

Radha Kunda Mahima Madhuri

An Insider's Guidebook to Radha's Lake of Love

Mahanidhi Swami

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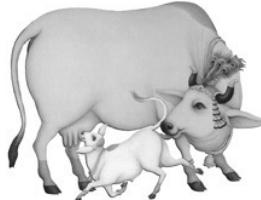
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108 Sweet Notes Volume I & II
Radha-Krpa-Kataksa



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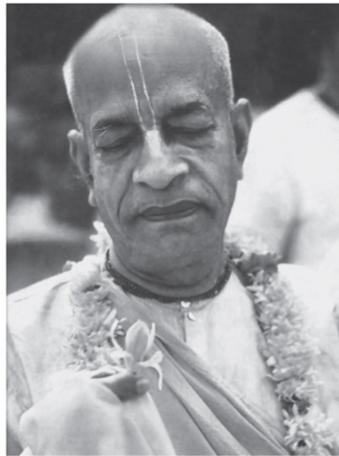
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Dedication

Sri-Sri Gandharvika-Giridhari Jayatah!
SriGuru-Gauranga Jayatah!



Rādhā Kuṇḍa Mahimā Mādhuri is dedicated to my beloved spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

*As a child you dreamed of coming to this land
In your longing of separation from Vraja
You often checked the train tables
“How far to Vṛndāvana? What is the cost?”
Behind your guru you walked and talked
Along the shimmering waters of Rādhā-kuṇḍa
“Avoid the fire! Print books!” he said.
Drinking deeply from Rādhā’s reservoir of prema
You spent the next forty years
Flooding the world with that nectar shower
In ‘75 you printed Śrī Upadeśāmṛta
Inviting us to taste the nectar sweet
Of bathing in Rādhā’s kuṇḍa
And serving Her lotus feet!*

Acknowledgements

We especially thank Svarūpa Dāmodara Swami, Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi Dāsa, Kūrma-rūpa Dāsa, and Gopāla Candra Ghosh for their help in producing this book. We pray to Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and to our worshipable Deities of Śrī-Śrī Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī to bless them all with *prema-bhakti*.

Maṅgalācaraṇa

*oṁ ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmīlitam̄ yena tasmai śrī-guruve namah*

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

*vāñchā-kalpatarubhyaś ca kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānāṁ pāvanebhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namah*

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

*namo mahā-vadānyāya krṣṇa-prema pradāya te
krṣṇāya krṣṇa-caitanya-nāmne gaura-tviṣe namah*

I offer my respectful obeisances to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Śrī Krṣṇa Himself. He has assumed the golden hue of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and is munificently distributing *Kṛṣṇa-prema*.

*he krṣṇa! karuṇā-sindho! dīna-bandho! jagat-pate!
gopeśa! gopikā-kānta! rādhā-kānta! namo ‘stu te*

I offer my respectful obeisances to Śrī Krṣṇa, who is the source of creation, an ocean of mercy, and the friend of the distressed. He is the master of the *gopas*, and the lover of the *gopīs* headed by Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

*tapta-kāñcana-gaurāṅgi! rādhe! vṛndāvaneśvari!
vr̥ṣabhānu-sute! devī! praṇamāmi hari-priye!*

I offer my respectful obeisances to Śrīmatī Rādhikā, whose complexion is like molten gold, and who is the Queen of Vṛndāvana. Rādhā is the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu Mahāraja and is very dear to Śrī Krṣṇa.

*bhaktyā vihīnā aparādha-lakṣaiḥ
kṣiptāś ca kāmaḍi-taraṅga-madhye
kṛpāmayi tvām śaraṇam̄ prapannā
vṛṇde namas te caraṇāravindam*

Being devoid of devotion and a great offender, I am being tossed about on the turbulent waves of lust, anger, greed and so forth. O merciful

Vṛndādevī, I take shelter of you, and offer my respectful obeisances to your lotus feet.

*śrī-caitanya-mano-’bhīṣṭam
sthāpitaṁ yena bhūtale
svayaṁ rūpaḥ kadā mahyaṁ
dadāti sva-padāntikam*

When will Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmi, who has established the mission in this world that fulfills the internal desire of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, give me shelter at his lotus feet?

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

At the lotus feet of Rādhā-Śyāmasundara in the supreme pleasure abode of Śrī Vṛndāvana, you are preaching the highest perfection of knowledge about the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the fountainhead of religion. O Śrīla Prabhupāda, my lord and the master of my senses, please accept my most humble obeisances.

*tavaivāsmi tavaivāsmi
na jīvāmi tvayā vinā
iti vijñāya devī tvaṁ
naya māṁ caranāntikam*

I am Yours! I am Yours! I cannot live without You! O Devī [Rādhe], please understand this and bring me to Your lotus feet.

*sṛī-vṛndāvipinam suramyam api tac, chrīmān sa govardhanāḥ
sā rāsa-sthalikāpy alaṁ rasamayī, kiṁ tāvad anyat sthalam
yasyāpy aṁśa-lavena nārhati manāk, samyaṁ mukundasya tat
prāṇebhyo ‘py adhika-priyeva dayitaṁ, tat kuṇḍam evāśraye*

The delightful forest of Vṛndāvana, beautiful Govardhana Hill, and the nectarean arena of the *rāsa* dance, what to speak of other places, are not equal to even a single particle of one of the atoms of Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa! Let me take shelter of these two lakes, which are more dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa than His own life's breath.

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

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

Introduction

*kunḍera ‘mādhurī’—yena rādhāra ‘mādhurīmā
kunḍera ‘mahimā’—yena rādhāra ‘mahimā*

“The attraction of Rādhā-kuṇḍa is as sweet as that of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Similarly, the glories of Her kuṇḍa are as glorious as Śrīmatī Rādhikā.”

(*Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya* 18.11)

The title of this nectar-guidebook to Rādhā-kuṇḍa is based on this wonderful *śloka* from Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī. The name, form, qualities, pastimes, friends, and home of Śrīmatī Rādhikā are full of unlimited glories and sweetness. As everything connected with Śrī Rādhā is full of the sweetest mellites, similarly, Her divine lake, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is overflowing with the sweetest transcendental glories.

Although this topmost place of Rādhā-Mādhava’s intimate pastimes almost disappeared from the world, by the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Rādhā-kuṇḍa reappeared to bless the most fallen with the rarest gift of Kṛṣṇa *prema*. For the last five-hundred years, this secret storehouse of mercy remained hidden within the sacred writings of the Six Gosvamis. Other than a handful of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas in India, no one had any knowledge or appreciation of the glories of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Lord Caitanya, who came to Vṛndāvana and personally revealed the location of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, wanted people in every town and village to sing the glories of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. By offenselessly chanting the Lord’s glories one may have a chance to fulfil Lord Caitanya’s inner desire. As Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted everyone to chant the holy names, He also wanted everyone to bathe in Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Bathing in Rādhā-kuṇḍa means to live eternally in Vraja-dhāma blissfully serving the lotus feet of Rādhā-Mādhava in the loving mood of the gopīs. Although one rarely attains this spiritual perfection, Lord Caitanya and His sincere followers are broadcasting this sublime message throughout the world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was an intimate and empowered associate of Lord Caitanya. Therefore, to fulfil the Lord’s inner desire, Śrīla Prabhupāda translated Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī’s Sanskrit classic *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* into English, calling it the *Nectar of Instruction*. Nectar is a tonic that

stimulates, energises, and extends one's life. This book is a nectar-tonic that stimulates *prema* to flow within the heart.

The *Nectar of Instruction* leads one out of the body, and into the nectar of bathing in Śrīmatī Rādhikā's eternal service in a divine body surcharged with spiritual ecstasy. Thinking that the nectar was only for a select audience, disciples became confused when Śrīla Prabhupāda once ordered the BBT to print 100,000 copies of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*.

One disciple said, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, this book is not for the masses of people. Besides, since we only have about 10,000 devotees in our movement, it seems 10,000 copies would be sufficient."

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "You do not understand. This book is not just for our devotees. The *Nectar of Instruction* is for everyone! You should distribute it widely."

Since Śrīla Prabhupāda's first English edition, *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* has been translated into all the major languages. Millions of copies have been distributed around the world. Śrīla Prabhupāda is fulfilling Lord Caitanya's desire to spread the glories of Rādhā-kuṇḍa to every town and village.

Every year thousands of fortunate devotees visit Vrndavana. We thought a nectar-guidebook to Rādhā Kūḍā would help these derive the greatest benefit from their pilgrimage. Besides describing all the holy places, *Rādhā Kūḍā Mahimā Mādhuri* is full of śastric quotations about the sweet glories of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. In one sense, the book is a golden treasure box full of precious gems and jewel-like *ślokas*, shining with the beauty and sweetness of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

Anywhere in the world, one can open this treasure box and swim in the nectar of remembering Rādhā-kuṇḍa. A fortunate soul can bring this treasure box to Vṛndāvana, open to the *parikramā* guide chapter, and wander through the nectar-filled groves of Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Then with a mind purified by the dust of *parikramā*, and a heart humbled by submissive prayers to the *ācāryas*, one can bathe in the immortal nectar of Rādhā-kuṇḍa's *prema*-filled waters.

We hope this book will serve the devotees as both a shower of nectar, and as a practical guidebook for visiting Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, the most sublime abode of Rādhā-Śyāmasundara. As Śrīla Prabhupāda once said, "Rādhā-

kunḍa is for relishing,” similarly, we pray that the devotees will also relish *Rādhā Kuṇḍa MahimāMādhuri*, the sweet glories of Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa Śyāma-kuṇḍa ki jai!
Śrīla Prabhupāda ki jai!

Mahānidhi Swami
Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandira
Vṛndāvana-dhāma
Nityānanda Trayodaśi 1995

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RĀDHĀ KRPA KATĀKṢA (by Lord Śiva).

PHALA ŚRUTI

RĀDHĀ-KUNÒAŚTĀKAÀ

SAKHĪ-VRNDE VIJĪĀPTIÙ

ŚRĪ VRAJA-DHĀMA-MAHIMĀMRTA

ŚRĪ RÜPA MAIJARI PADA

SARPĀRSADA-BHAGAVAD-VIRAHĀ-JANITA-

VILĀPA

VAIŚNAVE VIJĪAPTI

ŚRĪ-ŚRĪ SAÒ-GOSVĀMY-AŚTAKA

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Chapter 1: The Name of Rādhā kūṇḍa

“The word Rādhā means” the greatest worshiper of Kṛṣṇa. No other *gopī* in Vṛndāvana has such a significant name as Śrī Rādhā. Of course, all the Vraja *gopīs* love and give pleasure to Kṛṣṇa. However, compared to Rādhikā’s ocean of love for Kṛṣṇa, the other *gopīs* are merely pools, ponds and rivers. As the ocean is the original source of all the water found in lakes and rivers, similarly the love found in the *gopīs* and in all the other devotees has its origin in Śrī Rādhā alone. Since Rādhā’s love is the greatest, She gives the greatest pleasure to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Rādhā’s lake is named after Her because, like Rādhā, it pleases all the transcendental senses of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa’s eyes enjoy seeing Rādhā-kūṇḍa. Kṛṣṇa’s nose relishes the smell of Rādhā-kūṇḍa’s waters and its lotus flowers. The touch of Rādhā-kūṇḍa’s cool water pleases Kṛṣṇa’s body. The sounds of the singing birds and buzzing bees satisfy Kṛṣṇa’s ears. Kṛṣṇa’s tongue enjoys tasting the ambrosial water of Rādhā-kūṇḍa.

Rādhā-kūṇḍa is named after Śrī Rādhā because it has the same power that She has to attract and enchant Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is confirmed in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta Adi 4:95 jagat mohana kṛṣṇa tāñhāra mohinī, ataeva samastera parā thākurāṇī*. “Kṛṣṇa enchants the whole world, but Śrīmatī Rādhikā enchants even Him. Therefore, Rādhā is the Supreme Goddess.” Chanting Rādhā’s name and bathing in Rādhā-kūṇḍa both attract Kṛṣṇa as confirmed by Śrī Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura: *kṛṣṇa nāma gāne bhāi, rādhikāra carana pai, rādhā nāma gāne kṛṣṇa candra*. “O brother! If you sing Kṛṣṇa’s name, you will attain the lotus feet of Rādhikā, if you sing Rādhā’s name, you will attain Kṛṣṇacandra.”

“In Vṛndāvana, people are accustomed to chant Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s name more than Kṛṣṇa’s name. ‘*Jaya Rādhe!*’ If you want Kṛṣṇa’s favor, then just try to please Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. This is the way.” (SPT 75/82)

“Even a single utterance of the two syllables *RāDhā* immediately attracts Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Gokula. All the goals of human life seem insignificant for one who becomes full of love for the name of Rādhā! Lord Mādhava Himself also lovingly chants *japa* of this *mantra*. May the two wonderful syllables *RāDhā* become revealed to me.” (*Rādhā rasa-sudhā-nidhi*)

Once Śyāmasundara came to the Vṛndāvana forest to meet Śrīmatī Rādhikā. The *gopīs* met Him and said that Rādhā's superiors kept Her locked up at home, even though Rādhā was actually hiding in a nearby *kuñja*. Śyāma became upset, and asked the *gopīs* how He could meet Rādhikā. The *gopīs* advised Kṛṣṇa to just sit down, become absorbed in chanting Rādhā's sweet name, and surely She would come to Him.

After chanting for sometime, Kṛṣṇa stopped and said, "Hey *sakhīs*! Why hasn't Rādhā appeared yet?"

One *sakhī* jokingly replied, "Look Śyāmasundara! I think You're not getting any result because You're committing offenses against the holy name of Rādhā!"

Then the *sakhīs* gave further advice, "Look Śyāma, just clap Your hands, and loudly chant the divine name of Rādhā. This will remove Your offenses, and make the holy name pleased with You."

With tear-filled eyes, and a heart full of ecstatic love, Śrī Kṛṣṇa joined the *sakhīs* in a blissful Rādhā-nāma *kīrtana*. Forcefully attracted by the ecstasy, Śrīmatī Rādhikā left Her hiding place, and blessed Mādhava with a loving embrace.

If a person is very fortunate he will follow the example of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and chant the holy name of Rādhā with "tear-filled eyes and a heart full of ecstatic love."

"O Rādhā! Only by great fortune can one be absorbed in meditating on Your sweet holy name Rādhā. This name emanates a transcendental effulgence of ecstatic conjugal love that is worshiped in Vraja by hundreds of *kiṣorīs*, young girls. These beautiful pastimes totally embarrass millions of goddesses of fortune." (*Rādhā rasa-sudhā-nidhi*)

"Lord Mādhava blossoms with joy whenever He hears the syllable *Rā*, and when He simply hears the syllable *Dhā*, He eagerly runs after that person to reward him." (*Brahma-vaivarta-Purāṇa*)

Chanting Rādhā's name gives great pleasure to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and it also pleases all the previous *ācāryas*. Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī worships such a person as he proclaims in *Sva-niyama-dvādaśakam*, "I vow to bathe and worship the lotus feet of anyone in this world who bows down with love to worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and who showers the world with the nectarean name "Rādhā." Everyday, I will drink that water and carry it on my head."

Offenses are the main obstacle to making spiritual advancement. One will attain love of God only when one's offenses are destroyed, and one purely worships the Lord. Although Kṛṣṇa never tolerates an offender, nor gives Him any mercy, He will become favorable if this person takes shelter of the compassionate name of Rādhā. Prabhodhānanda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura says that Kṛṣṇa becomes so pleased with one who chants Rādhā's name that He nullifies all their offenses. Not only that, but Śrī Kṛṣṇa considers engaging him in Rādhā's personal service. This is confirmed in *Rādhā rasa-sudhā-nidhi*:

“O Śrī Rādhe! Madhupati [Śrī Kṛṣṇa] completely disregards unlimited Vaiṣṇava *aparādhas* of anyone who even once relishes the nectarean mellow of Your holy name. Overwhelmed in the greatest *prema*, Kṛṣṇa considers bestowing upon him the supreme gift of Rādhā *dāsyam* [Rādhā's personal service]. Therefore, who can imagine the limitless fortune of one whose mind is firmly fixed only in Your service?”

The Sanskrit word *sara* means lake, but by reversing the syllables *sa* and *ra*, it becomes *rasa*, which means the sweet flavor of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's playful pastimes. Therefore, those who understand this great secret will bathe in Śrī Rādhā's lake, Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and relish the sweet mellows of *mādhurya-rasa*.

Chapter 2: The Identity of Rādhā-kuṇḍa

Rādhā-kuṇḍa is known as the *prema svarūpa* of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. The glories of Rādhā-kuṇḍa are proclaimed throughout the *Vedas*. The land of Vṛndāvana is made of *cintāmani* and covered with *kalpa-vṛkṣa* [wish-fulfilling trees]. One can always hear the sweet sounds of cuckoos and buzzing bees. Lotuses fill the air with intoxicating aromas. The spring season, which serves Rādhā-kuṇḍa, attracts the senses and creates a divinely romantic atmosphere.

The true nature of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, however, is perceivable only by transcendental vision. Although Śrī Vṛndāvana appears to be within the material world, it exists eternally beyond this temporary world. Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma continues to exist even after the destruction of the material world. The pastimes that Rādhā-Śyāmasundara perform in this world have a uniquely sweet flavor. Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī says, “The sweetness of the Vṛndāvana manifested within the material world is greater than the sweetness of Vṛndāvana in the spiritual world.” It is just like a diamond set in white glass is not as attractive as a diamond set in a blue glass. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes set in the material world are more charming and fascinating than those in the spiritual world. Among all pastime places, Rādhā-kuṇḍa reigns supreme, because Rādhā-Govinda enjoy the greatest intimacy here without any outside disturbances.

“*Vedic* scholars say that by approaching Rādhā-kuṇḍa one will definitely attain Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa, which overflow with *prema*, are the two eyes of Giri-Govardhana.” (VRC)

“Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa are very beautiful and dear to the heart. It is the favorite pastime place of the Divine Couple.” (VVS)

“Mathurā is superior to Vaikuṇṭha because Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared there. Vṛndāvana is superior to Mathurā because Kṛṣṇa performed His *rāsa-līlā* there. Govardhana Hill is superior to Vṛndāvana because Kṛṣṇa lifted it and enacted many blissful pastimes there. But the superexcellent Rādhā-kuṇḍa stands supreme above all for it is overflowing with the ambrosial nectarean *prema* of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.” (*Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* #9)

“Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī gradually concludes that Śrī Rādhā is the most exalted devotee and that Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is the most exalted place. Why

is Rādhā-kuṇḍa so exalted? The lake is so exalted because it belongs to Śrī Rādhā, who is the most beloved object of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

“Great sages say that Rādhā-kuṇḍa is as dear to Kṛṣṇa as Rādhā Herself. Indeed, Kṛṣṇa’s love for Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the same in all respects.” (*Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* #11 pur.)

*yatha rādhā priya viṣṇos
tasyah kuṇḍam priyam tatha
sarva gopīsu saivaka
viṣṇor atyanta vallabha*

“Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is dear to Kṛṣṇa, and Her kuṇḍa known as Rādhā-kuṇḍa is similarly dear to Him. It is the favorite place of Kṛṣṇa. Of all the *gopīs*, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the most dear to Kṛṣṇa.” (*Cc.Madhya 18.8*)

Why is Rādhā-kuṇḍa so special?

Some *ācāryas* say that when compared with Gokula, Vṛndāvana, Varṣāṇa and Nandagrāma, Rādhā-kuṇḍa is special and unique because only *mādhurya-rasa* prevails there. Gokula, Vṛndāvana, Nandagrāma and Varṣāṇa are completely spiritual places full of Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental pastimes. But there are differences in *rasa*.

As a child in Gokula, Kṛṣṇa churned the ocean of *vātsalya-rasa*, continuously relishing the sweetness of Nanda and Yaśodā’s parental love. In Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa tasted *mādhurya-rasa* during the full moon night of the *Śārat* season. But during that *mahā-rāsa* dance, which is called *panciety rasa*, Kṛṣṇa didn’t relish the sweetest taste of *mādhurya*. This is because there were many classes of *gopīs* there, including the personified *Vedas*, the Daṇḍakāranya sages, and other liberated souls who had just attained the bodies of *gopīs* to enter the *rāsa* dance arena.

Due to the presence of all these “newcomers,” Śrī Rādhā became angry and left that *rāsa* dance. Then Kṛṣṇa pacified Rādhā, and began another exclusive *rāsa* dance with only His *parama presthaskhīs* [most intimate *gopīs*]. In Nandagrāma and Varṣāṇa, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa mostly relish the mellows of *sakhya* and *vātsalya* [friendship and parental love] with Their family and friends.

Rādhā-kuṇḍa is the crest jewel of all *līlā-sthānas* [pastime places]. Rādhā-kuṇḍa is the place of the highest perfection, because only in Rādhā-kuṇḍa do Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa enjoy the most ecstatic mellows of *mādhurya rasa*.

with Their intimate and dearest *gopī* friends. For this reason, Rādhā-kunḍa is the purest, most holy and elevated place, not only in the material universe but in the spiritual sky as well.

“O Vṛndāvana-dhāma! Who in this world did not quickly attain the topmost bliss by serving you? I offer my obeisances unto you. With my head bowed down I humbly beg you. Please reveal to me the best way to see my King and Queen. Please give me your mercy.” (*Utkalikā Vallariḥ*)

Chapter 3: The Appearance of Rādhā-kuṇḍa

Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa exist eternally and they are completely transcendental. Their manifestation here is just a playful pastime enacted by Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*.

“Kṛṣṇa killed the bull demon Ariṣṭāsura on the Northern side of Mānasi Gaṅgā. To atone for the sin of killing a bull Kṛṣṇa struck the ground with His left heel and revealed Śyāma-kuṇḍa.” (AP)

“Then Kṛṣṇa bathed along with His friends. Afterwards, He entered the cowherd pastures to relax for about an hour. Taking His flute, Kṛṣṇa called the *gopīs*. Then Kṛṣṇa told Rādhā that She must also purify Herself because the whole area, and everyone in it had become polluted by sharing the karma of Kṛṣṇa’s killing the bull. Rādhā then embraced Kṛṣṇa and made a lake which was named after Her.

“On Paurṇamāsī’s order Vṛndādevī planted various trees and vines around the *kuṇḍas*. She also built jewelled bathing *ghāṭas* with stairs leading down to the *kuṇḍa*, and she built the eight *kuñjas* of the *aṣṭā-sakhīs*.” (HV) Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes in the *Bhāgavata* that Ariṣṭāsura was so huge that his tail was touching the clouds. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī paints an even clearer picture of this demon’s incredible size in *Harīsadūta*:

Lalitā Sakhī said to the swan, “On the outskirts of Vṛndāvana, you will see the dried skull of the Ariṣṭāsura demon, which appears as white as the clouds in autumn. These decaying bones are often mistaken for the mountains of Kailāsa by the servants of Kubera and associates of Lord Śiva, who try to climb to its peaks.”

“Although Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa always want to be together, They are forced to separate from time to time. They must overcome many obstacles to meet. By taking the forms of Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa, They fulfil Their intensely eager desires for eternal union by constantly splashing each other with the nectar of Their waves.

“I [Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura] say that upon seeing each other Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa felt so much bliss that They melted in ecstasy and became the transcendental waters of these two *kuṇḍas*. For this reason Rādhā-kuṇḍa

and Śyāma-kuṇḍa have the same names and qualities as the Divine Couple.” (VRC)

Appearance of Rādhā-kuṇḍa in Goloka

“Once the *gopīs* were fanning Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as They sat on a jewelled *āsana* in Vraja-dhāma in the spiritual sky. Suddenly, Kṛṣṇa became so overwhelmed with love for Rādhā that He assumed the form and mood of Rādhārāṇī. He started repeatedly calling out, “Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!” Then Kṛṣṇa ran into a *kuñja*.

“At the same time, Rādhārāṇī assumed the form and emotions of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The *sakhīs* became astonished to see Rādhā’s transformation. After failing in their attempt to pacify Rādhā the *sakhīs* searched for Kṛṣṇa. When Kṛṣṇa heard about Rādhā’s dilemma He wanted to go there immediately.

“Suddenly a voice from sky told Kṛṣṇa to just chant Rādhā’s *mantra*. By doing this She would come to Him. Kṛṣṇa’s chanting drew Rādhā into the *kuñja*. Rādhā, now in the form of Kṛṣṇa, just stared at the ground out of shyness.

‘My dearest Rādhā,’ said Kṛṣṇa. ‘I am Your eternal servant. Please punish Me in any way You desire. My beloved Rādhā, I made you cry and caused You pain. I also cried and suffered greatly in Your separation. Just see the flood of our tears has made two small *kunḍas*. The *kunḍa* made from Your tears will be known as Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and the *kunḍa* from My tears will be called Śyāma-kuṇḍa.’

“The *sakhīs* became happy to see that Rādhā gave up Her distress upon hearing from Kṛṣṇa. Then Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa bathed in the *kunḍas*. Amazingly, Rādhā regained Her own form when She dipped into Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Kṛṣṇa also assumed His original form after bathing in Śyāma-kuṇḍa.” (AP)

Creation of Rādhā-kuṇḍa In This World

After Kṛṣṇa killed Ariṣṭāsura, the demon disguised as a bull, He had a joking conversation with Rādhārāṇī. Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura describes this in *Sārārtha Darśinī*, his commentary on the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*:

“Oh Kṛṣṇa, oh killer of the bull Ariṣṭāsura! Alas! Don’t touch us now!”

Hearing this statement of the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa replied, “Oh innocent girls! Ariṣṭā was a terrible demon; it is good that I have vanquished him!”

“Oh Kṛṣṇa,” said the *gopīs*, “Still, he was a male cow! You will have to undergo atonement just as Lord Indra did after killing the demon Vṛtrāsura, who was a *brāhmaṇa*.¹”

Kṛṣṇa asked, “Then what is the atonement for this sin?”

“You can purify yourself only by visiting every holy place in the three worlds,” replied the *gopīs*.

Kṛṣṇa indignantly replied, “Why should I have to wander throughout the entire universe? I will immediately bring all the countless pilgrimage places here and take My bath in them. Just watch!” Speaking thus, Lord Mukuṇḍa then struck the ground with the heel of His foot.

Kṛṣṇa called out, “Water of the Bhogavatī, coming from the Pātāla region, and all the holy places, please come here!” Hearing these words of the Supreme Lord, all the holy places came there and personally appeared before the Lord. Kṛṣṇa then said to the *gopīs*: “There! Now see all the holy places.”

The *gopīs*, however, responded to this by saying, “We certainly do not believe You.”

Then those best of pilgrimage places spoke up while folding their hands, saying, “I am the ocean of salt water.” “I am the ocean of milk.” “I am the Śoṇa river.” “I am the Tāmraparṇī river.” “I am the holy place Puṣkara.” “I am the Sarasvatī river.” “I am the Godāvari river.” “I am the Yamunā river, daughter of the sun.” “I am the Sarayū river [from Ayodhyā].” “I am the confluence at Prayāga.” “I am the Reva river; just see our waters and believe!”

After taking bath in these holy waters, Lord Hari then became quite arrogant and proudly announced, “I am now purified! I have produced a lake containing all the holy places. In contrast, you *gopīs* have taken birth on this earth, but you have never executed any pious activities at all!”

Hearing this, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī then addressed Her girlfriends: “Now I will also make an enchantingly beautiful lake. All of you please assist Me!”

The *gopīs* saw that the hooves of the demon Ariṣṭā had dug a shallow ditch to the west of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lake. In that spot, all the *gopīs* helped Śrī

Rādhikā dig up lumps of soft, moist dirt with their hands, throwing the dirt a short distance away. A divine pond manifested within the short span of forty-eight minutes.

Astonished, Kṛṣṇa smiled gently upon seeing the lake they made. Kṛṣṇa said, “O lotus-eyed one. You and Your girlfriends may fill this pond with water from My *kunda*.”

Rādhā replied, “No, no, no, no! This is unacceptable, since the water of Your *kunda* is contaminated by the terrible sin of killing a cow! I shall now fill this lake Myself. Along with My millions of girlfriends I will bring pure water from the Mānasī-Gaṅgā in hundreds of millions of pots. Thus I will make its widespread fame unequalled in all the worlds.”

Upon the gesture of Lord Kṛṣṇa, all the holy places suddenly appeared from out of His pond in one divine form. That personified form bowed down to the daughter of Vṛśabhānu and began to pray to Her in devotion, with folded palms and tears pouring from his eyes:

“O goddess! Even those who are learned in all the scriptures cannot comprehend Your glories. Neither can Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva or Śrī Lakṣmī. Only Kṛṣṇa Himself, the supreme goal of all human endeavor, knows You truly, and He feels Himself obliged to personally wipe away the perspiration of Your fatigue.

“Śrī Hari is perpetually engaged in anointing Your lotus feet with charming red *lac*-dye and adorning them with anklebells. Today, simply by obtaining the mercy of a glance from the corner of Your eye, He has become so delighted that He rejoices, considering Himself supremely fortunate.

“On His order we have immediately come here. We have taken up residence in this most excellent of ponds, which He has created by the strike of His heel. If You are pleased with us, and bestow Your merciful sidelong glance upon us, only then will the tree of our desires bear fruit.”

Hearing this prayer of the full assembly of holy places, Śrī Rādhā was indeed pleased with them and asked, “Oh kindly inform Me—what is your desire?” They then clearly told Her, “Our lives would be successful if You would order us to come to Your pond. That is the benediction we desire.”

The daughter of Vṛśabhānu smiled while peeking at the lotus face of Her beloved through the corners of Her eyes. Then She replied to the personified holy places, “All of you please come.”

Her girlfriends were in accord with Her decision, and everyone became submerged in the ocean of happiness, including all creatures, both mobile and stationary. Thus receiving the grace of the daughter of Vṛśabhānu, the best of holy places within Śrī Kṛṣṇa-kunḍa forcibly broke through the boundary walls of the pond and swiftly filled Rādhā-kunḍa with their waters.

Lord Hari then said, “My dear beloved, may this pond of Yours become even more glorified in this world than Mine. I will always come here to perform My water sports and for bathing. Just as You are very dear to Me, so now this lake will ever be dear to Me.”

Rādhā replied, “I will also perpetually come here with My girlfriends to take bath in Your pond. Anyone in the future who has explicit devotion for this lake where You chastised Ariṣṭāsura, who takes bath here or resides here, is sure to become very dear to Me. May they kill hundreds of Ariṣṭā demons.”

That night Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa performed a *rāsa* dance festival on the banks of Rādhā-kunḍa. The Kṛṣṇa-cloud decorated by the beautifully brilliant ray of Rādhikā-lightning generated a torrential downpour of the greatest mood of splendorous pleasure. In this way their divine glories saturated the expanses of all the three worlds.” (SD) Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda explains in *Śrī Caitanya Śikṣāmṛta* that Ariṣṭāsura-vrisha-vadha [killing the bull demon] represents a particular *anārtha* which is an obstacle to performing *Vraja-bhajana*. He explains that sometimes people get puffed up with false pride by indulging in fraudulent religions invented by cheaters. This causes them to disrespect pure devotional service, or to be negligent toward *bhakti*. By the pastime of killing the bull-demon named Ariṣṭāsura, Śrī Kṛṣṇa showed how He destroys this tendency. Our hearts will be purified of this *anārtha* by reading this pastime, and by loudly calling the all-powerful Lord Hari to drive out this *anārtha*.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī comments on this pastime in *Śrī Caitanya’s Teachings*: “Kṛṣṇa killed Aristotelianism or the rationalistic process of reasoning of this imperfect material world. When Kṛṣṇa wanted to hold hands with Rādhārāṇī, Ariṣṭāsura came forward to disturb Him, because many people thought that Rādhā was the wife of the *gopa* named Abhimanyu. This Ariṣṭāsura was the incarnation of mundane knowledge

[rationalistic reasoning] and Kṛṣṇa killed him. For that Kṛṣṇa atoned by taking a dip in Rādhā-kuṇḍa.”

“No other place can compare with the delightful forest of Vṛndāvana, the beautiful Govardhana Hill or the nectarean *rāsa sthali*. But even these cannot equal even a single particle of one of the atoms of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Let me take shelter of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, which is dearer to Kṛṣṇa than His own life.” (VVS)

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī’s Description

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī gives the following description of Śyāma-kuṇḍa and Rādhā-kuṇḍa in *Gopāla-campu*:

“Upon hearing the ear shattering sound of Ariṣṭāsura, Kṛṣṇa returned to Govardhana Hill and killed the demon. Even after killing Ariṣṭāsura, however, Kṛṣṇa still maintained a mood of chivalry and bravery. Later when Kṛṣṇa saw the place where He had fought Ariṣṭāsura, He kicked His lotus feet on the earth as if to kill the offender. Kṛṣṇa’s kicking made a deep hole which became Śyāma-kuṇḍa.

“Śyāma-kuṇḍa has the power to purify anyone. It can easily give the four goals of human life, namely *dharma*, *ārtha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. Kṛṣṇa and the cowherd boys bathed in Śyāma-kuṇḍa. By bathing here Kṛṣṇa set the example for all gentle persons to follow.” Upon seeing Śyāma-kuṇḍa, the Vrajavāsīs thought that it was a great place of pilgrimage that had come directly from Pātāla loka for their benefit. Taking advantage of the opportunity, they all immediately bathed there. They gave charity, happily sang about Kṛṣṇa’s vanquishing the demon, and then returned to Nandagrāma and Varṣāṇa.

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the son of the king of Vraja, paid obeisances to Nanda Bābā and the elders, and humbly served them. Kṛṣṇa then entered His bedroom and pretended to take rest. Secretly leaving Nandagrāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the ocean of supreme love, came to Govardhana and played sweetly on His flute to call all the *gopīs* into the forest of Vraja.

“Nobody saw Kṛṣṇa as He went to the *rāsa-sthali* to meet the *gopīs* and enjoy a *rāsa* festival. Rādhā tasted the sweet lotus lips of Śyāma, which are always relished by His flute. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa both fell unconscious in each other’s arms. Rapt in ecstatic love, They displayed all the *sattvic bhāvas* simultaneously.

Then pointing to Śyāma-kuṇḍa, Kṛṣṇa said to Rādhārāṇī, “Look! Look! This kuṇḍa of Mine is like an ocean meeting Giri-Govardhana. As I remove the sufferings of My devotees, or as Lord Śiva drank the poison from the milk ocean, or as Lord Balarāma pacifies the cows, this Śyāma-kuṇḍa takes away all the sins of the devotees. It removes their suffering and makes them peaceful.

“Just see Rādhā how I have created this purifying kuṇḍa which immediately purifies one. But You have not made such a purifying place. Now what will the pious people think of You?”

After hearing Kṛṣṇa’s statements the *gopīs* said, “We haven’t committed any sins. Therefore we do not need to perform any atonement to pacify or please others. However, You have become contaminated from killing that demon Ariṣṭāsura.”

Kṛṣṇa laughed and smiled while saying, “Ariṣṭāsura was not a cow, but a demon disguised as a cow. He was totally against cows, religion or any anything sacred. By siding with this atheistic demon you must share the karma of *go-hatya* [sin of cow killing].

“Now you must also do some atonement. According to the *Vedic* injunctions, the subjects must suffer for the sinful acts of the king. Your queen is Rādhārāṇī. Therefore, since Rādhā is your queen or leader, She alone must especially perform atonement for the sin of killing a cow.”

The *gopīs* replied, “Kṛṣṇa, You’re right. By associating with You we have inherited some of *Yoursinful reactions!* To atone we will also build a lake like Yours.” Then the *gopīs* made Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

The *gopīs* began glorifying Rādhā-kuṇḍa by saying, “O Śyāma! This Rādhā-kuṇḍa is for Your benefit and for Your beloved friend Śrī Rādhā. It is purifying like the Ganges that flows from the feet of Lord Viṣṇu. A person gets liberation by its mere touch. As Pārvatī Devī appeared from the Himālayas, similarly Rādhā-kuṇḍa appeared from Govardhana Hill. Lord Balarāma defeated the pride of the demon Pralambhā. In the same way, Rādhā’s lake defeats the pride of all the great rivers. What else can we say to glorify this Rādhā-kuṇḍa?”

Then Śyāma smiled softly and gently lifted Rādhikā’s chin. He said respectfully, “He Rādhe! If Your face is brighter than the full moon; then what’s the use of the moon? Your sweet lotus face eclipses all the light of the full moon. Your charming teeth embarrass the twinkling of the stars.”

