha Mountain. And this Ramyaka...

Prabhupada: Where is geographical description of this?

Tamala Krishna: They don't even know they exist.

Prabhupada: Little description of the Himalayas.

Tamala Krishna: That's all.

Prabhupada: That is also not sufficient. In Europe, when we go over the mountain, huge mountainous tract, who knows about it? We are passing just like on a roof, aeroplane. You have seen? Huge. They have no information of what is there. And Switzerland...

Tamala Krishna: Switzerland.

Prabhupada: I have seen mountain goat. Where it has gone, nobody knows. Still.

Bhakti-prema: In Srimad-Bhagavatam it is described more or less. Himalaya Mountain is 80,000 miles high and 16,000 miles wide. So each of these mountains are 16,000 miles wide and 80,000 miles high...

Yasodanandana: ...Then it prescribes in verse number nine that "South of Ilavrta-varsha and extending from east to west are the great, three great mountains named Nishadha Parvata, Hemakuta Parvata and Himalaya. Each of them is 10,000 yojanas high, 80,000 miles high." That means... The scientists have understood that the Himalayas are three and a half miles high, but we say... How much the Himalayas? Twenty-eight... Five and a half miles high. We say it's 80,000 miles high. The Bhagavatam says.

Prabhupada: They could not measure the whole thing. That is not possible...

Bhakti-prema: ...So how we will expose it before scientists?

Prabhupada: We do not require to satisfy the scientists. We have to describe according to our book. That's all. If they can understand, let them understand. Otherwise... It is not our business to satisfy the so-called scientists. We are giving the real description. (Room Conversation, June 18, 1977, Vrindavana)

I have shortened the details of this conversation, but basically, it is a discussion about how to understand the Srimad Bhagavatam's description of the Himalaya as standing at 80,000 miles high. The difficulty arises because the devotees are still thinking that the Himalaya described in Srimad Bhagavatam is referring to the mountain in India, whereas in fact, it is describing the great Himalaya that is to the extreme north of Bharata-varsha, and separates Bharata-varsha from Kimpurusha-varsha. The confusion arises because of thinking of the Earth as a globe rather than a continual plane. According to Sukadeva Goswami's description, if we were to continue along the plane of our most northern regions (across the Arctic) we would not go around the top of an assumed globe and head back south; rather we would run into an 80,000 mile high mountain called Himalaya which separates Bharata-varsha from Kimpurusha-varsha. The idea is illustrated in the following image:

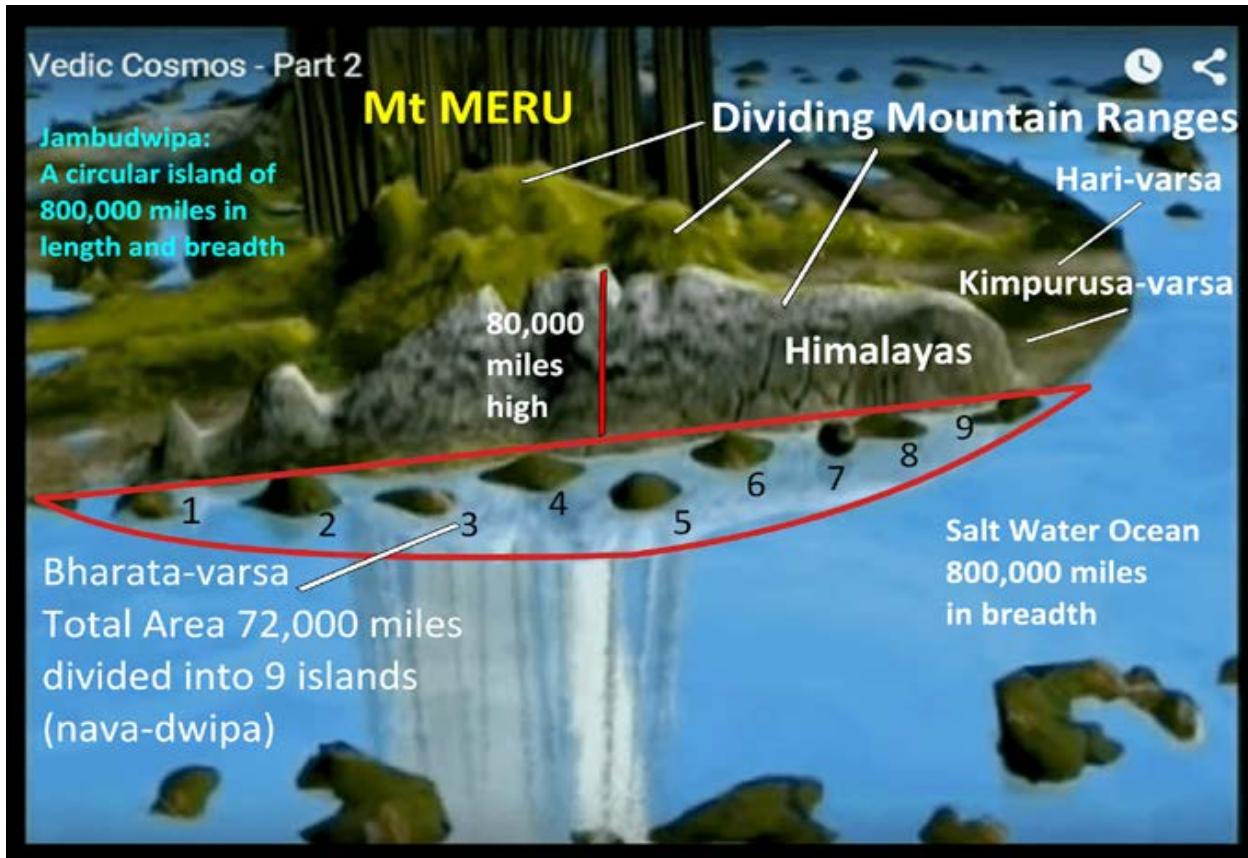


Figure 17

Again, my only objection to this picture is the depiction of Earth as a globe (number 7). The continents of the Earth should be lying flat on the salt-water ocean. Otherwise, the position of Earth to the great Himalaya mountain range that separates Bharata-varsha from Kimpurusha-varsha is the correct understanding. Sukadeva Goswami's description thus makes perfect sense if we consider Earth to be just a small part of a continuous horizontal plane that continues into the greater Earth area of Bhu-mandala. Otherwise, the description of a mountain spanning 72,000 miles in length, 16,000 miles in breadth, and 80,000 miles in height makes absolutely no sense in the conception that Earth is a 24,900-mile globe floating in space.