Then Rādhā, Śyāma and all the *gopīs* went to Girirāja to enjoy the *rasa līlā* in the middle of the forest.” (*Gopāla-campu*)

King Vajranābha Restores Rādhā-kuṇḍa

After Śrī Kṛṣṇa left this planet the original transcendental form and beauty of Rādhā-kuṇḍa became unmanifest. In other words, it disappeared from ordinary mundane vision. Vajranābha, the great-grandson of Lord Kṛṣṇa came to see Hastināpura after the Lord wound up His Dvārakā-*līlā*. At that time, King Yudhiṣṭhīra crowned Vajranābha the King of Mathurā.

It is said that the local *sādhus* asked King Vajranābha to uncover the pastime places of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vraja maṇḍala. King Vajranābha toured the length and breadth of Vraja maṇḍala, but unfortunately could not find even one *līlā-sthāna* [pastime place of Kṛṣṇa]. His heart broken and filled with anxiety, King Vajranābha sat beside the Yamunā River and cried in despair. Suddenly, the sacred *kalpa-vṛkṣa* [desiring- filling trees] of Vraja spoke to the king. They told him exactly how to find the places of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental pastimes. Overjoyed, the king jumped to the task utilising all the facilities at his command.

He installed many of Vṛndāvana’s famous Deities such as Madana Mohana [now in Karolī], Govindajī [now in Jaipur], Gopīnātha, Keśavajī [original Deity in Mathurā at the Janmāsthaṇa], Harideva [at Mānasi Gaṅgā], Śrī Gopāla [now Śrī Nāthajī], Śrī Sākṣi-gopāla, Gopīśvara Mahādeva, Vṛndādevī, and many more! The Govinda Deva Deity which the king made looked so much like the Supreme Lord that Uṣā Devī, Vajranābha’s mother, shyly covered her face with her veil when taking His *darśana*. 4,500 years later these same Deities were rediscovered and lavishly worshiped by the Six Gosvāmīs.

During this time [appx. 5,000 years ago], King Vajranābha rediscovered and built a bathing tank at Śyāma-kuṇḍa to commemorate the place where Śrī Kṛṣṇa killed the demon Ariṣṭasura. Although not usually visible, when Śyāma-kuṇḍa is empty one can see a wall encircling a small deep *kunḍa* in the center of Śyāma-kuṇḍa. This is called Vajra Kuṇḍa, which is the original *kunḍa* dug by the king.

1514 A.D. Lord Caitanya Reveals Rādhā-kuṇḍa

When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to Rādhā-kuṇḍa the area was known as Āriṭa-grāma, a derivation of the word Ariṣṭā, the bull demon. A few

Vrajavāsī farmers lived here on the hill behind the Purāṇa Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Mandira. Besides a few cleared fields for agriculture, the whole area was surrounded by a dense jungle full of tigers and bears.

Over the years Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa had been forgotten. They were merely two neglected ponds in the middle of some paddy fields. Local farmers called them Gaurī and Kalī kundas. Ācāryas say that Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa had practically disappeared due to the pain of separation from Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Due to similar feelings of separation, Girirāja-Govardhana is sinking into the ground a little each day.

A wonderful account of Lord Caitanya's visit to Rādhā-kuṇḍa is given in *Bhakti-ratnākara*:

"After completing His *parikramā* of Vraja maṇḍala, Lord Caitanya sat under a *tamāla* tree near Śyāma-kuṇḍa. Although no one knew the location of Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa, Mahāprabhu revealed them amidst two paddy fields. The Lord joyfully bathed in whatever little water was there, and glorified the *kundas* in various ways. Then Gaurāṅga applied *tilaka* with mud from the *kundas*. The local Vrajavāsīs were amazed by Mahāprabhu's behavior, and maddened with attraction to His nectarean form.

One person said, "This *sannyāsī* is definitely not from this material world. For my mind is becoming thrilled in ecstasy just by seeing Him."

Another person said, "He is not a *sannyāsī*. He is Kṛṣṇa Himself appearing before us dressed as a renunciate. Just see the proof. All of Vṛndāvana is exploding in loving reciprocation with Him! The cuckoos and parrots are joyfully calling out, *He Śyāma! He Govinda! He Murāri!* The peacocks are dancing jubilantly with their rainbow feathers fanned out in joy. Fresh and fragrant flowers are blooming in the trees. Honey is trickling down their trunks as tears of love moistening His lotus feet.

"*Malatī* and *Juthī* vines shower sweet smelling flowers upon the head of this person disguised as a *sannyāsī*. With the cups of their elongated eyes the deer are drinking the nectar of His lotus face. The cows, excited and running swiftly with raised tails, have surrounded Him, and are gazing lovingly upon Him. Seeing their tears of ecstasy, we understand that these trees and animals of Vraja are meeting their long lost friend! Dear brother! Let us offer obeisances unto the lotus feet of the Lord, who has mercifully revealed the transcendental identity of these two paddy fields."

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa Śyāma-kuṇḍa kī jai!

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī Expands the Mercy

Commenting on Lord Gaurāṅga’s discovery of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, one ācārya said, “Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the personification of *prema*, unleashed a tidal wave, drowning everyone in ecstatic love of God, by initiating the renovation of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s eternal *līlā* sthānas in Vṛndāvana.”

By the mercy and encouragement of Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmī, Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī came to Rādhā-kuṇḍa and absorbed himself in *bhajana rasa*. In his spiritual form as a maidservant named Rati Mañjarī, he mentally served Śrī Rādhā throughout the day and night. At that time, the *kuṇḍas* were a mere twelve square feet in size.

“Once a desire to expand the *kuṇḍas* into large beautiful lakes for the benefit of others appeared within the mind of Raghunātha Dāsa. Considering this a distraction to his *bhajana*, Raghunātha chastised his mind for thinking such a “lusty desire.” Then with increased determination he fully absorbed himself in undivided *bhajana* at the lotus feet of Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī. However, when a pure devotee desires something, it cannot be denied, for Kṛṣṇa always fulfills the desires of His devotee.

“Meanwhile, a rich man went to Badarikāśrama to offer Lord Nārāyaṇa a huge donation. In a dream the Lord told the man to take the money to Āriṭa-grāma [Rādhā-kuṇḍa], and give it to Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī for renovating the *kuṇḍas*. When Raghunātha Dāsa heard the story he became stunned in astonishment. After praising the good fortune of that man Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī supervised the expansion of the *kuṇḍas*.” (*Bhakti-ratnākara*)

Mahā-mantra and the Appearance of Rādhā-kuṇḍa

To express His mercy and compassion for the fallen souls of Kali, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa came as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to distribute the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.

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

In this age, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appears as His holy names to bestow His mercy. By chanting these names any

conditioned soul can become purified of *anārthas* and *aparādhas*. Gradually, a sincere *sādhaka* will rise to the offenseless stage in chanting. With further progress he will come to the pure state of chanting, wherein he will taste the ecstasy of *bhakti-rasa*, divine love of God.

A disciple once asked Śrīla Prabhupāda if performing *Harināma-saṅkīrtana* was in the mood of the *gopīs* dancing in *rāsalīlā*. Śrīla Prabhupāda confirmed by saying, “Yes, you have understood the inner meaning of *saṅkīrtana*.” Therefore, one will taste blissful *rasas* in the stage of pure chanting.

In Kali-yuga, Śrī Kṛṣṇa distributes His mercy through the transcendental sound incarnation of His holy names. Similarly, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī distributes Her mercy in Kali-yuga through the transcendental waters of Her sacred lake, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. *Sara* is the Sanskrit word for lake or *kuṇḍa*. *Sara* also means the most enjoyable part of a substance. When the syllables of *sara* [*sa* & *ra*] are reversed they spell *rasa* which means liquid, divine taste or spiritual mellow.

In *Vraja-rīti-cintāmanī* [verse 34], Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains that Rādhā’s *sara*, or lake, is nothing but a transformation of Her *rasa*, or *mādhurya prema*. Śrī Cakravartīpāda says that once Śyāma became so attracted, captivated and overwhelmed by seeing the indescribable beauty of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī that He melted into a pool of ecstatic *rasa*. This *rasa* became the *sara* or lake named Śyāma-kuṇḍa. Similarly, by hearing Śyāma’s alluring flute, smelling His sweet fragrance, and beholding His enchanting form Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī melted into pool of ecstatic *rasa* that became Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Just as one will taste *bhakti-rasa* by purely chanting Kṛṣṇa’s holy names, similarly, a sincere *sādhaka* who offenselessly bathes in Rādhā-kuṇḍa will taste the pure spiritual mellow of *mādhurya-rasa*. Bathing in Rādhā-kuṇḍa means to bathe in the *rasa*-laden liquid *prema* of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. The appearance of Rādhā-kuṇḍa within the material world is an expression of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī personal compassion for the suffering souls of Kali.

As Kṛṣṇa gives *prema* to the pure chanter, Rādhārāṇī not only gives *prema*, but She also gives Her intimate loving service in the form of *mañjari-bhāva* to an offenseless bather in Her dearest lake. The Divine Couple have kindly blessed all conditioned souls with these two gifts: the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* and Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Both of these gifts are the causeless

mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Through the beautiful form of Lord Caitanya, Kṛṣṇa manifested His perfect and all-auspicious holy names. Also through Lord Gaurāṅga, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī revealed the location and supreme significance of bathing in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Her lake of eternally flowing mercy.

Rādhāśṭamī and the Appearance of Rādhā-kuṇḍa

The appearance of Rādhā-kuṇḍa resembles the appearances of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. All three forms of the Lord appeared on the āṣṭami [eighth day of the waning moon]. As Kṛṣṇa appeared at midnight, Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa also appeared at midnight. Rādhā-kuṇḍa, being a manifestation of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, appeared in the Kārtika month which Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī rules as the presiding Deity. Kārtika is called the month of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. So, it is appropriate that Rādhā-kuṇḍa appeared in Her month.

On Rādhāśṭamī [the appearance day of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī], the devotees bathe Rādhārāṇī with *pañca āmṛta*, the five nectars of their loving faith, surrender, affection, remembrance, and prayers. On Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍāśṭami [appearance day of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, also known as Bahulāśṭamī], however, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī reciprocates with the devotees by lovingly embracing and personally bathing them with the liquid nectar of Her *prema*. On this day all the devotees bathe in Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa to celebrate Her merciful appearance in this world.

Appearance of the Milk Ocean at Rādhā-kuṇḍa

In 1941, there was a major overhaul and renovation of Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa. When the *kuṇḍas* were empty numerous tiny water springs were seen bubbling on the floor of the *kuṇḍas*. Some of these underground springs were emitting so much water that the *kuṇḍas* would quickly fill up if the drainage pumps were turned off. Local *ācāryas* say that each spring represents one of the original *tīrthas* [holy places] that came here 5,000 years ago on Kṛṣṇa's request. These *tīrthas* took the form of springs to continue serving the lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

At this time, devotees also discovered Kañcana-kuṇḍa, a small *kuṇḍa* in the center of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. This small walled in area marks the location of the original *kuṇḍa* that Śrīmatī Rādhikā and the *gopīs* dug with their

bangles. Surprisingly enough, in the middle of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, devotees saw some unusual springs emitting a thick whitish liquid resembling milk.

Occasionally over the last fifty years these “milk springs” have released vast amounts of milky fluid into Rādhā-kuṇḍa. The milk collects in clearly visible pools within the waters of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Sometimes so much milk comes out that all of Rādhā-kuṇḍa turns white, appearing as if someone dumped thousands of tons of milk into Rādhā-kuṇḍa! A local devotee once collected some of the milk in a bottle, and the next day it turned to yogurt.

Where does the milk come from? The local *ācāryas* say the milk comes from Kṣira sāgara, the milk ocean in the universe. Kṣira sāgara came to Rādhā-kuṇḍa when Kṛṣṇa called all the *tīrthas* and rivers of the universe to fill Śyāma-kuṇḍa. This is similar to Kṛṣṇa’s calling the Gaṅgā to Govardhana to satisfy Nanda Bābā’s desire for a purifying dip. That manifestation of the sacred Ganges River is called Mānasī Gaṅgā.

Why are there no milk springs in Śyāma-kuṇḍa? The holy *tīrthas* filled up Śyāma-kuṇḍa, did their job of purifying Kṛṣṇa, and then filled Rādhā-kuṇḍa. There they took shelter of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, begging to remain in the service of Her *nitya-līlā*. She agreed.

The *tīrthas* [in the form of milk springs] occasionally become overwhelmed in ecstasy from seeing Rādhā-Mādhava’s *līlās*. Then they gush out uncontrollably, just like the cows and Ma Yaśodā releasing their breast milk due to ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa.

In the *Āyurveda* milk is called *amṛta* or nectar. Milk is a form of nectar because of its sweet taste, and its ability to nourish and maintain a healthy body and mind. As the nectar of milk maintains the body, the nectar of *prema* nourishes the soul. Rādhā-kuṇḍa is filled with both these life-giving nectars! At Rādhā-kuṇḍa one can drink the milk nectar coming from mysterious underground springs, plus the *prema-amṛta* [nectar of *prema*] flowing from the sweet lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa Śyāma-kuṇḍa kī jai!

Chapter 4: Description of Rādhā-kuṇḍa



*rādhā-kuṇḍa-mahimā to' koriyā śravan
lālāyita ho'ye āmi paḍibo takhan*

“As soon as I hear Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī thus describe the glories of this sacred Rādhā-kuṇḍa, I will become seized with such an eager yearning that I will swoon and fall down on the spot.” (*Gīta-Mālā*)

“There is a place so fragrant that it defeats the fragrance of sandalwood multiplied millions of times. There is a place so fragrant that it defeats the fragrance of musk multiplied millions of times. There is a place more fragrant than a flood of camphor. There is a place more fragrant than an abundance of *kunkuma*. There is a place so wonderfully fragrant that it defeats *aguru*.

Day and night it is filled with the sweet fragrance of various flowers. It has various kinds of nectar drinks, various kinds of delicious foods, and various kinds of very sweet splendid fruits. Because of Rādhā-Mādhava’s pastimes, there are belts, flower garlands, broken jewel necklaces, and other objects in this place.

May King Vṛśabhānu’s daughter, accompanied by Her *gopī* friends and singing duets with dark complexioned Kṛṣṇa, appear before me in a beautiful jewelled pavilion on the banks of wonderful Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

With their lotus hands Rādhā and Her friends repeatedly splashed Lord Kṛṣṇa, the jewel of lovers. Hanging down His moonlike face, Kṛṣṇa cried out: “Enough! Enough! I accept defeat!” When Rādhā heard these syllables, which were like a great flood of nectar, She stopped splashing

and burst into laughter. I wonder: Did pastimes like this happen here in this place?

At some time, did the two Deities of nectarean transcendental mellites enjoy wonderful pastimes of decorating each other with flowers in this small grove of graceful *kalpa-vṛkṣa* bushes, which have beautiful flowers on their extended branches?

All glories to the amorous pleasure that Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa enjoy by casting wonderful, smiling glances at each other from the corners of Their eyes, and by touching each other's limbs, out of various pretexts, which causes Their hair to stand up in ecstasy, and by conversing with a sweet nectar stream of words.

My queen is Śrī Rādhā, who amazes Her friends with the splendor of Her beautiful, youthful limbs shining like molten gold; with the eternally wonderful graceful waves of Her sweet amorous pastimes, and with Her tears, faltering voice, and the other symptoms of Her ecstatic love for dark complexioned Kṛṣṇa. When Śrī Rādhā's friends come to Her favorite forest grove they become overwhelmed in ecstasy, and their bodily hairs stand erect.

May Śrī Rādhā and Her beloved, who are overflowing with waves of wonderful sweetness, splendid beauty, playful transcendental pastimes, and expertise in the arts of love; who have come to Vṛndāvana from Vraja, and the wonder of whose beauty increases hundreds and hundreds of times at Rādhā-kuṇḍa appear in my heart.

When, will the lake, which is wonderful with splendid, graceful waves from the nectar ocean of sweetness; which fills Vṛndāvana with a very wonderful and splendid fragrance; which is the most wonderful of all places wherein Śrī Rādhā enjoys wonderful pastimes decorate my mouth with its glories?

The Divine Couple, splendid as gold and sapphires, and expert at relishing transcendental mellites sit in the whorl of a giant golden lotus, which is surrounded by petals and filaments. They enjoy the pastime of repeatedly moving back and forth on Their swing.

In Vṛndāvana, let us glorify the passionate Queen's favorite transcendental lake, which is eternally very wonderful with Rādhikā-Hari's endless sweet pastimes; which is an ocean of the great wonders of the nectar of transcendental mellites; and which is very splendid and fragrant.

Let me take shelter of the lake that is Vṛndāvana's greatest ornament, where two splendid fair and dark forms of bliss enjoy the ultimate dance of the nectar of pure amorous pastimes, and where the water's touch makes a wonderful sweetness rise in the heart.

The hairs of His body erect in ecstasy, His crown and earrings moving, and His flute placed against the full moon of His lips, Mādhava praises the delightful transcendental qualities of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, which is the greatest jewel decorating Śrī Govardhana's crown, and which is very dear to the Queen who rules the life of the charming lotus-eyed Lord.

O friend, please meditate on Rādhā-kuṇḍa's flowering-vine pavilion, which is praised by Vṛndāvana's great splendor; which is respectfully worshiped by Lord Hari's favorite regal mountain, Śrī Govardhana, which bows down, placing its peak on the ground before it, and which is filled with the beauty and sweetness of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's extremely wonderful amorous pastimes.

Please meditate on the fair and dark youthful Divine Couple who, surrounded by Their friends, and overwhelmed with sweetness, have plunged into an ocean of nectar at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, which arouses transcendental amorous desires without equal or superior.” (*Vṛndāvana-mahimāmrta śataka* 5.1-15)

The Banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa

Śrīla Thākura Bhaktivinoda gives this description in *Gīta-Mālā*: “The banks of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa are made of billions of conscious ecstatic desire-fulfilling touchstones. There are hundreds and hundreds of beautiful transcendental gardens and groves surrounding the lake. All the trees and creepers in those gardens are made of coral and rubies, and the fruits they produce are pearls and diamonds. Indeed, their branches are bending down to the ground due to the weight of so many lovely gemstone fruits.”

The preceding and the following passages give descriptions of Rādhā-kuṇḍa in the spiritual world. By the power of pure devotion one can also see all the sweet transcendental beauty of Rādhā-kuṇḍa right here as well. The following descriptions are based on *Śrī Govinda-līlāmrta* and *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanamṛta* written by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja and Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī respectively.

Rādhā-kuṇḍa is breathtaking to behold! The banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa are lined with divine trees of *kadamba*, *campaka*, *śiriṣa*, *ketakī*, and fragrant vines of *jatī*, *yuthī*, *lavaṅga*, and *mādhavīs*. Many varieties of flowers color and scent the scene. Male and female parrots sit in the trees singing sweet songs about Rādhā-Mādhava. The honeybees hum a constant OĀ, and the cuckoos sing the fifth note which lovers vibrate at union.

On all four sides of Rādhā-kuṇḍa are jewelled stairways leading down to jeweled bathing *ghāṭas* which beautify the water's edge. On either side of the *ghāṭas* are pairs of wonderfully decorated swings hanging from flower laden trees of mango, *kadamba*, *bakula* and *campaka*. Above the jewelled inlaid stairways, which lead down to the water, are jewelled platforms flanking gem-studded cottages. A jeweled bridge connects Rādhā-kuṇḍa with Śyāma-kuṇḍa at the *sangam* [meeting place of the two *kundas*], which some call the Rādhā-kuṇḍa *yoga-pīṭha*,

Rādhā-kuṇḍa has many shade trees which are entwined with flowering creepers. These flowering creepers have limitless clusters of multicolored flowers that soothe all the senses. When the wind blows the nectarean pollen from these flowers falls to the ground in perfumed droplets. Lining all sides of Rādhā-kuṇḍa are *kalpa-vrksa* trees perpetually bowing down from the weight of their deliciously-sweet fruits and intoxicatingly fragrant flowers. The *ācāryas* explain that Vṛndāvana's trees and creepers are liberated souls who can liberate others. Intelligent devotees, therefore, take shelter of the dust, trees and creepers of Vṛndāvana praying for their mercy.

At the base of the trees are jewel-inlaid platforms which have unique designs, no two are alike. Some are round, square, hexagonal or octagonal. Some platforms are only knee high, and others reach up to the navel, chest or neck. Rādhā-Mādhava and the *gopīs* always enjoy sitting on them, because these platforms are warm in winter and cool in summer.

Immediately surrounding the bathing *ghāṭas* are various *kuñjas* [forest groves]. Then at increasing distances from the bathing *ghāṭas* are arbors, banana groves, flower gardens, and fruit orchards attractively nestled amongst other picturesque scenery. Vṛndādevī's hundreds of servants go there to collect fresh fruits, flowers, and other paraphernalia for Rādhā-Govinda's divine service. These items are then stored in various jewelled cottages scattered around Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

To increase Rādhā-Mādhava's pleasure in Their pastime cottages, Vṛndādevī and her maidservants render many services. They sweep the pathways and courtyards, and sprinkle them with scented water. They hang strands of sweet smelling flowers on the archways. After arranging the swings they hang colorful tapestries overhead.

They make flower beds by covering a base of leaves with heaps of soft, fragrant red lotus petals, and then drape a thin cloth on top. A few soft flower pillows are made for lounging. They also set boxes of *pan*, pots of inebriating honey nectar, and golden jugs of fresh camphor-scented drinking water within arm's reach of the flower bed. All these arrangements increase the divine atmosphere of Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Aromatic pollen and honey, oozing from white lilies, pink, red, white, and blue lotus flowers, forever freshens and sweetens the waters of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Just outside of Rādhā-kuṇḍa gardens and arbors are the six seasonal forests, wherein Rādhā and kuṇḍa can enjoy the season of their choice. Swans, cranes, *cakravākras*, and other water birds sing sweetly in and around Rādhā-kuṇḍa. The parrots pour out poetry praising Rādhā-Mādhava's ecstatic pleasure pastimes.

Mistaking Muralidhara for a monsoon cloud, the jubilant peacocks call “Ke ka! Ke ka!” Then, with tail feathers expanded, they break into a love-maddened dance. The exotic *catakī* birds churn nectar for the ears with their celestial singing. The *cakoras* quench their thirst by drinking the moon rays of Kṛṣṇacandra’s indescribably beautiful face. All of these satisfying sights, sounds and smells provide a wonderfully festive and enchanting environment for the pleasure of Radhika and Śyāma.

The Kuñjas of the Aṣṭā Sakhīs

In the eight directions surrounding Rādhā-kuṇḍa are the Kuñjas of Śrī Rādhā’s aṣṭā sakhīs. Each gopi has personally designed and decorated her Kuñjas in order to deliver unlimited happiness to the Divine Couple. Surrounding each of the *aṣṭā sakhi*'s *kuñjas* are eight smaller groves belonging to the eight assistants of that particular *sakhi*. The predominant color and location of each *kuñja* is written in brackets.

“Limitlessly beautiful Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is filled with the Divine Couple’s splendid love. On every side are the groves of Rādhā’s friends and the humming of many blissful bees.” (VRC)

1. Śrī Lalitā Sakhī's Kuñja [lightning, North]

Lalitā's entire *kuñja* is shaped like one large lotus flower, and the joy of all seasons can be experienced here. It is the largest and most dear to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa because it always pleases Them with ever-expanding delight. There are platforms made of gold, crystal, sapphires and lapis-lazuli. In the center of a courtyard there is a golden temple named Anaṅgā-*rāṅgambūja*, which is shaped like a 1,000 petalled lotus. This *kuñja* expands and contracts in size according to Rādhā-Mādhava's desires.

Its eight sub-*kuñjas* resemble an eight-petalled lotus flower. Vasanta *kuñja*, one of the sub-*kuñjas*, brings the pleasure of spring with its beautiful red, white, blue, yellow and green flowers, and its humming bees and sweet sounding cuckoos.

In the SW corner of Lalitā's *kuñja* stands a spectacular three-story lotus temple containing sixteen richly appointed rooms on two floors. It has windows and entrances on all four sides. Jewelled paintings of Rādhā-Mādhava's intimate pastimes [*rāsa-līlā*, *pūrva-rāga* and others] line the inside walls. Paintings of Kṛṣṇa's demon killing pastimes [Pūtanā, Ariṣṭāsūra and others] adorn the outside walls. On the third floor there is a large jewelled dome supported by red coral pillars which have carved crystal bases. From this open air room Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa relish a wonderful panoramic view of Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Lalitā's Lotus Swing

In the SE corner of Lalitā's *kuñja* is a huge lotus-shaped swing named Madana Dolana. It hangs from four heavy silken ropes tied to two *bakula* trees. The swing has eight seats made of rubies. Each seat has an eighteen inch high backrest made of coral, and lotus-petal shaped footrests hanging beneath it. The seats have silk covered cotton cushions, plus round pillows and bolsters. A beautiful canopy made from colorful tapestries hangs above Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as They swing.

The *aṣṭā sakhiṣ* sit around Rādhā-Mādhava as Vṛndādevī pushes the swing and the *sakhiṣ* sing festive songs. Although the *sakhiṣ* are seated in a circle around Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, it appears that the Divine Couple are directly smiling at each one them.

2. Śrī Viśākhā Devī's Kuñja [NE]

The extremely powerful fragrance from red, blue, yellow and green flowers of four large *campaka* trees floods the four directions of Viśākhā's *kuñja*. Blue, green and yellow colored bees, parrots and cuckoos enliven the atmosphere with their bright hues, humming and sweet chirping. The intoxicated bees act as "gate-keepers" to keep out unwanted guests. The *mādhavī* vine covered branches of the *campaka* trees bend down to shade the entire area, making the *kuñja* look like a palace. At the base of the trees are platforms that are pleasing to sit on due to the dense foliage overhead. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa always taste the sweet mellows of loving pastimes here.

3. Śrī Citrā Devī's Kuñja [multi-colored, East]

The word *citrā* means variegated or wonderful. So, all the trees, vines, birds, bees, animals, courtyards, platforms, swings and thrones in this *kuñja* display a variety of forms and colors.

4. Śrī Indulekhā Sakhī's Kuñja [white, SE]

Everything in this forest grove is completely white in color. Being made of moonstones, the thrones, platforms, courtyards and cottages are also white. There are white lilies, lotuses and *mallikā* flowers. The trees have white trunks, branches and leaves! The white bees, parrots and cuckoos are not visible due to the white background, but one perceives their presence by hearing their sweet singing. On Pūrnimā [full moon day] Rādhā-Mādhava and the *sakhīs* wear white clothes, and freely sport here unseen by outsiders such as Jatilā.

5. Śrī Campakalatā's Kuñja [gold, South]

The bees, earth, trees, flowers, creepers, swings, platforms, pavilions, and everything else here has a golden-hue. Once Jatilā, Śrī Rādhā's crooked and suspicious mother-in-law, came here hoping to catch Kṛṣṇa playing with Rādhārāṇī. Gaurāṅgī [Śrī Rādhā] sat here wearing a yellow dress over Her molten gold body. When Jatilā came she just saw Kṛṣṇa sitting alone and couldn't spot Śrī Rādhā.

Sometimes Kṛṣṇa comes here, takes a golden form, and mixes unnoticed amongst the *gopīs*. Then He relishes their private love talks about Him. Campakalatā's kitchen is famous for the fabulous feasts that she and Vṛndādevī cook and serve here to the Divine Couple.

6. Śrī Raṅga Devī’s Kuñja [śyāma-blue, SW]

This dark blue *kuñja* is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s favorite because everything here reminds Her of Her beloved Śyāmasundara. The ground, temples and cottages are in-laid with blue sapphires. Dark blue creepers embrace the many *tamāla* trees.

When unwanted visitors like Mukharā, Śrī Rādhā’s grandmother, and her elderly *gopī* friends pass by here they cannot see Śyāma sitting beside His beloved Śrīmatī. Happy to see the chaste Śrī Rādhā sitting alone, Her elders offer blessings and leave.

7. Śrī Tuṅgavidyā’s Kuñja [crimson, West]

The entire grove is inlaid with rubies. By Kṛṣṇa’s desire the vines, trees, flowers, birds, beasts, swings, and pathways are all crimson colored.

8. Śrī Sudevī’s Kuñja [green, NW]

Everything in this divine playground of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s is green. Emerald covered thrones, cottages, platforms, pavilions, and pathways are set amidst green trees, buds and flowers. In this luxuriant verdant grove, Rādhā-Govinda enjoy Their famous pastime of *pāsa-kelā* [a board game with dice, gambling, and a barrel of laughter].

Śrī Anaṅga Mañjarī’s Kuñja [center of Rādhā-kuṇḍa]

This *kuñja*, located in the center of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, connects with the northern bank by a crystal foot bridge [the present site of Jāhnavā Devī’s sitting place]. Outsiders mistake it for a large lotus floating in the middle of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. In the center of the *kuñja* is a dazzling jewelled temple, appearing like a splendid sixteen petalled lotus flower. There are many swans, flowers and other objects carved from gems. Śrī Kṛṣṇa feels great bliss in Anaṅga Mañjarī’s beautiful *kuñja*.

Śrī Anaṅga Mañjarī is the younger sister of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. At the time of bathing, eating or playing she always follows her sister like a shadow. She is thirteen years old, and covers her golden body with clothes the color of a blue lotus flower. She rides in the same palanquin with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī when Śrīdāma brings Rādhārāṇī to Varṣāṇa from Yāvaṭ. Anaṅga Mañjarī serves both as a maid servant *mañjarī*, and as a *gopī* group leader

who fully satisfies Śrī Kṛṣṇa with her intimate love. See the *parikramā* chapter #12 for more discussion of Śrī Anaṅga Mañjarī.

“By the shore of Rādhā-kuṇḍa is a grand pavilion made of gold, pearls and precious gems. In that pavilion, Rādhā-Mādhava, considering everything else unimportant, enjoy transcendental pastimes as the two prime ministers of the king of divine love. They happily anoint that kingdom of love with the sandal paste of Their pastimes. I eternally worship this splendid grove by the shore of Rādhā-kuṇḍa.” (VVS)

The Gopa’s Kuñjas Surrounding Śyāma-kuṇḍa

Instead of being square shaped like Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śyāma-kuṇḍa is shaped like Kṛṣṇa’s left foot, which He used to create this *kuṇḍa*. Later when Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī was renovating Śyāma-kuṇḍa, the Pāñdavas told him in a dream not to cut the trees. They said they had taken tree bodies to do bhajana on the banks of Śyāma-kuṇḍa.

Śyāma-kuṇḍa also has jewelled *ghāṭas*, staircases, thrones, swings, platforms and so on. Surrounding Śyāma-kuṇḍa are the eight *kuñjas* of Kṛṣṇa’s *priya-narmā sakhas*. These boys are Kṛṣṇa’s most intimate *gopa* friends who understand, and are submissive to Kṛṣṇa’s confidential dealings with the *gopīs*. The cowherd boys, however, have given their personal *kuñjas* to different *sakhīs* to manage.

1. Subala’s Kuñja [NW]

Subala gave his *kuñja* to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, who comes here everyday to Mānasa-pāvana-ghāṭa in order to bathe in Śyāma-kuṇḍa, which She loves as much as She loves Kṛṣṇa. Śrīmatī Rādhikā is always eager to bathe here, because Śyāma-kuṇḍa is mixed with the sweet honey of Mādhava’s lotus feet.

2. Madhumāṅgala’s Kuñja [North]

Lalitā Devī supervises this *kuñja* which is full of artistic designs and various colors. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa enjoy joking and laughing here.

3. Ujjvala’s Kuñja [NW]

Viśākhā Sakhī controls this *kuñja*. In the other directions surrounding Śyāma-kuṇḍa the gopas have given their *kuñjas* to the *gopīs*. At both

kundas there are ramps into the water so Kṛṣṇa's cows and animals can bathe too.

Chapter 5: Pastimes at Rādhā-kuṇḍa

Rādhā-Śyāmasundara meet everyday at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and spend about six hours [10:48 a.m.-3:36 p.m] together enjoying many splendidly blissful intimate pastimes. These are Their mid-day pastimes, or *madhyāhna līlā*. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa relish such pastimes as flower picking disputes, stealing Kṛṣṇa's flute, *nava-graha pūjā*, *holi*, *jhulana*, *kuñja-keli*, *jala-keli*, *madhupan*, playing dice, forest picnics, and wandering in the six seasonal forests.

"Generally, the six seasons come one after another. At any given time the qualities of only one season are manifest. In Vṛndāvana, however, Kṛṣṇa, the moon of Vṛndāvana, can enjoy the pastimes of any season at any time. In Vṛndāvana all the seasons are eternal, and they diligently serve Kṛṣṇa, the moon of Vṛndāvana. The *gopīs* lovingly decorate Kṛṣṇa with garlands and other ornaments made from the flowers of many different seasons."

(VRC)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanāmṛta describes that a specific *līlā* happens in each seasonal forest. *Holi līlā* [playfully throwing colors] takes place in the spring forest. *Jala-keli* [splashing and fighting inside Rādhā-kuṇḍa] occurs in the summer forest. In the monsoon or rainy season forest Rādhā-Mādhava enjoy their *Jhulana yatra*, or swing pastimes. Rādhā-Govinda perform an ecstatic *rāsa* dance in the autumn forest,. They celebrate *madhupan līlā* [drinking intoxicating honey wine] in the Hemānta forest [early winter forest]. The Divine Couple enjoy a wonderful picnic in the winter forest.

Some of Rādhā-Mādhava's fun-filled pastimes at Rādhā-kuṇḍa will be described in the following pages. First, however, we should remember the eternal midday pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Śrī Navadvīpa dhāma. The verse below, which can be sung in the tune of the Six Gosvāmī's prayer, comes from Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's *śrīman-mahāprabhor-aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā smaraṇa-mangala-stotram*:

*madhyāhne saha taiḥ sva-pārṣada-gaṇaiḥ, saṅkīrtayad-īdrśamī
sādvaitendu-gadādharaḥ kila saha,
śrīlāvadhūta-prabhuḥ.
ārāme mṛdu-mārutaiḥ śisīritair,
bhrṅga-dvijair-nādite.*

*svaṁ vṛndā-vipināṁ smaran bhramati yas,
tam gauram adhyemy aham.*

“During the midday period [10:48 a.m.-3:36 p.m.], Śrīman Gaurasundara, Śrī Nityānanda Avadhūta, Advaita Ācārya, Gadādhara and all the Lord’s dear devotees continue their ecstatic *sāṅkīrtana* performance. Then they wander through the various seasonal forests of Nadia. These forests are cooled by breezes from the Gaṅgā, and filled with buzzing bees and chirping birds. In this pleasant and beautiful setting Lord Caitanya remembers His ecstatic pastimes as Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, which are occurring simultaneously in His own forest of Vṛndāvana. Let us meditate upon Śrī Gaurāṅga as He performs His daily pastimes.”

The following description comes from the *Gauranga Līlāmrta*. “Male and female parrots call out, “Jai Śrī Sacīnandana! Glory, glory to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa who have united in one form! Glory, glory to He who has manifested all these desire-fulfilling trees! Each and every one of our Vṛndāvana-vāsīs has increased their *prema* unlimitedly by sporting here in Navadvīpa!”

“Hearing the parrots, Lord Caitanya remembers the midday *līlā* of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa at Rādhā-kuṇḍa within His mind: One moment He says, “Who has stolen My flute?” The next moment He says, “Just see! I have defeated you at dice!” The next moment He says, “Let there be water sports in this *kunda*!” The next moment He says, “Come on! Let us go to the place of Surya-pūjā!”

Rādhā-kuṇḍa Līlā — Two Kṛṣṇa’s in the Kuñja

Once at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Kṛṣṇa desired to dress Rādhārāṇī to look exactly like Himself. On Kṛṣṇa’s order the *mañjarīs* smeared black *aguru* and *kastūrī* [deer musk] all over Śrīmatī’s golden body. Then they wrapped Śyāma’s yellow *dhoti* around Śrī Rādhā, and decorated Her with Kṛṣṇa’s ornaments. They tucked Kṛṣṇa’s flute into Rādhā’s sash for the finishing touch.

Śrī Rādhā, disguised as Kṛṣṇa, sat facing North on a *kuśa* grass *āsana* covered with a tiger skin. Holding a set of *rudrākṣa* beads and looking like a great *yogī*, Śrī Rādhā sat silently meditating. Kṛṣṇa sat beside Śrī Rādhā on another *āsana*. The *sakhīs* became bewildered when they entered the *kuñja* and saw two meditating Kṛṣṇas.

One *sakhī* said, “What land have we come to where there are two Kṛṣṇas? Just see They are both Śyāma blue in color, wearing flower garlands and peacock feathers in Their hair.”

The *sakhīs* were confused and especially worried. How would they explain the disappearance of Śrī Rādhā to Jaṭilā, Rādhā’s mother-in-law? Thinking the “*yogī*” with the *rudrākṣa* beads must be the real Kṛṣṇa, the *sakhīs* accepted the second Kṛṣṇa to be Śrī Rādhā.

The *sakhīs* said, “Hey Rādhe! Why have You disguised Yourself to look like this lusty lover? Let Kṛṣṇa sit on His tiger skin and chant *mantras*. We should leave from here immediately!”

Imitating Śrī Rādhā’s voice, Kṛṣṇa said, “O Lalitā! I am too embarrassed to tell you what Kṛṣṇa did to make Me like this. If you come with Me to a private place I will reveal everything to you.”

Hearing the familiar voice of Rādhā, the *sakhīs* felt relieved that this was Rādhā. Upon touching the bodily limbs of Kṛṣṇa, the *sakhīs* said, “Except Your voice, Your whole body perfectly resembles Kṛṣṇa’s. How did this happen?”

Continuing to imitate Rādhā’s voice, Kṛṣṇa said, “Well, Kṛṣṇa used *mantras* to hypnotise Me. Then He chanted over palm-fulls of water which He rubbed all over My body. Amazingly, every part of My body became exactly like His. Since My mouth was closed, however, the *mantra* water did not enter my throat and affect My voice. I feel too shy to say in public what He did after that.”

Understanding Rādhā’s feelings, all the *sakhīs*, except Lalitā Devī, left the *kuñja*. They knew that Lalitā would later inform them of the secret. Then Kṛṣṇa took Lalitā to another private *kuñja*. Once inside, Rādhā [Kṛṣṇa] tightly embraced Lalitā and began kissing her passionately. Startled, Lalitā said, “Hey Rādhe! What are you doing?”

Continuing to imitate Śrī Rādhā’s voice, the clever Kṛṣṇa said, “Hey Lalitā! I felt too embarrassed to tell you what Kṛṣṇa did to Me, so I showed you instead.”

Then Kṛṣṇa stopped imitating Rādhā’s voice, and began enjoying with Lalitā *sakhī* to His full satisfaction amidst great laughter and merry-making. Promising to keep Kṛṣṇa’s secret, Lalitā left the *kuñja* and rejoined the *sakhīs*. Lalitā told Viśākhā, “O *sakhī*! If you want to know what happened to Rādhā, then just go into this *kuñja* and find out for

yourself.” Kṛṣṇa, the gallant lover, enacted the same pleasure pastimes with Viśākhā, Campakalatā, Citrā and the other *sakhīs* one after another.

Holi Līlā [festival of throwing colors]

Holi līlā takes place on a colorful jeweled stage in the northwest corner of Lalitā’s *kuñja* within the spring season forest. Artistic designs drawn in rice paste adorn the stage floor. There are innumerable golden jugs of color filled with *kastūrī* [musk], *kuṇkuma*, *aguru*, and sandalwood diluted in water. Many jewelled covered *pichkārīs* [syringes for color squirting] stand ready.

There are flower arrows made of *kuṇkuma*, camphor and other ingredients. There are also special bombs made from camphor, *kuṇkuma*, *kastūrī*, *aguru* and coated with *lac*. They are so delicately made that they burst in mid-air drenching the opponent from the sky. To relieve the fatigue of battle there are refreshments of *pan*, scented rose-water and fresh flower garlands.

Vṛndādevī dresses Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* in thin white cloth, gives them garlands, offers them *pan*, and decorates them with *candana*. Kṛṣṇa stands on one side of the stage facing Śrī Rādhā and the *sakhīs*. The battle of Holi begins in a loving spirit. Scented powders start flying everywhere. As Cupid twangs his bow, Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* simultaneously shower each other with colored fluids and the arrows of side-long glances!

Soon the *gopīs* foreheads are decorated by beads of sweat. Flowers fall from their braids as their hair loosens and sways back and forth over their shoulders. They keep fragrant powders tucked in the aprons tied around their waists. The *gopīs* are singing beautiful romantic songs to increase the mood of love.

Rādhikā and the *gopīs* shower their beloved Śyāma with *prema* by throwing flower bombs, fragrant powders, and by squirting Him with their *pichkārīs*. Everything is done in a playful mood of love. Keep in mind that *aguru*, *kastūrī*, *kuṇkuma*, *candana*, camphor, and saffron are all pleasing substances. Thus, when one is bombarded with them he becomes surcharged with ecstasy!

The spray of color streaming from Kṛṣṇa’s *pichkārī* is amazing. It starts off as a single stream, and as it passes through the sky it splits into a hundred, a thousand and finally a million streams to rain down drenching

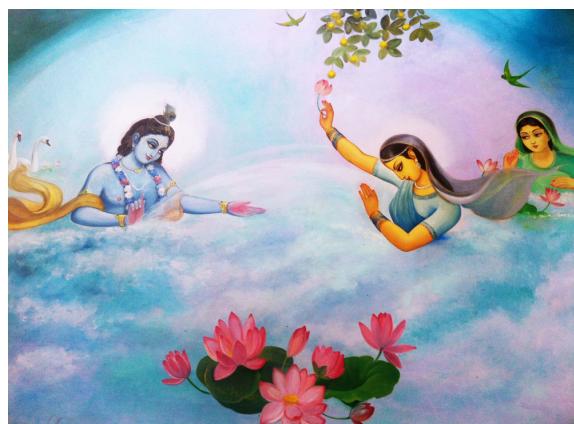
the *gopī*'s bodies. *Lac* bombs hit the ground and explode, coloring everyone with fragrant powders.

Since their clothes are now soaking wet, the colorful powders stick to everyone's bodies. The *gopī*'s bodies and clothes become multi-colored when hit with the *kunkuma* bombs, which are loaded with camphor, *sindhūra* and flower pollen. The earth, sky, and all directions are saturated with colored powders and the shower of colors from the *pichkārīs*.

When Kṛṣṇa tries to touch Śrī Rādhā, She smears a fragrant paste over Him. Some *gopīs* sneak behind Kṛṣṇa, and douse Him with a pitcher of colored water. All the *sakhīs* laugh when someone blindfolds Kṛṣṇa by covering His eyes with her hands. Then the *gopīs* surround Kṛṣṇa and toss fragrant powder. Seizing the opportunity of their proximity, Kṛṣṇa embraces them, throws powder in their faces and kisses them. During the whole pastime Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* tease and joke with each other. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja concludes this wonderful pastime with this verse:

"It is amazing to see a cloud descend upon the earth. It is more amazing when the cloud takes on a human form. Yet, it is even more amazing when the lightning showers it with *rasa*. But when a myriad of beautiful lightning strikes constantly shower that cloud with streams of colored water, that is the most amazing sight of all! Hence, the *catakī* sparrows always drink the pure nectar of that cloud with their eyes!" (*Govinda-līlāmṛta*)

Jāla-keli [water pastimes in Rādhā-kunḍa]



Vṛndādevī leads Rādhā-Mādhava and the *gopīs* to Rādhā-*kunḍa* to enjoy pastimes in the cool refreshing waters. Although usually heard in different seasons, birds like swans, cuckoos, parrots and *catakī* are all singing

together at Rādhā-*kunḍa* for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. Vṛndā dresses the *gopīs* in thin white outfits suitable for bathing. Kṛṣṇa also wears a thin bathing outfit.

Arriving at the water's edge, the *gopīs* playfully induce each other to enter. Some shy *gopīs* hesitate and try to run away. Laughing and giggling, their friends catch their dresses and yank them into the water. The *gopīs* in the *kunḍa* use their lotus palms to splash water on those still on the bank.

To protect themselves from Kṛṣṇa's attack the *gopīs* stand in shallow water up to their knees or hips. Standing in waist-deep water, Kṛṣṇa eagerly challenges the *gopīs* to a water fight. Fearing that Śyāma may grab them, the *gopīs* don't respond immediately. All the *gopīs* hold hands to form a golden net, which they use to surround Kṛṣṇa.

The *gopīs* splash Kṛṣṇa with water mixed with fresh flower pollen and honey nectar seeping from pink, yellow, red, white and blue lotuses. Suddenly, Kṛṣṇa forcefully splashes everyone and breaks their phalanx.

When the thin garments of the *gopīs* become wet they cling to their bodies, revealing all their splendid beauty. Kṛṣṇa eyes are like intoxicated elephants bathing in the nectarean river of that delightful *darśana*. The *vraja-gopīs* become passive. Although they begin to pout and shiver from the cold, their faces beam with smiles.

There are two cheering sections on the banks of Rādhā-*kunḍa*: one for Rādhā, one for Kṛṣṇa. Vṛndā, Dhaniṣṭhā and Nāndīmukhī watch from one pavilion. When the *gopīs* defeat Kṛṣṇa, they throw flower petals and cheer, "Jai Rādhe! Rādhe!" In a pavilion nearby sits Subala, Madhumaṅgala and Kundalatā. When Kṛṣṇa wins they shower flowers and cheer "Jai Kṛṣṇa! Jai Kṛṣṇa!"

Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* battle again. At first, they gently splash each other. Then as their enthusiasm increases, both sides start splashing furiously in a frenzied competition. The red lotus-bows of the *gopī*'s palms release a constant stream of water-arrows that cascade over Kṛṣṇa's body like an attack of Cupid.

With brute force the Kṛṣṇa lion overpowers the deer-like *gopīs* with a massive inundation. The *gopīs* cannot withstand Kṛṣṇa's assault. Abandoning any hopes for victory, they lower their heads in defeat, and cover their faces with their hands. Seeing Kṛṣṇa's triumph, Madhumaṅgala shouts from the bleachers:

“Hey Sakhā! You won! You won! Look, these proud *sakhīs* are trying to hide their valuable jewellery and run away! Quickly, snatch their jewellery and give it to me! I will sell it in Mathurā and buy sweets. Then I will be right back!”

Lalitā, infuriated by Baṭu’s [nickname of Madhumangala] outlandish statements, blurts out, “O hey you rascal! Just wait, we’ll take revenge later!”

Meanwhile, Madhusūdana [Kṛṣṇa] moves in to collect the spoils of war—embraces, kisses and the *gopī*’s jewellery. The *gopīs* lose interest in the battle as their creeper-like arms become languid, and their hair, garments and garlands loosen. Seeing Her *priyā-sakhīs* [dearest friends] tired and dishevelled, and Kṛṣṇa, smiling over His victory, Rādhā vows to defeat the proud hero.

The *gopīs* were forbidden to interfere in the battle of the Divine Couple. The combat begins with water, then Rādhā-Mādhava fight hand to hand, nail to nail, mouth to mouth, and finally tooth to tooth. The *sakhīs* surround the Divine Couple in a circle of loving support. Kṛṣṇa became stunned into a senseless state from Rādhikā’s furious attack.

Lalitā *sakhī* said, “Hey Rāi! [Rādhā] You can stop now. Look! Kṛṣṇa’s crown fell off, and His *kaustubha* gem has taken shelter of Your cheeks by reflecting Your form. Kṛṣṇa’s *tilaka* has washed off, His garland is ripped to shreds, and His earrings are shaking fearfully. *Sakhī!* Kṛṣṇa is in great distress, so let’s not torture Him any more! Now You can revive Him with Your tender loving touch.”

“During Their water pastimes, Rādhā hid in a cluster of golden lotus flowers. Kṛṣṇa kissed a golden lotus, mistaking it for Rādhā’s face. Laughing and laughing, Rādhā was no longer able to hide. Kṛṣṇa also started laughing and embraced Rādhā while the *gopīs* laughed heartily.” (*Vṛndāvana mahimāmr̥ta*)

“O Rādhe! When You blissfully fight with Kṛṣṇa in the waters of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, You make the drinking of the loser’s lips the wager. When Hari wins He eagerly kisses You, and holds You by the neck as we watch from the shore. When will I see Your proudly raised lotus face showing anger externally with crying, reddish eyes, crooked eyebrows, and yet smiling at the same time?” (*Utkalikā Vallariḥ*)

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa Śyāma-kuṇḍa kī jai!

Chapter 6: Serving and Worshiping Rādhā-kuṇḍa



“By serving Śrī Rādhā or following Her order, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is more easily captured than when one serves Him directly. In this way, automatically the bliss of Kṛṣṇa’s association becomes readily available.” (*Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmrta* 2.7.11)

“By serving Rādhā-kuṇḍa, one gets an opportunity to become an assistant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī under the eternal guidance of the *gopīs*.” (*Upadeśāmrta* #11 pur.)

“He who has failed to carefully worship the lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, which are the abodes of all auspiciousness; who has not taken shelter in the transcendental realm of Vṛndāvana, which is decorated with the beautiful lotus flower named Rādhā; who in this life has not associated with the devotees of Rādhā, who are very wise and whose devotion for Rādhā is very deep—how will such a person ever experience the bliss of bathing in the ocean of Lord Śyāma’s sublime mellites?

“Please understand this most attentively. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the teacher of the mellows of conjugal love. The pure love between Rādhā-Mādhava is meant to be discussed and contemplated. He who cherishes the lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī with great care obtains the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, which are like priceless jewels. One can never meet Kṛṣṇa without taking shelter of the lotus feet of Rādhā.

“The *Vedic* scriptures declare that Kṛṣṇa is the property of the maidservants of Śrī Rādhā. Having abandoned wealth, wife, sons, friends, followers, and after having given up materialistic activities and speculative knowledge, one should become absorbed in the sweetness of service to the lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. This is Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s solemn declaration.” (*Gitāvali*)

Once Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa sat in a beautiful *kuñja* on the bank of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Rādhā suddenly saw Her own golden effulgence reflected in Śyāma’s shining blue chest. Rādhā became angry. She thought that this reflection was one of Her rival *gopīs* like Śyāmala or Candra embracing Her beloved Kṛṣṇa right before Her eyes.

Rādhā couldn’t tolerate this. She ran into another cottage, draped Her veil over Her head, and proudly turned Her back on Kṛṣṇa. The *sakhīs* tried vainly to pacify Her. Thinking that Kṛṣṇa had just engaged the *sakhīs* to mollify Her, Rādhā said:

“I gave up My shame, honor and family reputation. I underwent much hardship and physical pain just to meet this boy. Yet now, right before My eyes He’s enjoying with one of My rivals. This is intolerable.”

Since they couldn’t pacify Rādhā, the *gopīs* urged Kṛṣṇa, even though He was innocent, to go and apologise to Rādhā. It didn’t work. Refusing to speak, Rādhā sat stubbornly with Her head covered. Failing to break Rādhā’s *māna* [proud huff], Kṛṣṇa decided to worship Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Kṛṣṇa thought to Himself, “If I worship Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Rādhā-kuṇḍa is pleased than Rādhārāṇī will be pleased with Me.”

After bathing, Kṛṣṇa offered flowers to Rādhā-kuṇḍa that were moistened with His tears of love. Then He paid *danḍavats* and prayed, “O Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa please give me your mercy so that Rādhā will again look favorably upon Me?” By His own example, Kṛṣṇa is teaching everyone to serve and worship Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

*api jana iha kaścid yasya sevā prasādaiḥ
praṇaya sura latā syāt tasya goṣṭhendra sūnoḥ
sapadi kila mad īśā dāsyā puṣpa praśasyā
tad ati surabhi rādhā kuṇḍam evāśrayo me*

“By the mercy of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, anyone who performs devotional service here will awaken the desire to be Rādhā’s maidservant. This is the

blooming flower on the desire vine of Kṛṣṇa *prema*. Let this beautiful and enchanting Rādhā-kuṇḍa be my only shelter.”

In this fifth verse of *Rādhā-kuṇḍāṣṭakam*, Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī says *kaścid* [anyone whether qualified or not] who offenselessly serves Rādhā-kuṇḍa will attain not only Kṛṣṇa-*prema*, but the divine service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in *mañjari-bhāva*. Usually it is very difficult to attain love of God. In *Bhakti-rasāmrta-sindhu* [eastern division ch.3.6] Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī says that *bhagavad-rati* or *bhāva* is attained either by *sadhanabhi-nivesana* [intense or total absorption in devotional practices], or by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees which is rarely achieved.

In Her liquid form of *prema* as Rādhā-kuṇḍa Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is most merciful and compassionate. Otherwise, how would the fallen sinful souls of Kali-yuga have a chance? In verse mentioned above, Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī says that one will quickly get *prema* simply by performing devotional service at Rādhā-kuṇḍa without offense. Devotional service means serving Rādhā-kuṇḍa by seeing, visiting or living there, serving the Deity or the devotees there, bathing, performing *ārati*, or circumambulating Rādhā-kunda. All this is possible by the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

*yathā yathā gaura pādaravinde
vindeta bhaktiṁ kṛta-puṇya-rāśih
tathā tathot-sarpati hṛdy—akasmād
rādhā-padāmbhoja-sudhāmbu rāśih*

“One who is extremely fortunate may get the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. By serving the lotus feet of Gaurāṅga one will taste the pure nectar of serving Rādhā’s lotus feet.” (*Caitanya-candrāmrta* #88)

The *Danḍavat Parikramā* of Rādhā-kuṇḍa

Pāda sevanam [serving the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa] is one of the nine forms of devotional service mentioned by Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja in the *Bhāgavatam*. *Pāda sevanam* includes a variety of activities such as serving Vaiṣṇavas, doing *parikramās* and offering *danḍavats*. Sometimes devotees wonder “if it’s bona fide” to do a *danḍavat parikramā* of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Yes, it is a perfectly bona fide form of devotional service fully sanctioned by the *śāstras* and performed by the *ācāryas*. *Danḍavats* should be

performed to please Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa by humbly submitting our body, mind, and words.

It is an austerity meant to make us humble, purify our hearts and please the Lord. However, all the good results are lost if we become proud and say, “Oh Prabhu, did you know, I did a *danḍavatparikramā* of Rādhā-kuṇḍa?” Falling down in the dust of Rādhā-kuṇḍa or Vṛndāvana is meant to make us humble. It is not meant to make us proud of our humility and thereby fall down. As they say, “Pride precedes a fall.”

There is some debate among *ācāryas* as to whether Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī ever did a *danḍavat parikramā* of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Some say they never heard, or saw it directly written anywhere that he did it. They say when Dāsa Gosvāmī was at Rādhā-kuṇḍa he was always with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, absorbed in his eternal identity as Rati Mañjarī. He was always under the control of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Other *ācāryas* say that although Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī was a *siddha puruṣa* [perfectly liberated soul], he acted like a *sādhaka* [practitioner] to teach us the proper path of *sādhana* [devotional behavior]. Therefore, they accept that Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī certainly did *danḍavatparikramās* of Rādhā-kuṇḍa to set the example for practicing devotees. At the same time, though, he would be in *svarūpa āveśa*, internally absorbed as Rati Mañjarī serving the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā.

Raghunātha Dāsa says in *Manah-sīkṣā* # 11: *tad ijyakhy dhyana śravana nati pancāmṛtam idam, dhayan nitya govardhanam anudinam tvam bhaja manah*, “One should daily worship Govardhana Hill with five kinds of nectar, namely *ījya* [formal *pūjā*], *ākhyā* [singing His name], *dhyāna* [meditation], *śravaṇa* [hearing His glories], and *nati* [bowing down to Him].”

The word *nati* includes offering *danḍavats*. Since Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī lived at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, it is conceivable that he worshiped Govardhana by doing *danḍavats* of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, which is part of Govardhana Hill.

Śrīla Prabhupāda confirms this in a tape class [#78/76]: “Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī showed us how to deal with Rādhā-kuṇḍa. *Saṅkhyā pūrvaka nāmagāna natibhiḥ. He was circumambulating Rādhā-kuṇḍa falling down making obeisances*, that is Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Not only he counted the holy

name, but he offered obeisances so many hundreds of times daily while going around.”

It seems clear from the words of Śrīla Prabhupāda and other *ācāryas* that doing a *danḍavatparikramā* of Rādhā-kuṇḍa is both bonafide and beneficial. Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura says in *Prārthanā*: *rūpa-raghunātha-pade hoibe ākuti*, “When will I become eager to follow in the footsteps of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī?” By the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas we can attain the loving service of Śrī Rādhā. Their mercy comes when we sincerely follow their example. Let us be eager to follow Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī by offering a *danḍavat parikramā* to Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

If you are still not convinced about doing a *danḍavat*, then try one. As Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say, “You can judge the value of something by its result.” The enlivening experience of heartfelt purification will remove all your doubts. Besides, it only takes about one hour to perform a *danḍavatparikramā* of Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa. Offering *danḍavats* helps one realise the meaning of the *śloka* which should adorn our necks.

*trṇād api sunīcena, taror ivai sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena, kīrtanīyah sadā hariḥ*

“One should chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa in a humble state of mind, considering oneself to be lower than a blade of grass. One should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of false prestige, and offer all respect to others, without expecting any respect in return. In this way, one should always chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.” (*Siksāṣṭaka* 3)

Worship During Kārtika Month

Kārtika or Dāmodara [Oct-Nov] is the favorite month of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. The *Vedas* and the Gosvāmī *granthas* proclaim that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī Herself is the *kārttika-devatā* [presiding Deity of the month of Kārtika]. In *Śrī Utkalikā Vallarī*, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī refers to Rādhārāṇī as Kārtika-devī, the goddess of the month of Kārtika.

The *Bhakti-rasāmr̥ta-sindhu* mentions the *Ūrja vrata*. This is a vow of austerities performed by devotees during Kārtika to please Ūrjeśvarī [a name of Rādhārāṇī]. The word *ūrja* means ability, enjoyment, expansion and inspiration. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī [Ūrjeśvarī] is the queen and source of

all these potencies. Śrī Rādhā alone has the unlimited ability to continually inspire Kṛṣṇa, and expand His enjoyment by Her selfless loving service. Therefore, to gain Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's blessings and Her divine service the devotees follow a month long vow during the Kārtika month called the Ürja-vrata.

Most people call October-November the month of Dāmodara. The name Dāmodara refers to the pastime of Mother Yaśodā's binding Kṛṣṇa's belly with a rope. Gauḍīya's, however, call it the month of Rādhā-Dāmodara based on the following pastime from the *Bhavisya Purāṇa, uttara-khanda*.

"Once in the auspicious month of Kārtika, Kṛṣṇa came late for a rendezvous with Rādhārāṇī in the *kuñja*. In loving anger, Śrī Rādhā looked at Śyāma with frowned eyebrows. Using some golden vines, Rādhā then tied a rope around Śyāma's belly to punish Him for not showing up as promised. Kṛṣṇa said He was late because Mother Yaśodā kept Him home for a festival. Seeing Her mistake, Rādhā quickly untied Her beloved Dāmodara."

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, therefore, meditate upon this Dāmodara who is bound by Rādhā's love and covered with tiny bumps of loving ecstasy. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa says *māsānāṁ mārga-sīrśo 'ham*, "Of months I am Mārgaśīrṣa [Nov-Dec]." Since Kṛṣṇa always follows Rādhā, it is quite appropriate that His month also follows Her month of Kārtika. In this regard, Śrīla Prabhupāda said:

"All glories to Rādhārāṇī! She is so dear to Kṛṣṇa. Everyone is trying to love Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa is trying to love Rādhā. Just imagine how great She is? Kṛṣṇa *prema* is so valuable, but Kṛṣṇa is after Rādhārāṇī. Just try to understand Rādhārāṇī. She is so great. We have to offer Her respects.

"Of all the young girls, Rādhā is the most beautiful. She always dresses so nicely that Dāmodara is attracted by Her beauty. If you go to Vṛndāvana you will find everyone worshiping Rādhārāṇī. All the devotees in Vṛndāvana worship Rādhārāṇī. The pure devotees pray to Rādhārāṇī, 'O my worshipable Rādhārāṇī! You are so full of mercy. I am begging for Your mercy.' (SPT 9/18/69)

During Kārtika hundreds of devotees come from Bengal, Assam, Manipur, other parts of India and around the world to live, serve and worship at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Day after day many ecstatic *kīrtana* parties, pouring their hearts out in chords of love, circumambulate the sacred *kundas*. Especially

in Kārtika everyone is trying somehow or other to obtain the Rādhā *krpa-katākṣa*, the ever-merciful sidelong glance of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Actually the service of Rādhārāṇī is the highest ideal and the intimate aspiration of most Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavas.

The *Hari-bhakti-vilasa* describes the devotional activities to observe in Kārtika. “O learned *brāhmaṇas*! Lord Dāmodara becomes very pleased if during the month of Kārtika one worships a Deity of Rādhikā solely for Her pleasure.” (H.B.V. 16.95)

Only pure and qualified *brāhmaṇas* observing strict rules and regulations can worship the Deity form of Rādhārāṇī. In Her most merciful form as Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, however, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī gives unlimited opportunities for one and all to serve and worship according to their heart’s delight anytime in the day or night.

While circumambulating Girirāja-Govardhana during Kārtika, the Vrajavāsīs sometimes arrive at Rādhā-kuṇḍa at midnight or two a.m. Upon getting *darśana* of the beautiful divine form of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, sparkling in the full moonlight, the Vrajavāsī devotees ecstatically shout: “*Jai Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa kī jai! Varṣīwari kī jai! Jai Jai Śrī Rādhe! Bol Girirāja Mahārāja kījai!*” Then they worship Rādhā-kuṇḍa with incense, ghee lamps, flowers and few loud firecrackers to joyously announce the end of their *ārati* to Śrī Rādhā’s liquid form of *prema*.

All of this spontaneous outpouring of devotion could never happen on the path of *arcanā-mārga* or temple Deity worship. At midnight the temple Deity of Rādhārāṇī is privately enjoying pastimes with Kṛṣṇa behind locked doors. The public cannot see or serve the Deity at this time. Rādhā’s *ārati* usually ends with the sound of a conchshell; not firecrackers! So we can understand that in Her form as Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is much more merciful than in Her Deity form.

Performing devotional service during the Kārtika month gives tremendous results.

“Queen Satyabhāma once asked Kṛṣṇa how she attained the fortune to become His wife. Kṛṣṇa said that she attained her present position by observing a Kārtika-vrata with a desire to become His wife in a previous life.” (PP)

“If a devotee offers a ghee lamp to Rādhā-kuṇḍa during the Kārtika month, he will see the entire universe.” (PP)

“Śrī Rādhā is Kṛṣṇa’s most beloved *gopī*, and Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is as dear to Kṛṣṇa as Śrī Rādhā Herself. For this reason, devotees should bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa during the month of Kārtika and worship Kṛṣṇa.” (*Bhakti-ratnākara*)

Serving and worshiping Rādhā-kuṇḍa during Kārtika is most beneficial. The merciful Rādhā-kuṇḍa reciprocates with all Her worshipers by blessing them with *vrāja-bhakti*.

Bahulāṣṭami Bathing

“On this day [Bahulāṣṭami] Kṛṣṇa made Śyāma-kuṇḍa, called all the sacred rivers and bathed while chanting the name of each holy place. Kṛṣṇa finished His bath sometime before midnight. Even now people still follow the same system of bathing in the holy kuṇḍa. By bathing in Rādhā-kuṇḍa on the day of Bahulāṣṭami [also called Kṛṣṇāṣṭami] one pleases Lord Hari.” (*Bhakti-ratnākara*)

Rādhā-kuṇḍa appeared in this world at midnight on Bahulāṣṭami, the eighth day of the waning moon in Kārtika. Every year on this day, thousands of devotees bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa to celebrate Śrī Rādhā’s merciful appearance. On Bahulāṣṭami, some of married couples from the village will insert five metals or at least a *rupee* coin into a whole pumpkin, and then offer it to Rādhā-kuṇḍa. With their cloth tied together the husband and wife bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa while praying to be blessed with a son. People say that Rādhā-kuṇḍa usually fulfills the couple’s desire, which in turn increases their attachment for Rādhā-kuṇḍa. This is Śrī Rādhā’s compassion to ultimately attract them to the higher taste of Rādhā-Govinda’s selfless loving service.

Chapter 7: Bathing and Living at Rādhā-kuṇḍa

The Glories of Bathing

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī says in his *Rādhā-kuṇḍaṣṭākam* that one can immediately attain pure love of God simply by one bath in Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja says the same thing in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā*:

*sei kuṇḍe yei eka-bāra kare snāna
tāñre rādhā-sama ‘prema’ kṛṣṇa kare dāna*

“Indeed, Śrī Kṛṣṇa gives ecstatic love like that of Rādhārāṇī to whoever bathes in Rādhā-kuṇḍa even once in his life.” (*Cc. Madhya 18.10*)

“A devotee will at once develop pure love of Kṛṣṇa in the wake of the *gopīs* [ed. *mañjari-bhāva*], if he once takes a bath in Rādhā-kuṇḍa.” (*Upadeśāmṛta #11 pur*) One may ask how this is possible? The answer is that the glories of Rādhā-kuṇḍa are equal to the glories of Śrī Rādhā. Bathing in or even seeing Rādhā-kuṇḍa is the same as directly seeing and associating with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. This point is confirmed in the *Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta 2.5.233*: “Anyone who somehow sees the supreme goddess Rādhikā will experience *prema* in its real form.”

Although we have seen thousands of people bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, why is it that we have never seen anyone exhibit the signs of love of God? The extraordinary effects of bathing in Rādhā-kuṇḍa mentioned by the *sādhus* and *śāstras* apply only to an offenseless bather. A similar principle applies to the chanting of the holy names. For the pure devotee the holy names reveal Themselves as Rādhā-Gopīnātha, full in transcendental beauty and absorbed in ecstatic loving pastimes. Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa without offense gives liberation, but pure chanting gives *prema-bhakti*. The offensive chanter, like the offensive bather, however, cannot taste the fruits of liberation or *prema-bhakti*.

A neophyte devotee diligently chants Hare Kṛṣṇa, becomes purified, and gradually advances from the offensive to the pure stage of chanting. Similarly, an offensive person can destroy his offensive attitude, and attain

the supreme goal of divine love by patiently and repeatedly bathing in Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

The *Padma Purāṇa* says: *dinam ekam nivāsena, harau bhaktir prajāyate*, “Simply by residing for one day in Mathurā one will attain *Hari-bhakti*, devotion to Hari. So what’s the difference, whether I bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa or reside in Mathurā, the result is the same? Not exactly. Bathing in Rādhā-kuṇḍa is unique because by this one can attain Rādhā-Govinda *vraja-prema*.

The *mādhurya-prema* of Vraja far exceeds any other type of divine love for other forms of God like Hari, Viṣṇu, and Nārāyaṇa. Rādhā-kuṇḍa awards one Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *prema* in the mood of the *rāgātmikā Vrajavāśīgopīs* and *mañjarīs*. *Mādhurya-prema*, the pure and intimate love of the Vraja *gopīs* is far greater than the reverential devotion [*aiśvarya bhāva*] to Lord Hari of the residents of Mathurā and Dvārakā.

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī says in verse two of *Rādhā-kuṇḍaṣṭākam*, *vraja bhavi mura śatroḥ preyasīnāṁ nikāmair*: “This love is very difficult to attain even for Kṛṣṇa’s dear beloveds in Vraja-bhūmi.” What is this love? It is *mañjarī prema*, the ecstatic love relished by Śrī Rādhā’s intimate maidservants. This unique type of love which is awarded by Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is hard to get even for Kṛṣṇa’s own girlfriends, what to speak of those servants, friends, and parents who worship Kṛṣṇa in a mood of *aiśvarya bhāva*.

“Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa are nothing but the *prema* of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. By bathing there fortunate souls can immediately attain *prema*. Therefore, these two lakes are named after the Divine Couple. Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa assumed the forms of Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa only to bestow mercy upon all living entities. One who bathes here will directly perceive the sweet love of Rādhā-Govinda. In great happiness, therefore, devotees bathe here.” (VRC)

The Rarity of Taking Bath

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī says in text eleven of *Upadeśāmrta*, *yat presthairapy alam asulabham kim punar bhakti-bhajam*: “Rādhā-kuṇḍa is rarely attained even by Kṛṣṇa-*presthās* [most advanced devotees]; therefore it’s even more difficult for *bhakti-bhajam*, [ordinary devotees practicing devotional service] to attain.”

In the purport to this verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda says that even exalted devotees like Nārada Muni and Śanaka Ṛṣi don't get a chance to bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa. One gets the opportunity to bathe in the supremely sanctified waters of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa only by great fortune accrued in this or in previous lives.

Without giving up male consciousness one cannot enter the intimate pastimes of Rādhā-Mādhava in Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Brahmā, Nārada, Śiva and Śuka are not only in male devotee consciousness, but they also worship Kṛṣṇa in a mood of awe and reverence. For that reason, these great personalities cannot enter Śrī Rādhā's confidential service at Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

"Oh Providence! I offer my respects to you! Over the powerful course of time, I have attained Rādhā, the rarest treasure in the ocean of nectarean loving mellows. Rādhā is attained only by those who take exclusive shelter of the mood of the *gopīs*. Great demigods like Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva are not qualified to hold even a speck of dust from Rādhā's lotus feet on their heads!" (*Rādhā rasa-sudhā-nidhi*)

To enter Śrīmatī Rādhikā's intimate service one must adopt the mood of a *gopī* or *mañjari*. Reverential devotional service is performed in a mood of awe and respect. It cannot be spontaneous or free from hesitation. Therefore, it cannot be full of perfect *ānanda* or bliss. Vraja is an abode filled with a constant festival of sweet spontaneous devotional service.

Brahmā, Śiva and Nārada could partially see Kṛṣṇa's childhood pastimes. However, Śyāma's romantic pastimes in youth were never seen by them, nor by anyone identifying himself with his male body. The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* explains that one who worships Kṛṣṇa in spontaneous love will attain Vraja. However, one who worships Kṛṣṇa according to rules and regulations will become the Lord's associate in Vaikuṇṭha. Brahmā, Śiva and Nārada are devotees in Vaikuṇṭha *bhāva*. As such, they can barely perceive the sweetness of Govinda.

To Bathe or Not to Bathe

This section addresses members of ISKCON who may have some doubts or reservations about bathing in Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. In September 1975, Śrīla Prabhupāda published Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Upadeśāmṛta* wherein he highly extolled Rādhā-kuṇḍa. At that time he allowed his disciples to visit and bathe in the sacred waters of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. It is said, however, that

Śrīla Prabhupāda changed his mind and forbid his disciples to bathe after he heard that some of them had disrespected Rādhā-kuṇḍa. They had offended Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī by kicking Her during their frivolous sporting and swimming about in the sanctified waters of Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

During a room conversation in Vṛndāvana on the fifth of September 1976 Śrīla Prabhupāda appeared to be discussing this point. “There is no difference between Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Rādhārāṇī,” said Śrīla Prabhupāda. “So how can you jump over Rādhārāṇī? Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Rādhārāṇī are nondifferent. How can you enjoy Rādhā-kuṇḍa by swimming? You cannot touch with your feet even Rādhā-kuṇḍa. You can take little water and keep it on the head. That is respectful to Rādhā-kuṇḍa.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda expertly instructed his disciples according to *kāla, deśa, and pātra* [time, place and circumstance]. In some instances he even gave completely opposite instructions. For example, once two *brahmacāris* who had very similar natures and qualities discussed their services with Śrīla Prabhupāda. Śrīla Prabhupāda told one boy to marry, and the other to take *sannyāsa*. The godbrothers were surprised when they heard that Prabhupāda had assigned different *āśramas* to these two seemingly similar *brahmacāris*.

It appears that Śrīla Prabhupāda gave two different categories of instructions: temporary instructions according to time, place and circumstance, and eternal orders for all to follow at all times. The instructions that Śrīla Prabhupāda gave personally or in a letter to a particular disciple are specific, individual, and in many cases fall in the category of time and place instructions. The teachings and instructions, however, that Śrīla Prabhupāda left in his books are his eternal orders. They should be followed everywhere by all classes of devotees for the next 10,000 years of Lord Gaurāṅga’s golden age of enlightenment.

Śrīla Prabhupāda himself particularly emphasised the importance and topmost position of his books. Archival material such as Śrīla Prabhupāda’s letters, lectures and conversations that have recently appeared in book form are of lesser importance. When Śrīla Prabhupāda said that everything he wanted to say was in his books, or if you want to know me then read my books, he was referring to his published works such as the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Upadeśāmṛta* [Nectar of Instruction], and others.

Besides the previously cited quotation about taking an *acamana* bath at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, which Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke in a room conversation, Śrīla Prabhupāda says repeatedly in his books that devotees should bathe regularly in Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī says in verse eleven of *Upadeśāmrta*, *tat premedaṁ sakṛd api sarah snātūr āviṣkaroti* : “If one simply bathes once within the holy waters of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, one’s pure love of Kṛṣṇa is fully aroused.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda mentions the word bath seven times in his purport to this verse. Although one rarely gets the opportunity to associate with Rādhā-kuṇḍa, the *ācāryas* repeatedly stress the immense spiritual value of serving Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and respectfully bathing within Her *prema*-filled, transcendental waters.