For most people the description of such a huge mountain is irrelevant anyway because they do not have either faith in, or understanding of the Srimad Bhagavatam's description. For those outside of the Srimad Bhagavatam world-view, the whole thing is ridiculous. But for those who at least claim to be followers of the Srimad Bhagavatam, and who wish to 'see through the eyes of scripture,' a change in understanding of the Earth is certainly required – one that conforms to Sukadeva's Goswami's description, and not to that of NASA's. Srila Prabhupada insists on this point:

"We have to describe according to our book. That's all. If they can understand, let them understand. Otherwise... It is not our business to satisfy the so-called scientists. We are giving the real description." (Room Conversation, June 18, 1977, Vrindavana)

THE HIMALAYA BEYOND THE ARCTIC ZONE

In the concluding chapter of the *Mahabharata*, we once again hear of the Pandavas return to Jambudvipa:

"Then by the northern coast of the salt sea, those Princes of Bharata's race proceeded to the south-west. Turning next towards the west, they beheld the city of Dwaraka covered by the ocean. Turning next to the north, those foremost ones proceeded on. Observant of yoga, they were desirous of making a round of the whole Earth. Vaisampayana said, 'Those princes of restrained souls and devoted to Yoga, proceeding to the North, beheld Himavat, that very large mountain. Crossing the Himavat they beheld a vast desert of sand. They then saw the

mighty mountain Meru, the foremost of all high-peaked mountains." (Mahabharata, Maha-prathaika Parva, Section 1 and 2)

Here it is described that the Pandavas first circumambulated the world as a mark of respect and then proceeded north again through the Himalayas before reaching Mount Meru in Jambudvipa. At this last stage of their Earthly pastimes, the Pandavas departed the world of mortals. In an interesting lecture given in 1973, Srila Prabhupada speaks of the Pandavas passage to these greater Himalayas through the Arctic region:

*"udicim pravivesham
gata-purvam mahatmabhih
hrdi brahma param dhyayan
navarteta yato gatah*

Translation: "He then started towards the north, treading the path accepted by his forefathers and great men, to devote himself completely to the thought of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And he lived in that way wherever he went."

Prabhupada: Udicim pravivesha. So one who goes to the northern side, it is to be understood he never comes back. Northern side means the Arctic zone, covered with snow. So this was known in Bhagavata days. Not only in Bhagavata days, some, about a thousand years ago also, there is Kalidasa's book Kumara-sambhava. Kumara-sambhava, "The Birth of Karttikeya." So in the book the beginning is asty uttarasyam dishi himalayo nama nagadhirajah. Uttara-syam dishi, in the northern side, there is mountain which is covered with snow, Himalaya. Hima means ice, hima. Asty uttarasyam dishi himalayo nama nagadhirajah: "In the northern side, there is a hill or a mountain which is always covered by snow." Although at the present moment, Himalaya, there is one mountain that is also called Himalaya, Mount Everest, but I think this Arctic zone was referred. Because it is said that "touching both sides, water." Asty uttarasyam dishi himalayo nama nagadhirajah, toya-nidhi avagahya. Toya-nidhi. Toya-nidhi means oceans, both sides ocean, the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean. Avagahya, touching. So the Arctic zone was referred in many books, Vedic literature. It is not that it was unknown. Everything was known. The modern historians, they say like that. They say the Bhagavata was written about 1,500 years ago. No. Five thousand years ago. They bring everything within the Christian era. And before that, there was no history, according to them. But that is not the fact. (Lecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.15.44, Los Angeles, December 22 1973)

From a flat-Earth perspective, it makes sense that the Pandavas were crossing somewhere from Bharata-varsha into Jambudvipa. Here Srila Prabhupada postulates a passage through the Arctic. According to my own understanding of the flat-Earth, it would be the case that as one proceeds north from India, one would eventually come to Jambudvipa after crossing the ice regions. There may also be some kind of portal from the Himalaya in India to the greater Himalaya, which stands at 80,000 miles tall and separates Bharata-varsha from Kimpurusha-varsha. I believe if Sanskrit scholars begin to study the Vedic texts from the perspective of an expanded flat Earth, much linguistic evidence will surface to prove this point of journeys between Bharata-varsha and Jambudvipa.

SECTION 1.5 — THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE EARTH

The adulteration of Vedic cosmological concepts by Western influences is a long subject and beyond the range of our present essay. However, to find out where this mis-translation of Bhu-gola started, we need look no further back than the translations of Vedic texts by Christian missionaries and other agents bent on destroying Vedic culture. The Western Christian translators of the Puranas who had neither faith in or understanding of this cosmological idea of Bhu-mandala or Bhu-gola, simply conflated the concept of the great Earth circle with the assumed 'Earth-globe.' The great extended Earth plane of Srimad Bhagavatam (Bhu-mandala) instantly shrunk to the tiny western globe. The seven islands and oceans of Bhu-mandala were mistakenly identified as the continents and oceans of our known Earth, and Jambudwipa was thus magically disappeared and forgotten about, as the varshas of Jambudwipa became identified as places in and around India.

In this conversation below, Srila Prabhupada is not specifically referring to the globe controversy, but his argument about the Christians trying to discredit the Vedic texts as mythological does have bearing on the issue at hand:

Prabhupada:(Sanskrit) Chakra bhagavan. So there was a circle of friends. So all the friends conspired to make another friend bewildered. So they conspired that "As soon as you meet that gentleman you cry, 'Oh, here is a ghost! Here is a ghost! Here is a ghost!' " So all the friends, they come, "Oh! You are dead, you are ghost, you are ghost!" So after ten times like that, he thought, "Have I become a ghost?" Then he became bewildered, "Whether really I have become ghost, I am dead?" He became puzzled. This is like that: "There was no human being, there was no human being," and all the rascals are now thinking whether this is right. This is cakra bhagavan (Sanskrit). If you make conspiracy, even the sane man will think himself that "I have become ghost."

Svarupa Damodara: The influence of the...

Prabhupada: Yes, propaganda. That is the cause of India's cultural falldown. These Britishers simply made propaganda that "Whatever you have got in India, this is all allegory, fiction. These shastras (scriptures) are nothing. But now you are learning from us England's work in India, that is your real... You are becoming civilized now. Otherwise, you are in the utopia, and all these sastras, throw it out." Because that was Lord Macauley's policy. Lord Macauley was sent to report how Indians can be governed nicely. So he reported that if you keep the Indians as Indians, you will never be able to govern them, because they are superior. You make propaganda that they are inferior and they will imitate you and then you can... That they did. (September 28 1972)

Just as in Prabhupada's fable wherein a conspiracy of friends convinced one of the group that he was a ghost, similarly the conspiracy of Western ideologists convinced the Hindus that Bhumi-mandala is a ghost idea – a dead concept belonging to primitive Hindu mythology. The great plane of Bhumi-gola literally disappeared, and a tiny Earth globe floating in lonely space magically took its place. In the Srimad Bhagavatam, a number of analogies are employed to illustrate the corruption or loss of Vedic concepts in the age of Kali-yuga:

"In the evening twilight during the rainy season, the darkness allowed the glowworms but not the stars to shine forth, just as in the age of Kali the predominance of sinful activities allows atheistic doctrines to overshadow the true knowledge of the Vedas." (SB 10.20.8)

"During the rainy season the roads, not being cleansed, became covered with grass and debris and were thus difficult to make out. These roads were like religious scriptures that brahmanas no longer study and that thus become corrupted and covered over with the passage of time." (SB 10.20.16)

The above verse from Srimad Bhagavatam (SB 10.20.16) makes an interesting analogy: just as village paths become unrecognizable due to being over-grown in the rainy season, so scriptural passages that are no longer studied by brahmanas become corrupted with the passage of time, and their true meaning is 'covered over.' This is particularly true of those parts of the Vedic scripture dealing with cosmology. The scriptural meaning of Bhumi-gola has been literally 'covered over,' and the brahmanas who chant their daily gayatri manta beginning *om bhur bhuvah svaha*, no longer understand the actual meaning of Bhumi. Unfortunately, the brahmanas have been duped into accepting the version of western science regarding the shape of the Earth; and the actual description of Bhumi provided in the Vedas has been forsaken as belonging to a mythological past.

The initiative by Srila Prabhupada in the 1970's to build a Vedic planetarium and reintroduce the Vedic conception of the universe, has led to a renewed study of the Puranic texts dealing with cosmology. To keep with the above poetic metaphor from Srimad Bhagavatam, research into the topic has led to the clearing away of the grass and debris (corruption of text) that has covered the true feature of the Vedic cosmos. Once the relevant texts describing Bhumi-gola have been pointed out, a qualified brahmana who sees through the eye of scripture (shastra cakshusha), should have no difficulty in immediately recognizing the true feature and extent of Bhumi.

Although Srila Prabhupada spoke of the Earth as a globe, his ultimate intention was to reintrodu-

ce the real Vedic world as described by Sukadeva Goswami in Srimad Bhagavatam. Srila Prabhupada spoke the essential theology and philosophy of Krishna consciousness but expected his disciples to assist him by filling in the details, and this would obviously involve presenting the actual description of Earth as spoken by Sukadeva Goswami. When I began this research into the Sri-mad Bhagavatam's description of the Earth, I was hoping that the cosmology department at the Temple of Vedic Planetarium would enthusiastically receive the idea. Not so! The Earth is most certainly a globe, according to Antardwipa dasa, present head of the TOVP cosmology department (as of July 2016). In an on-line discussion with Antardwipa dasa, I asked for scriptural reference in support of his idea that the Vedas describe Bharata-varsha as an Earth-globe floating in space. In response, I did not receive any verses from Srimad Bhagavatam itself (as there are no verses that describe Bharata-varsha as a globe in space), but I did get a number of verses from the Surya Siddhanta translated by Reverend Ebenezer Burgess. For sake of length, I will discuss just one of these verses to give the reader of how interpolations on verses can create a planet out of nowhere. The following is from a post by Antardwipa dasa:

"Antardwipa dasa: However, there are also statements in the sastra that the earth is a globe. These can be seen in the siddhantic texts, that are part of the Vedangas. These are also Veda, and cannot be dismissed. An example of such is Surya Siddhanta 12.32:

*madhye samantad andasya bhugolo vyomni tisthati/
bibhranah paramam saktiā brahmano dharanatmakam//*

Quite in the middle of the [universal] egg, the earth-globe (bhugola) stands in the ether, bearing the supreme might of Brahma, which is of the nature of self-supporting force.

Here the word Bhu-gola is translated as earth-globe. We have heard this many times, but it appears that some doubt this translation. The English rendering above was given by the Reverend Burgess, some time before 1860. Perhaps not a perfect source, **but nonetheless he is given the standard meaning of the word.** Anyway, those conversant with the content of the Surya Siddhanta know that the translation pf bhu-gola as 'globe' is correct because it is confirmed by other parts of the text... Additionally, the Surya Siddhanta (12.33) also describes the subterranean realms in relation to the earth globe.

*tadantaraputah sapta nagasurasamasrayah/
divyausadhirasopeta ramyah patalabhumayah//*

Seven cavities within it, the abodes of serpents (naga) and demons (asuras), endowed with the savor of heavenly plants, delightful, are the interterranean (patala) earths."

The above translation is typical of the European Christian speculations that wrecked havoc in the understanding of the Vedic Cosmos, but which Antardwipa dasa upholds as the 'standard meaning of the word.' Reverend Burgess who had obviously neither faith in, understanding, or realization of the thing being described, has translated Bhu-gola as Earth globe, and thus anyone reading the text, naturally assumes that the verse is describing a globe in space rather than a 4 billion diameter circular plane that crosses the center of the universe (*madhye samantad andasya*) dividing the universe into higher and lower sections.

There are many objections to Antardwipa dasa's identifying Bhu-gola with NASA's fictional Earth globe, not least because we have already presented Srimad Bhagavatam's description of Bhu-gola as the great cosmic *circle* (not globe) which has a diameter of 4 billion miles, upon which Bharata-varsha rests. The text from Surya Siddhanta is clearly referring to the Bhu-mandala, but it has been interpolated to present the idea of an Earth globe in space. We can forgive Reverend Burgess for misunderstanding and mis-translating the word Bhu-gola; but surely the head of the TOVP is meant to understand the difference between the description of Bhu-gola provided by Sukadeva Goswami, and the description of the supposed Earth globe provided by NASA. By merging these two completely different concepts, the TOVP will simply propagate a complete fiction based on a translation by a Christian preacher who neither understands or believes in the thing being described.

First of all, it should be understood by anyone familiar with Vedic nomenclature that Bhu-gola refers to Bhu-mandala and not to a specific place within Bhu-mandala, namely Bharata-varsha where the so-called Earth globe is reputedly situated. Why ascribe the name Bhu-gola to Bharata-

ta-varsha anyway? The name Bharata-varsha was not even invoked which would give us an indication of the specific area in question. If we want to whimsically apply names to things they don't represent, by the same reckoning, I could just apply the name Bhu-gola to Hari-varsha or Kimpurusha-varsha or any of the other eight varshas of Jambudwipa. I could create so many Earth-globes in space. Why pick just Bharata-varsha as the Earth globe? And if Bharata-varsha is the assumed Earth globe floating in space, then where are the other eight varshas of Jambudwipa - the nearest of which is only a few thousand miles away according to the description given by Sukadeva Goswami. Where has the rest of Jambudwipa suddenly disappeared? Why does an 800,000-mile island not show up in the satellite images? Try as they may, the TOVP representatives cannot answer this question. Attachment to the idea that the Earth is a globe, has unfortunately resulted in placing greater faith in the hoax photos from NASA, than in the description of Bharata-varsha provided by Sukadeva Goswami.