“One should bathe there [in Rādhā-kunda] regularly...to bathe there constitutes the highest perfection of devotional service...Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī recommends that even if one can’t permanently live on the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, he should at least *take a bath in the lake* as many times as possible. This is a most important item in the execution of devotional service.” (NOI # 11 pur.)

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s phrase, *take a bath in the lake* gives clear and specific details about how and where to bathe at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Śrīla Prabhupāda often criticised the foolish rascals who falsely misinterpret the *Bhagavad-gītā*. When the meaning of Kṛṣṇa’s Sanskrit words is clear and direct, Prabhupāda said, there’s no need for any interpretation by mundane rascals. When Lord Kṛṣṇa says to offer Him some water, He clearly means pure water; not milk, orange juice or some other liquid. In the same way, the direct meaning of the word bath is to immerse one’s entire body in a tank of water.

Śrīla Prabhupāda is not saying here that one should bathe simply by putting a few drops of water on his head. Nor is he saying that one should take a bucket of Rādhā-kuṇḍa water and bathe privately as some people claim. Prabhupāda’s saying: *He should take a bath in the kuṇḍa* means exactly that one should come to Rādhā-kunda, and immerse his entire body within the sacred *prema*-filled waters of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa!

To bathe or not to bathe is not a question for philosophical debate. If Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to instruct the world of devotees not to bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa he could have easily made such a solemn proclamation in

one of his books. He didn't. Nor did Śrīla Prabhupāda revise the purports to any of the many editions of his *Nectar of Instruction*, wherein he repeatedly encourages bathing in Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Not only did Śrīla Prabhupāda want his disciples to bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, but he wanted everyone to come and get the mercy of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Once Śrīla Prabhupāda printed 100,000 copies of *Nectar of Instruction* for mass distribution in order to enlighten the general public about the incredible glories of Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

“By taking bath in Rādhā-kuṇḍa one becomes very dear to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” (HBV)

“Out of great kindness to the people, so that they could directly taste Their sweetness. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa have become these two lakes. Shining with happiness, the devotees bathe in these two lakes. I think these two lakes are the Divine Couple’s love. They who are fortunate bathe there. Because bathing there is like bathing in the transcendental love of Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Śyāma, these two lakes bear the name of the Divine Couple.” (VRC)

Mood and Method of Bathing

None of our Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ācāryas have ever said not to bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Beginning with Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu who personally revealed Rādhā-kuṇḍa and bathed there, all of His followers have continued this practice. Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, the “captain of Rādhā-kuṇḍa,” set the example for all future *sādhakas* by bathing thrice daily in Rādhā-kuṇḍa. What to speak of humans? Dāsa Gosvāmī even built ramps around Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa so that cows, beasts, and buffalo could also bathe in Śrī Rādhā’s merciful lake of love.

Before approaching Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa one should understand Her transcendental glories, identity, and position. After obtaining permission to bathe and the blessings of one’s spiritual master one should first circumambulate Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa. In this regard, Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī was regularly offering *dandavats* while going around Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

According to his means, one can worship Rādhā-kuṇḍa just as one would offer *pūjā* and *ārati* to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Incense, ghee lamp, flowers, sweets or grains are all acceptable offerings. Hear the nectarean glories of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and then offer prayers to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga, Rādhā and

Kṛṣṇa, and the Vaiṣṇavas. [see Chapter 9 Prayers] The following *śloka* from *Vraja-vilāsa-stava* can be sung to the tune of the *Ṣad-gosvāmy-aṣṭaka* as a *pranām* to Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

*duṣṭariṣṭa-vadhe svayaṁ samabhavat, kṛṣṇāṅghri-padmād idam
sphītaṁ yan-makaranda-vistr̄tir ivā, riṣṭākhyam iṣṭaṁ sarah
sopanaiḥ parirañjitaṁ priyatayā, śrī-rādhayā kāritaīḥ
premnāliṅgad iva priya-sara idam, tan nitya nityaṁ bhaje*

“When the Ariṣṭā demon was killed, a great lake named Ariṣṭā-kuṇḍa, which is filled with nectar and surrounded by splendid jewelled staircases, sprang from Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lotus foot. Because it is Her favorite, Śrī Rādhā always embraces this lake with love. I eternally worship Rādhā-kuṇḍa.” (VVS)

The *Gaurī-tantra* says, “The *sādhaka* who chants the eight syllable Rādhā-*mantra* [śrīṁ rāṁ rādhikāyai svahā] will attain the lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.” At this time, one can chant this *mantra* while meditating on Rādhā-Mādhava’s eternal pastimes here. Then offer *dandavats*, and carefully bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa with the utmost humility and surrender.

Slowly enter the kuṇḍa, and stand firmly in one place facing Rādhā-kuṇḍa [if you are in Śyāma-kuṇḍa], or Dāsa Gosvāmī’s *samādhi* if you are in Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Offer a prayer in your mind, “O Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa please purify my heart and fill me with *prema*, so I may eternally serve Your lotus feet in Vṛndāvana.”

Then dunk under the water three times. Be careful not to kick your legs or disturb any of the resident Śrī turtles. Offer *dandavats* after bathing in each kuṇḍa, and beg Rādhā-Mādhava to please forgive you for any offenses that you may have committed.

There are some different ideas about the order and number of baths. Some say that one should first bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, then Śyāma-kuṇḍa, and again in Rādhā-kuṇḍa because our ultimate goal and shelter is the lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Other devotees say that one bath in Rādhā-kuṇḍa is sufficient because Śyāma-kuṇḍa mixes with Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

To remove the sin of *go-hatya* [killing a bull], Kṛṣṇa called all the sacred rivers and *tīrthas* to Śyāma-kuṇḍa. Taking advantage of the purifying waters of Śyāma-kuṇḍa, many devotees bathe there first to remove sins

from their hearts. Then with their clean and purified hearts they bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa to receive the gift of *prema*.

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa bathed in both *kuṇḍas*. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī said that She would bestow Kṛṣṇa *prema* upon any bather in Śyāma-kuṇḍa. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa promised to give Rādhā-*prema* to anyone bathing in Rādhā-kuṇḍa. When Lord Caitanya revealed Them, He first bathed in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, then Śyāma-kuṇḍa. The main point is to bathe in both Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa. If you do not have a personal realisation about bathing, we suggest you follow Lord Gaurāṅga’s example.

The following quotations of different devotees give an idea of the proper mood while bathing in Rādhā-kuṇḍa:

1. “O Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, we are fallen, wretched, degraded and sinful. Our body, what to speak of our mind, is dirty and full of contamination. In one sense, we have no right to defile Your most beloved and supremely pure, love-filled lake with our filthy body and putrid mind. But because we are so lost and fallen we need Your mercy. Be compassionate upon us Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Please allow us to bathe in Your kuṇḍa, purify our hearts and someday accept us in the divine service of Your lotus feet.”
2. “O Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Śyāma please purify my heart. Please fill me with pure love for eternally serving you within the pleasure groves of Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma.”
3. “We are bathing simply to please Rādhā-Mādhava, and especially Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is very much attached to Rādhā-kuṇḍa. There is no selfish consideration about comfort or the temperature of the water. Simply let me bathe here to please Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and receive Their mercy and love.”
4. “I’m always thinking of Rādhā’s mercy. Because Kṛṣṇa told Rādhā that anyone who bathes in Her kuṇḍa will get His mercy, and Rādhā said that anyone who bathes in Śyāma-kuṇḍa will get Her mercy. O Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, I want your mercy all the time. Please give Your mercy to me, so that I can always remember You along with Kṛṣṇa.”
5. “In the fifth *śloka* of *Rādhā-kuṇḍaṣṭākam* Dāsa Gosvāmī says that by once bathing in Rādhā-kuṇḍa one can become a flower on the creeper of love for Kṛṣṇa. That flower is a maid servant of Śrīmatī

Rādhārāṇī's lotus feet. She becomes a maidservant of Śrī Rādhā, and serves Śrī Kṛṣṇa through Her. Bathing here we will attain Rādhā-dasya [*mañjarī bhāva*] which is compared with a flower on the creeper embracing the tree of Kṛṣṇa."

6. "O Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, I'm surrendering and taking shelter of You by bathing in Your Rādhā-kuṇḍa. I only aspire to become Your loyal maidservant."
7. "I'm taking a bath in Rādhā-kuṇḍa so I may become qualified to see the pastimes of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa described in the last *śloka* of *Rādhā-kuṇḍaṣṭākam*. The waters of Rādhā-kuṇḍa are scented with four kinds of fragrant lotus flowers. Absorbed in conjugal ecstasy, Rādhā-Mādhava are playing madly in the water while the *sakhīs* lovingly serve Them. Praying and hoping against hope, we bathe in Rādhā-kuṇḍa with the desire to see this pastime, and eternally serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa along with the *sakhīs* in the mood of a *mañjarī*."

*śyāma-kuṇḍe rādhā-kuṇḍe snāna
kari' kabe jūdāba parāṇa*

"When by bathing in Śyāma-kuṇḍa and Rādhā-kuṇḍa will I attain the stage of engaging my life and soul in the service of Rādhā-Govinda?" (*Prārthanā*)

Living at Rādhā-kuṇḍa

"Only by the grace of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī can one live at Rādhā-kuṇḍa." (*Bhakti-ratnākara*)

"Some great souls can live on the bank of Śrī Rādhā's dearest lake Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, because in previous lives they worshiped the beautiful lotus feet of Śrī Gāndharvā and Acyuta [Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa] with the ever-fresh sweetness of pure spiritual love. These exalted devotees are my life and soul." (VVS)

"...Indeed, those who execute devotional service on the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa are the most fortunate people in the universe." (*Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* # 10)

Śrīla Prabhupāda repeatedly stresses the importance of living at Rādhā-kuṇḍa in his purports to *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* [verses 9-11]:

“Advanced devotees prefer to live at Rādhā-kuṇḍa because here Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī eternally enact many intimate loving affairs [*rati-vilāsa*]. Who then, would give up Rādhā-kuṇḍa and try to reside elsewhere? No person with transcendental intelligence would do so. Therefore everyone interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness should ultimately take shelter of Rādhā-kuṇḍa and execute devotional service there throughout one’s life.”

“Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that Rādhā-kuṇḍa is the most select place for those interested in advancing their devotional service in the wake of the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. It is also recommended that one should live on the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and be absorbed in the loving service of the Lord. One should bathe there regularly and give up all material conceptions, taking shelter of Śrī Rādhā and Her assistant *gopīs*. ”

“...Who, then will not reside at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and, in a spiritual body surcharged with ecstatic devotional feelings [*aprākṛta-bhāva*], render loving service to the divine couple Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, who perform Their *aṣṭa-kāliya līlā*, Their eternal eightfold daily pastimes...” (*Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* #10)

In the purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda says, “If one is thus constantly engaged during his lifetime, after giving up the body he will go back to Godhead to serve Śrī Rādhā in the same way as he contemplated during his life on the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. The conclusion is that to live on the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and to bathe there daily constitutes the highest perfection of devotional service.”

Of course, these statements of Śrīla Prabhupāda do not mean that devotees from around the world should drop everything and move to Rādhā-kuṇḍa. However, it does indicate that Rādhā-kuṇḍa is the topmost place of service. If by the grace of *guru* and Gaurāṅga a devotee gets service there, then that devotee is exceptionally fortunate.

Nothing happens by chance. The chance to live and serve at Rādhā-kuṇḍa is a direct gift from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Her representative, Śrī Guru. “Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī recommends that even if one cannot live permanently on the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, he should take a bath in the lake as many times as possible. This is a most important item of devotional service.” (*Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* #11 pur.)

In summary, the *ācāryas* recommend living and serving at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. If that is not possible, then one should visit regularly and bathe “as many times as possible.” The following anecdote shows that soon there may be an opportunity for many devotees to live and serve in ISKCON Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Once a disciple asked, “Śrīla Prabhupāda, since the major Vṛndāvana temples have smaller replica temples at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, can we also have an ISKCON Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandira in Rādhā-kuṇḍa?”

“Yes, that is a good idea,” said Śrīla Prabhupāda. “You can do it anytime. The land is not expensive. You can make an *āśrama*. What will you do there?”.

“Preach!” said the disciple.

“No. Rādhā-kuṇḍa is not for preaching. *Rādhā-kuṇḍa is for relishing!*” said Śrīla Prabhupāda. Pausing briefly, Śrīla Prabhupāda smiled and added, “It is a good idea.”

“This lake is my eternal home. Rādhā-kuṇḍa is everything for Rādhā’s friends. Rādhā-kuṇḍa is filled with the glory of Rādhā’s love for Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa loves Rādhā-kuṇḍa as much as He loves Śrīmatī Rādhikā. I pray that at this lake Lalitā’s friend, Rādhā, may eternally enjoy pastimes before my eyes.” (*Stavāvalī*)

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa Śyāma-kuṇḍa kī jai!

Chapter 8: Parikramā Guide to Rādhā-kuṇḍa

Come to Rādhā-kuṇḍa by taking the road from Chatikāra in Vṛndāvana until it ends in a T-junction at Govardhana. Turning left at the T-junction will lead to Mānasi-Gaṅgā and Govardhana town. Turning right takes you straight into Rādhā-kuṇḍa. After walking ten minutes on this road you will pass a hospital on your left.

A short distance more, on the left side above a temple doorway you will see a large sign written in English, Hindi and Bengali that says Th. Rādhā Gokulānanda Temple. Our Rādhā-kuṇḍa *parikramā* begins here. The holy places in Rādhā-kuṇḍa are listed numerically in the following guide, and referred to by this number in the accompanying texts.

1. Ṭhākura Rādhā Gokulānanda Temple

This small temple contains *pratibhu mūrtis* of Rādhā-Gokulānanda. The original Deities of Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda are in Vṛndāvana in the Rādhā-Gokulānanda Mandira near Rādhāramanjī.

In the seventeenth century when the Muslims attacked Vṛndāvana many of the Gosvāmī's original Deities shifted to Rādhā-kuṇḍa for safety. Then They moved to Kāmyavana and finally Karolī and Jaipur in Rājasthān. Small replica temples of the large original temples in Vṛndāvana were built at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. *Pratibhu mūrtis* [expanded forms, nondifferent from the original Deities] were also established to honor the Lord's visit here and continue His worship.

By the Lord's mercy the residents of Rādhā-kuṇḍa can visit the seven main temples of Vṛndāvana without leaving Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Rādhā Madanamohana, Rādhā-Govinda, Rādhā-Gopīnātha, Rādhā-Dāmodara, Rādhā-Śyāmasundara, Rādhāramaṇa and Rādhā-Gokulānanda are all here.

Although it appears that many of the original Deities of Vṛndāvana have left Vraja-dhāma, one should understand that They live eternally in Vṛndāvana. They are always engaging in pastimes here, and blessing the devotees with Their divine *darśana*. The Lord's pastimes are inconceivable and His will is indomitable. No one can check the Lord if He decides to leave Vṛndāvana, as in the case of Gopāla Rāja [Śrī Nāthajī],

who went to Rājasthan. The pure love of the Rājasthani devotees attracted Lord Gopāla from Vraja's shady groves to the desert sands of Rājasthan.

In the same way Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's beloved Deities of Rādhā-Govinda moved to Jaipur. Now 10,000 devotees worship Them every day at *mangala ārati*. By Their desire, Rādhā-Dāmodara, the beloved Deities of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, went to Jaipur for seventy years. Then They returned to Vṛndāvana for a short time before moving back to Jaipur where They have been for the last two-hundred and fifty years.

We're Asking Everyone To Give a Donation

Devotees should give some lakṣmī to maintain this and all the other sacred places which we will see on *parikramā*. The *Vedic śāstras* state that one must offer a donation when visiting a *sādhu* [saintly person] or a temple of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The offering may be simply some grains, fruits, sweets or vegetables; or it may be vast sums of money.

To neglect this *Vedic* injunction, however, and offer nothing is an offense. “One who is not prepared to practise the injunctions prescribed in the *śāstras* cannot be a good man simply by book knowledge.” (SB pur.1.13.31) Regarding this, an exasperated Vrajavāsī *pūjāri* once revealed his mind to me in this way:

“Mahārāja, Western devotees spend about 40,000 *rupees* just to fly to Vṛndāvana from America and Europe right? They spend all this money to come see the original Deities of Vṛndāvana like Govindajī, Dāmodara, Rādhāramaṇajī, and others. Taking *darśana*, bathing in Yamunājī and Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and Girirāja *parikramā* are the main activities they do here.

“But Mahārāja, can you explain why it is that after taking so much trouble to come here, the Western devotees take *darśana* of Thākurajī [the Deity of Kṛṣṇa] pay respects and walk away; without giving a single *paisa* [penny]? Aren't they coming from the world's richest countries? What's with them? Even the poorest Indians will give a few rupees after taking Thākurajī's *darśana*. ”

All the *Vedic* scriptures emphasise that householders must give charity to purify their accumulation of wealth. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [1.13.31] says that Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was a pious king and exemplary *grhasta*. He personally practiced the pious duties enjoined for householders by daily giving charity to temples, *brāhmaṇas* and others.

Bali Mahārāja was a great king and *grhasta* who became the constant companion of the Supreme Lord by giving everything. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: *ye yathā māṁ prapadyante*, “As you surrender unto Me, I reward you accordingly.” Later Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gītā* 12.11: *karma phala tyāgam*, one can become peaceful by renouncing the fruits of one’s labor. Peace of mind is necessary to become Kṛṣṇa conscious.

“Charity given out of duty without expectation of return, at the proper time and place, and to a worthy person is in the mode of goodness.” (B.G. 17.20)

In the purport to this verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda says, “Spiritual perfection is always a consideration. Therefore, charity is recommended to be given at a place of pilgrimage [like Vṛndāvana] or to a qualified *brāhmaṇa* or a Vaiṣṇava or in temples.” Besides being one of the six qualities of a *brāhmaṇa*, giving charity is essential for self realisation. “Without austerity and penance and without sacrificing one’s riches, one cannot achieve the mercy of the Supreme Lord.” (SB 3.24.3 p.)

In summary, ultimately we must give everything to Kṛṣṇa, so why not start with a few *rupees*. When doing *parikramā* one should give reasonable donations to each temple. Please remember that a minimal donation of twenty *rupees* is only about fifty-cents in America. Visiting devotees often spend 100-300 *rupees* a day on food and drink. But on *parikramā* they cannot spare ten *rupees* for the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Obviously, our priorities are perverted. Without question or hesitation we will spend lavishly for our bodily maintenance. Unfortunately, for the service of Kṛṣṇa and the purification of our souls we become penny-pinching misers. We humbly request the devotees to give generously to the temples they visit. Giving donations is especially beneficial in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, since this is the topmost place in the supreme spiritual realm of Vṛndāvana.

Śrī-Śrī Thākura Rādhā Gokulānanda kī jai!
Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa Śyāma-kuṇḍa kī jai!

2. Śrī Kuṇḍeśvara Mahādeva Temple



Continuing along the road into Rādhā-kuṇḍa, you will pass a couple sweet shops on your right. On the left you will see the small white marble roadside temple of Kuṇḍeśvara Mahādeva [Lord Śiva] just before you see Rādhā-kuṇḍa on your right. A sacred *peepul* tree is growing inside the temple.

Here on the West side, and in the other directions around Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Lord Śiva protects Rādhā's sacred lake from intrusion by unqualified persons. Lord Śiva, as the protecting Deity, serves the Divine Couple throughout Vraja maṇḍala by guarding most of Their confidential pastime abodes like Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Varṣīvāta, Mānasī Gaṅgā and others. The following śāstric quotations will help one better understand the position of Lord Śiva.

“Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, ‘Hear Me, O Śiva, you are as precious to Me as My own body. One who is dear to you is even more dear to Me. I allow you to stay in all of My abodes. You are the protector and maintainer of all the holy *dhāmas*. One who claims to be My devotee, but disregards you is only pretending devotion to me.’ ” (SKP)

“Lord Kṛṣṇa said, ‘How can those who do not show respect to My foremost devotee Lord Śiva, ever become devoted to Me?’ ” (AVP)

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught that no one should at any time criticise or diminish the position of His energies manifested in the forms of the many demigods and demigoddesses. By showing proper love and reverence to them one strengthens his devotion and love for Lord Kṛṣṇa.” (CB)

“If anyone sees Lord Śiva with devotion and reverence, his heart is immediately cleansed.” (SB 4.7.10 p.)

With a humble and respectful mood a devotee should beg Śrī Kuṇḍeśvara Mahādeva for permission to enter Rādhā-kuṇḍa. We should sincerely pray to Lord Śiva for the chance to someday serve the lotus feet of Rādhā-Mādhava on the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. You can easily please Lord Śiva by worshiping him with some flowers and water from Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Lord Śiva spoke many wonderful prayers in glorification of Rādhā-Śyāmasundara. In *Urdhvamnaya Tantra* Lord Śiva spoke *Rādhā-Kṛpa-Kaṭākṣa-Stava-Rāja* [the king of prayers petitioning the sidelong glance of Śrī Rādhā]. This is one of the most recited prayers in Vṛndāvana. We have included it in Chapter 9. The following verses by Lord Śiva are from *Śrī Rādhā-sahasra-nāma* [thousand names of Rādhā] which appears in the *Nārada-pañcarātra*:

**12/ vṛṇdāvaneśvarī kṛṣṇa / priyā mandana mohinī
śrīmatī kṛṣṇa-kāntā ca / kṛṣṇananda-pradāyinī**

**108/ prema-priyā prema-rūpā / premānanda-taraṅgiṇī
prema-hārā prema-dātrī / prema-śaktīmayī tathā**

**109/ kṛṣṇa-premavatī dhanyā / kṛṣṇa-prema-taraṅgiṇī
prema-bhakti-pradā premā / premānanda-taraṅgiṇī**

**110/ prema-krīḍā-parītāṅgī / prema-bhakti-taraṅgiṇī
premartha-dāyiṇī sarva- / śvetā nitya-taraṅgiṇī**

Translation

12/ Śrī Rādhā is the queen and controller of Vṛndāvana. Rādhā is very dear to Kṛṣṇa and totally enchants the transcendental Cupid [Kṛṣṇa] with Her superexcellent beauty. Rādhā is the best lover of Kṛṣṇa, and She alone fills Him with the topmost bliss.

108/ Śrī Rādhā is the personification of *prema* and Her love is the sweetest. Rādhā’s love is always tossing in blissful waves of ever-fresh variety. Śrī Rādhā gives that love, and with Her love She captivates and takes Kṛṣṇa away from all other lovers. Rādhārāṇī is full of the energy of *prema*. Rādhā is fair, and She is an ocean of eternity.

109/ Rādhā is the embodiment of fortune. Rādhā is full of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Rādhā’s heart swells in waves of Kṛṣṇa-*prema*. Rādhā is made of

prema, and She gives out *prema-bhakti*. Rādhā’s love is always tossing in blissful waves.

110/ Śrī Rādhā’s entire form is saturated with amorous love. Rādhā is an ocean of *prema-bhakti*. Rādhārāṇī bestows the wealth of *prema*.

Śrī Kuṇḍeśvara Mahādeva kī jai!
Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa Śyāma-kuṇḍa kī jai!

3. Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Purāṇa Mandira

Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is on your immediate right as you leave Mahādeva’s temple. Offer *daṇḍavats*, prayers, and pause for a few moments to admire the sublime transcendental beauty of Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa. Proceed another 60 meters along the *parikramā mārga* until you see a stone structure shaped like an upside down U on the right side. This marks a site of Rādhā-Govinda’s *jhulana* [swing pastimes]. Walk in the small alley sloping up the hill to your left towards the blackish pyramid-shaped dome. This Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple is the oldest temple in Rādhā-kuṇḍa. While excavating Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī found these Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities. He asked the local Vrajavāsī *brāhmaṇas* to worship Them. To this day, descendants of the original *pūjāris* are still worshiping the Deity.

A pair of large *neem* and *banyan* trees are entwined together in the courtyard of this temple. According to *sāstra*, people will worship a pair of trees like this as Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa. Here at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, however, these trees are worshiped as Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa [the original Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa] eternally embracing each other.

“Throughout Vṛndāvana and along the Yamunā’s banks are splendid trees that are like the incarnations of the Lord. These *kalpa-vṛkṣa* [desire-fulfilling trees] can bestow the gift of *prema*. They help one remember the Lord, the moon of Vraja, who then immediately rises within one’s consciousness.” (VRC)

Taking the dust on our heads as we bow to these desire-trees, let us pray that they satisfy our desire to serve the intimate pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa kī jai!

4. Śrī Gopāla Manipur Mandira



Return to the *parikramā mārga*, turn left and walk 50 meters. The next road you see on your left is the Govardhana *parikramā mārga*. Just after this junction you will see the red stone Gopāla Manipur Mandira on the left. A Vrajavāsī *brāhmaṇa* who served as Gopālajī's *pūjāri* for the last forty years told the following Deity story:

“Lord Gopālajī was originally worshiped in the house of a local Vrajavāsī. About one hundred years ago, Gopālajī appeared in a dream to Manipur King Churachand Mahārāja. Ṭhākurajī [Gopālajī] told the king to build a temple for Him at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. The temple should be placed where Gopāla could gaze at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and also give His merciful *darśana* to Sūryadeva.

“The king found the exact spot where the first rays of the rising sun reach across Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Then he built this temple for the pleasure of the Lord. If you come here at sunrise, you will see that the first rays of the rising sun directly fall on the beautiful lotus face of Gopālajī, exactly as the Lord desired.

“The single Deity of Śrī Jagannātha Deva came along with Gopāla. Shortly thereafter, Rādhā-vinoda [the small set of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities] appeared here. At a much later time, some Manipuri Vaiṣṇavas left the larger set of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities.”

In 1994 just before the month of Kārtika, Śrīpāda Svarūpa Dāmodara Swami, a Manipuri Vaiṣṇava from birth, took possession of the Śrī Gopāla Mandira. Śrīpāda Dāmodara Swami Mahārāja is a direct disciple of *nityā-līlā* Oṁ Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedanta Swami Mahārāja Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON [the International Society for Krishna Consciousness].

Many of the senior *brāhmaṇas*, Vrajavāsīs, and venerable Vaiṣṇavas at Rādhā-kuṇḍa have remarked that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī must be very pleased

with Śrīla Prabhupāda's worldwide preaching of the *yuga-dharma* of *Harināma saṅkīrtana*. Therefore, Śrī Rādhā has given ISKCON such a special place at Her most beloved Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Śrī Gopāla Deva kī jai!

5. Śrī Rādhā-Kānta Mandira

The white building opposite Gopālajī's Mandira houses the *pratibhu* Deities of Rādhā-Kānta. The original Deities of Rādhā-Kānta were established by Śrī Vakreśvara Paṇḍita in Jagannātha Purī next to the Gambhīra Math. There is also a *mūrti* of Śrī Vakreśvara Paṇḍita Gosvāmī on the right side of the altar.

They say that Vakreśvara Paṇḍita takes the form of Tuṅgavidyā *sakhī* to serve Śrī Rādhā in Vraja. In *aprakṛta* [unmanifested spiritual dimension] Rādhā-kuṇḍa the area surrounding this temple is known as Tuṅgavidyā's *kuñja* where Tuṅgavidyā *sakhī* intimately serves her beloved Rādhā-Kānta. Once Devānanda Paṇḍita was freed from his offense against Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita by Vakreśvara's mercy. Commenting on this incident, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, "Kṛṣṇa has made His home in the heart of Vakreśvara Paṇḍita, so Vakreśvara Paṇḍita dances. That place blessed by Vakreśvara Paṇḍita's association becomes a pilgrimage place more holy than all the holy places." (CB)

Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kānta kī jai!
Śrī Vakreśvara Paṇḍita Gosvāmī kī jai!

6. Rādhā Kuñja Bihārī Mandira

Upon leaving Rādhā-Kānta Mandira, turn left, walk ten meters, and turn right going backwards up the Govardhana *parikramā mārga*. Proceed for 100 meters until you see a red stone temple on the right. The Deities of Mahāprabhu and Rādhā Kuñja Bihārī were installed in this Gauḍīya Math temple by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. The following verses come from Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Śrī-Śrī Kuñja Bihārī Aṣṭakam*:

*indra-nīla-maṇi-mañjula-varṇaḥ
phulla -nīpa-kusumāñcita-karṇaḥ
kr̥ṣṇalābhīr akr̥śorasi hārī
sundaro jayati kuñja-bihārī*

*rādhikā-vadana-candra-cakorah
 sarva-ballava-vadhū-dhṛti-caurah
 carcarī-caturatāñcita-cārī
 cāruto jayati kuñja-bihārī*

“All glories to Kuñja Bihārī! His complexion is charming as deep blue sapphires. His ears are decorated with *kadamba* flowers. His broad chest is beautified by a garland of *guñjā* berries.

“All glories to Kuñja Bihārī! He is the *cakora* bird that drinks the rays of Rādhikā’s moon-face. He is the thief of the composure of the cowherd men’s wives. He gracefully dances while clapping His hands skilfully in time.”

The puṣpa *samādhi* of Śrīla Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābājī is on the side of the temple.

*namo gaura-kiśorāya sākṣād-vairāgya-mūrtaye
 vipralambha-rasāmbhode pādāmbujāya te namaḥ*

“I offer my humble obeisances to Śrīla Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja who is renunciation personified. He is always absorbed in a feeling of separation and intense love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābājī spent thirty years wandering through Vraja. Feeling separation from the Divine Couple, he would loudly chant the holy names in a deep voice full of lamentation. An excerpt from one of his favorite *bhajans* is included below.

*kothay go prema-mayī / rādhe rādhe!
 rādhe rādhe go jaya / rādhe rādhe!
 dekha diya prāṇa rakho / rādhe rādhe!
 tomār kañgal tomay rake / rādhe rādhe!
 rādhe vṛndāvana-vilasīnī / rādhe rādhe!
 rādhe kanu-mano-mohinī / rādhe rādhe!
 rādhe aṣṭā-sakhīr śiromani / rādhe rādhe!
 rādhe vṛṣabhānu-nandinī / rādhe rādhe!*

“O Rādhe! Rādhe! Where are You? O goddess of ecstatic love. O Rādhe! Rādhe! All glories to You. O Rādhe! Rādhe!

“O Rādhe! Rādhe! Please reveal Yourself to me and thereby maintain my life. This most despicable fallen servant of Yours calls out to You. O

Rādhe! Rādhe!

“O Rādhe! Oh artful enjoyer of Vṛndāvana. O Rādhe! Rādhe! Oh enchantress of Kānu’s [Kṛṣṇa’s] mind. O Rādhe! Rādhe!

“O Rādhe! Oh crest jewel of Your eight dearest *sakhīs*. O Rādhe! Rādhe! Oh delightful daughter of Mahārāja Vṛśabhānu. O Rādhe! Rādhe!

Śrī-Śrī Rādhā Kuñja Bihārī kī jai!

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu kī jai!

Śrīpāda Gaura Kiśora Dāsa Bābājī kī jai!

7. Mālyahāri Kuṇḍa

After leaving Rādhā Kuñja Bihārī Mandira, continue walking 40 meters backwards on the Govardhana *parikramā mārga*. Turn right onto a cobblestone road just after a big tree surrounded by a low stone wall on your right side. Walk 175 meters straight up this road. You will pass through a small dairy village with peaceful cows and buffalo lining the road. Stop when the road bends to the right. On the left side is Mālyahāri Kuṇḍa. On the northern bank of this neglected kuṇḍa you will see a well, and usually some cows and buffalo lounging about.

This place is described in the fifth wave of *Bhakti-ratnākara*: “O Śrīnivāsa, at Mālyahāri-kuṇḍa wonderful pastimes took place connected with a pearl necklace. Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī has very mercifully described this incident in his book *Śrī Muktā Carita*. ” “The Pearl Story” or *muktā carita* is summarised here:

Once in Dvārakā, Satyabhāma said, “My Lord, a girlfriend told me that You once grew some matchless pearls in a garden in Vṛndāvana. Could You tell me this wonderful story?” Remembering Vraja within His mind, Kṛṣṇa became overwhelmed in ecstatic *prema* and began to speak.

“Once upon a time the *gopīs* came nearby Mālyahāri-kuṇḍa to celebrate *Divali* during Kārtika month. Vicaksana, My pet parrot, told me about this, so I immediately went to Mālyahāri kuṇḍa. Seeing Rādhikā and the *gopīs* stringing pearl necklaces, I asked them for some pearls to decorate My favorite cows named Hārinī and Hāsinī. They denied My request.

“I repeatedly pleaded with the *gopīs*, and finally Lalitā sakhlī responded. She said, ‘Kṛṣṇa, I’m really sorry, but I don’t even have one pearl that is suitable for decorating Your cows.’ I became angry, called Lalitā a cruel miser, and then ran off to see My mother. When I asked Mother Yaśodā for

some pearls to plant a garden she just laughed and said: ‘Pearls don’t grow on trees. Everyone knows that pearls come from oysters.’

“Mother Yaśodā finally gave Me some pearls which I planted in a garden near the Yamunā. When I sent Madhumāṅgala to beg some milk from the *gopīs* to water My pearl garden, they just laughed at him. Taking milk from My mother, I watered My pearls. Within four days tiny green shoots appeared. The *gopīs* laughed at Me saying that they were only thorn shoots.

“After a few days the shoots grew to become creepers emitting a sweet fragrance. Amazingly, these creepers began producing big beautiful pearls. My friends and I started making jokes about the small pearls of the *gopīs*. The *gopīs* became very attracted to My pearls, but I didn’t give them even one pearl. They met among themselves, and vowed to grow a pearl garden twice as big as Mine.

“The *gopīs* collected all their pearls and planted them. They did not keep a single pearl either on their bodies or in their homes. Thinking, ‘Now we will show Kṛṣṇa’, the *gopīs* soaked their pearl field three times a day with profuse quantities of milk, ghee and butter. Candrāvalī also began a garden twice the size of Rādhikā’s. “Seeing that only thorn bushes were growing in their gardens, My boyfriends and I began laughing at the *gopīs*. To further humiliate the *gopīs*, I decorated all the cows, buffalo, goats and sheep of Vraja with exquisite pearls necklaces and ornaments. Even every monkey living in Vṛndāvana got a pearl necklace! However, the *sakhīs* did not get a single pearl!

“The *gopīs* were in anxiety that their elders would punish them upon discovering that there were no more pearls left in their houses. They sent Candramukhī and Kañcanalatā with lots of gold to buy My pearls. I refused, telling them that each *gopī* must come individually to barter for My pearls.

“Then all the *gopīs* came, except Rādhārāṇī who hid nearby so She could overhear everything. All the *gopīs* wanted to buy My pearls. I gave a small pearl to Viśākhā for Rādhārāṇī. I told her that if she did not pay immediately, that I would imprison her in My private garden.”

“At that time, Subala, who was acting as a mediator, asked Me to be kind and agree on a fair price. Subala opened the box and showed My pearls to the *gopīs*. Then the *gopīs* and I started arguing over the proper price for

My pearls. Not reaching an agreement, the *gopīs* met with Śrī Rādhikā and went to Rādhā-kuṇḍa.”

In the greatest bliss, Kṛṣṇa then strung His best pearls into necklaces with His own hand. He took the first necklace, put it into a golden box, and engraved the name of Rādhikā on the top. In the same way, Kṛṣṇa prepared separate boxes to send to all the *sakhīs*. In reciprocation, Rādhārāṇī sent Kṛṣṇa some betel nut, scented garlands, and some delicious foods that She had cooked. The *gopīs* happily adorned themselves with the pearl necklaces and returned to their homes, where their elders joyfully beheld their pearl ornaments.

Muktā-carita līlā kī jai!

8. Śiva Khari

Return to the Govardhana *parikramā mārga*, turn right, walk 100 meters until you come to a small intersection. Turn right [continuing along the Govardhana *parikramā mārga*], walk another 35 meters until you see a body of water on the left side. This is Śiva Khari or [Śiva Puṣkarini]. Just alongside the road is a small five foot cube-shaped temple of Lord Śiva known as Rameśvara. Lord Śiva has taken residence here to guard Rādhā-kuṇḍa. The following story about Śiva Khari comes from the *Padma Purāṇa, Vṛndāvana Mahātmya* :

“Once a female jackal stopped by Śiva Khari to drink some water from the kuṇḍa. Seeing the jackal, some children came with sticks to beat her. To save her life that jackal hid in a nearby fox hole. The children built a fire at the entrance of the hole in order to catch the jackal.

“At that time, by divine coincidence, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī was coming from Rādhā-kuṇḍa with the *gopīkās*. When Rādhārāṇī heard the distressed crying of that female jackal, She said, ‘No one should be in distress in My favorite place.’