As we have already demonstrated there is no description in the Srimad Bhagavatam that even hints of Bharata-varsha or any of the other varshas being globe-shaped and floating in space. In any case, by wrongly ascribing the name Bhu-gola to Bharata-varsha, a new planet has just been created out of thin air. The texts quoted earlier from Surya Siddhanta clearly refer to Bhu-mandala. If one does not make the categorical distinction between Bhu-gola and Bharata-varsha then that is a problem. Because if one builds on an initial mistake, it doesn't matter what one gets right after that - the whole thing remains a mistake.

Anyway, let's look again at what the text is saying. The words *madhye samantad andasya bhugolo* are clearly describing the complete Bhu-mandala which the Earth circle in the 'middle of the universe.' Bhu-gola is not referring to the same thing as Bharata-varsha, a small area upon the Bhu-gola. Sameness and difference is a consideration of the qualities, attributes, and characteristics of certain things that enable us to categorize some things as the same, and other things as different. *Names help!* By naming things, we can differentiate between one thing and another. America, for example, is the name of a general area, and New York is the name of a specific area within America. New York is *not* America itself, though it is part of America. Like-wise, Bharata-varsha is not the Bhu-gola itself, though it is part of Bhu-gola. Bhu-gola refers to a general area, and Bharata-varsha refers to a specific area upon the Bhu-gola. If the TOVP representatives cannot recognize the difference in definition and description between the names Bhu-gola and Bharata-varsha there is a problem, and the result will be the propagation of an untruth.

The question here is: do the verses of Surya Siddhanta that were quoted above describe the Bhu-mandala, or do they indeed describe a second Earth, a round ball that floats in space? It is obvious that the TOVP representative has not been able to recognize the name and qualities of the Bhu-gola in the verses from Surya Siddhanta and has wrongly ascribed them to a so-called globe that has mysteriously manifested in Bharata-varsha. The presentation that Bhu-gola is the assumed Earth globe of Bharata-varsha is simply not acceptable. Supposing some one presented a banana to you that was painted blue. Would you still recognize it as a banana, or would you be fooled into thinking it was a new fruit called a blue-nana? I'm sure you would immediately recognize it as a banana; and for proof you could just open the peel and reveal its true appearance. So like-wise, we have to not be bewildered by the renaming of Bharata-varsha as Bhu-gola, and we need to further peel away the mis-interpretations and misunderstandings to reveal the actual thing that the text is describing. It is describing Bhu-mandala not Bharata-varsha.

The above translation from Surya Siddhanta also mentions the seven realms below the Earth plane: "Seven cavities within it, the abodes of serpents (naga) and demons (asuras), endowed with the savor of heavenly plants, delightful, are the interterranean (patala) earths." This again is further proof that the verse is referring to Bhu-mandala since the description of these vast underworlds are described in chapter 24 of the Fifth Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam. Antardwipa dasa has forwarded this verse as scriptural proof that the Earth is a globe. He is perhaps hoping that no-one will point out the huge discrepancy between conflicting measurements of the Earth in question. NASA's Earth globe is supposedly 24,900 miles in circumference. That does not leave much room for Earth's seven lower realms described by Sukadeva Goswami which measure at a whopping 560,000 miles. Again, I suggest going back and reading the *description* provided in Chapter 24 of the Fifth Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam. The commentaries by the acharyas confirm Sukadeva Goswami's measurement of the Earth-plane's massive interior. Again, please follow the parampara.

If a text like Surya-siddhanta is a bona-fide sastra, it cannot possibly be stating something in

contradiction to Srimad Bhagavatam (the essence of all Vedic literature) which clearly describes Bharata-varsha's position at the southern side of Jambudwipa with no additional information indicating a so-called globular Earth in space.

Regarding the criminality of mis-interpreting texts, I think it's a very serious issue to impute meanings to Vedic texts that do not in fact exist. I'm referring to the whole tradition begun by the Western translators of Sanskrit texts that caused havoc in the understanding of Vedic concepts. I'm not saying all of these translations should be rubbedish as there are indeed many passable translations of the Puranas, or at least parts of them, but the problem comes in the conveyance of concepts, particularly in relation to the understanding of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and also in relation to our present discussion on the Vedic cosmos. In this regard, it is obvious the Western translators have no idea what the Vedic texts are talking about as it is clearly evident, for example, in their application of the nine varshas of Jambudwipa to places within India. Translators without faith in the location and huge measurements of Jambudwipa, simply tucked it safely away into the category of Hindu mythology, and tried to make some logical sense of the text by misapplying the place names of Jambudwipa to areas within India. Suddenly Jambudwipa was disappeared and no one knew where it went to. Like a magicians disappearing trick the Westerners fooled the Hindus into believing that Jambudwipa had gone into the realm of mythology.

An example of this can be gotten from the 1840 translation of Vishnu Purana by Horace Hayman Wilson. In his footnotes to the section on the seven dwipas of Bhu-mandala, he writes:

"...the seven Dwipas, with their surrounding seas, may have some connexion with the notion of the seven climates, as Col. Wilford has supposed. That learned, but fanciful writer bestowed great pains upon the verification of these fictions, and imagined the different Dwipas to represent actual divisions of the globe: Jambu being India; Kusha, the Kush of Scripture, or the countries between Mesopotamia and India: Plaksha being Asia Minor; Shalmali, eastern Europe; Krauncha, Germany; Shaka, the British isles; and Pushkara, Iceland. The white or silver island, or island of the moon, was also, according to him, the island of Great Britain. Whatever may be thought of his conclusions, his essays on these subjects, particularly in the eighth, tenth, and eleventh volumes of the Asiatic Researches, contain much curious and interesting matter." (Vishnu Purana Translated by Horace Hayman Wilson, Book II, Chapter IV)

This Western Christian understanding that the huge measurements and fantastic features of the saptadwipa are mythological, but somehow correlate to places on the 'globe,' gradually replaced the traditional Vedic teaching that the Earth is a great circle that continues in all directions on a vast plane. When we begin to look at the translations and particularly the footnotes/commentaries to these translations of the Puranas by Western scholars, and also those by Hindu scholars who follow their precedence, it is quite amazing how the Bhu-mandala literally disappeared by a complete disregard, complete misunderstanding, and complete lack of faith in the Puranic description of the great Earth plane.

Below is another typical example of utter speculation that continues to convince the Hindus that the Vedic Earth is a small globe in space, and not a vast plane covering 4 billion miles. Tragically, the following commentary is from a relatively recently edition of the Narada Purana printed by a famous Indian publisher of Vedic texts. The commentary follows the precedent set by the Western academia that completely disregards the huge measurements of each dwipa and ocean on the Bhu-mandala. Instead, the dwipas and oceans are mistakenly identified as areas in and around India. Tactfully, and to keep the peace, some credence is given to the Vedic sages that their wild fantasies of a fabulous Earth plane have some correlation to 'real' places on the so-called globe. The descriptions of the fantastic features of Bhu-mandala are otherwise passed off dismissively as 'poetic' and 'imaginative' (i.e. mythological). The net result is that the Vedic Earth was disappeared.