“Then Rādhā sent a *gopī* to see what was wrong. When the *gopī* saw the jackal’s dilemma, she chased the children, and brought that fortunate jackal before Rādhā’s lotus feet. Crying, the jackal fell down before the Queen of Vṛndāvana. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī then petted the jackal, and blessed her with eternal service.”

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura gives this Śiva prayer in *Śrī Caitanya’s Teachings*: “The only thing worth praying for is that our mind

may be more and more attracted towards Kṛṣṇa. We do not want riches or followers, nor do we desire to be saved from the misery of birth and death. “When we are in the presence of Mahādeva [Śiva], let us pray to Lord Śiva like this: ‘Glory to the ruler of the realm of Vṛndāvana, whose forehead is adorned with the moon! Glory to him who is worshiped by Sanandana, Sanātana, and Nārada! O lord, please bestow upon me unceasing unconditioned love to the twin lotus feet of the amorous hero of Vraja.’ We do not pray either for the cure of disease or for liberation. Rather we approach Lord Śiva and Pārvatī and say, May you bless us that our minds may be directed to Kṛṣṇa.”

Anyone who faithfully bathes in this beautiful Śiva Khari can attain the most intimate service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Taking the dust of this divine place on our heads, let us pray for the mercy of Lord Śiva before we return to Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Śiva Khari kī jai!

9. Rādhā Śyāmasundara Mandira

Retrace your steps back to the Rādhā Kuñja Bihārī Mandira and on to Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Turn left, pass by the Gopāla Mandira, and turn left into the next lane. Five meters in on the left side is the entrance to the Rādhā Śyāmasundara Mandira. These Deities are expansions from the Rādhā Śyāmasundara Deities established in Vṛndāvana by Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu.

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa [the previous name of Śyāmānanda] would rise before dawn each day to sweep the footpaths of Seva Kuñja. One morning he found a golden anklebell that captivated his mind with its beautiful effulgence. Noticing a missing anklebell, Rādhārāṇī sent Lalitā to Seva Kuñja to find it. When Lalitā asked Kṛṣṇa Dāsa for the anklebell, he said he would only give it to the original owner.

Lalitā put a blindfold over the eyes of Kṛṣṇa Dāsa and took him to Rādhārāṇī. Before fastening the bell on Rādhā’s ankle Kṛṣṇa Dāsa respectfully touched it to his forehead. This left a new *tilaka* mark which now distinguishes all of his followers. Upon hearing this wonderful story, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī gave Kṛṣṇa Dāsa the name Śyāmānanda.

Let us pray to Śyāmānanda Prabhu to bless us that some day we will do some humble service which will attract the attention of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

*Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara kī jai!
Śrīla Śyāmānanda Prabhu kī jai!*

10. Rādhā Dāmodara Mandira



Come out of Rādhā Śyāmasundara Mandira, turn left, continue up the lane another 30 meters. Through a doorway on your left stands the small red-colored temple of Rādhā-Dāmodara. The original Deities of Rādhā Dāmodara, which were installed in Vṛndāvana by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, now reside in Jaipur.

The following verse praising Lord Dāmodara comes from Śrī Satyavrata Muni's famous *Śrī Damodaraṣṭāka*:

*nāmas te 'stu dāmne sphurad dīpti-dhāmne
tvadīyodarāyātha viśvasya dhāmne
namo rādhikāyai tvadīya priyāyai
namo 'nanta-līlāya devāya tubhyam*

“O Lord Dāmodara! I offer my obeisances unto the magnificent rope binding Your waist, which is an abode of splendrous effulgence. I offer my obeisances unto Your belly which is the shelter of the entire universe. I offer my obeisances unto Rādhikā, Your dearest beloved. Lastly, I offer my obeisances unto Your unlimited transcendental pastimes.”

Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda explains the inner meaning of this *stotra* in his *Dig-Darśinī-Tīka*. The words *namo rādhikāyai* mean that obeisances are offered unto Kṛṣṇa's beloved, Bhāgavatī Śrī Rādhikā. This is done in order to show that the mercy of Kṛṣṇa's beloved enables one to fully attain the desired objective.

The word *rādhikā* denotes the attributes and excellence of one who is always engaged in Kṛṣṇa's *arādhāna* or worship [arranging only for His pleasure]. The words *tvadīya priyāyaih* indicate that not only is Rādhā dear to Kṛṣṇa, but She is dear to all of Kṛṣṇa's devotees as well. The words *namo nanta līlāya devāya tubhyam* mean my obeisances unto You, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who are continuously engaged in unlimited pastimes [such as *rasa-līlā*] with Śrī Rādhikā in Vraja Gokula.

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara kī jai!
Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī kī jai!

11. Rādhā Gopīnātha Mandira



Return to the Rādhā-kuṇḍa *parikramā mārga*, turn left. The next temple on your right after the water taps is Rādhā Gopīnātha Mandira.

These Rādhā-Gopīnātha Deities were installed about 400 years ago after Jāhnavā Devī received *darśana* of Lord Gopīnātha under a *tamala* tree at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. In Gaura-*līlā*, Jāhnavā Devī serves as the divine consort of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. In Vraja-*līlā* she serves Rādhā-Śyāmasundara as Anaṅga Mañjarī [Rādhā's younger sister].

According to a popular two century old legend, Gopīnātha snatched Jāhnavā Devī when she was taking his *darśana*, and kept her on His leftside. Then to fulfill Gopīnātha's desire, Rādhā then moved to His right.

Gaudiya acaryas, sastras, and historians, however, give this explanation. During her visit to Vṛndāvana, Jāhnavā Devī saw that the Rādhārāṇī Deity beside Gopīnātha was too small. Returning to Bengal, Jāhnavā had a *sthapati* [Deity carver] make a new Deity of Śrīmati Rādhārāṇī. When finished, however, Rādhā's face looked exactly like Jāhnavā Devī's. This happened because the *sthapati*, being a devoted follower of Mā Jāhnavā,

was always thinking of her. So while carving, his thoughts took shape in the Deity.

When this Deity of Rādhārāṇī was brought to Vṛndāvana, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī did the *abhiseka* and installed Her next to Gopīnātha. Since that time, the temple brahmanas have worshiped this Deity as Rādhārāṇī with all the appropriate mantras.

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnātha kī jai!

Śrīmati Anaṅga Mañjarī kī jai!

Śrīmati Jāhnavā Devī kī jai!

12. Mā Jāhnavā Baiṭhāka [sitting place of Mā Jāhnavā]



After taking *darśana* of Rādhā Gopīnātha walk straight through the temple toward Rādhā-kuṇḍa. On the right side is a platform extending into Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Beside the *tamala* and *bakula* trees is a small temple honoring Mā Jāhnavā's sitting place. Behind the temple are steps leading to Jāhnavā Ghāṭa, the private bathing place of Mā Jāhnavā.

After the disappearance of Lord Nityānanda, Mā Jāhnavā came to Vṛndāvana in 1582 to tour Vraja maṇḍala and visit Rādhā-kuṇḍa. During her four days at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Mā Jāhnavā displayed symptoms of ecstatic Kṛṣṇa *prema*. She also felt great happiness by meeting with Dāsa Gosvāmī and Kavirāja Gosvāmī.

“At the time of Śrī Īśvarī’s (Mā Jāhnavā) arrival in Vraja, Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī had become so overwhelmed in separation from Śrī Rādhā that he could no longer walk. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī asked Jāhnavā Devī to please go to Rādhā-kuṇḍa to give her divine *darśana* to Dāsa Gosvāmī.

“That illustrious personality, Mā Jāhnavā, glowed with a golden effulgence more brilliant than the sun. When Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī saw her coming he went mad in ecstatic love. He cried so much that he lost sight of her. Jāhnavā could not understand the inner heart of Raghunātha Dāsa. Tears of divine love rushed out of their eyes like well springs. Raghunātha Dāsa did not know what to say, or how to please Mā Jāhnavā, whose heart was burning like smouldering embers in separation from her beloved Lord Nitaī.” (*Bhakti-ratnākara*)

Why did Jāhnavā Devī sit in this particular place at Rādhā-kuṇḍa? She sat here because in *aprakaṭa līlā* a crystal footbridge extends from here to Anaṅga Mañjarī’s personal *kuñja*, which looks like an island floating in the middle of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. This platform marks the place of Jāhnavā Devī’s eternal service in Rādhā-kuṇḍa. While meditating on her form and service as Anaṅga Mañjarī [in Kṛṣṇa *līlā*], Jāhnavā Devī had the sweet *darśana* of Lord Gopīnātha playing His enchanting flute under the *tamala* tree here.

“While sitting here one day, Jāhnavā Devī heard His flute, and then saw Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā and all the *sakhīs* under these trees.” (*Bhakti-ratnākara*)

The following *pranām* mantra for Śrī Anaṅga Mañjarī comes from Śrī Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī’s Paddhati:

*śrī-rādhikā-prāṇa-samāṁ kāṇiyasīṁ
viśākhikā-sikṣita-saukhya-sauṣṭhavāṁ
līlāṁṛtenocchalitāṅga-mādhurīṁ
anaṅga-purvāṁ pranāmāmi mañjarīṁ*

“I offer my most humble obeisances to Śrīmatī Anaṅga Mañjarī, whose body overflows with the sweetness of nectarean loving pastimes. She learned the proper etiquette of performing service as a *sakhī* from Viśākhā Devī. Anaṅga Mañjarī is identical to the life-force of Śrī Rādhikā, and she is Her younger sister.”

The following meditation on Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī comes from the Sanatkumāra Saṁhitā:

“I meditate on Śrī Rādhikā standing next to Kṛṣṇa. Rādhā wears a fine blue dress, and Her beautiful bodily complexion resembles molten gold. Rādhārāṇī half-covers Her beautiful smiling lotus face with the border of Her garment. Rādhā’s restless eyes dance like cakorī birds on Her

charming face. With Her thumb and forefinger Rādhā offers tāmbūla to the lotus mouth of Her beloved. A pearl necklace adorns Rādhā's lovely raised breasts.

"Rādhikā's waist is slender, and Her wide hips are ornamented with a kiñkiñī-mālā [a necklace of tiny tinkling golden bells]. Rādhārāṇī wears jewelled earrings, armlets, and bracelets. Golden ankle bells jingle sweetly at Rādhā's lotus feet, and jewelled rings crown Her toes. Śrī Rādhā is very graceful.

"All the parts of Her transcendental body are indescribably beautiful. Rādhikā is very happy, satisfied, and in the prime of youth. Śrī Rādhā is the very form of love for Kṛṣṇa, and She always stands beside Him completely drowned in ānanda rasa."

Anaṅga Mañjarī Sampūṭīka gives a wonderful description of Śrī Anaṅga Mañjarī: "Anaṅga Mañjarī is the younger sister of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. She resides in the house of Cupid and is the giver of devotion. Just as Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the potency [śaktī] of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, similarly, Anaṅga Mañjarī is the potency of Lord Balarāma, who acts as the original spiritual master.

"One who becomes follower of Anaṅga Mañjarī will understand all of the *Vedas*, and attain love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. If you want the mercy of Kiśora-Kiśorī [Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa], then with your body, mind, words and determination worship the lotus feet of Anaṅga Mañjarī. This type of worship is only possible by the mercy of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu.

"Mā Jāhnavā is Lord Nityānanda's dearmost. One transcendental body has become two [Lord Nityānanda and Jāhnavā Devī] to give mercy to the fallen conditioned souls. She who was Anaṅga Mañjarī in Kṛṣṇa līlā has now become Jāhnavā Devī. She looks very beautiful with her face glowing like the full moon, and her lotus eyes sparkling attractively. Mā Jāhnavā, the mother of the entire universe, was always absorbed in ecstatic bliss. Out of compassion for the conditioned souls, she wandered in the material world along with Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu.

"My dear Mā Jāhnavā, I am a most insignificant and foolish conditioned soul. Please bless me so that my mind will always remain at your lotus feet. I cannot forget your unlimited glories even for a moment. How can I

describe them? Please show me your compassion? Please remove my distress and fulfil my desire for your service.

“Since you are full of all divine qualities, I offer this prayer to your lotus feet. ‘Wherever I may take birth, please grant me the benediction that even in my dreams I will never forget you. I want my mind to be continuously absorbed at your lotus feet. Please be merciful to me? Taking a straw in my mouth, I loudly proclaim, please give me this benediction.’”

*Śrī Anaṅga Mañjarī kī jai!
Thākurāṇī Śrī Jāhnavā Devī kī jai!*

13. Samādhi of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī



Samadhi Raghunatha dasa gosvami



Samadhi Raghunatha dasa gosvami

Walking away from Jāhnavā's Baīthāka and along the edge of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, you will pass a few small *samādhis*. Step up through the last doorway on your left. Relish the sweet nectar of the holy name. For the pleasure of Dāsa Gosvāmī this *akhanda kīrtana* party has been continuously chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* for the last 40 years. The cone-shaped grey marble structure is the *samādhi* of Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī.

Pay *dandavats* and circumambulate the *samādhi* and *kīrtana* party four times. Behind the *samādhi* at its base is a small movable stone. Slide the stone to one side and use a dry leaf to scoop up some water. This is *caraṇāmrta* from the lotus feet of Dāsa Gosvāmī's *samādhi mūrti*. Now honor some of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's buttermilk *mahā-prasāda* which is kept behind the *kīrtana* party in a small niche in the wall.

Offering *danḍavats*, pray to Dāsa Gosvāmī for the opportunity to stay eternally in Rādhā-kuṇḍa absorbed in the loving service of Rādhā-Giridhārī.

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Gosvāmī says in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta Antya-līlā* 16.60,61:

*bhakta-pāda dhūli āra bhakta-pāda jala
bhakta-bhukta-avašeṣa-tina mahā bala
ei tina-sevā haite kṛṣṇa premā haya
punah-punah sarva śāstre phukāriyā kaya*

“The dust of the feet of a devotee, the water that has washed the feet of a devotee, and the remnants of food left by a devotee are three very powerful substances. By rendering service to these three, one attains the supreme goal of ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. In all the revealed scriptures this is boldly declared again and again.”

To help the fallen souls of Kali-yuga attain the divine service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Dāsa Gosvāmī has made all three available at his *samādhi*: the dust of his feet, the *caraṇāmrta* from bathing his feet, and his sacred buttermilk food remnants. Let us serve these three transcendental touchstones, and thereby attain ecstatic love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's daily *bhajana* included chanting 64 rounds of *japa*, doing *mānasi-seva* in his spiritual body as Rati-Mañjarī, worshiping his Govardhana *śilā*, bathing thrice in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, offering 1,000 obeisances to Kṛṣṇa, and 2,000 to the Vaiṣṇavas plus embracing

them, resting ninety minutes and some days not at all. Raghunātha Dāsa explains in his *Manah-śikṣā* #11 that one should daily worship Giri-Govardhana with five kinds of nectar:

1. *Pūjā* [formal worship, bathing, *bhoga*, *ārati*].
2. *Kīrtana*[singing Giridhārī's name]
3. *Dhyāna*[meditation on Girirāja]
4. *Śravaṇa* [hearing His glories and pastimes.]
5. *Nati* [offering obeisances to Girirāja]

Throughout his life Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī never ate anything for sense gratification. He took the bare minimum to keep body and soul together. After the disappearance of Lord Caitanya, Raghunātha Dāsa ate only fruit and milk. Upon the disappearance of Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda, Raghunātha existed on a leaf cup [100grams] of buttermilk every day or two. When Rūpa Gosvāmī entered *nitya-līlā*, Raghunātha gave up all eating and drinking! He was slowly burning in the fire of separation from the Lord and His loving servants. The Vrajavāsīs would cry upon seeing his weakened condition.

In *Vilāpa-kusumāñjalī*, Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī wrote that Śrī Rādhā's service is the highest attainment of spiritual perfection. While feeling extreme impatience and hopelessness due to separation from Rādhārāṇī, Dāsa Gosvāmī wrote:

“My life is worthless. I will give it up if I don't receive Your mercy. Living in Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Vṛndāvana is meaningless to me. To say nothing of Vṛndāvana, even Kṛṣṇa Himself is useless to me without You.

“O Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī! You are the only object of my life. Please be merciful to me. Crying profusely in great lamentation, I hold Your lotus feet to my heart and beg for Your loving service. May this *Vilāpa-kusumāñjalī* bring even the slightest satisfaction to You.”

“I pray that Śrīmatī Rādhikā's maidservants [like Rati Mañjarī] whose bumblebee hearts are always intoxicated by tasting the honey of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's lotus flower feet; who shed tears and whose bodily hairs stand erect due to their blissful love for the Divine Couple; and who bitterly lament when any obstacle stops their service to the master and mistress of their lives, may appear before me.” (VM)

“On the shore of Rādhā-kuṇḍa is a beautifully constructed pavilion made of gold, pearls, and precious gems. Considering everything else insignificant, the Divine Couple come here and enjoy playful pastimes of amorous love. As the two prime ministers of transcendental love, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa anoint the kingdom with happiness. I eternally worship this splendid grove on the bank of Rādhā-kuṇḍa.” (VVS)

*Śrī-Śrī Gāndharvikā-Giridhārt kī jai!
Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmīpāda kī jai!*

14. Śiva Mandira

Return to the Rādhā-kuṇḍa *parikramā mārga*, turn right, walk 15 meters, and on your left see a small red stone temple of Lord Śiva on a raised area beside the *mārga*. Mahādeva stays here protecting the northern side of Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Mercy is a characteristic quality of all Vaiṣṇavas. They express it by giving conditioned souls the chance to serve and love Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Being the greatest of Vaiṣṇavas, Lord Śiva is full of mercy. Let us pray to the merciful Lord Śiva to give us a chance to offer our love to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī glorified Gopīśvara [a famous Deity of Lord Śiva in Vṛndāvana] in *Vraja-vilāsa-stava* with this verse:

“Desiring to quickly attain the treasure of Kṛṣṇa’s loving embrace, many splendid and affectionate *gopīs* devoutly worshiped Lord Śiva. I daily worship Gopīśvara-tīrtha, on the banks of the Yamunā, where the *gopīs* happily did their worship.”

Śrī Mahādeva kī jai!

15. Rādhāramaṇa Mandira

The entrance to Rādhāramaṇa Mandira is right next to # 14 on the raised level to your left. In 1879 the Deities of Śrī Rādhāramaṇa and Śrī-Śrī Revatī-Balarāma were installed. The original Deity of Rādhāramaṇa, which self-manifested from Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī’s *sālagrāma*, is still worshiped in Vṛndāvana near Nidhivana.

It is interesting to note that the *bhajana kuṭīra* of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa is located directly opposite this temple, just 100 meters to the south on the bank of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. After Rādhāramaṇa’s *ārati* the Vrajavāsīs often chant:

*mero rādhā ramaṇa giridhārī
mero rādhā ramaṇa giridhārī
giridhārī śyāma banawari
giridhārī śyāma banawari*

“My Lord is Rādhāramaṇa [the lover of Rādhā] and Giridhārī [the lifter of Govardhana Hill]! Giridhārī has a bluish-black complexion and lives in the forests of Vṛndāvana!”

*Śrī-Śrī Rādhāramaṇa kī jai!
Śrī Giri-Govardhana kī jai!*

16. Rāsa Maṇḍala Platform

Directly opposite Rādhāramaṇa Mandira is a raised circular cement platform called a *rāsa mandala*, which is actually an outdoor stage. This and many others like it were established in Vṛndāvana by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī and his followers.

Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa was a South Indian *brāhmaṇa* expert in all the *kalas* [musical arts of drama, singing, dancing and so on]. He wrote dramas glorifying Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. Rigorously trained Vrajavāsī *brāhmaṇa* boys would play the roles of Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. The *rāsalīlās* were performed on these circular stages or *rāsa mandalas* for the pleasure and purification of the public.

Fortunately, these *rāsa līlā* performances are still going on today in Vṛndāvana. Whenever we see a *rāsa mandala* we should bow our heads in respect, and remember the blissful *rasa*-filled pastimes of the Divine Couple, Rādhā-Mādhava.

“Anyone who faithfully hears or describes Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s playful affairs with the young *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana will attain the Lord’s pure devotional service. Thus, he will quickly become sober and conquer lust, the disease of the heart.” (SB 10.33.39)

*sri-rasa-mandala jaya, jaya radha-syam
jaya jaya rasa-lila sarva-manoram
syamakunda, radhakunda, giri-govardhan
sri-govinda, gopinatha, madana-mohan*

17. Rādhā Govinda Mandira

Standing on the right side of the *parikramā path*, keep the *rasa mandala* respectfully on your right, and walk around it up to a doorway on your left. Inside are the *pratibhu* Deities of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's original Rādhā-Govindajī Deities which are now in Jaipur.

Rādhā-Govindajī are the *seva mūrtis* of all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govindajī inspire and enlighten all sincere devotees on the path of *prema-bhakti*. They kindly accept our devotional offerings, and bless us in return with Their love and mercy. These Deities of Rādhā-Govinda at Rādhā-kuṇḍa are exceptionally beautiful to behold. With Their enchanting faces and playful pranks They have captivated the hearts of all the *kuṇḍa vāsīs* [residents of Rādhā-kuṇḍa].

“O Śrī Govinda! Śrī Rādhā is the crown-jewel amongst all the beautiful Vraja-*gopīs*. Rādhā’s beautiful lotus feet are dearer to You than millions of hearts. O Lord of Lords! I pray to You again and again — at every moment may Śrīmatī Rādhikā accept me in Her maidservice, which is full of ever-fresh and astonishing *rasa*.” (*Rādhā rasa-sudhā-nidhi*)

“Make the dust from the feet of a *gopī* your only means of living and chant “Rādhā-Govinda!” Feel refreshed and satisfied living in Vraja, and in your eternal spiritual form just chant Rādhā-Govinda!” (*Gitāvali*, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda)

Śrī Śrī Rādhā Govinda Deva kī jai!

18. Jibyā Mandira [the tongue of Girirāja]



Turn left immediately after leaving Govindajī's temple. Walk up some steps, and through a quiet *kuñja* to a small white temple which houses the transcendental tongue [*jihvā*] of Śrī Girirāja.

The square reddish stone *śilā* resting atop a white marble platform is the tongue of Girirāja. To prevent people from using the sacred water of Rādhā-kuṇḍa for mundane washing purposes, Raghunātha Dāsa had a well dug on the eastern side of Śyāma-kuṇḍa. While digging the well the workers struck a rock which started bleeding. Raghunātha Dāsa stopped the work and pondered over this amazing event. In a dream that night, Govardhana told Raghunātha that His tongue had been struck. The Lord said that it should be removed from the well and worshiped appropriately.

At this place anyone can worship Giri-Govardhana and get His full blessings. Simply offer Him some Rādhā-kuṇḍa water, *tulasī mañjarīs*, fragrant flowers and your heart. Then circumambulate Him seven times while singing the glories of Girirāja. *Jai Giri-Govardhana! Jai Giri-Govardhana! Jai Rādhā-Giridhārī! Jai Rādhā-Giridhārī!* *Rādhe!* It is said that if time and circumstances prohibit a full Govardhana *parikramā*, then you can still get the same benefit by walking seven times around any Govardhana *śilā*.

Śrī Girirāja Mahārāja kī jai!

19. Teen Gosvāmī Samādhi



Return through the outer entrance of Rādhā-Govinda Mandira, turn left into a small alley, walk straight to the end, and into the *samādhi mandira* of the three [teen] Gosvāmīs. Each of these *nitya-siddha* devotees left this world on the same day [*āśvina śukladvādaśī*], but in different years: Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī [1583], Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī [1563], Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī [1588]. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī had their sacred bodies cremated to prevent desecration by Muslims.

Then he enshrined their sacred ashes here. Some of the ashes of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī were entombed on the bank of Śrī Rādhā-

kunḍa. Sacred ashes of Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī were also enshrined in the 64 Samādhis Area near the Rādhā-Govinda temple in Vṛndāvana. The three small square marble platforms inside the *mandira* mark the *samādhis* of Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa [left], Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja [center], and Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī [right]. After begging for the mercy of these great souls we should circumambulate the *samādhi* four times. Time permitting, one can sing the *Ṣad-Gosvāmy-aṣṭāka* from chapter nine.

Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī’s service was chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and reciting the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. All the leading Vaiṣṇavas in Vṛndāvana including Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmī would relish his *Bhāgavata kathā*. He sang the *ślokas* in four different tunes as sweet as a cuckoo. As Raghunātha read the *Bhāgavata*, he would wet the pages with his tears of Kṛṣṇa *prema*.

By the order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī remained a lifelong *brahmacāri*. He was so absorbed in Kṛṣṇa *kathā* that he never heard or spoke worldly topics, what to speak of criticising devotees. Raghunātha believed that each devotee was serving the Lord according to his realisation, and therefore one should ignore his faults. Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī lived in Vraja for forty-five years. In Rādhā-Govinda’s *nitya-līlā* he serves as Rāsa or Rāga Mañjarī.

Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī kī jai!
Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī kī jai!
Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī kī jai!

20. Bhajana Kuṭīra of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī



Turn left after leaving the Teen Gosvāmī Samādhi, walk 10 meters toward Rādhā-kunḍa, and step up to the right into the bhajana kuṭīra of Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī which faces Rādhā-kunḍa.

After coming to Vṛndāvana, Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī used to worship eleven *sālagrāma* *śilās*. He never had a fixed residence. Carrying His *sālagrāms* in a cloth bag, he would wander around Vraja just like Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmīs. Once a wealthy man, desiring to serve Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, gave him some opulent cloth and ornaments.

Gopāla Bhaṭṭa kept those gifts and thought, “If I had a Deity then I could nicely decorate Him with these things.” That evening after offering *bhoga* and *ārati* to his *sālagrāma-śilās*, he put them to rest in a basket. The next morning after returning from his Yamunā bath he started his *sālagrāma pūjā*. He was completely astonished when he woke the Lord, and found a gorgeous Deity of Kṛṣṇa playing a flute. There were now ten *śilās* and this Deity.

Overwhelmed in spiritual bliss, he fell to the ground and offered *danḍavats*. Then he recited various *stutis* and *stotras* [hymns and prayers]. Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana, and many other devotees came running when they heard the amazing news. The whole universe became enchanted by the Lord’s beautiful form. Everyone just gazed at the Lord as their tears fell in streams to bathe Him.

The Deity of Śrī Rādhāramaṇa Deva appeared on the full moon day of *Vaiśākha* in the year 1542. Rādhāramaṇajī is one of the few original Deities of the Gosvāmīs who never left Vṛndāvana. Rādhāramaṇa Deva still receives a high standard of worship full of loving attention in His temple beside Nidhuvana in Vṛndāvana.

Śrī Rādhāramaṇa Deva has a uniquely gorgeous form. He has a smooth and brilliant Śyāma-blue complexion, a broad chest, long arms, a waist as thin as a lion’s, and powerful sloping thighs. He has many intricate features which include lotus-petal eyes, fingernails and even teeth. Anyone who even once sees His all-attractive threefold bending form will be captivated forever. On the back of Rādhāramaṇa one can still see parts of the original *sālagrāma* *śilā* from which He manifested.

In Goloka Vṛndāvana, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa is Śrī Rādhā’s beloved maid-servant named Guṇa Mañjarī. Let us remember the mind-enchanting Śrī Rādhāramaṇa Deva, and pray for the mercy of Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī as we meditate on the following translation of a *sucaka kīrtana* written by Manohara Dāsa.

“Whenever I see the beautiful lotus feet of Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Prabhu my eyes flood with tears. One becomes free from the cycle of birth and death by hearing about your unlimited qualities. Being attracted by your moonlike face and lips, which are radiant like the rising sun, I am no longer pierced by Cupid’s ten golden arrows. Your beautiful teeth resemble a string of pearls. Your joyful words are saturated with the sweetest nectar.

“Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana, Dāsa Raghunātha, Bhaṭṭa Raghunātha, Rāghava Paṇḍita, Kavirāja Gosvāmī, and Lokanātha Gosvāmī are your life. Rādhāramaṇajī is your very soul. You offer obeisances to Lord Caitanya with your body overflowing with love. You are like a honeybee attached to His nectarean lotus feet. You so kindly gave shelter to Śrīnivāsa Ācārya [his disciple]. Your only activities are relishing *rasa*, associating with pure devotees, and tasting the divine madness of *gopī bhāva*.

“The pastimes of Rādhāramaṇa flow through your mind like the celestial Ganges. You are the crest-jewel of rasika Vaiṣṇavas. By relishing *prema rasa* you become overwhelmed with ecstatic emotions. Oh, ocean of spontaneous love for Rādhāramaṇa, you are the friend of the fallen.

‘Your fame is sung throughout the universe. Your divine form is sweet to behold and full of mercy. Your unlimited transcendental qualities act like a touchstone. O master, just once let me see your lotus feet, which are the essence of all sweetness.

“After many many births I have attained the rare fortune of serving the servants of your eternal associates. Due to my bad karma I have simply wasted my life enjoying sense gratification. I am full of offenses. My only hope is that you, who are full of merciful qualities, will deliver this fallen soul. I am greedy and sinful, and although my mind is fickle, still this Manohara Dāsa calls out to you: Please don’t neglect me!”

*Śrī Śrī Rādhāramaṇa Deva kī jai!
Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī kī jai!*

21. Bhajana Kuṭīra of Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja



Return to the Teen Gosvāmī Samādhi, turn left [down the alley you came in on], then turn quickly right and follow this narrow lane to a building on the left at the end. Ask the caretaker sitting inside to let you in.

Lord Nityānanda appeared to Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja in a dream and said: *āre āre kṛṣṇadāsa, nā karaha bhaya, vr̥ndāvane yāha tāñhā, sarva labhya haya*, “O my dear Kṛṣṇadāsa, do not be afraid. Go to Vṛndāvana, for there you will attain everything.” (*Cc.Ādi 5.195*)

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja left his native West Bengal and came to Vṛndāvana where he lived for many years on the bank of Śyāma-kunda. Here he wrote *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Govinda-līlāmṛta*, and *Śaraṅga Raṅgadā*. Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura offered this glorification in *Prārthanā*: “Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja who composed the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, is the connoisseur among devotees. His *Govinda-līlāmṛta* moves stones to tears, but alas, my mind is not attracted to it.”

The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is the most accurate, authentic, and philosophical biography of Lord Caitanya. Every line is full of infinite humility, enthusiasm, and devotion for Mahāprabhu and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. Kṛṣṇa Dāsa had the wonderful power of speaking without offending, even when rebuking his opponents. The personal humility of his writing style automatically attracts the heart of any reader of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja had vast knowledge in all *Vedic* scriptures. His books show his mastery in the *Śrutis*, *Smṛtis*, *Nyāya*, *Jyotir śāstra*, and the culinary arts. Although he was an erudite scholar, a strict ascetic and a *paramahaṁsa rasika* Vaiṣṇava, Kṛṣṇa Dāsa wrote about himself: “I am deaf, dumb, wholly illiterate, worldly-minded, and lower than a worm in stool.” Kavirāja Gosvāmī [his popular name] was a living example of *humbler than a blade of grass, more tolerant than a tree*.

Kastūrī Mañjarī, one of Rādhā's eight most dear maidservants, is the name of Kavirāja Gosvāmī's *mañjarī rūpa*. Let us fall down here in submission and pray with all sincerity to the merciful Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī. May he bless us with the utmost humility, so that we may understand his wonderful books. By his grace may we someday be qualified to serve the eternally blissful pastimes of Rādhā-Śyāmasundara.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī kī jai!

22. Bhajana Kuṭīra of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī



Directly opposite Kavirāja Gosvāmī's, and down a few steps en route to Śyāma-kuṇḍa is a rectangular building with metal gates. On your right as you face the building is the *bhajana kuṭīra* of Śrī Dāsa Gosvāmī [popular name of Raghunātha Dāsa]. On the left side is the *bhajana kuṭīra* of Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura.



A painting on the back wall inside his *kutīra* shows him totally absorbed in Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *līlā smaraṇam* [remembering Kṛṣṇa's pastimes]. He didn't realise that two dangerous tigers were nearby sipping water at Śyāma-kunda. Nor did he see that Lord Kṛṣṇa was standing nearby waiting to protect him. Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī stands in the upper left corner of the painting observing the whole scene.

Sometime later, Dāsa Gosvāmī was again sitting in the open under the scorching sun. Feeling compassion for Her devotee, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī came, stood behind Raghunātha Dāsa, and used Her veil to shield him from the sun. Sanātana Gosvāmī appeared again, and saw that Rādhā's clothes were wet from perspiring under the hot sun. Rādhārāṇī smiled sweetly at Sanātana and then disappeared. Sanātana chastised Raghunātha for causing inconvenience to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Following this incident, Raghunātha Dāsa agreed to stay in a small *bhajana kutīra*.

After the disappearance of Lord Caitanya, Raghunātha Dāsa came to Vṛndāvana to end his life by jumping off Govardhana Hill. Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs convinced him to live on, and enlighten all the Vaiṣṇavas with Mahāprabhu's Purī pastimes. At this place, Dāsa Gosvāmī would speak three hours a day about the ecstatic pastimes of Śrī Caitanya.

Dāsa Gosvāmī performed *bhajana* at Rādhā-kuṇḍa for forty-one years. He is known as the *tyāgi vairāgya prakata mūrti* [the deity of renunciation]. Raghunātha Dāsa lived an austere life of pure devotion to Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī. By giving up all eating, mating, sleeping and defending, He showed the standard of renunciation needed to attain the service of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa at Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Not only was Dāsa Gosvāmī perfectly renounced, but he was full of Kṛṣṇa *prema*. He was always crying due to lamentations of separation from Śrī Rādhā. The seniormost devotees at Rādhā-kuṇḍa say that in the silence of midnight a fortunate soul can still hear the pitiful weeping of Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī.

Upon completing his wonderful book *Lalita-Mādhava*, Rūpa Gosvāmī offered a copy to Dāsa Gosvāmī. While reading it Raghunātha Dāsa went mad and cried without stopping. The book is full of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's intense feelings of love in separation. Sometimes Raghunātha left the book alone, and sometimes he fell to the ground clutching it to his chest.

To alleviate the distress of his friend, Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote *Dāna-keli-kaumudī*, which describes the joyous pastimes of Rādhā-Govinda's meeting and joking together. By reading this, Raghunātha became revived and tasted different ecstasies as he swam in an ocean of bliss.

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī followed the rules and regulations so strictly that they were compared to lines etched in stone. As such lines can never be erased, similarly, the regulative principles of Dāsa Gosvāmī could never be changed. His life and teachings are a great source of enthusiasm for all the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī wrote three books: *Stavāvalī*, *Dāna Keli Cintāmanī*, and *Muktā-carita*.

Dāsa Gosvāmī always performed *mānasi-seva* [serving Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa within the mind]. One day in his meditation he cooked sweet rice and offered it to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. In great pleasure, They accepted the offering and gave Their *mahā-prasāda* to the *sakhīs*. Within his mind Raghunātha honored the remnants of their *prasāda*. Feeling ecstatic because he had pleased Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*, Raghunātha ate more than usual.

That afternoon, Raghunātha Dāsa was supposed to speak about Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. However, when the devotees came to hear him, they found him locked in his kuṭīra. They waited for some time, but when

they heard no movement inside they became anxious and called out, “Gosvāmījī, are you all right?” Śrī Dāsa Gosvāmī answered, “My body is not well.”

Two physicians came and examined Śrī Dāsa Gosvāmī. They concluded that Dāsa Gosvāmī was feeling heavy due to overeating a combination of rice and milk. Everyone was amazed at the diagnosis. How was it possible that Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, who subsisted on a little buttermilk each day, could fall ill from eating too much sweet rice? This was especially astonishing since it was eaten only in his meditation. Dāsa Gosvāmī solved the riddle by saying that in the ecstasy of his meditation he took a little too much of Rādhā’s sweet rice remnants!

Dāsa, a Vrajavāsī friend of Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, once brought some buttermilk in a leaf cup from a place called Sakhīsthali. Seeing that the cup was unusually large, Raghunātha Dāsa asked where it came from. When he heard the word “Sakhīsthali” [the residence of Rādhā’s rival Candrāvalī], Dāsa Gosvāmī became angry, and threw the cup far away! In his spiritual form as Rati Mañjarī, Dāsa Gosvāmī is completely surrendered to the loving service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Therefore, he cannot tolerate anything opposed to Her pleasure.

Dāsa Gosvāmī is often referred to as the “Emperor of Rādhā-kuṇḍa.” Five-hundred years ago Rādhā-kuṇḍa was only a small pool. Since Lord Caitanya had given His personal Govardhana *śilā* to Raghunātha Dāsa, the Gosvāmīs felt that the Lord wanted Raghunātha to stay at Govardhana. So they asked Dāsa Gosvāmī to be in charge of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Dāsa Gosvāmī serves Śrī Rādhā in Vṛndāvana-dhāma as Rati-Mañjarī [also called Rāsa-Mañjarī].

We are all grateful to Dāsa Gosvāmī for developing Rādhā-kuṇḍa to its present form, and for writing books about the exclusive service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. First we should cover our bodies, minds, and hearts with the sacred dust of this place. Then we should pray to Dāsa Gosvāmī to fill us with eagerness for studying his books, and the intense spiritual greed needed to attain the loving service of Śrī Rādhā.

Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmīpāda kī jai!

23. Bhajana Kuṭira of Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura

The *bhajana kūṭīra* of Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is in the same building on the left side of Dāsa Gosvāmī's. Although he did *bhajana* here about one-hundred years after Dāsa Gosvāmī [1680], Viśvanātha was in the same mood of *mañjarī-bhāva*. Therefore, it is appropriate that their *bhajana kūṭīras* are connected here.

When Viśvanātha arrived in Vṛndāvana he noticed that since the disappearance of the six Gosvāmīs [about 100 years before] the beauty of the holy place was no longer visible. A large number of temples had been destroyed by Muslims. Taking away the Deities which were in their charge, many priests had migrated from Vṛndāvana. Other Deities were simply abandoned and receiving no service. The devotees were in a state of constant fear.

People in general had no interest in studying the scriptures. Due to his devotion, strength of mind, and hard working nature Viśvanātha attracted many loyal workers and scholars such as Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. With great determination, Viśvanātha restored the lost glory of Vṛndāvana. The following are some of his achievements.

Viśvanātha personally installed the Deity of Gokulānanda and took charge of serving the Govardhana *śilā* [previously worshiped by Lord Caitanya]. He reinstated priests to begin the service of the Deities in various places. Viśvanātha renovated many temples and established new ones.

At that time, the common people had little access to the scholarly Sanskrit works of the Gosvāmīs. Viśvanātha prepared simple and lucid commentaries for these works, as well as presenting abridged forms of the original works. All types of devotees could now understand and appreciate the essence of the Gosvāmī's works. Viśvanātha distributed these books widely to help the Vaiṣṇavas in their daily study and spiritual practices. He also organised classes to impart the teachings.

“Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura was the protector, guardian, and *ācārya* during the middle period [1650-1750] of the historical development of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.” (Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura)

Once while compiling *Mantrārtha Dīpikā* [explanation of *kāma gāyatrī*] Viśvanātha became perplexed. According to his exhaustive research indicating twenty-five, he could not substantiate why Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Gosvāmī wrote in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that the *kāma gāyatrī* contains twenty-four and one-half syllables.

Śrī Rādhikā instructed Viśvanātha in a dream, “O Viśvanātha! Please don’t lament anymore. What Kṛṣṇa Dāsa wrote is true. He is also My confidential maidservant, and thus he knows everything about My innermost moods. The *kāma gāyatrī* is the *mantra* for worshiping Me. Indeed, I am revealed by the syllables of this *mantra*. Without My mercy, no one can understand the mystery of this *mantra*.”

“Look in the book entitled *Varnāgama-bhasvadī* to find the solution to the half syllable. Kṛṣṇa Dāsa read this book, and then wrote as he did. The letter *ya* which is followed by the letter *vi*, as in the words *kāma devāya vidmahe*, is considered to be a half-syllable. This falls on Kṛṣṇa’s forehead because His forehead is shaped like the halo of a half moon. All the other letters of the *mantra* are full syllables and therefore full moons. Now wake up, check that book, and compile this evidence for everyone’s benefit.”

Instantly awaking, Viśvanātha cried out in ecstasy, “*Hey Rādhe! Hey Rādhe! Hey Rādhe!*” Receiving Rādhārāṇī’s *darśana* infused Viśvanātha’s writing with divine *śaktī*.

Among the society of Vaiṣṇavas, Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda remains unsurpassed in his erudition, theological knowledge, poetic talent, and his appreciation of *rasa*. He wrote over forty books on Rādhā-Govinda *prema bhakti*, which include *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanāmṛta*, *Mādhurya kadambini*, *Vraja-riti-cintāmaṇi*, *Camatkāra-candrikā*, *Saṅkalpa-kalpa-druma* and others. The life and teachings of Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura give happiness, inspiration and transcendental wisdom to the entire Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. In Vraja, Viśvanātha Cakravartī serves Śrīmatī Rādhikā as Vinoda-vallarī Mañjarī.

Let us sincerely pray that after thousands of births we will someday qualify to become a particle of dust under the shade of his lotus feet.

Behind Viśvanātha Cakravartī’s *bhajana kūṭira* is a short *pīlu* tree. Its dense foliage hangs down the steps of Mānasa-pāvana-ghāṭa at Śyāma-kūḍa. It is said that this *pīlu* tree was once a *brāhmaṇa* who has now taken this humble form to render the topmost service to Rādhikā and the *gopīs*. When Rādhā and Her *sakhīs* bathe here at midday, they hang their clothes on this tree. Viśvanātha Cakravartī would often discuss Rādhā-Śyāma’s pastimes with this great personality. While offering some Śyāma-kūḍa water to this *pīlu* tree devotee, we can beg for his mercy that we may someday serve in Rādhā-Mādhava’s pastimes.

“I eternally bow down to Vṛndāvana’s trees and vines which are far, far beyond the influence of matter, and which mercifully grant the goals of life to one who even sees, touches, hears about or remembers them.” (VM)

*Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Gokulānanda kī jai!
Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura kī jai!*

24. Mānasa-pāvana-ghāṭa



The steps below the *pīlu* tree described above lead to Mānasa-pāvana-ghāṭa at Śyāma-kuṇḍa. Śrī Rādhikā and Her *gopīkās* bathe here everyday at noon. While bathing here Śrī Rādhā once said, “I will bless anyone who bathes here in Śyāma-kuṇḍa by filling them with the same love that I have for My Lord Śyāmasundara.”

Śrī Mānasa-pāvana-ghāṭa kī jai!

25. Pañca Pāṇḍavas



To the left of Viśvanātha Cakravartī’s *bhajana kuṭira* and overlooking Śyāma-kuṇḍa is the area where the Pañca [five] Pāṇḍavas once lived as trees. When Dāsa Gosvāmī was excavating Śyāma-kuṇḍa the Pāṇḍavas appeared in a dream. They told him not to cut the trees because they were

living in that form doing bhajana on the banks. He complied with their wish and dug around the trees, thus giving Śyāma-kuṇḍa an irregular shape. Local authorities say the Pāñdavas have left, and only a dead tree or two marks the place of their previous residence.

From visiting these sacred places we can realise how all the trees in Vṛndāvana-dhāma are sages and devotees. These trees are called *kalpa-vrkṣas* [desire trees]. Since these trees are fully conscious devotees, they are very merciful by nature, and they can fulfil one's desires. Therefore, devotees regularly serve, embrace and pray to the merciful *kalpa-vrkṣa* trees of Vṛndāvana. Rādhā-kuṇḍa is the topmost place in Vraja, so we can understand that the trees here are very special. Giving up our false prestige, let us bow down to them, and pray for the gift of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *prema-bhakti*.

“The wonderful trees of Vraja-bhūmi are completely spiritual in nature and full of all potencies. They are just like incarnations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Just as conditioned souls can not perceive the spiritual nature of the Supreme Lord’s incarnations, similarly, they misunderstand the glory of Vraja’s trees.” (VRC)

There is an all-auspicious *tulasī* plant here near a stone seat. In the trees, Vṛndādevī’s parrots are chattering excitedly about Rādhā’s recent pastimes. We can sit here quietly, gazing across the peaceful waters of Śyāma-kuṇḍa at the sitting place of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Let us appreciate how it is only by the unlimited mercy of Lord Caitanya that we are here today. We can worship Śyāma-kuṇḍa by chanting the following prayer by Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Kuṇḍaṣṭāka

Eight Prayers Glorifying Śyāma-kuṇḍa

*kim tapaś cacāra tīrtha lakṣam akṣayaṁ purā
suprasīdati sma kṛṣṇa eva sad varam yataḥ
yatra vāsam āpa sādhu tat samasta durlabhe
tatra kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa eva saṁsthitiḥ stutāstu nah*

What austerities did the hundreds of thousands of eternal holy places perform to please Kṛṣṇa, and get the benediction to live at Kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa [Śyāma-kuṇḍa], the rarest holy place? Let us pray for eternal residence at Kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa.

*yady arīṣṭā dānavo ‘pi dānado māha-nidher
 asmad ādi durmatibhya ity aho vasīyate
 yo mṛti cchalena yatra muktim adbhitām vyadhāt
 tatra kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa eva saṁsthitiḥ stutāstu naḥ*

If even a demon named Arīṣṭā could enter Kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa, then crooked hearted persons such as we may also be able to live there. Let us pray for eternal residence at Kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa, which on the pretext of death, grants a wonderful form of liberation.

*go vadhasya niṣkṛtis triloka tīrtha kotibhī¹
 rādhāyety avādi tena tā hariḥ samāhvayat
 yatra pārṣṇi ghāṭa je mamaj ja ca svayaṁ mudā
 tatra kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa eva saṁsthitiḥ stutāstu naḥ*

When Rādhā said, “To atone for killing a cow (Arīṣṭasura), You must visit millions of holy places in the three worlds.” Kṛṣṇa responded by calling all the holy places there. Then He happily bathed in the lake that sprang from His heel. Let us pray for eternal residence at Kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa.

*kvāpi pāpa nāśa eva karma bandha bandhanād
 brahma-saukhyam eva viṣṇuloka vāsitā kvacit
 prema ratnam atyayatnam eva yatra labhyate
 tatra kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa eva saṁsthitiḥ stutāstu naḥ*

At some holy places one becomes free from all sins. At others one becomes free from the bondage of karma, attains Brahman happiness, or attains residence in Viṣṇuloka. Let us pray for eternal residence at Kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa, where without any effort one attains the jewel of Kṛṣṇa *prema*.

*phulla mādhavī rasāla nīpa kuñja maṇḍale
 bhr̥īga koka kokilādi kākali yad añcati
 āṣṭa yāmikāvitarka koti bheda saurabham
 tatra kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa eva saṁsthitiḥ stutāstu naḥ*

Kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa is surrounded by groves of mango, *kadamba* and other trees, and also many fragrant flowering vines like *mādhavī*. The sweet music of bees, cuckoos and *cakravakas* fills the air. At night there are millions of inconceivably sweet fragrances. Let us pray for eternal residence at Kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa.

*dola keli citra rāsa nrtya gīti vādanair
 nihnavā prasūna yuddha sīdhu pāna kautukaiḥ
 yatra khelataḥ kiśora śekharau sahālibhiḥ
 tatra kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa eva saṁsthitiḥ stutāstu naḥ*

The two crowns of youth enjoyed many pastimes here with Their *gopī* friends. They sang, talked, rode on a swing, danced wonderful *rāsa* dances, and played instrumental music. In a secluded place, They eagerly drank the nectar of a flower fight. Let us pray for eternal residence at Kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa.

*divya ratna nirmitāvatāra sāra sauṣṭhavais
 chatrikā virāji cāru kuṭṭima prabhā bharaiḥ
 sarva loka locanātī dhanyatā yato bhavet
 tatra kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa eva saṁsthitiḥ stutāstu naḥ*

Kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa brings auspiciousness to all eyes with the beauty of its mosaic pavements, glistening jewel shores, and its splendorous canopies. Let us pray for eternal residence at Kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa.

*mathurāṁ vaikuṇṭhato ‘pi janma dhāma durlabhaṁ
 vāsakānanam tato ‘pi pāninā dhṛto girih
 śrī hareś tato ‘pi yat paraṁ saro ‘ti pāvanaṁ
 tatra kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa eva saṁsthitiḥ stutāstu naḥ*

Mathurā, Kṛṣṇa's birthplace, is more sacred and difficult to attain than Vaikuṇṭha. The forest where Kṛṣṇa lived is more sacred still, and the hill lifted by His hand is more sacred than that. But this purifying lake of Śrī Hari is most sacred. Let us pray for eternal residence at Kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa.

*kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa tira vāsa sādhakaṁ paṭhed idam
 yo ‘ṣṭakaṁ dhiyāṁ nimajya keli kuñja rājitoḥ
 rādhikā girīndrādhāriṇoh pādambu jeṣu sa
 prema dāsyam eva śīghram āpnuyad anāmayam*

May he who reads these eight verses, which convince one to reside on the shore of Kṛṣṇa kuṇḍa, and who also plunges his mind in the lotus flowers of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā Giridhārī's feet, quickly attain sincere love for Them.

*Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu kī jai!
 Rādhā-kuṇḍa Śyāma-kuṇḍa kī jai!*

26. Caitanya Gadādhara Mandira

Retrace your steps to Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja's *bhajana kuṭīra*. Walk up to the right and behind into a small *āśrama* courtyard. The small Deities from left to right are Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, Lord Gaurāṅga, and Śrī Gadādhara. Gaṅgā Mātā Gosvāmīni and Lakṣmīpriyā, two disciples of Śrī Haridāsa Paṇḍita, performed their *bhajana* here.

“Śrī Haridāsa Paṇḍita Gosvāmī always accepted the good qualities of the Vaiṣṇavas. He never found fault in them. He engaged his heart and soul only to satisfy the Vaiṣṇavas. He always heard the reading of *Śrī Caitanya-mangala*.” (Cc. Ādi 8.61)

Gaṅgā Mātā was born a princess, but she refused to marry on account of her genuine attachment to Kṛṣṇa. After her father's demise she ruled the kingdom. Within a short time, she renounced the royal throne to find a bona fide spiritual master. She came to Vṛndāvana, took *dikṣā* from Śrī Haridāsa Paṇḍita and began a serious life of devotional service.

After sleeping on the Yamunā's sandy bank, she would rise before sunrise to sweep Govindajī's temple. Her daily activities were hearing the *Bhāgavata*, attending Govindajī's *ārati*, and visiting Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastime places. On her *guru*'s order, she moved to Rādhā-kuṇḍa to join Lakṣmīpriyā, who was daily chanting three *lacs* of *japa* [300,000 names] and worshiping Gadādhara-Caitanya.

Daily they would circumambulate Govardhana Hill and do *mādhukarī*. Eventually, Gaṅgā Mātā moved to Jagannātha Purī where she preached the *Bhāgavata* and initiated many followers, including the Purī King and the head priest of Jagannātha Mandira.

Śrī Śrī Gadādhara-Caitanya kī jai!

27. Bhajana Kuṭīra of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda

Returning to the Rādhā-kuṇḍa *parikramā path*, continue on 30 meters, veer left on the broad cobble stone road just before the path bends to the right. Walk another 70 meters until you see a building on the right with a colorful sign above the entrance which says: *Braja Svānanda-sukhadakuñja*. From 1900-1936 this *kuṭīra* was used by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. During the Kārtika month, Śrī Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would come here with thousands of devotees.

In Godrumadvīpa, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda built another *bhajana kūṭira* in the *Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja* of Navadvīpa-dhāma. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wrote in *Gīta-Mālā*: “My small cottage shines within that most enchanting garden called *Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja* [the grove that gives one the happiness of my own bliss]. Living there, I will sing Kṛṣṇa’s holy name, and will greedily hanker for the time when I will get the personal service of Him and His associates.

“Suddenly, while chanting and meditating like this, the songs of a divine flute will enter this maidservant’s ear. Becoming madly excited by such a sound, I will forget everything and will only listen spellbound to those wonderful songs of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s flute. The low, deep sound of His long *muralī* flute will call out, “Rādhe...Rādhe...” — the very name of my own worshipable Queen! Startled with wonder by hearing such a sound, this maidservant will jump up in great haste with an extremely anxious heart, not knowing what to do next.

“This maidservant has a complexion just like lightning. She wears a *sari* which has star-like patterns all over it. My name is Kamalā Mañjarī [here Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda reveals his *mañjarī* name]. Eternally appearing to be only twelve-and-a-half years of age, I always live within the abode of *Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja*.¹” (*Gīta-Mālā*)

Inside there are two rooms. One contains puṣpa *śamādhis* of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda and his son, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. The cane and wooden shoes of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura are in the bedroom. Now we can take the purifying dust of Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s shoes on heads. Holding his cane, we should beat our minds everyday one-hundred times with Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s chastening instructions.

“O mind! Always engage yourself in the service of Śrī Rādhā. Keep away from the snake of material enjoyment. There is nothing glorious about performing *kīrtana* simply for name and fame. You are the eternal servant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Why then do you renounce Her for the cheating process of *nirjana-bhajana*? Why do you run after false renunciation, and thereby give up the service of Śrī Rādhā?

“The residents of Vṛndāvana are the real object of preaching. They do not aspire for false prestige, nor are they devoid of life, as are the false renunciates. Those who have spiritual vitality can preach and instill spiritual life in their audience. Preaching is the symptom of vitality. One

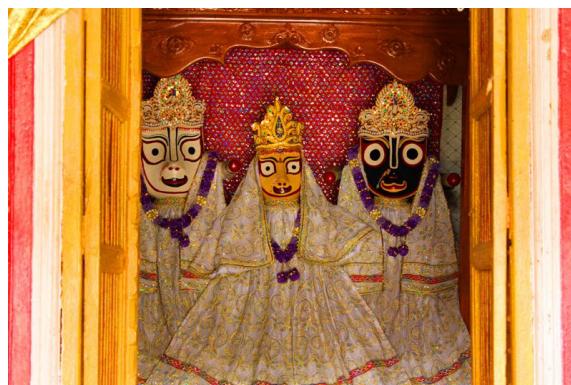
who preaches the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is devoid of hopes for prestige.

“Śrī Dayitā Dāsa [Śrīla Bhaksiddhānta], the humble servant of Śrī Rādhā and Her beloved Kṛṣṇa, always hopes for *kīrtana*, and begs everyone to loudly sing the holy name of the Lord. By the influence of such *kīrtana* one may gradually come to the exalted stage of *smaranam*, wherein one constantly remembers the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa within one’s mind. *Nirjana-bhajana* is conceivable only after attaining this advanced level of Kṛṣṇa-bhakti.” (*Mahājana-rācita Gīta* by Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura)

Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also revealed his eternal identity as Nayana Mañī Mañjarī.

Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja kī jai!
Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda kī jai!
Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura kī jai!

28. Śrī Jagannātha Mandira



Return to the *parikramāmārga*, turn left, walk 20 meters, and turn left into the next courtyard. See the splendidly sweet and softly smiling lotus faces of Vrajendra-nandana Kṛṣṇa [Lord Jagannātha], Lord Baladeva and Subhadrā Devī. Every year the Lord and the *kuṇḍa-vāśīs* enjoy a wonderful Ratha-yātrā around Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

At this time, one can sing the following prayers in worship of Lord Jagannātha. According to the *Arcanā-Paddhati*, this *Jagannāthāṣṭaka* issued from the mouth of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Jagannāthāṣṭaka

Prayers in Worship of Lord Jagannātha

*kadācit kālindī-taṭa-vipina-sangītaka-ravo
 mudābhīrī-nārī-vadana-kamalāsvāda-madhupah
 ramā-śambhu-brahmāmara-pati gaṇeśārcita-pado
 jagannāthah svāmī nayan-patha-gāmī bhavatu me*

Sometimes in great happiness Lord Jagannātha makes a loud concert with His flute in the groves beside the Yamunā. He is like a bumblebee tasting the beautiful lotus flower faces of the Vraja *gopīs*. Great personalities like Lakṣmī, Śiva, Brahmā, Indra and Gaṇeśa worship His lotus feet. May I see that Jagannātha Svāmī before my eyes.

*bhuje savye veṇum śirasi śikhi-puccham kaṭitāṭe
 dukūlaṁ netrānte sahacara-kaṭākṣaṁvidadhate
 sadā śrīmad-vṛndāvana-vasati-līlā paricayo
 jagannāthah svāmī nayan-patha-gāmī bhavatu me*

In His left hand Lord Jagannātha holds a flute. On His head He wears peacock feathers, and on His hips He wears fine yellow silken cloth. Out of the corners of His eyes He bestows sidelong glances upon His loving devotees. He always reveals Himself through His pastimes in the divine abode of Vṛndāvana. May I see that Jagannātha Svāmī before my eyes.

*mahāmbhodhes tīre kanaka-rucire nīla-śikhare
 vasan prāśādāntah sahaja-balabhadreṇa balinā
 subhadrā-madhyā-sthah sakala-sura-sevāvasara-do
 jagannāthah svāmī nayan-patha-gāmī bhavatu me*

Residing on the shore of the great ocean, within a large palace situated upon the crest of the brilliant, golden Nīlācala Hill, along with His powerful brother Balabhadra, and His sister Subhadrā in the middle, Lord Jagannātha bestows the opportunity for devotional service upon all pious souls. May I see that Jagannātha Svāmī before my eyes.

*kṛpā-pārāvārah sajala-jalada-śrenī-rucirop
 ramā-vāṇī-rāmaḥ sphurad-amala-pañkeruha-mukhah
 surendrair ārādhyaḥ śruti-gaṇa-śikhā-gīṭa-carito
 jagannāthah svāmī nayan-patha-gāmī bhavatu me*

Lord Jagannātha is an ocean of mercy, and He is as beautiful as a row of blackish rain clouds. He is the reservoir of bliss for Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī. His face resembles a spotless full-blown lotus. He is worshiped by the best

of sages and demigods, and the *Upaniṣads* sing of His glories. May I see that Jagannātha Svāmī before my eyes.

*rathārūḍho gacchan pathi milita-bhūdeva-paṭalaiḥ
stuti-prādurbhāvaṁ prati pādam upākarnya sadayāḥ
dayā-siñdhur bandhuḥ sakala-jagatām sindhu-sutayā
jagannāthah svāmī nayan-patha-gāmī bhavatu me*

When Lord Jagannātha moves down the road on His Ratha-yātrā cart, at every step there is a loud presentation of songs and prayers chanted by large assemblies of *brāhmaṇas*. Hearing their hymns, Lord Jagannātha becomes very favorably disposed towards them. May that Jagannātha Svāmī and His consort Lakṣmī, who was born from the ocean of nectar, appear before my eyes.

*para-brahmāpiḍaḥ kūnalaya-dalotphulla-nayano
nivāśī nīlādrau nihita-carāṇo ‘nanta-śirasi
rasānando rādhā-sarasa-vapur-āliṅgana-sukho
jagannāthah svāmī nayan-patha-gāmī bhavatu me*

He is the ornament on the head of Lord Brahmā, and His eyes are like the full-blown petals of the lotus. He resides on Nīlācala Hill, and His feet rest on the heads of Anantadeva. Lord Jagannātha is overwhelmed by the mélodies of love. He becomes joyful when He embraces the body of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, who is like a cool pond. May I see that Jagannātha Svāmī before my eyes.

*na vai yāce rājyam na ca kanaka-māṇikya-vibhavaṁ
na yāce’haṁ ramyāṁ sakala-jana-kāmyāṁ vara-vadhūm
sadā kāle kāle pramatha-patinā gīta-carito
jagannāthah svāmī nayan-patha-gāmī bhavatu me*

I do not pray for a kingdom, nor for gold, rubies or wealth. I do not ask for an excellent and beautiful wife as desired by all men. I simply pray that Jagannātha Svāmī, whose glories are always sung by Lord Śiva, may appear before my eyes.

*hara tvāṁ saṁsāraṁ drutataram asāraṁ sura-pate
hara tvāṁ pāpānāṁ vitatim aparām yādava-pate
aho dīne’nāthe nihita-carāṇo niścitam idaṁ
jagannāthah svāmī nayan-patha-gāmī bhavatu me*

O Lord of the demigods, please quickly take away this useless material existence I am undergoing. O Lord of the Yadus, please destroy this vast ocean of sins which has no shore. Also, this is certain that Lord Jagannātha's lotus feet are bestowed upon those who feel themselves fallen, and have no other shelter in this world but Him. May I see that Jagannātha Svāmī before my eyes.

29. Lalitā Kuṇḍa

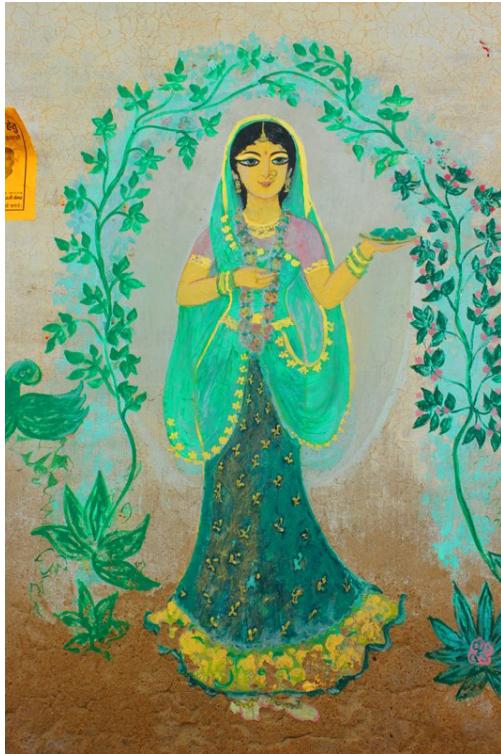


Proceeding along the path, you will see a body of water on the left which is called Lalitā Kuṇḍa. The remains of Mohan-kuṇḍa and the Aṣṭā-sakhī *kunḍas* lie to the north, just beyond the boundary wall which runs through the middle of Lalitā-kuṇḍa.

It is said that Lalitā and Mohana *kunḍas* manifested first in preparation for Rādhā-kuṇḍa's appearance. On the request of Lalitā and Mohana [Śrī Kṛṣṇa], the sixty-eight holy places came to Lalitā's *kunḍa* in order to purify sinners from six types of killing: murder, abortion, suicide, cow slaughter, killing a *brāhmaṇa*, and killing worms & insects.

After Kṛṣṇa killed Ariṣṭāsura [the bull demon] he bathed in Lalitā-kuṇḍa to free Himself from the sin of *go-hatya* [cow-killing]. Kṛṣṇa knew that He had to please Lalitā-sakhī first in order to attain Rādhā's association. What to speak of Kṛṣṇa, every devotee must first approach and please Lalitā, who is Rādhā's dearest friend and guardian, before their desires for service will be fulfilled.

The all-merciful Lalitā-kuṇḍa is the sure gateway into the eternal pastimes of Rādhā-Giridhārī. Lalitā-kuṇḍa is the liquid form of Lalitā-sakhī. By bowing down, offering prayers, remembering her, or contacting her water one will quickly receive the mercy of Rādhā-kuṇḍa and attain eternal residence here. To bathe in Lalitā-kuṇḍa see # 31.



The following *pranām mantra* for Lalitā Devī may be sung in the tune used for the Six Gosvāmī's prayer.

*sāndra-prema-rasaiḥ plutā priyatayā,
prāgalbhyaṁ āptā tayoḥ /
prāṇa-preṣṭha-vayasyayor anudinam,/
līlābhisāram kramaiḥ /
vaidagdhyena tathā sakhiṁ prati sadā,
mānasya śikṣāṁ rasair /
yeyaṁ kārayatīha hanta lalitā,
gṛhṇātu sā māṁ gaṇaiḥ /*

“Lalitā Devī overflows with the nectar of intense *prema* for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. These two friends are more dear to her than her own life. Lalitā is affectionately arrogant in the presence of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Everyday she arranges for Their pastime of meeting. Lalitā is expert in teaching her friend Rādhā the art of always showing *māna* [jealous loving anger] towards Śyāma. I pray that someday Lalitā Devī will accept me in her group of maidservants.” (VVS)

ŚRĪ LALITĀṢṬĀKAM

by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

1. I offer my obeisances to Lalitā devī, who has many wonderful qualities. She worships the perspiration of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mukunḍa's lotus feet and acts boldly, due her intense love for Them.
2. I offer my obeisances to Lalitā devī, who has wonderful and unlimited transcendental qualities. Her effulgent face defeats the beauty of the full moon. Lalitā's lotus eyes are like those of a frightened deer. She is expert in the art of dressing Śrī Rādhikā.
3. I offer my obeisances to Lalitā devī, who is endowed with many glorious qualities. She wears a silk blouse, and a wonderful dress colored like the fanned-out feathers of a dancing peacock. Lalitā's golden complexion defeats the splendour of *goracanā*.
4. I offer my obeisances to Lalitā devī, who has many wonderful qualities. She teaches Śrī Rādhikā to be contrary towards Kṛṣṇa by saying, “Rādhe! O immoral girl! Listen! Don't be weak! I'm saying this for Your own good. Don't be gentle and submissive. Reject that rascal son of Nanda Mahārāja.”
5. I offer my obeisances to Lalitā devī, who has unlimited transcendental qualities. Her eyes become red with anger if she sees Nandānandana [Kṛṣṇa] even slightly cheating Śrī Rādhikā. At that time, she will immediately embarrass Him with her clever words.
6. I offer my obeisances to Lalitā devī, who has many wonderful qualities. She is an abode of affection for Yaśodā Devī, the Queen of cowherders. Lalitā teaches all the *sakhīs* of the art of loving friendship. Lalitā loves Śrī Rādhikā and Kṛṣṇa equally.
7. I offer my obeisances to Lalitā devī, who has many wonderful qualities. She requests every girl in Vraja to join the Rādhārāṇī's party. Lalitā expertly satisfies all the desires of Śrī Rādhikā. All of Lalitā's desires were immediately fulfilled when she saw that the path in Vraja which Rādhā was walking on had become blocked by a certain person.
8. I offer my obeisances to Lalitā devī, who has many wonderful qualities. She always enjoys the meeting festival of Rādhā and

Vrajendrasūta [Kṛṣṇa]. Lalitā is the leader of all Rādhā's dear girlfriends in Gokula.

9. Śrī Rādhikā will lovingly count amongst Her own maidservants anyone who, with a pure heart, recites these prayers praising Lalitā-sakhī. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is famous as the brilliant desire vine in the family of King Vṛśabhānu, the husband of Kīrtidā.

*Śrī Lalitā-sakhī kī jai!
Śrī Lalitā-kuṇḍa kī jai!*

30. Bhajana Kuṭīra of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī

On the opposite side of the *parikramā mārga* from Lalitā-kuṇḍa is a wall with a door leading into Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī's *bhajana kuṭīra* and another small temple of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara. Walk through a small garden, and under the stone roof of the *kīrtanamanḍapa* just in front of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī's *kuṭīra*. In the temple directly next door, there is a plaster impression of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's lotus feet, said to be originals coming from Jagannātha Puri.

Although Dāsa Gosvāmī was the inspiration, the practical work of excavating and managing Rādhā-kuṇḍa was done by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī. Consequently, Jīva Gosvāmī often came to Rādhā-kuṇḍa to look after the affairs of Śrīpāda Dāsa Gosvāmī who was always deeply absorbed in feeling separation from Rādhā-Giridhārī.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī established the worship of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara in Seva Kuñja, Vṛndāvana. In Vraja-dhāma, Śrī Jīva lovingly serves Śrī Rādhikā as Vilāsa Mañjarī, one of Rādhā's *aṣṭā-mañjarīs*.

*Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara kī jai!
Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīpāda kī jai!*

31. Lalitā Bihārī Mandira

Leaving Lalitā-kuṇḍa, continue walking on the *parikramā* path until it bends to the right. The doorway on the left side just as the path bends is the entrance to the Lalitā Bihārī Mandira. Śrī-Śrī Lalitā-Bihārī [sometimes called Mohana] are the presiding Deities of Lalitā-kuṇḍa. Behind the *rasa mandala* platform on your left, there is a door within the western wall of

this compound. Going through this door will enable you to bathe in or take *acamana* from the merciful waters of Lalitā-kuṇḍa.

Śrī-Śrī Lalitā-Bihārī kī jai!

32. Rādhā Vinoda Bihārī Mandira

Leaving Jiva Goswami's return to Lalitā-kuṇḍa, walk 30 meters on the *parikramā* path until you see a small temple just touching the path on the right side. Here are the *pratibhu* Deities of Rādhā-Vinoda which were originally installed in Vṛndāvana by Lokanātha Gosvāmī. Vinoda Bihārī is very beautiful with His Śyāma-blue color glistening like a monsoon cloud. Lord Caitanya sent Lokanātha Gosvāmī to Vṛndāvana to search for the lost pastime places of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Once while Lokanātha was wandering through Vraja-dhāma, he came to the banks of Kiśorī-kuṇḍa in the village of Umrāo. The beautiful Kiśorī-kuṇḍa is very dear to Kiśorī [Rādhārāṇī]. Seeing this wonderful place, Lokanātha felt great pleasure within.

After a few days he began thinking about worshiping a Deity of Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supersoul within all, reciprocated with His devotee by appearing before Lokanātha in His Deity form as Rādhā Vinoda. This sudden and mysterious appearance of the Lord bewildered Lokanātha Gosvāmī.

Seeing Lokanātha deep in thought, Rādhā Vinoda laughingly said, "Who could have brought Me here? I have come Myself! Umrāo is My village, and I live here on the banks of Kiśorī-kuṇḍa. Now please give me something to eat".

Lokanātha was overwhelmed in ecstatic bliss. He immediately offered some *bhoga* for Rādhā Vinoda's pleasure. Then he made a bed of flowers for the Deity to take rest. While fanning the Deity with some leaves, Lokanātha meditated on massaging the Lord's lotus feet. Lokanātha Gosvāmī surrendered his body, mind and very life to Rādhā Vinoda's service.

Lokanātha Gosvāmī had no permanent abode. Some Vrajavāsī villagers wanted to build a cottage for him but he refused. His activities represented the crest jewel of asceticism. During the cold and rainy months, Lokanātha stayed under a tree with only an old quilt and a tattered outer cloth. When it rained he kept Rādhā Vinoda in the hollow of a tree, while he stayed outside getting wet. When Lokanātha traveled he carried his Deity in an

old burlap bag tied around his neck. In Vraja-*līlā*, Lokanātha Gosvāmī is Mañjulalī Mañjarī, one of Rādhārāṇī's most intimate maidservants. Śrī Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura Mahāśaya, Lokanātha Gosvāmī's only disciple, wrote the following prayer to his *guru*:

"Oh My Lord, Lokanātha! Please keep me at your feet. If it pleases you, then let your glance of mercy fall upon me. I have a great hope that my mind's desires will be fulfilled someday. Whenever one gets the association of Lord Caitanya, then he also attains the association of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. If you are not merciful to me, then who will be?"

"Please fulfil my mind's desires this one time. In the three worlds I have no one other than you. Please keep me near your lotus feet, so I can always hear you singing about the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Without you, the desire of Narottama cannot be fulfilled."

Śrī-Śrī Rādhā Viñoda Bihārī kī jai!
Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmīpāda kī jai!

33. Gopa-kū wa [Girirāja jihvāprakata sthali]



Walk on 15 meters until you see a large stone circular structure on the left side. This well is the appearance place of the tongue of Govardhana mentioned in # 18.

"O beautiful Rādhā-kundā! My Queen [Śrī Rādhā] always plays erotic games within you with Her beloved Kṛṣṇa. Since You are dearer to Them than the dearest, then please show me my Queen, who is my very life." (VK)

Giri-Govardhana kī jai!
Gopa-kūa kī jai!

34. Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī's Baithāka [sitting place]



Just opposite Gopa-kūa, walk down the lane on the right side of the *parikramā mārga*. Enter the gate in the wall on your left. You'll see a small raised shrine on your right as you walk in the courtyard of this private *āśrama*. Locals call this place Vyāsa Ghera. Several years before Lord Caitanya revealed Rādhā-kunḍa, Śrīla Mādhavendra Purīpāda sat down here briefly while doing a Govardhana *parikramā*.

“ ‘O My Lord! O most merciful master! O master of Mathurā! When shall I see You again? Because of not seeing You, my agitated heart has become unsteady. O most beloved one, what shall I do now?’

“In this verse, Mādhavendra Purī instructs how to achieve ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. By feeling separation from Kṛṣṇa one becomes spiritually situated. Mādhavendra Purī sowed the seed of ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa within this material world and then departed. That seed later became a great tree in the form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.” (*Cc. Antya 8.34-36*)

Mādhavendra Purī Meets Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu

When Nityānanda Prabhu and Mādhavendra Purī first met they both fainted in a swoon of ecstatic love.

Śrī Gauracandra said that no one could compare with Mādhavendra Purī in relishing the mellow of love in devotion. Gradually, Nityānanda Prabhu and Madhavendra returned to external consciousness. Upon seeing each other, they put their arms around each other's necks and cried tears of joy.

Hurled by the waves of ecstatic love, they began to roll in the sand. The sky split open from their loud roaring. Mother Earth considered herself fortunate when a river of loving tears began to flow from their eyes, inundating all directions. These physical transformations of tears, trembling, and hairs standing erect due to bhāva showed that their bodies had become a place of Lord Gaurāṅga's pastimes.