From *Narada Purana*, Notes to 'Chapter Three: Description of the Sphere of the Earth and of Bharata', pp 99-100, Motilala Banarsi-dass Publishers, Delhi, 1950:

"11. Seven Continents:

The dominant cosmographical conception of the Puranas is that of the Earth consisting of seven concentric island-continents (saptadvipa Vasundhara). Each continent has its own chain

of principal mountains, river-systems. The names of these continents, as enumerated in the next (43rd) verse, are: Jambu, Plaksha, Shalmala, Kusha, Krauncha, Shaka, and Puska-ra...The following is briefly the Puranic conception of these dwipas:

(1) Jambudwipa with mount Meru or Sumeru at the centre and surrounded by the ocean of Lavana (salt water). It is identified with India and the land around it as Bharata varsha—a prominent part thereof is 'to the north of the salt sea and south of the Himalayas' (NP. 1.3.46 below) and the glorification of this holy land from vv.47-72 below leaves no doubt that India is the land so praised.

(2) Plaksa—Surrounding the Lavana ocean and surrounded by the ocean of Iksu (sugarcane juice).

(3) Shalmali—Surrounding the Iksu ocean and surrounded by the ocean of Sura (wine); probably Chaldea—chal-dia<.shalmali dvipa: Ancient region SW Asia on the Euphrates and Persian Gulf (Webster—College Dikt. P. 1106), if the derivation recorded by N.L. De in GDAM I, p.175 be correct. But the rivers Nirvrtti and Vitrishna mentioned by him in Brahmanda P. Ch.53 are not traced in Jagdish Shastri's new edition (Motilal BanarsiDass, Delhi) either at ch.19 describing Plaksadvipa or ch. 53 as mentioned by De at the corresponding ch. the-rein.)

(4) Kusha—Surrounding the Sura ocean and surrounded by Sarpis:

(Ghee) ocean. Puranas state that the source of the Nile is in a lake in the Kusha dvipa. It is, of course, a region in Africa. Ancient Persian inscriptions mention a country called 'Kusha' and its people 'Kushiya' "There is no doubt that Kusha was situated in North East Africa beyond Egypt" D. G. Sircar—GAMI P. 25. Probably it is Ethiopia.

(5) Krauncha—Surrounding sarpis ocean and surrounded by the ocean of Dadhi' (curds).

(6) Shaka—Surrounding the 'Dadhi' ocean and surrounded by the ocean of milk. It is obviously the land of Sakas or Seythians of the Greeks. Dr. Ray Choudhary identifies it with Seistan (

12. Seven Seas surrounding these island continents are traditionally mentioned as in v.44-B.

lavenekshu-sura-sarpir-dhadhi-ksira-jalah saman

i.e. seas consisting of (1) Salt water, (2) Sugar-cane juice (3) wine, (4) ghee, (5) curds, (6) milk and (7) sweet water. N.L. De locates them as follows:

(1) Lavana (salt water): The Indian Ocean surrounding Jambudwipa or India.

(2) Iksu (Sugar cane juice): Iksu is another name for the Oxus (V.P. 2.4.66 mentions this as a river). De explains, "Here the river is taken as a sea."

(3) Sura (wine): Corruption of the sea of Sarain, another name for the Caspian sea and it formed the Southern or south-eastern boundary of Kusha dwipa.

(4) Sarpis or Grita (Clarified butter): It is a corruption of the Erythraen sea or the Persian Gulf and formed the boundary of Shalmali-dvipa or Chaldia i.e. Assyria.

(5) Dadhi (curds): The sea of Aral, Dadhi is Sanskritisation of Dahi (Dahae) the name of a Scythic tribe which lived in the upper Jaxartes and evidently on the shores of this lake, it formed the boundary of Krauncha dwipa.

(6) Kshira (Milk): It is a corruption of Shirwan sea, as the Caspian sea was called, and it formed the northern boundary of Shaka dwipa.

(7) Jala i.e. Svatujala (sweet water): Perhaps a corruption of Tchadun, a river in Mongolia forming a boundary of or flowing through Plaksha dwipa—GDAMI, p. 179.

Rivers and seas were formerly designated by the same word. Hence some rivers came to be understood as 'seas' in Puranas. The extent of some seas like the Caspian and the Aral were different (much larger than at present) in ancient times. But the unanimous tradition in Puranas shows a race-memory and not a geographer's report of an expedition. The above is enough to show that geography in Puranas is not all imagination, but had some basis in reality."

By this, and other, seemingly innocuous commentaries on the Puranic cosmology, the true understanding of the Vedic cosmos was lost. Faith in the actual reality of the Earth plane was buried; literally 'covered over' by speculative ideas. It should be carefully noted that the acharyas in their Fifth Canto commentaries never equate the dwipas and oceans of Bhumi-mandala with India and its surrounding area. They present the structure of the universe as described by Sukadeva Goswami accepting the huge measurements of sapta-dwipa as factual. It is very unfortunate that in our

own ISKCON, Sadaputa Prabhu dasa, a prominent disciple of Srila Prabhupada and the main pioneer of Vedic cosmology within ISKCON has followed this Western interpretation in his presentation of Jambudvipa as a topographical map of South-central Asia. The following is from an article called Universe of the Vedas:

Jambudvipa as a Topographical Map of South-Central Asia

"Jambudvipa, the central hub of Bhumandala, can be understood as a local topographical map of part of south-central Asia. This is the third of the four interpretations of Bhu-mandala. In the planisphere interpretation, Jambudvipa represents the northern hemisphere of the Earth globe. But the detailed geographic features of Jambudvipa do not match the geography of the northern hemisphere. They do, however, match part of the Earth."

Six horizontal and two vertical mountain chains divide Jambudvipa into nine regions, or varshas (Figure 11,top left). The southernmost region is called Bharata-varsha. Careful study shows that this map corresponds to India plus adjoining areas of south-central Asia. The first step in making this identification is to observe that the Bhagavatam assigns many rivers in India to Bharata-varsha. Thus Bharata-varsha represents India. The same can be said of many mountains in Bharata-varsha. In particular, the Bhagavatam places the Himalayas to the north of Bharata-varsha in Jambudvipa (Figure 11)."