Nityānanda exclaimed, "Today I have received the fruit of all My travels to the holy places. By seeing the feet of Mādhavendra Purī, I have received the treasure of love of God. Now My life has become blessed." (CB *Ādi* 9.158192)

In the same way that Lord Nityānanda got Kṛṣṇa-prema, let us roll in the dust of Mādhavendra Purī's feet, and pray that he bestows upon us ecstatic love of God.

Śrī Nityānanda Rāma kī jai!
Śrīla Mādhavendra Purīpāda kī jai!

35. Aṣṭā Sakhī Mandira





Return to the *parikramā mārga* and continue circumambulating Rādhā-kuṇḍa. The next temple you see on the right side of the path is the Aṣṭā Sakhī Mandira. There are small Deities of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Their eight dearest *sakhīs*: Lalitā, Viśākhā, Citrā, Campakalatā, Tuṅgavidyā, Indulekhā, Raṅgadevī, and Sudevī.

Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa kī jai!
Aṣṭā-Sakhī Vṛndā kī jai!

36. Śrī-Śrī Nitaī-Gaura Sītānātha Mandira

This temple is on the opposite side of the street as # 35. The Deities from left to right: Nitaī, Gaura, and Sītānātha [Advaita Ācārya]. These Deities, which are maintained by the Manipuri Vaiṣṇavas, have very kind and sweet smiling lotus faces.

Śrī-Śrī Nitaī-Gaura Sītānātha kī jai!

37. Rādhā Mādhava Mandira

Śrī-Śrī Rādhā Mādhava are the pratibhu Deities of Jayadeva Gosvāmī, the author of *Gītā Govinda*. Three-hundred years before the appearance of Lord Caitanya, Jayadeva Gosvāmī wrote in *Gītā Govinda* that Kṛṣṇa put Rādhārāṇī's lotus feet on His head in order to pacify His beloved. By this,

Jayadeva revealed the topmost position of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and the perfectional state of *Rādhā-dāsyam* [the loving service of Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet].

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has commented that even though Lord Caitanya had not revealed his internal pastimes at that time, within Jayadeva's heart Mahāprabhu's mood of *Rādhā-dāsyam* had already appeared. Let us pray to Jayadeva Gosvāmī to manifest within our hearts the sincere desire to lovingly serve the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā.

*Śrī-Śrī Rādhā Mādhava kī jai!
Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī kī jai!*

38. Tamāla Tala Ghera

Directly opposite and across the street from # 37 is a small temple with Deities of Mahāprabhu and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Śyāmasundara smiles sweetly as a lovely golden Rādhā dances blissfully to His enchanting flute playing.

*Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu kī jai!
Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara kī jai!*

39. Bankhandi Mahādeva [Lord Śiva Mandira]

Proceeding on the *parikramā mārga*, you'll see a water pump on the left, just before the *parikramā mārga* bends to the right. 10 meters further on the left side you will see a brick road passing through a metal gate. Follow the brick road to its end which goes straight into an ancient temple of Lord Śiva known as Bankhandi Mahādeva. This Śiva Deity protects Rādhā-kuṇḍa from the eastern side.

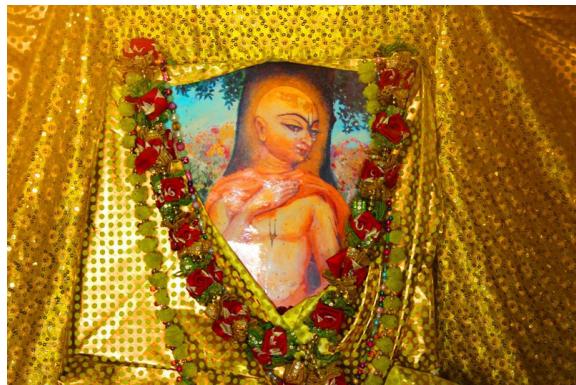
Once Lord Śiva asked Lord Kṛṣṇa, "How can one attain You?"

Śrī Kṛṣṇa replied, "A person who surrenders to Me, but not to My beloved Rādhā never attains Me. A person who once surrenders to Her, and tells Her, 'I am Yours,' attains Me also without doing anything further. A person who desires to conquer Me should surrender with all his heart to My beloved Rādhikā. In this way, one becomes dear to Me. You should take shelter of My beloved Rādhā, chant My names, and always stay in My abode, Śrī Vṛndāvana." (*Sanat-Kumara-saṁhitā*)

Let us pray to Lord Śiva to destroy our enjoying spirit with his trident. May Mahādeva allow us entrance into Śrī Rādhā's pastimes of selfless spontaneous love.

*Śrī-Śrī Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī kī jai!
Śrī Bankhandi Mahādeva kī jai!*

40. Mahāprabhu's Baithāka [Tamāla Tala]



Return to the *parikramā mārga*, walk 10 meters, and on the right behind two palm trees you will see a beautiful stone temple overlooking the blissful waters of Śyāma-kuṇḍa. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu sat here under a *tamāla* tree after discovering Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa. It is also called Mahāprabhu's Baithāka [sitting place]. Chapter three describes the pastime of Lord Caitanya discovering Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Lord Caitanya's lotus footprints are inside the newly built red granite shrine. After circumambulating the shrine and the *tamāla* tree beside it, we can sit peacefully and remember the all-merciful Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. We can chant the following prayer which is said to have been spoken by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Śrī Rādhikā-Aṣṭottara-Śata-Nāma-Stotram

108 Names of Śrī Rādhikā

*śrīmad-rādhā rasa-mayī, rasa-jñā rasikā tathā
rāseśvarī rasa-bhaktī, rasa-pūrṇa rasa-pradā (1)*

Śrī Rādhā is endowed with all the most splendid opulences, and is completely pervaded with ever-flowing transcendental mellows. She fully understands the subtleties of these mellows. Rādhā is adept in relishing mellows. Rādhikā is the Queen of the nightly *rāsa* dance. She is totally devoted to expressing divine mellows. Śrī Rādhā is full to overflowing with pure mellows. She bestows these exquisite mellows unto everyone.

*raṅgiṇī rasa-lubdhā ca, rāsa-maṇḍala-kāriṇī
rasa-vilāsinī rādhā, rādhikā rasa-pūrṇadā (2)*

Rādhā is always very playful. She is greedy to taste newer and newer aspects of mallows. Rādhā is the designer of the circular arenas for *rāsa* dancing. She enjoys sporting the *rāsa* dance to Her heart's content. Rādhā is the best worshiper of Śyāma. Rādhikā, the best worshiper, is adored intimately by Her friends. She bestows mallows unto others in the most completely fulfilling way.

*rāmā-ratnā ratna-mayī, ratna-mālā su-śobhanā
raktoṣṭhi rakta-nayanā, raktotpala-vidhāriṇī (3)*

Śrī Rādhā is the topmost jewel among all the many forms of Lakṣmī-devī. All of Her ornaments and paraphernalia are studded with precious jewels. Rādhikā likes to wear gemstone necklaces. Rādhā radiates the nicest, purely sublime splendor. Her lips are naturally hued with a charming redness. The corners of Śrī Rādhā's eyes are hued with reddish tints. She especially likes to hold a red lotus flower in Her hand.

*ramanī rāmanī gopī, vṛndāvana-vilāsinī
nānā-ratnā vicitrāṇī, nānā-sukha-mayī sadā (4)*

Rādhārāṇī is a charming young mistress. Her loveliness is especially pleasing to behold. Rādhā is a cowherd girl. She likes to frolic in the forest of Vṛndāvana. Rādhā is fond of wearing different types of gemstones. The shapes of Rādhārāṇī's limbs are astonishingly lovely to behold. She abounds in various forms of happiness.

*samīśāra-pāra-tāraṇī, venu-gītā-vinodinī
krṣṇa-priyā krṣṇa-mayī, krṣṇa-dhyāna-parāyanī (5)*

Rādhārāṇī delivers souls out of the material world. She takes great pleasure in listening to flute songs. Rādhā is very dear to Kṛṣṇa. She is Lord Kṛṣṇa's exact counterpart. Rādhā is fond of meditating upon Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

*sadānandā kṣīṇa-madhyā, krṣṇā krṣṇālayā śubhā
candrāvalī candra-mukhī, candrā ca krṣṇa-vallabhā (6)*

Rādhikā is always full of bliss. Her waist is very slim. Rādhā is the female form of Kṛṣṇa Himself. She is the refuge of Her beloved Kṛṣṇa. Rādhārāṇī is the embodiment of auspiciousness. She is beautiful as a series of full

moons. Rādhā's face is round, and radiantly soothing like a full moon. She is the very personification of the moon itself. Rādhā is the dearmost beloved of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

*vṛndāvaneśvarī devī, kṛṣṇa-raṅgī parā-gatiḥ
dhyānātītā dhyāna-magnā, sadā-kṛṣṇa-kutūhalī (7)*

Rādhārāṇī is the Queen of Vṛndā's forest. She is the Supreme Goddess of the entire creation. Rādhā enjoys playing fun games with Kṛṣṇa. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the final transcendental goal. She is naturally situated far, far beyond anyone's meditation. Rādhā is very meditative by nature. She is always playing mischievous pranks on Kṛṣṇa.

*prema-mayī prema-rūpā, premā prema-vinodinī
kṛṣṇa-priyā sadānandī, gopī-maṇḍala-vāsinī (8)*

Rādhikā is effused with the purest ecstatic love. She is the embodiment of love's most beautiful form. Her every thought, action, word and deed is totally saturated with love. She revels in the delightful sports of pure love. Rādhā is the favorite of Lord Kṛṣṇa. She is perpetually absorbed in the greatest happiness. Rādhārāṇī resides within the circle of Her cowherd girlfriends.

*sundarāṅgī ca svarṇābhā, nīla-paṭṭa-vidhāriṇī
kṛṣṇānurāgiṇī caiva, kṛṣṇa-prema-su-lakṣaṇā (9)*

Rādhā's bodily limbs are all very attractive. Her complexion is radiantly golden. Rādhā especially likes to wear blue silken garments. She is very contented in Her attachment to Kṛṣṇa. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is nicely marked by Her obvious love for Kṛṣṇa.

*nigūḍha-rasa-sāraṅgī, mṛgākṣī mṛga-locaṇā
aśeṣa-guṇa-pārā ca, kṛṣṇa-prāṇeśvarī samā (10)*

Rādhā embodies variegated forms of confidential mellows. Her eyes are just like those of a deer. Rādhā views things innocently like a deer. She excels even beyond limitless good qualities. Rādhārāṇī is the mistress of the very life-breath of Kṛṣṇa. She is equal in Her dealings with all.

*rāsa-maṇḍala-madhyasthā, kṛṣṇa-raṅgī sadā śuciḥ
vrajeśvarī vraja-rūpā, vraja-bhūmi-sukha-pradā (11)*

Rādhā dances in the center of the circular *rāsa* dance. She enjoys frolicking with Lord Kṛṣṇa. Rādhārāṇī always has immaculate manners. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the Queen of Vraja-dhāma. Aspects of Her form are visible in all the natural features throughout Vraja. Śrī Rādhā is the grantor of happiness to all beings in Vraja-bhūmi.

*rasollāsā madonmattā, lalitā rasa-sundarī
sarva-gopī-mayī nityā, nānā-śāstra-viśāradā (12)*

Rādhā especially blossoms with delight during the *rāsa* dance. She becomes wildly intoxicated by drinking honey-wine. Rādhā embodies the most charming loveliness. She is the truly beautiful expression of divine loving mellow. She expands Herself into multiple forms as all the cowherd girls. Rādhā is the essence of eternity. She is greatly learned in various scriptures.

*kāmeśvarī kāma-rūpā, sadā kṛṣṇa-parāyanā
parā-śaktī-svarūpā ca, srṣṭi-sthiti-vināśinī (13)*

Rādhā is the Queen of transcendental lust. She is the personification of divine desire. Śrī Rādhikā is always cherishing Kṛṣṇa. She is the very figure of divine potency. Rādhā is the annihilator of the material creation.

*saumyā saumya-mayī rādhā, rādhikā sarva-kāmadā
gaṅgā ca tulasi caiva, yamunā ca sarasvatī (14)*

Rādhā is pleasing like the moon. All of Her dealings are soft and gentle. She is endowed with all prosperity and success. Rādhā fully satisfies Her beloved by Her intimate worship. She fulfills the aspirations of all beings. Śrī Rādhā is the original form of the Ganges River. She is the original form of the holy basil plant. She is the original form of the Yamunā River. Rādhā is the original form of the Sarasvatī River.

*bhogavatī bhagavatī, bhagavac-citta-rūpiṇī
prema-bhakti-sadā-saṅgī, premānanda-vilāsinī (15)*

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the original form of the Bhogavatī river [the Ganges flowing in the Pātāla region]. She is the Supreme female divinity. Rādhā is the embodiment of Bhagavān's very heart. She is continuously associated with ecstatic loving devotion. Rādhā cavorts in the ecstatic bliss of pure love.

*sadānanda-mayīnityā, nitya-dharma-parāyanī
trailokyākarṣanī ādyā, sundarī kṛṣṇa-rūpiṇī* (16)

Rādhikā is perpetually permeated with exhilaration. She is the incarnation of agelessness. Rādhā is devoted to performing auspicious daily rituals. She is the attractor of the three worlds. Śrī Rādhā is the original source of all that is. She is the absolute manifestation of total beauty. Rādhārāṇī expresses Herself as the form of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

*śatam-aśṭottaraṁ nāma, yaḥ paṭhet prayataḥ śuciḥ
prātaḥ-kāle ca madhyāhne, sandhyāyāṁ madhya-rātriike
yatra tatra bhavet tasya, kṛṣṇah prema-yuto bhavet* (17)

If a pious and clean devotee recites these 108 holy names of Śrī Rādhikā — either in the morning [6-8:24a.m.], evening [6-8:24p.m.], or in the middle of the night [10:48p.m.-3:36a.m.]— wherever and however that person lives, they become endowed with ecstatic love for Lord Kṛṣṇa.”

*Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī kī jai!
Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu kī jai!
Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa Śyāma-kuṇḍa kī jai!*

41. Pāśa Ghāṭa [and Vallabhācārya’s Baīṭhāka]

Return to the *mārga*, and walk 20 meters until you see the parking lot of the Manoranjan Dharmashalla [yellow building on your left]. Directly opposite their metal gates, on the right side of the *mārga*, is a door opening into Śyāma-kuṇḍa. Step through and walk to the stone platform jutting out into Śyāma-kuṇḍa. Local authorities call this place Pāśa Ghāṭa, a site of Rādhā-Śyāma’s hilarious eternal midday pastimes of *pāśa kela* [a board game with dice]. Our Gauḍiyā *śāstras* like the *Govinda-līlāmrta* say that Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa play dice in Sudevī’s green *kuñja* on the north west side of Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

There is a temple in this compound commemorating Vallabhācārya’s stay here. Hence, it is a popular place among members of the Vallabha *saṃpradāya*. It is said that when they met in Vṛndāvana, Lord Caitanya elevated Vallabha’s mood from *vātsalya* to *mādhurya*. Later Vallabha visited Lord Caitanya in Purī and insulted the great *ācārya*, Śrīdhāra Svāmī.

The *Yugala-gītā* of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* [10.33 Gopī’s Feelings of Separation] describes how the *gopīs* absorbed themselves in talking about and remembering Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. Commenting on this, Srila Prabhupāda said:

“The example of the *gopīs* is very instructive to persons who are trying to be absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One can very easily associate with Kṛṣṇa simply by remembering His transcendental pastimes. Everyone has a tendency to love someone. That Kṛṣṇa should be the object of love is the central point of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. By constantly chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* and remembering the transcendental pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, one can be fully in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and thus make his life sublime and fruitful.”

Let us sit peacefully beside Śyāma-kunda, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare / Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare, and remember Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental pastimes. The following brief summary of Rādhā-Mādhava’s *pāśā kela līlā* comes from Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī’s *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanāmr̥ta*.

Śrī Rādhikā told Lalitā, “Lalite! Kṛṣṇa has forcefully defeated us in the fun of honey-wine drinking, watersports, swinging and so on. These are all power games. Now let us challenge Kṛṣṇa to a dice-game which requires some brains. In this way we’ll diminish His pride.”

Nāndīmukhī sat on Kṛṣṇa’s side as the witness and Vṛndā sat on Rādhikā’s side. Kuṇḍalatā was the game-board supervisor. Madhumangala kept score for Kṛṣṇa, and Lalitā for Rādhā. Jaya Śrī [Rādhā the goddess of victory] very cleverly rolled a pair of tens and twelves with the stone dice. First Kṛṣṇa lost his precious Kaustubha gem to Rādhā. Kṛṣṇa cheated on the next throw and took the prize of Rādhā’s embrace. Then Rādhā won the wager of kisses.

Smiling, Kṛṣṇa placed His cheek near Rādhā’s lips and said, “Sakhī! I admit defeat in this public assembly. Now collect Your prize.” Rādhā and the *sakhīs* laughed at Kṛṣṇa’s joke while covering their mouths with their veils.

*Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava kī jai!
Śrī Pāśa Ghāṭa kī jai!*

42. Śrī-Śrī Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa Mandira

Continuing another 30 meters on the *parikramā mārga*, you will see an old temple on your left. Walking through a series of stone arches, you will come to a small temple of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa which faces the *parikramā mārga*, and dates back about 500 years. Let us pray to Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa to bestow upon us the precious opulence of humility and tolerance with which we may serve the Vaiṣṇavas.

Śrī-Śrī Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa kī jai!

43. Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Madana Mohana Mandira



Continue on the *parikramā mārga* to the next big temple on the right side. You will see a big archway at the entrance, just before a snack bar along the outside wall. This is a replica of the original Rādhā-Madana Mohana temple built in Vṛndāvana by Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda. Sanātana Gosvāmī would often visit this *kuñja*, and from here he saw Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as mentioned in # 22.

Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Madana Mohana kī jai!

Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda kī jai!

44. Śrīman Mahāprabhu Temple [Gaura-Nītāī]



Five more meters after # 43 the *parikramā mārga* meets the walkway to the *Saṅgam* [meeting place of Rādhā and Śyāma-kuṇḍas] on your right. Just at the junction is a medium-sized temple of Śrī-Śrī Gaura-Nitaī. These beautiful Deities are always attractively dressed. They have big lotus eyes, and long arms with open hands offering blessings.

Gaura-Nitaī seem to be saying, “O my friend! Come to Me. Your suffering is now over. Take My gifts, and be blessed with the bliss of Kṛṣṇa-prema!” To become free from our offenses to Rādhā-kuṇḍa, let us dive deeply into the ocean of *Harināma saṅkīrtana*. By the mercy of Gaura-Nitaī, we will surface on the blissful shores of Rādhā-kuṇḍa in the spiritual world.

*jaya śrī krṣṇa caitanya, prabhu nityānanda
śrī advaita gadādhara, śrīvāsādi gaura bhakta vṛnda
hare krṣṇa hare krṣṇa, krṣṇa krṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma, rāma rāma hare hare
Nitaī-Gaura premānande! Hari bol! Hari bol!
Śrī-Śrī Gaura-Nitaī kī jai!
Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa Śyāma-kuṇḍa kī jai!*

45. The *Saṅgam* [meeting place of the kuṇḍas]



Coming out of Gaura-Nitaī’s temple, follow the sidewalk, which meets the *parikramā mārga* in front of Mahāprabhu’s temple, and runs back to the *Saṅgam*, which is called Ratna-vedi [jewelled platform]. This area separating the two *kuṇḍas* is covered with valuable gemstones in *aprākāṭa-līlā*.

If you look closely you will see some slits in the stones which allow mixing of Rādhā and Śyāma-kuṇḍasprema-filled waters. Here at this most confidential and intimate pastime place, Rādhā-Śyāmasundara [in Their liquid forms] relish eternal union without any fear of separation.

A. Śrī Caraṇa Cinha — In the middle of the *sangam*, just past the mini-mountain of Govardhana *śilās*, you will see a small open air shrine honoring the lotus footprints of Rādhā-Śyāmasundara. We can offer respects here and some *tulasī*, flowers and Rādhā-kuṇḍa water. At this time, you should be prepared to kindly donate to the local Vrajavāsī *pūjāris* for services rendered.

Śrī Giri-Govardhana Mahārāja kī jai!
Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Caraṇa Cinha kī jai!

B. Śrī Banke-Bihārī Mandira — This very old temple with a beautiful Deity of Banke-Bihārījī is on the right, just beyond the Śrī Caraṇa Cinha. Ask the friendly *pūjāri* to show you his most extraordinary Govardhana *śilās*.

Śrī Banke-Bihārī lal kī jai!
Śrī Giri-Govardhana kī jai!

C. Govinda Ghāṭa — Leaving Banke Bihārījī, turn right and walk five meters north until you see a *neem* tree hanging over the path beside Rādhā-kuṇḍa. This area is called Govinda Ghāṭa where Rādhā-Govinda sometimes enjoy *jhulana* [swing] pastimes. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa also swing in Lalitā’s *kuñja*. Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda had an amazing *darśana* here.

One day Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda came here and met with Śrī Rūpa and Dāsa Gosvāmīs. They sat together and immersed themselves in hearing the nectarean pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. At that time, Sanātana Gosvāmī expressed a doubt about a verse from Śrī Rūpa’s *Cāṭu Puṣpāñjali*, wherein he compares Śrī Rādhā’s braid to a cobra’s black hood:

*nava-gorocanā-gaurīṇī, pravarendīvarāmbarām
mani-stabaka-vidyoti, venī-vyālāṅganā-phanām*

“O Rādhārāṇī, O Queen as golden as fresh *gorocanā*. O Queen whose beautiful clothes are as splendid as a blue lotus. O Queen whose braid, decorated with jewels and flowers, is glistening like the hood of a serpent.”

At noon, Sanātana Gosvāmī came here, offered prayers to Rādhā-kuṇḍa and began to bathe. He saw some girls swinging under a tree nearby. Seeing the hair braid of one girl, he mistook it for a cobra climbing up her back.

Sanātana anxiously called out to warn the unsuspecting girl, “O Lālī! Look out! There’s a dangerous black snake just behind you!” The girls smiled at Sanātana and suddenly vanished. Stunned in ecstasy, Sanātana realised the meaning of the vision. He returned to Rūpa Gosvāmī, and admitted that the poetic metaphor in his verse was perfectly correct.

Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara kī jai!

Śrī Govinda Ghāṭa kī jai!

46. Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnātha Mandira



Retrace your steps south along the *Sangam*, keeping Girirāja respectfully on your right, pass the Gaura-Nitāi temple, and turn right onto the *parikramā mārga*. Walk 30 meters and look on the left side for a broken down temple entrance, just before the shops. The small Rādhā-Gopīnātha Deities are pratibhu *mūrtis* of Madhupanḍita’s original Deities which are now worshiped in Jaipur.

A. Śrī Nityānanda Baiṭhāka — While on pilgrimage through India, Lord Nityānanda came to Vraja in search of His brother Kṛṣṇa. To no avail He cried out everywhere, “Kanhaiyā! Kanhaiyā!” In this compound, just opposite the temple, there is a small square building marking the place where Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu sat in desperation, crying in separation from Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Suddenly, a voice from the sky informed Nityānanda Rāma that Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa had now appeared in Navadvīpa-dhāma. Immediately, Nityānanda Avadhūta left Vraja, and met Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the home of Śrī

Nandana Ācārya in Māyāpur. That meeting is described in the following excerpt from *Śrī Caitanya Maṅgala*:

“Nityānanda’s beautiful golden body had a slight reddish hue. Glistening ornaments adorned His enchanting form. Bright yellow cloth caressed His hips. A yellow turban, the color of a golden *campaka* flower, decorated His head. As He walked, His anklebells chimed sweetly, “*Jhuni, jhuni, jhuni.*”

“Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu’s eyes were wide and long like a deer. With His brilliant, lightning-like smile, He removed the shyness of all young girls. His roaring like a lion, louder than monsoon clouds, subdued the mad elephants of Kali. Lord Nityānanda walked with the gait of a maddened elephant.

“When He cried tears of divine love, His peaceful lotus face was beautiful to behold. Absorbed in deep love of Kṛṣṇa, His body would shiver, perspire, and erupt all over with ecstatic symptoms. He carried a golden stick in His hand to smash the pride of Kali.

Lord Gaurāṅga paid obeisances, and spoke some sweet auspicious prayers to Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. Then They both tried unsuccessfully to take the dust from each other’s feet. They cried as They embraced warmly and talked about Their recent travels.

Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu said, “I went on pilgrimage around the whole world looking for You. Not finding You, I returned when I heard that the son of Nanda Mahārāja was hiding in Navadvīpa. Coming here, I have caught the thief. Now where will You go to run away? Then Gaurāṅga and Nityānanda laughed heartily, cried some tears of joy and danced together blissfully.

Later in His home, Mahāprabhu said, “In all the three worlds there is no comparison to the glories of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. His love and devotion for Kṛṣṇa are extraordinary. It is very difficult to attain Kṛṣṇa *prema*.

“From the platform of realisation one surrenders to Kṛṣṇa in devotion. Relishing a higher taste, he automatically rejects sense gratification. Day after day his attachment for Kṛṣṇa increases. Eventually, he reaches the mature state of pure ecstatic love of God. But by the causeless mercy of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, anyone can easily obtain Kṛṣṇa *prema!*”

Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu embodies the principle of *guru-tattva*, and as Lord Baladeva He is the original spiritual master. The *śāstras* state that the spiritual master is a representative of both Lord Baladeva [or Lord Nityānanda] and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Thus, the spiritual master is called Śrī

Guru which means he represents the original Śrī, who is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was very careful about openly discussing his relationship with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. One time, however he made the following comment to a senior *sannyāsī* Godbrother:

“My *guru* is Rādhārāṇī. Rādhārāṇī, my *gurudeva*, has ordered me to preach in the West. Therefore, Dear Kṛṣṇa, my friend, You must help me, because Rādhārāṇī, my *gurudeva*, will be satisfied. Besides, Your business is like that — to please Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. So, You must come to help me, because I am going to carry out the order of Rādhārāṇī!”

Śrī-Śrī Rādhā Gopīnātha kī jai!
Śrī Nityānanda Rāma kī jai!

47. Śrī Hanumān Mandira

Turn left after leaving # 46, and after 20 meters you will see a large red Deity of Hanumānjī on the right side in between some shops. Hanumānjī, the eternal servant of Lord Rāma, is the emblem of *dasya-bhāva* because of his totally surrendered, pure service mood. Following in the footsteps of Lord Caitanya, who offered obeisances to the Hanumān Deities He saw during His South India tour, we should offer respects to this loyal servant of Śrī Rāma.

It is said that Hanumānjī protects devotees from the offenses they may commit while performing Govardhana *parikramā*. Hanumānjī has mercifully appeared to help devotees by removing the obstacles on the spiritual path, and by inspiring them with devotional strength. Let us pray humbly to Hanumān that he will nullify the offenses that we have committed during our *parikramā*. May he bless us with a pure service mood, and absolute loyalty to the lotus feet of our *gurudeva* and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Mahāvir Hanumān kī jai!

Turning right at the next corner, we will finish our *parikramā* of Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa by falling prostrate before Śrī Kuṇḍeśvara Mahādeva [see # 2], and begging for his *paramā Vaiṣṇava krpa*.

At this time, we usually return to the *Sangam* to bathe at Mānasa-pāvana-ghāṭa and then Govinda Ghāṭa.

“O giver of *rasa*, Śrī Rādhe! By eating only Your ambrosial remnants, by hearing only Your pastimes, by remembering the dust of Your lotus feet, by wandering around Your *kuñjas*, by singing Your divine qualities, and by seeing Your splendid divine form I will purify my body, mind, and words by thus taking full shelter only in You.” (*Rādhā rasa-sudhā-nidhi*)

Śrī Kuṇḍeśvara Mahādeva kī jai!
Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa Śyāma-kuṇḍa kī jai!
Jai! Jai! Śrī Rādhe!
Jai! Jai! Śrī Rādhe!!
Jai! Jai! Śrī Rādhe!!!! Śyāma!

Two Extra Parikramās

1. Mukharāi [Village of Rādhārāṇī's grandmother]

This village is named after Mukharā, the mother of Kīrtidā Devī, who is the mother of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. After finishing your Rādhā-kuṇḍa *parikramā*, you can easily walk here and back in one and a half hours. Devotees from Rādhā-kuṇḍa regularly visit this friendly village for *mādhukarī*.

From Rādhā-kuṇḍa, walk 10 minutes back to the T intersection where the Vṛndāvana road joins the Rādhā-kuṇḍa-Govardhana road. If time is short, two people can take a bicycle rickshaw roundtrip from here for 30 rupees. Turn left on the road leading back to Vṛndāvana, walk 20 minutes until you see a rusty saffron-colored sign on your right which says village of Mukharāi [Hindi]. Turn right and walk straight for 15 minutes. As you walk along this wonderful transcendental path, you will pass a huge saintly *banyan* tree, and then enter a quaint village of Vrajavāsī farmers.

When the road into town comes to an end, look to your left for Mukharā's temple and bathing kuṇḍa.

The Deities from left to right are Mukharā Devī, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Kīrtidā Devī. Behind the temple are some *bājana-silās* [large stones] which Radharani would hit with a small stone to make fascinating music. Ask the *pūjāri* to play a few tunes.

Mukharā Devī shows a special type of affection toward Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. She exhibits *saṅkulā-rāti*, which means that the primary *rasa* or mellow is blended with other humors. The mood of Mukharā is *vātsalya* [parental

love] mixed with *sakhya* [friendship]. *Saṅkula-rāti* differs from *kevala-rāti*, which is a pure state of a mellow favoring only a single affection.

Nanda, Yaśodā, and many of the residents of Vṛndāvana eternally exhibit *kevala-bhakti*. This means they always display the mood of *vatsalya-bhāva*, intimate paternal affection. They never entertain any other mellow.

In *saṅkula-rāti* [mixed mellows] the mellows of *dasya*, *sakhya* and *vātsalya* can combine together in one individual. Uddhava sometimes serves Śyāmasundara as a loyal servant [*dasya*], and other times behaves intimately as a friend [*sakhya*]. The friendship of Balarāma is mixed with parental love.

Sometimes Mukharā would act as a mother and appear to chastise Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī for misbehaving with Kṛṣṇa. “In anger, Mukharā would place many obstacles to stop Rādhā-Mādhava’s amorous pastimes. With her crooked deeds, Mukharā only increased the happiness of the youthful Divine Couple, who are her grandchildren. I bow down to the elderly Mukharā Devī, holding her lotus feet upon my head.” (VVS)

“At other times, Mukharā, like a loving friend, would take pleasure in arranging the meetings of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.” (*Bhakti-ratnākara*)

Śrīmatī Mukharā Devī kī jai!

2. Sūrya-kunda

Continuing Their mid day fun at Rādhā-kunda, Rādhā-Mādhava and the *gopīs* come here everyday at about 3 p.m. to “worship” Sūryadeva [sun-god]. Actually, Kṛṣṇa manifests Himself in the form of the sun-god to receive the worship. He also disguises Himself as the *pūjāri* “Viśvā Śarma,” who along with His *brāhmaṇa* sidekick Madhumaṅgala, act as Rādhā’s “priests.”

“All the demigods are living entities who have been appointed to their various posts because of their great service and pious acts. Only the predominating deity of the sun, Sūrya Nārāyaṇa, is an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. “(SB 5.23.3 pur.) “The predominating deity within the sun is Lord Nārāyaṇa. He is worshiped by the Gāyatrī mantra: *om bhūr bhuvaḥ svah tat savitur vareṇyaṁ bhargo devasya dhīmahi*. Within the sun Lord Nārāyaṇa is situated.” (SB 5.7.13 pur.) Since Kṛṣṇa is already present in the sun planet, it is quite natural for Him to assume the form of Sūrya Nārāyaṇa for this blissful pastime.

Taking a taxi from Rādhā-kuṇḍa, you can go to Sūrya-kuṇḍa [near the village of Basanti] and back in about two hours.

If you have a car, then drive 9 kms East on the road back to Vṛndāvana until just before the village of Rāl, which is the first busy intersection on your left. Turn left on the asphalt road just before Rāl. As you travel, continue to ask directions from the locals of Sūrya-kuṇḍa, which is about 6 kms. The road winds through many fields. When you reach the small village surrounding Sūrya-kuṇḍa ask for Sūrya Mandira and kuṇḍa, and the Gaura-Nitāī temple.

Once Rādhā set Her *mukut* [golden crown] on a rock while bathing in this *kuṇḍa*. That rock, which melted in ecstasy from Her touch, still bears the golden marks of Rādhā's crown. You can have *darśana* of that rock in the newly renovated Gaura-Nitai temple on the west side of the *kuṇḍa*. The rock is embedded in the back wall inside the *samādhi mandira* of Madhusūdana Dāsa Bābājī, which is located inside the Gaura-Nitāī temple. Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī, a disciple of Madhusūdana Bābā, did *bhajana* here for sometime. The *samādhi* of Śrī Bhāgavata Dāsa Bābājī [the *veśa guru* of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora Dāsa Bābājī] is here too. A temple of Sūrya Nārāyaṇa [sun-god temple] is located on the bank of the *kuṇḍa*.

Sometimes Kṛṣṇa would come here, pick a variety of flowers, and string a garland for Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. A *sakhī* would then hand it to Rādhārāṇī who would instantly recognise that it was expertly made by Her beloved. Rādhārāṇī would become ecstatic from smelling the aroma of musk, aloe, sandal and camphor from Kṛṣṇa's lotus hands that still lingered on the flowers.

"Just see the deity of Sūryadeva situated in the Sūrya-mandira within this forest. In great happiness, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Her *sakhīs* came here to worship Sūryadeva. Kṛṣṇa Himself became the priest and enjoyed performing the *pūjā*. This deity of Sūryadeva is very merciful and gives love of Kṛṣṇa. I worship Sūryadeva, who is the father of the Yamunā and the destroyer of all diseases. He bestows attachment to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and therefore he is the basis of all auspiciousness." (*Bhakti-ratnākara*)

Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's nitya-līlā kī jai!
Śrī Sūrya Nārāyana kī jai!

SŪrya Pūjā

The following description of Rādhā-Mādhava's daily pastime of worshiping Sūrya Nārāyaṇa at Sūrya-kuṇḍa comes from *Govinda-līlāmrta* and *Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmrta*. Taking Jaṭilā's permission, Rādhā and the *gopīs* leave Yāvaṭ every day at about 10:30 a.m. to go to Sūrya-kuṇḍa for worshiping the sun-god. Rādhā uses Sūrya-*pūjā* as an excuse to get out of Her mother-in-law's house, and meet secretly with Her beloved Priyātama at Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

During the entire five hour period of *madhyāhna-līlā* [10:48 a.m.-3:36 p.m.] Rādhā-Govinda enjoy a variety of blissfully intimate pastimes at Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Rādhā's long absence from Yāvaṭ fills Jaṭilā with suspicion. Jaṭilā wonders, "Why is Rādhā so late in returning? She must be with that gallant lover."

Vṛndā's parrot, Śukṣmadhī, flies excitedly into Sudevī's kuñja and shrieks, "Jaṭilā is coming!" Shaking in fear, Rādhā-Mādhava and the *gopīs* run quickly North towards Sūrya-kuṇḍa. Leaving Kṛṣṇa behind, Kuṇḍalatā [a trusted friend of Jaṭilā who acts as Rādhā's guardian] brings Rādhā to Sūrya's temple just moments before the old Jaṭilā arrives.

Jaṭilā said, "Oh Kuṇḍalatā! Why are you so late?"

Kuṇḍalatā replied, "We couldn't find a *brāhmaṇa* boy. But there is one boy from Mathurā named Viśva Śarma. He's a disciple of Garga-munī, and is expert in Sūrya-*pūjā*. After this boy met Kṛṣṇa in Kāmyavana, Madhumāṅgala brought him to Arīṣṭa-kuṇḍa for bathing. At that time, we humbly asked him to perform Sūrya-*pūjā* for us, and he agreed. But when he heard your name, Madhumāṅgala forbade him because of your harsh behavior and baseless criticism of the *gopī*'s character."

With an affectionate tone, Jaṭilā urged Kuṇḍalatā, "Oh chaste one! You are expert in all affairs. Go quickly and bring that Mathurā-*brāhmaṇa* boy by carefully soliciting him."

"Feigning sadness, Kuṇḍalatā sighed, "Oh Ārye! I tried my best. But that peaceful *brāhmaṇa* boy became afraid after hearing about your rough behavior!"