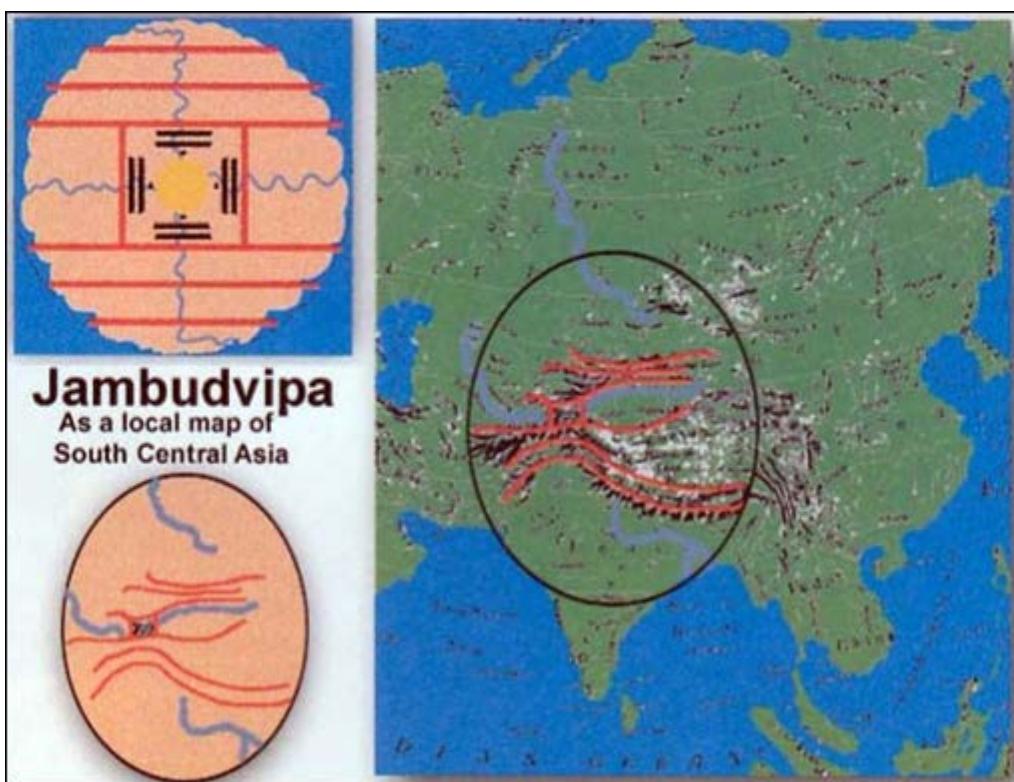


Figure 18

"A detailed study of Puranic accounts allows the other mountain ranges of Jambudvipa to be identified with mountain ranges in the region north of India. Although this region includes some of the most desolate and mountainous country in the world, it was nonetheless important in ancient times. For example, the famous Silk Road passes through this region. The Pamir Mountains can be identified with Mount Meru and Ilavrita-varsha, the square region in the center of Jambudvipa. (Note that Mount Meru does not represent the polar axis in this interpretation.) Other Puranas give more geographical details that support this interpretation."
<http://www.krishna.com/universe-vedas>

However, there is no basis in the Puranas or the commentaries to support this view of Jambudvipa as a Topographical Map of South Asia. Chapter 16 of the Fifth Canto is called *Description of Jambudvipa*. The word 'description' is appropriate. Jambudvipa is described in a particular way. If we do not follow the *description* given, then we cannot claim to be presenting Srimad Bhagavatam. I mention this not to unduly criticize Sadaputa Prabhu who has done wonderful pioneering

work to explain the Vedic Cosmos, but it should also be recognized where mistakes have been made in our understanding of the Earth of Srimad Bhagavatam. One cannot whimsically equate varshas and mountains measuring hundreds of thousands of miles with the small area of India and surrounding area. There is no correlation at all; and the superimposition of the Jambudwipa map unto India is completely arbitrary.

Sadaputa Prabhu says: "*The Pamir Mountains can be identified with Mount Meru and Ilavrita-varsha, the square region in the center of Jambudvipa.*"

Mount Meru is 800,000 miles high!

Mount Meru is Mount Meru; it is not the Pamir mountains. The center of Mount Meru is some four hundred thousand miles from the Pamir mountains. The Srimad Bhagavatam describes the conditions in the other eight varshas of Jambudwipa as *bhaumani svarga-padani* 'the heavenly places on Earth.' They are distinct from Bharata-varsha which is a place where karma is made. The Bhaumani svarga is where the good karma is enjoyed. Again, the following description does not fit any place or any inhabitants of our known Earth area:

"Among the nine varshas, the tract of land known as Bharata-varsha is understood to be the field of fruitive activities. Learned scholars and saintly persons declare the other eight varshas to be meant for very highly elevated pious persons. After returning from the heavenly planets, they enjoy the remaining results of their pious activities in these eight earthly varshas."

In these eight varshas, or tracts of land, human beings live ten thousand years according to earthly calculations... Thus the standard of pleasure for the residents of these heavenly regions is exactly like that of the human beings who lived during Treta-yuga." (5.17.11-12)

"...They never feel fatigue, and perspiration does not give their bodies a bad odor. They are not afflicted by old age, disease or untimely death, they do not suffer from chilly cold or scorching heat, nor do their bodies lose their luster. They all live very happily, without anxieties, until death." (SB 5.16.25)

It mentions here that the conditions in the varshas other than Bharata-varsha are similar to Treta-yuga. Only Bharata-varsha is affected by Kali-yuga. Again no such people, places, and conditions exist anywhere in our known Earth area, making it a categorical mistake to ascribe such places to places in and around India.

This kind of presentation simply obscures the reality of Jambudwipa as a vast area of land further north of our known Earth area. It is certainly not my intention to criticize Sadaputa Prabhu, but it must be pointed out how the reality of Bhu-mandala becomes obscured by ascribing it to places within India and its surrounding area. If we don't recognize where the obfuscation is coming from then we will just continue perpetrating the wrong idea. For example, Radha-Mohan Prabhu (of Bhaktivedanta Manor) made a video in February 2016 called *Astronomy of the Bhagavat Purana* and just repeated the same concept. The net result is that no-one takes the idea of the greater Earth plane with any seriousness. Bhu-mandala disappears into God knows where, and we are back on the ball which doesn't even exist in the Puranic descriptions. I'm merely pointing out how the understanding of Bhu-mandala has disappeared by mistakenly presenting it as something else.

Hence my repeated question: Where is the 800,000 mile Jambudwipa in relation to the round globe? Try and appreciate the question: If the Earth is as NASA depicts it – a globe floating in space, where is the rest of the 800,000 mile island of Jambudwipa described by Sukadeva Goswami. According to Sukadeva Goswami, as one heads north from Bharata-varsha, after a few thousand miles, one comes to the mainland of Jambudwipa. Where is this Jambudwipa in NASA's images? How do you explain it's whereabouts? Where is the 800,000-mile salt-water ocean surrounding Jambudwipa? If the TOVP representatives cannot explain the whereabouts of Jambudwipa (or its notable absence in NASA's satellite images) then there is a major omission in their presentation of the Vedic Earth.

Contrary to the title of this section, the Earth described in the Vedic Puranas has not disappeared at all, although it has certainly disappeared from our immediate vision and understanding. According to Srimad Bhagavatam, massive lands and oceans that are undiscovered to the present ge-

neration surround our known Earth area. These areas were previously connected in the Vedic era. This is evident from the various historical narratives given in Srimad Bhagavatam, which describe, for example, King Pariksit's rule over Jambudwipa (SB 1.16.12).

Therefore, one must seriously consider that the building of the Temple of Vedic Planetarium is part of Krishna's plan to reintroduce knowledge of the Bhu-mandala as a *factual reality*.

SECTION 1.6 — THE REAPPEARANCE OF THE EARTH

The Mayapur Temple Of Vedic Planetarium is meant to radically change the perception of the world by ushering in the new paradigm of the Earth's true location on the Bhu-mandala plane. The TOVP, in other words, must be considered part of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's plan to bring about a 'reappearance' of the Earth for the purpose of reconnecting this part of the Vedic universe in the joyous sankirtan movement (see: CC Adi-lila, 13.32). Of course, the Bhu-mandala (great Earth circle) described in Srimad Bhagavatam, has not, disappeared anywhere; but due to Maya's covering potency, the world has lost sight of the reality. The appearance of the Srimad Bhagavatam in the world, not only disperses all untruth, illusion, and deception regarding the true feature and purpose of the Earth; it also shines its light of knowledge revealing the vast landscape of the greater Earth circle all around us. The Mayapur TOVP is meant to convey this message of Srimad Bhagavatam's cosmology to the world.

In this paper, we have collected the relevant verses clearly describing the characteristics and measurements of the Bhu-gola. As anyone can see, they do not describe Earth as a small globe in space; and no other description of such an Earth globe exists anywhere in the 18,000 verses of Srimad Bhagavatam. If the mandate of the TOVP is to present the cosmology of Srimad Bhagavatam, it cannot legitimately present Earth as a globe in space if no such description of a globe in space actually occurs in the Srimad Bhagavatam itself. The ISKCON community, at least those interested in this subject, and particularly those responsible for the TOVP, have to deal with the issue. Of course, the issue is complicated because Srila Prabhupada spoke favorably of the globe concept. I have argued that the issue can be resolved by taking Srila Prabhupada's own instruction, which is to present the version of Srimad Bhagavatam. The version of Srimad Bhagavatam, as we have seen, unambiguously presents the Earth as a plane, not a planet.

Srila Prabhupada vigorously preached the message of Srimad Bhagavatam that there is life in all parts of the universe, and that the living entities transmigrate to these different places according to their karma and desire. Srila Prabhupada, for example, spoke of other 'Earthly planets.' Although Srila Prabhupada spoke of these places as other planets, these other Earthly 'planets' are not in some far distant space or dimension as we may have assumed. As we have demonstrated in this paper, the Earthly 'planets' (sapta-dwipa) are not, in fact, planets as we know them; they are not in space; and the closest neighbour to our part of the world is only a few thousand miles away past our most northern region. As we have seen, Srimad Bhagavatam describes that our Earth rests on a plane, and this plane continues into undiscovered areas of the greater Earth plane called Bhu-mandala. To the north of our Bharata-varsha is the mainland of Jambudwipa, an 800,000-mile circular island inhabited by other human beings. From here, the Earth plane extends for hundreds of millions of miles. Will the TOVP present this concept as a factual reality?

The real question is whether the leadership of ISKCON are going to have the courage to present Srimad Bhagavatam as *it is*, which would mean accepting and presenting the horizontal plane model of the Earth, and basically having to change the opinion of the rest of the world about the nature, shape and location of the Earth on the plane of Bhu-mandala. Srimad Bhagavatam is predicted to create a revolution, but are we revolutionaries? The problem is that an uninformed community of Krishna devotees are still stuck in the paradigm that Earth is a globe in space. The actual description of the Earth has not been accurately explained to the devotee community, and the oftentimes bewildering nature of Vedic cosmology also puts many people off from even going near the subject. Forsaking any real research into the subject, the easiest option is to go on as before, thinking that the Earth is a globe, as depicted in the fake photos presented by NASA. It is often too much for people to doubt or challenge the authority of those propagating the images and science that support the globe Earth conception. In this way we go complacently along with the lie.

The lie began in 1969 when so-called American astronauts made their way to the moon and for

'proof,' snapped a few photographs of the Earth in so-called outer space. Once committed to this deception, NASA had no choice but to continue the hoax to the present day. NASA is nothing but the special effects department of the American government's propaganda machine. They are creators of the longest running space saga, but just never told anyone it's all a movie.

The idea that Earth continues on an extended plane is certainly a test to our knowledge, faith, and sense of reality, and it is not an easy concept for one to immediately accept. But one thing we can consider: to the degree we are invested in illusion and untruth, to that degree we willingly allow ourselves to be deceived by Maya's agents in the form of government agencies such as NASA who have been caught lying and cheating time and time again. The question of whether the Earth in the TOVP will be depicted as a plane or a planet is really a secondary question. The primary question is this: to what degree are the leadership of ISKCON invested in continuing the illusions of the present world paradigm?

In June 2013, President Obama gave an address on climate change at the Georgetown University in which he said "I am willing to work with anybody...to combat this threat on behalf of our kids, but I don't have much patience for anybody who argues the problem is not real. *We don't have time for a meeting of the Flat Earth Society.*" Apart from the President finding time otherwise to meet with people like the Saudi government to sign arms deals worth billions of dollars, his statement about the flat-Earth is not going to sit well with the Governing Body Committee of ISKCON who may think twice about presenting such an idea in the face of such powerful people. Indeed, as ISKCON begins to rub shoulders with the big politicians of mainstream society, it is highly unlikely that anyone is going to rock the boat by calling into the question the authenticity of the so-called International Space Programs. The question thus arises: are we going to seriously challenge or change the ideas of the materialistic society about what is real and what is illusion; or for sake of false prestige, will we willingly allow our society to be subsumed into the same ideological paradigm of mainstream society, such as wholeheartedly accepting whatever propaganda movies NASA and the ESA (European Space Agency) cares to put out to the innocent public about so-called space exploration.

The so-called 'powers that be' are trying to convince the other inmates of the prison planet that they are in control and freely travelling around the universe when they themselves are bound hand and foot by their own karma. On the occasion of the so-called moon landing in 1969, when the whole world was held in awe at the spectacle, Srila Prabhupada boldly dismissed the entire escapade as a complete hoax. He was perhaps the first 'conspiracy theorist.'

Prabhupada: So I am the only man in the world challenging that "You have not gone to the moon planet." Eh? (Morning Walk, June 2, 1975, Honolulu)

Srila Prabhupada explained the situation as follows:

"Just like in free life you can go from this home to that home, in prison life you cannot do that. You must stay to your cell. So all these planets are like cells. We are trying to go to the moon planet; that is not possible, not in this way. That way is different. I have explained many times in this meeting. Because we are given a particular cell. Either we are Americans or Indians or Chinese or Russian, we have been given this planet. Live—you cannot leave it by your will. Although there are millions and billions of planets, and although you have got machine to fly, but because we are conditioned, checked by the laws of nature or God, you cannot go. Exactly like the man who is put into certain cell, he cannot change at his will without the superior authority." (Los Angles, July 12 1969)

Srila Prabhupada exposed the real agenda:

"Because they are very, very sinful, duskrtina. Mischievous, miscreants, simply wasting money. They're taking huge salary, huge research fees from the government, and simply misleading persons. That is their business. Miscreants. Actually, they want money, but to take the money he has to bluff. Without bluffing, how he can take money? Then they will present themselves: "I am great scientist, I am great philosopher, so give me money, millions of dollars. I'll go to the moon planet, I'll go to the Mars," and taking money and wasting. And because we are rascals, we are also: "Oh, they are making so much advancement, yes." Andha yathandhair upaniyamanah [SB 7.5.31]. We are following blind leaders. Because we are blind, we do not know. This is the position. Andha yathandhair upaniyamanah. So we have to open

our eyes." (SB 1.2.25, August 28, 1972, Los Angeles)

Note carefully what Srila Prabhupada says here, "Because we are rascals, we are thinking also: "Oh, they are making so much advancement, yes"...We are following blind leaders. *Because we are blind, we do not know...so we have to open our eyes.*" Space travel only happens in movies. Don't fall for the propaganda. Open your eyes. Do the research. The so-called space agencies of the world are not making any advancement. The so-called astronauts (*astro-nots*) cannot get out of the Earth's atmosphere which is why they have to fake all their images in studios on Earth. Srila Prabhupada called the bluff of these cheaters. Unfortunately, at the time of Srila Prabhupada's manifest preaching pastimes, no one in his entourage made the connection between the fake moon landing and the fake pictures of Earth that were presented to the gullible public. Will the TOVP be courageous enough to now vindicate Srila Prabhupada's claim that the moon landing and subsequent propaganda are all fake? An exhibition in the TOVP exposing this bluff and non-sense is certainly called for.

All of this is going to require some momentous decision making, and that can only be done if the parties involved have made at least a preliminary study of the horizontal plane model of the Earth, as well as a study of the many objections to the globe model, and thereby gaining sufficient knowledge and realization to make an informed decision. Most of all, it requires thoroughly honest people making the decisions:

"Completely rejecting all religious activities which are materially motivated, this Bhagavata Purāṇa propounds the highest truth, which is understandable by those devotees who are fully pure in heart. The highest truth is reality distinguished from illusion for the welfare of all. Such truth uproots the threefold miseries." (SB 1.1.2)

It will be a momentous decision on the part of ISKCON'S leadership to present Bhu-mandala as it is without bringing in a secondary excuse for a globe model. The plan for the TOVP at the present moment is to depict the Bhu-mandala in the central dome, with a secondary exhibition to present the Earth as a globe in space. This will have the net result of reducing the primary exhibit of Bhu-mandala to mere spectacle and mythology artistry. If the intention of the secondary exhibition is to convince everyone that we live on a globe in space, the so-called 'scientists' may be satisfied; but the reality of our life on the vast plane of Bhu-mandala will remain obscured and hidden. A straightforward presentation of Bhu-mandala is all we need, along with supporting science to explain the flat-Earth and disprove the globe model. The present TOVP plan for a secondary exhibition to display a globe Earth will simply hide the truth of the matter. As pointed out by Utta-masloka Prabhu:

"Remember, the central model is just the visualization and it doesn't explain or reveal anything in and of itself. Most visitors will be overwhelmed, amazed, and confused at first sight. The supporting literature they give to guests and the explanations of the tour guides will be the key points where the knowledge is transmitted to visitors."

If the focus in a secondary exhibition is to present the Earth as a globe, the actual description of the Earth given in Srimad Bhagavatam as a continual plane will just be explained away as belonging to another dimension. It will be seen as completely irrelevant with no bearing on our lives here on the so-called globe. Thus, one of the most important preaching functions of the TOVP will be lost. But how will our devotees honestly answer an inquisitive visitor to the TOVP, who asks: "You have depicted Bharata-varsha at the southern end of Jambudwipa. But where is this Jambudwipa?"

The most surprising thing to me so far, is that most people that I've talked to - including both devotees and non-devotees - are not at all taken aback by the concept that the Earth continues on an extended plane. What the world does not know is the extent of the Earth plane and this is what the TOVP can explain. The flat-Earthers are also in the dark about what lies beyond the boarders of our known Earth. It is our mandate to awaken the rest of the world to what the world actually looks like. Will our TOVP management be part of the universal awakening, or will it tiptoe quietly for fear of waking anyone up to life on a new Earth?

The shape and location of the Earth is an issue, however, not just for the TOVP; it is an issue that affects us all. What if NASA and other space agencies were lying to the world, and the Earth is not a globe floating in space after all? Would that not radically change your perception of the

world and its purpose? Would that not shake your faith in the government, education systems, and scientific institutions that have been perpetrating this idea to you and your society for the last few hundred years? Would it not oblige you to think deeper into what is real and what is illusion?

Is the globe real? Are the images of the Earth as a globe in space authentic? Are you being deceived? Does it matter? Yes, certainly it matters. If people are involved in deceiving you about the real nature of the Earth, what lie and falsehood will they not tell? Upon investigation, it will be discovered that the so-called scientific presentation of the Earth as a globe rotating around the sun, is all part of the same materialistic propaganda that teaches the Earth came from a big bang, and that all life including humans evolved by a process of chemical evolution. In this way, people are indoctrinated into a materialistic conception of life and obliged to work as soulless slaves. The Earth of Srimad Bhagavatam changes everything.

"In the creation of the Lord there are many wonderful things we can see with our own eyes every day and night, but we are unable to reach them equipped by modern materialistic science. We should not, therefore, depend on the fragmentary authority of materialistic science for knowing things beyond the range of scientific purview. For a common man, both modern science and Vedic wisdom are simply to be accepted because none of the statements either of modern science or of Vedic literature can be verified by him. The alternative for a common man is to believe either of them or both of them. The Vedic way of understanding, however, is more authentic because it has been accepted by the acaryas, who are not only faithful and learned men, but are also liberated souls without any of the flaws of conditioned souls. The modern scientists, however, are conditioned souls liable to so many errors and mistakes; therefore the safe side is to accept the authentic version of Vedic literatures, like Srimad-Bhagavatam, which is accepted unanimously by the great acaryas." (SB 2.2.26)