Jaṭilā said, "Okay, then just do one thing. Take Dhaniṣṭhā with you and try to persuade him. If he refuses to come alone, then invite Madhumāṅgala while mentioning that I will offer lots of sweets and a large *dakṣinā*."

Jaṭilā, Kunḍalatā and Dhaniṣṭha were astonished when they saw Kṛṣṇa disguised as a *brāhmaṇa*. Completely peaceful and equipoised, he was the ideal of a *brāhmaṇa* depicted in the *Vedas*. Jaṭilā was fooled, and even the *gopīs* were struck with wonder upon seeing the “*brāhmaṇa*.”

After being honored by Jaṭilā, Viśva Śarma [Kṛṣṇa] offered a blessing in return, “May your son become rich with many cows, and may your daughter [Rādhikā] be embraced by good fortune.”

[Ed. note] Beginning here and throughout this pastime, Kṛṣṇa will utter *mantras* and make statements that have double meanings. The foolish Jaṭilā can only understand the outer meaning. Whereas, Rādhā and the *gopīs* fully realise and relish the inner meaning deep within their love-filled hearts.

“O Rādhā! If You embrace Me, then You will attain all-auspiciousness,” is the inner meaning of Kṛṣṇa’s previous statement.

Pretending that it is part of the *pūjā* procedure, the *brāhmaṇa* [Kṛṣṇa] asks Jaṭilā about her daughter’s name. Upon hearing the name “Rādhā,” Kṛṣṇa’s body trembles with *sattvic-bhāvas*. To conceal these ecstatic symptoms Kṛṣṇa feigns surprise and says joyfully:

“Oh! This is that famous, most qualified girl whose chastity is known even in Mathurā. You are truly blessed to have such a daughter-in-law.”

Kṛṣṇa informs Jaṭilā that before starting the *pūjā* one must first accept the priest by chanting a *Vedic mantra*: “I accept Viśva Śarma [Kṛṣṇa], who is most pure and learned, and whose dynasty bestows fortune on the world, as my priest.”

Inner meaning: “I accept Kṛṣṇa, whose name [*gotra*] purifies the world, and who is most learned in the art of love, as Mine.” Next, the *brāhmaṇa* instructs them in chanting *paramos* to Sūryadeva:

“Oh Sūryadeva! I offer my obeisances unto you. You destroy the darkness, make the lotuses bloom, and are a well-wisher of the world.”

Inner meaning: “I offer Myself to Kṛṣṇa whose *darśana* removes the affliction of lusty desires. He is the all-attractive friend of the lotus-like *gopīs*.”

Throughout the *pūjā*, Madhumāṅgala is reciting various *Vedic mantras*. At the end he advises Śrīmatī Rādhikā: “Hey Rādhe! To complete the worship

of the sun [*gopāti*] and to increase Your wealth of cows, You must now offer some cows [*go tati*] to the priest.”

Inner meaning: “Rādhe! To fulfil Kṛṣṇa’s desires for romantic pastimes, You must offer Your body with all its senses [*go tati*] to the cowherd king [*gopāti* or Kṛṣṇa].”

Being very impressed with Viśva Śarma’s “*brāhmaṇical expertise*”, Jaṭilā said, “Henceforward, everyday I shall engage this peaceful Śyāma-complexioned *brāhmaṇa* boy to perform my daughter’s *pūjā*.

Viśva Śarma said, “Having been trained by my *guru*, Garga Muni, I am now an expert palmist, astrologer, and clairvoyant.” On Jaṭilā’s behest, Kuṇḍalatā asked Viśva Śarma to read Rādhā’s palm.

Hearing the request, Kṛṣṇa pretends to be lost in contemplation, and then replies, “As an ideal *brahmacārī*, I do not touch women nor do I look at any part of their bodies. I’m sorry, but this is My vow! But since you are very eager and are depending on Me, I will honor your desire. Let Me see Her hand from a distance.”

Glancing upon Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s soft reddish palm awakened Kṛṣṇa’s memory of His many intimate pastimes with Her. Overwhelmed by blissful symptoms, Kṛṣṇa began to cry, horripilate and tremble in joy.

Trying to conceal His ecstasy, Kṛṣṇa exclaimed, “Aha! This is amazing. I can see from the auspicious marks on Her hand that this girl is the goddess of fortune Herself! All opulence will manifest wherever She casts Her merciful glance. Wherever She lives will be filled with auspiciousness.” Inner meaning: “I will become the most fortunate person when I meet alone with Rādhā.”

Kṛṣṇa asked Jaṭilā the name of her son. Then after making a show of calculating his horoscope, Kṛṣṇa said, “I see many dangerous and inauspicious planets influencing your son’s life. It appears that he could die at any moment. But rest assured, all this is nullified by the power of this chaste girl.”

Hearing this, Jaṭilā became very happy and placed two jewelled rings before Kṛṣṇa as a reward. With His skilful word jugglery Kṛṣṇa converted the angry, suspicious, and harsh spoken Jaṭilā into an affectionate mother-in-law. At that time, Subala arrived and said, “Hey Viśva Śarma! Kṛṣṇa is anxiously waiting for you. He wants to serve you and Madhumāṅgala a forest feast of fruits and milk.

Madhumāṅgala said, “Oh Jāratī! [old lady, a name for Jaṭilā] Give me a reward for the blessings I have bestowed.” Jaṭilā gave him two of her own golden rings. Happy with the gift, Madhumāṅgala made an amusing sound by repeatedly slapping his armpits. Then he wrapped the rings and the Sūrya *prasāda* from the sacrifice in his cloth. While praising Rādhā and Jaṭilā, Baṭu began dancing.

Jaṭilā offered obeisances to Sūryadeva, Viśva Śarma and Madhumāṅgala. Then, feeling satisfied, she took Rādhā and the *sakhīs* home. While walking, Rādhikā repeatedly looked back over Her shoulders on the pretext of talking with Lalitā-sakhī. This was just an excuse to catch a glimpse of Her beloved who was standing in the doorway of Sūryadeva’s temple.

“Oh Swāminī! On the way home after performing Sūrya-*pūjā*, You will be very anxious to get a last look at Kṛṣṇa. Knowing Your mind, I will deliberately lag behind to give You a chance to look toward the sun-god’s temple. As You repeatedly drink the sweet nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s face, You will say to me, ‘Come on *kinkarī*, hurry up!’ ” (*Saṅkalpa-kalpa-druma*)

Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Govinda kī jai!
Śrī Sūrya Pūjā kī jai!

Chapter 9: Prayers

RĀDHĀRĀNĪ KĪ JAI! MAHĀRĀNĪ KĪ JAI!

*rādhārānī kī jai, mahārānī kī jai.
bolo barṣāṇe vārī kī jai jai jai (1)*

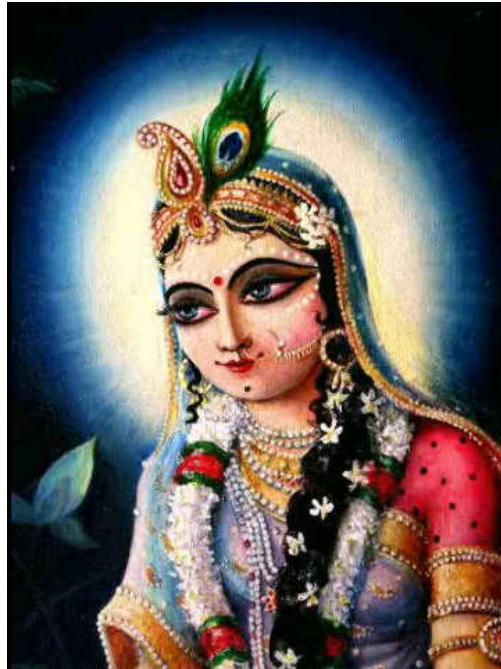
*ṭhākurānī kī jai, hari pyārī kī jai
vr̥ṣabhānu-dulārī kī jai jai jai (2)*

*gaurāṅgī kī jai, hemāṅgī kī jai
vrajarāja-kumāri kī jai jai jai (3)*

*vrajā-rānī kī jai, vraja devī kī jai
gahvara vana vārī kī jai jai jai (4)*

1. All glories to Rādhārānī! All glories to the greatest of all Queens.
Sing the glories of Rādhārānī, who lives in Barṣāṇā.
2. All glories to Rādhā Ṭhākurānī [Queen Rādhā], who is the beloved of Śrī Hari. All glories to the beloved daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu.
3. All glories to Rādhārānī who has a fair complexion and golden limbs.
4. All glories to the Queen of Vraja. All glories to the goddess of Vraja.
All glories to Rādhā who wanders in the Gahvara forest.

RĀDHĀ KR̥PĀ KATĀKṢA (by Lord Śiva)



*munīndra vṛnda vandite! tri loka śoka hārini!
prasanna vaktra paṅkaje! nikuñjā bhū vilāsini!
vrajendra bhānu nandini! vrajendra sūnu saṅgate!
kadā kariṣyasiha mām, kṛpā kaṭākṣa bhājanam?*

Adored by all the best of sages, Rādhā removes all the miseries of the three worlds! Her joyful face blooms like a lotus flower! In Vraja's secret groves Rādhā delights in pastimes of love. Rādhā is the charming daughter of King Vṛśabhānu, and She always associates intimately with the son of the King of Vraja. Oh when will You shower upon me Your sidelong glance of over flowing grace?

*aśoka vṛkṣa vallarī! vitāna maṇḍapa sthite!
pravāla vāla pallava! prabhāruṇanghri komale!
varābhaya sphurat kare! prabhūta sampadālaye!
kadā kariṣyasiha mām, kṛpā kaṭākṣa bhājanam?*

Rādhikā rests upon a flower throne beneath a canopy of creepers and boughs of *aśoka*. Her soft and delicate lotus feet radiate a pinkish glow like coral-colored freshly sprouted leaf buds. Her upraised hand bestows the benediction of fearlessness upon Her devotees. Rādhā is the abode of abundant opulences. O when will She shower upon me Her sidelong glance of over flowing grace?

*anāṅga rāṅga mañgala! prasaṅga bhaṅgura bhruvāṁ!
 savibhramāṁ sasambhramāṁ! dṛganta vāṇa pātanaiḥ!
 nirantaraṁ vasī kṛta! pratīta nanda nandane!
 kadā kariṣyasiḥa mām! kṛpā kaṭākṣa bhājanam?*

Rādhā continuously subdues the Son of Nanda into complete surrender unto Herself by piercing Him with the arrows of loving glances shot from the corners of Her eyes. These glances, laden with amorous delusions, inspire Śyāma with feelings of the most reverential submission. This is further enhanced by Rādhā’s crookedly-bending eyebrows that dance with the most auspicious sportive interest of the God of love! O when will She shower upon me Her sidelong glance of overflowing grace?

*tadīt suvarṇa campaka! pradīpta gaura vigrahe!
 mukha prabhā parāsta koṭi! śāradendu maṇḍale!
 vicitra citra sañcarac! cakora śāva locane!
 kadā kariṣyasiḥa mām! kṛpā kaṭākṣa bhājanam?*

Rādhikā’s form has a fair complexion brilliantly more effulgent than a combination of lightning, pure gold, and campaka flowers. The splendor of Her face defeats the glory of a million Autumn moons. Rādhā’s restless eyes move to and fro like young *cakora* birds, and thus make astonishing expressions from moment to moment. O when will She shower upon me Her sidelong glance of overflowing grace?

*madonmadāti yauvane! pramoda māna maṇdite!
 priyānurāga rañjite! kāla vilāsa paṇḍite!
 ananya dhanya kuñja rājya! kāma keli kovide!
 kadā kariṣyasiḥa mām! kṛpā kaṭākṣa bhājanam?*

Śrīmatī Rādhikā is madly intoxicated with Her own eternal youth. She is adorned with the great delight of Her mood of jealous pouting. Rādhā is dyed in pure loving affection for Her beloved. She is most expert in all the arts of making love. Śrīmatī is most learned in designing loving sports within the matchless opulent kingdom of glorious forest groves. O when will She shower upon me Her sidelong glance of over flowing grace?

*aśeṣa hāva bhāva dhīra! hīra hāra bhūṣite!
 prabhūta śāta kumbha kumbha! kumbhi kumbha sustani!*

*praśaṣṭā manda hāsyā cūrṇa! pūrṇa saukhya sāgare
kadā kariṣyasiha mām! kṛpā kaṭākṣa bhājanam?*

Śrīmatī Rādhikā is decorated with the diamond necklace of feminine charms like amorous gestures, ecstatic moods, and gentle manners. Rādhā's breasts are plump like the purest golden water pots or the cranial globes of a young elephant. Rādhā is like a swelling ocean of happiness full of the soft pollen of Her most glorious mild sweet smile. O when will She shower upon me Her sidelong glance of over flowing grace?

*mṛṇāla vāla vallarī! taraṅga raṅga dor late!
latāgra lāsyā lola nīla! locanāvalokane!
lalal lulan milan manojñā! mugdha mohanāśrite!
kadā kariṣyasiha mām! kṛpā kaṭākṣa bhājanam?*

Rādhikā's creeper thin arms rhythmically wave and flow like fresh young lotus stems in the ripples of a river. The restless roving glance of Rādhā's deep blue eyes dances seductively like vine-tips in the breeze. Her playful and alluring movements entice lovely meetings, and fascinate Mohana Himself to take refuge in Her charms. O when will She shower upon me Her sidelong glance of over flowing grace?

*suvarṇa mālikāñcita! tri rekha kambu kaṇthage!
tri sūtra maṅgalī gunā! tri ratna dīpti dīdhite!
salola nīla kuntala! prasūna guccha gumphite!
kadā kariṣyasiha mām! kṛpā kaṭākṣa bhājanam?*

Śrīmatī Rādhikā wears a pure golden necklace on Her neck, which is as graceful as a lovely conch enhanced with three lines. Rādhā shines in the splendorous auras of Her three-stranded necklace, woven with small jasmine garlands, and decorated with the three jewels of diamond, emerald and pearl. Her luxuriant black tresses, artfully woven with clusters of flowers, flow in waves towards Her heels. O when will She shower upon me Her sidelong glance of over flowing grace?

*nitamba bimba lambamāna! puṣpa mekhālā gunē!
praśaṣṭā ratna kiṅkinī! kalāpa madhya mañjule!
karindra śuṇḍa daṇḍikā! varoha saubhagoruke!
kadā kariṣyasiha mām! kṛpā kaṭākṣa bhājanam?*

Rādhā's rounded hips are decorated by a belt of dangling flowers. Her charmingly thin waist is decorated by groups of superexcellent tiny tinkling jewel-bells. Śrīmatī Rādhikā's most beautiful thighs taper gracefully like the trunk of the king of elephants. O when will She shower upon me Her sidelong glance of over flowing grace?

*aneka mantra nāda mañju! nūpurā rava skhalat!
samāja rāja haṁsa varṇa! nikvanāti gaurave!
vilola hema vallarī! viḍambi cāru caṅkrame!
kadā kariṣyasiha mām! kṛpā kaṭākṣa bhājanam?*

Rādhāraṇī's most captivating anklebells are resounding various *Vedic mantras* as She walks. They also possess the superexcellence of resembling the warbling of a flock of the most noble swans. The elegant movement of Her limbs puts to shame the swaying dance of golden creepers. O when will She shower upon me Her sidelong glance of over flowing grace?

*ananta koṭi viṣṇu loka! namra padma jārcite!
himādrijā pulomajā! viriñcijā vara prade!
apāra siddhi vṛddhi digdha! sat padāṅguli nakhe!
kadā kariṣyasiha mām! kṛpā kaṭākṣa bhājanam?*

Śrīmatī Rādhikā is humbly bowed to by all the Lord Brahmās in the countless millions of universes created by Lord Viṣṇu. Rādhā is the bestower of boons upon Pārvatī [daughter of the Himālayas], Śacī [Indra's wife and daughter of Pulomā] and to Sarasvatī [Brahmā's wife]. Rādhā's toenails glow with the radiance of boundless mystic perfections and opulent prosperities. O when will She shower upon me Her sidelong glance of overflowing grace?

*makheśvari! kriyeśvari! svadheśvari! sureśvari!
triveda bhāratīśvari! pramāṇa! śāsaneśvari!
rameśvari! kṣameśvari! pramoda-kānaneśvari!
vrajeśvari! vrajādhipe! śrīrādhike! namo stu te!*

Oh Goddess of *Vedic* sacrifices! Oh Goddess of all pious activities! Oh Goddess of all that is natural and spontaneous! Oh Goddess of all the demigods and goddesses! Oh Goddess of all the knowledge of the three *Vedas*! Oh Goddess of the enforcement of universal law! Oh Goddess of fortune! Oh Goddess of forgiveness! Oh Goddess of the most pleasurable

forest of Vṛndāvana! Oh Goddess of the entire realm of Vraja! Oh one and only authority of Vraja! Oh Śrī Rādhikā! I offer my most respectful obeisances unto You!

*itī mamadbhutam stavaṁ niśamya bhānu nandinī
karotu sañtataṁ janam kṛpā kaṭākṣa bhājanam
bhavet tadaiva sañcita trirūpa-karma nāśanam
bhavet tadā vrajendra-sūnu maṇḍala praveśanam*

May Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī, upon hearing my most astonishing prayer being recited by someone, make that person the constant object of her most merciful side-long glance. Then, at that time, one will feel that all the effects of the three types of karma [whether entangling one in the past, present or future] have been completely destroyed. At such a time, one will finally gain entrance into the assembly of Nandānandana's eternal loving associates.

PHALA ŚRUTI

That *sādhaka* [practicing devotee] of purified intelligence, who recites this *stava* with a fixed mind on the lunar days— full moon, bright *aṣṭamī* [waxing eighth day], *daśamī* [tenth day], *ekādaśī* [eleventh day], or *trayodasī* [thirteenth day] — finds that each and every desire that one had will be fulfilled without fail. And by the most merciful side-long glance of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, one will obtain devotional service which has a very special quality of pure, ecstatic love [*prema*].

The aspirant who recites this hymn one hundred times, while immersed in the waters of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, either up to his waist, navel, chest, or neck, achieves the perfection of his desired ends. Whatever he speaks come true, He will receive full spiritual opulences, and get the direct personal *darśana* of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī!

Being pleased with him, Śrīmatī Rādhikā will immediately grant him the greatest benediction. With his own eyes he will get to see Her sweet darling Śyāmasundara. In response, the Lord of Vraja grants that devotee entrance into His eternal pastimes. For a Vaiṣṇava, there is no greater goal to be achieved than this.

RĀDHĀ-KUNÒAŚTĀKĀÀ

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī

*vṛṣabha danuja nāsān narma dharmokti rangair
 nikhila nija sakhibhir yat sva hastena pūrṇam
 prakaṭitam api vṛndāraṇya rājñā pramodais
 tad ati surabhi rādhā kuṇḍam evāśrayo me*

Appearing after the Divine Couple's joking quarrel about Kṛṣṇa's violating the principles of piety by killing a bull (the demon Ariṣṭāsura), Rādhā-kuṇḍa was joyfully excavated by the beautiful hands of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the Queen of Vṛndāvana, and Her own girlfriends. Let this beautiful and enchanting Rādhā-kuṇḍa be my only shelter.

*vraja bhavi mura śatroḥ preyasīnāṁ nikāmair
 asulabham api tūrṇam prema kalpa drumāṁ tam
 janayati hṛdi bhūmau snātūr uccair priyam yat
 tad ati surabhi rādhā kuṇḍam evāśrayo me*

The seed of the desire tree of *prema* is sown in the heart of anyone who bathes here, although Kṛṣṇa's dear girlfriends in Vrajabhūmi rarely attain it. Let this beautiful and enchanting Rādhā-kuṇḍa be my only shelter.

*agha ripur api yatnād atra devyāḥ prasāda
 prasara kṛta kaṭākṣa prāpti kāmaḥ prakāmam
 anusarati yad uccaiḥ snāna sevānubandhais
 tad ati surabhi rādhā kuṇḍam evāśrayo me*

Kṛṣṇa Himself, the enemy of Aghāsura, carefully takes shelter of Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Hoping to attain the merciful sidelong glance of Śrī Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa eagerly bathes in and worships Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Let this beautiful and enchanting Rādhā-kuṇḍa be my only shelter.

*vraja bhuvana sudhāṁśoh prema bhūmir nikāmaṁ
 vraja madhura kiśorī mauli ratna priyeva
 paricitam api nāmnā yac ca tenaiva tasyās
 tad ati surabhi rādhā kuṇḍam evāśrayo me*

Rādhā-kuṇḍa is the abode of love for Kṛṣṇa, the moon of Vraja. Because Rādhikā is the crown jewel of all the sweet youthful *gopīs* of Vraja, She is Kṛṣṇa's most beloved. Rādhā-kuṇḍa is equally as dear to Kṛṣṇa as Śrī Rādhā Herself. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa has named it after Rādhā. Let this beautiful and enchanting Rādhā-kuṇḍa be my only shelter.

*api jana iha kaścid yasya sevā prasādaiḥ
 praṇaya sura latā syāt tasya goṣṭhendra sūnoḥ
 sapadi kila mad īśā dāsyā puṣpa praśasyā
 tad ati surabhi rādhā kuṇḍam evāśrayo me*

By the mercy of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, anyone who performs devotional service here will awaken the desire to be Rādhā's maidservant. This is the blooming flower on the desire vine of Kṛṣṇa *prema*. Let this beautiful and enchanting Rādhā-kuṇḍa be my only shelter.

*taṭa madhura nikuñjāḥ klpta nāmāna uccair
 nija pari�ana vargaiḥ saṁvibhagyāśritās taiḥ
 madhukara ruta ramyā yasya rājanti kāmyās
 tad ati surabhi rādhā kuṇḍam evāśrayo me*

On the banks surrounding Rādhā-kuṇḍa are sweet and delightful *nikuñjās* (forest groves) full of buzzing bees that awaken the desire for amorous pleasure. These *kuñjas* are personally arranged and named after each of Rādhārāṇī's *aṣṭā-sakhīs*. Let this beautiful and enchanting Rādhā-kuṇḍa be my only shelter.

*taṭa bhuvi vara vedyāṁ yasya narmāti hṛdyāṁ
 madhura madhura vārtāṁ goṣṭha candraSYa bhaṅgyā
 prathayati mitha īśā prāṇa sakhyālibhiḥ sā
 tad ati surabhi rādhā kuṇḍamevāśrayo me*

On the bank of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śrīmatī Rādhikā sits on an excellent jewelled platform with Her dearest girlfriends. Along with different gestures, they make very sweet and pleasant jokes about Kṛṣṇa, the moon over Vraja. Let this beautiful and enchanting Rādhā-kuṇḍa be my only shelter.

*anudinam ati raṅgaiḥ prema mattāli saṅghair
 vara sarasija gandhair hāri vārī prapūrṇe
 viharata iha yasmin dampatī tau pramattau
 tad ati surabhi rādhā kuṇḍam evāśrayo me*

Maddened with love, Rādhā-Mādhava, and the *gopīs* come here every day and happily play in Rādhā-kuṇḍa which is full of colorful lotus flowers, sweetening the air with their charming aroma. Let this beautiful and enchanting Rādhā-kuṇḍa be my only shelter.

*avikalam ati devyāś cāru kundāṣṭākaṁ yah
 paripat̄hati tadiyollāsi dāsyārpitātmā
 aciram iha sarīre darśayaty eva tasmai
 madhu ripurati modaiḥ śliṣyamāṇāṁ priyāṁ tām*

Benediction: Anyone who with a peaceful mind recites this *Rādhā-kundāṣṭākaṁ*, while offering himself for Rādhā's blissful service, will quickly attain the *darśana* of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa happily embracing.

SAKHĪ-VRNDE VIJĀPTIŪ

Narottama Dāsa

*rādhā-kṛṣṇa prāṇa mora jugala-kiśora
 jīvane maraṇe gati āro nāhi mora*

O Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, You are my life and soul! O youthful Divine Couple, in life or death I have no other shelter but You.

*kālindīra kūle keli-kadambera vana
 ratana-bedīra upara bosābo du'jana*

I will place You upon a jeweled throne in a pleasant forest of flowering *kadamba* trees on the shore of the Yamuna River.

*śyāma-gaurī-aṅge dibo candanera gandha
 cāmara ḍhulābo kabe heri mukha-candra*

I will anoint Your dark and fair forms with *aguru* scented sandalwood pulp. I will fan You with a *cāmara* whisk, as I lovingly gaze upon Your moonlike faces?

*gāthiyā mālatīr mālā dibo dohāra gale
 adhare tuliyā dibo karpūra-tāmbūle*

I will string garlands of *mālatī* flowers and place them on Your necks. Then I will put betel-nuts mixed with camphor in Your lotus mouths.

*lalitā viśākhā-ādi jata sakhī-brnda
 ājñāya koribo sebā caraṇāravinda*

I will eagerly serve Your lotus feet by carrying out the orders of Lalitā, Viśākhā and all the other *gopīs*.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-prabhur dāser anudāsa
 sevā abhilāṣa kore narottama-dāsa*

Narottama Dāsa, the servant of the servant of Lord Caitanya, longs for this service to the Divine Couple.

ŚRĪ VRAJA-DHĀMA-MAHIMĀMṛTA

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa

*jaya rādhhe, jaya kṛṣṇa, jaya vṛndāvana
śrī-govinda, gopīnātha, madana-mohana (1)*
*śyāma-kuṇḍa, rādhā-kuṇḍa, giri-govardhan
kālindī-jamunā jaya, jaya mahāvan (2)*
*keśī-ghāṭa, baṁśī-baṭa, dwādaśa-kānan
jāhā saba līlā koilo, śrī-nanda-nandan (3)*
*śrī-nanda-jaśodā jaya, jaya gopa-gaṇ
śrīdāmādi jaya jaya, dhenu-vatsa-gaṇ (4)*
*jaya br̥ṣabhbhānu jaya, kīrtidā sundarī
jaya paurnamāstī jaya, ābhīra-nāgarī (5)*
*jaya jaya gopīśwara, vṛndāvana-mājh
jaya jaya kṛṣṇa-sakhā, baṭu dwija-rāj (6)*
*jaya rāma-ghāṭa jaya, rohiṇī-nandan
jaya jaya vṛndāvana,-bāstī jata jan (7)*
*jaya dwija-patnī jaya, nāga-kanyā-gaṇ
bhaktite jāhārā pāilo, govinda-caran (8)*
*śrī-rāsa-maṇḍala jaya, jaya rādhā-śyām
jaya jaya rāsa-līlā, sarva-manoram (9)*
*jaya jayojjwala-rasa, sarva-rasa-sār
parakīyā-bhave jāhā, brajete pracār (10)*
*śrī-jāhnava-pāda-padma, koriyā smaran
dīna kṛṣṇa-dāsa kohe, nāma-saṅkīrtan (11)*

1. All glories to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and to the transcendental realm of Vṛndāvana! All glories to the three presiding Deities of Vṛndāvana, Govinda, Gopīnātha and Madana-mohana.
2. All glories to Śyāma-kuṇḍa and Rādhā-kuṇḍa, which are beautiful garden pools belonging to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and are the places of the

pinnacle of Their *līlās*. All glories to Govardhana Hill, to the Yamunā or Kālindī, and to the glorious forest of Mahāvana.

3. All glories to Keśī-ghāṭa, where Kṛṣṇa killed the horse demon, and to the *varṣī-vāṭa* tree, where Kṛṣṇa used to sit and call the *gopīs* with His flute. All glories to the twelve groves of Vṛndāvana. These places set the background for the son of Nanda Mahārāja to play His pastimes.
4. All glories to Kṛṣṇa's divine mother and father, Nanda-Yaśodā, and to the cowherd men. All glories to Kṛṣṇa's cowherd boy friends headed by Śrīdāmā. All glories to the cows and calves of Vṛndāvana.
5. All glories to Kīrtidā and Vṛṣabhānu, Rādhā's mother and father, and to Her grandmother, who is the personality of Yogamāyā.
6. All glories to the Lord of the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana, and to Kṛṣṇa's funny *brāhmaṇa* friends Sudāmā and Madhumaṅgala.
7. All glories to Rāma-ghāṭa. All glories to the son of Rohinī [Balarāma], and all glories to all the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana.
8. All glories to the Nāgapatnīs. All glories to the wives of the *Vedicbrāhmaṇas* who left their husbands and surrendered at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, and were bestowed with pure *bhakti*.
9. All glories to the arena of the *rāsa* dance and Rādhā-Śyāma. All glories to the *rāsa-līlā* which captures the minds of all.
10. All glories to the ever-shining mellow of *parakīyā-bhāva*, the supreme platform of the unalloyed 'lawless love' of the *gopīs*.
11. Remembering the lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda's *saktī*, Śrī Jāhnava-devī [Yogamāyā], I, Kṛṣṇadāsa, a very fallen and lowly soul, sing the names of the Lord.

ŚRĪ RÜPA MAÑJARĪ PADA

Narottama Dāsa

*śri-rūpa-mañjarī-pada, sei mora sampada,
sei mor bhajana-pūjana
sei mora prāṇa-dhana, sei mora ābharaṇa,
sei mor jīvanera jīvana*

Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī's lotus feet are my only wealth. They are the object of my *bhajana* and worship. They are the ornament I wear and the treasure of

my heart. They sustain my very life.

*sei mora rasa-nidhi, sei mora vañca-siddhi,
sei mora vedera dharama
sei brata, sei tapa, sei mora mantra-japa
sei mor dharama-karama*

They are an ocean of *rasa* fulfilling all my desires. They are the perfection of *Vedic dharma*. They are the goal of all my vows, austerities, and the chanting of my *mantra*. They are the purpose of all my pious activities.

*anukūla habe vidhi, se-pade hoibe siddhi
nirakhibo e dui nayane
se rūpa-mādhuri-rāsi, prāṇa-kuvalaya śaśī
praphullita habe niśi-dine*

By the mercy of those feet my activities will become favorable to devotion, and spiritual perfection will be attained. Then I will see the sweet, amorous form of the Divine Couple. Both day and night, Śrī Rūpa-māñjarī's divine feet will shine like the brilliant moon upon the lotus of my heart, thus giving relief to my afflicted soul.

*tuwā adaraśana-ahi, garale jāralo dehī
ciro-dina tāpita jīvana
hā hā rūpa koro doyā, deho mora-pada-chāyā
narottama loilo śaraṇa*

The venom of the snake of separation from You has caused this spirit soul to wither and decay. For many days my life-breath has burned in the fire of separation from you. O Rūpa-māñjarī, please be merciful to me, and give me the shade of your lotus feet. Narottama dāsa takes shelter of you

SARPĀRŚADA-BHAGAVAD-VIRAHĀ-JANITA-VILĀPA

Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura

*je ānilo prema-dhana koronā pracura
heno prabhu kothā gelā ācārya-ṭhākura*

Śrīnivāsa Ācārya Ṭhākura gave the treasure of Kṛṣṇa *prema* to everyone. Oh, where has Prabhu gone now?

*kāhā mora swarūpa rūpa kāhā sanātana
kāhā dāsa raghunātha patita-pāvana*

Where are my Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rūpa Gosvāmī? Where is Sanātana?
Where is Dāsa Raghunātha, the saviour of the fallen?

*kāhā mora bhaṭṭa-juga kāhā kavirāja
eka-kāle kothā gelā gorā naṭa-rāja*

Where are my Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa and Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, and where is Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja? All at once, they have gone to join Lord Gaurāṅga, the king of dancers.

*pāṣāṇe kuṭibo māṭhā anala paśibo
gaurāṅga guṇera nidhi kothā gele pābo*

I will crush my head with a rock and jump into a fire. Where will I find Lord Gauranga, the reservoir of all wonderful qualities.

*se-saba saṅgītra saṅge je koilo bilāsa
se-saṅga nā pāiyā kānde narottama dāsa*

They have all gone off together to relish blissful pastimes. Unable to obtain their association, I [Narottama dāsa] must simply weep..

VAIŚNAVE VIJİAPTI

Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura

*ei-bāro karuṇā koro vaiṣṇava gosāi
patita-pāvana tomā bine keho nāi*

O Vaiṣṇava Gosāi! O ocean of mercy. Please be merciful to me now. You are the saviour of the fallen. Without you, there is no one.

*jāhāra nikāṭe gele pāpa dūre jāy
emona doyāla prabhu kebā kothā pāy*

All sins go far away just by seeing you. Where can anyone find such kindness?

*gaṅgāra paraśa hoile paścāte pāvan
darśane pavitra koro—ei tomāra guṇ*

After bathing many times in the sacred Ganges, one becomes purified. But merely by seeing you, the fallen souls become purified. Such is your great power.

*hari-sthāne aparādhe tāre hari nām
tomā sthāne aparādhe nāhi paritrāṇ*

The holy name delivers offenders to Lord Hari, but if one offends you, there is no means of deliverance.

*tomāra hṛdoye sadā govinda-viśrām
govinda kohena—mora vaisṇava parāṇ*

Lord Govinda always stays within your heart. Lord Govinda says: “The Vaiṣṇavas are my life and soul.”

*prati-janme kori āśā caraṇera dhūli
narottame koro doyā āpanāra boli’*

I hope that in every birth I will obtain the dust of your lotus feet. Narottama dāsa prays, “Please, O Vaiṣṇava Gosaī, be kind unto me.

ŚRĪ-ŚRĪ ŠAÒ-GOSVĀMY-AṢṭAKA

Śrīnivāsa Ācārya

*kṛṣṇokīrtana-gāna-nartana-parau, premāmr̥tāmbho-nidhī
dhīrādhīra-jana-priyau priya-karau, nirmatsarou pūjītau
srī-caitanya-kṛpā-bharau bhuvi bhuvo, bhārāvahantārakau
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau, śrī-jīva-gopālakau (1)*

*nāna-sāstra-vicāraṇaika-nipuṇau, sad-dharma-saṁsthāpakau
lokānāṁ hita-kāriṇau tri-bhuvane, manyau śaranyākarau
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-padāravinda-bhajanā, nandena mattālikau
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau, śrī-jīva-gopālakau (2)*

*śrī-gaurāṅga-guṇānuvarṇana-vidhau, śraddhā-samṛddhy-anvitau
pāpottāpa-nikṛntanau tanu-bhṛtāṁ, govinda-ganāmr̥taih
ānandāmbudhi-vardhanaika-nipuṇau, kaivalya-nistārakau
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau, śrī-jīva-gopālakau (3)*

*tyaktvā tūrṇam aśeṣa-maṇḍala-pati,-śrenīṁ sadā tuccha-vat
bhutva dīna-gaṇeśakau karuṇayā, kaupīna-kanthāśritau
gopī-bhāva-rasāmr̥tābdhi-laharī,-kallola-magnau muhur
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau, śrī-jīva-gopālakau (4)*

*kūjat-kokila-haṁsa-sārasa-gaṇā, kīrne mayūrākule
nānā-ratna-nibaddha-mūla-viṭapa, śrī-yukta-vṛndāvane*

*rādhā-kṛṣṇam ahar-niśam prabhatau, jīvārthadau yau mudā
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau, śrī-jīva-gopālakau (5)*

*saṅkhyā-pūrvaka-nāma-gāna-natibhīḥ, kālāvasānī-kṛtau
nidrāhāra-vihārakādi-vijitau, cātyanta-dinau ca yau
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa-smṛter madhurimā, nandena sammohitau
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau, śrī-jīva-gopālakau (6)*

*rādhā-kuṇḍa-taṭe kalinda-tanayā-tīre ca vaṁśīvate
premonmāda-vaśad aśeṣa-daśaya, grastau pramattau sadā
gāyāntau ca kadā harer guṇa-varam, bhāvābhībhūtau mudā
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau, śrī-jīva-gopālakau (7)*

*he rādhe vraja-devīke ca lalite, he nanda-sūno kutah
śrī govardhana-kalpa-pādapa-tale, kālindī-vane kutah
ghoṣantāḥ iti sarvato vraja-pure, khedair mahā-vihvalau
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau, śrī-jīva-gopālakau (8)*

1. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Gosvāmīs namely Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, who are always engaged in dancing and chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. They are just like the ocean of love of God. Because they are not envious of anyone they are popular both with the gentle and with the ruffians. Their actions are pleasing to everyone, and they are fully blessed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Thus, they are engaged in missionalry activities meant to deliver all the conditioned souls in the material universe.
2. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Gosvāmīs namely Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, who are very expert in scrutinizingly studying all the revealed scriptures with the aim of establishing eternal religious principles for the benefit of all human beings. Thus, they are honored all over the three worlds. They are worth taking shelter of because they are absorbed in the mood of the *gopīs*, and they are engaged in the transcendental loving service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

3. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Gosvāmīs namely Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭā Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭā Gosvāmī, who are very much enriched in understanding of Lord Caitanya, and who are thus expert in narrating His transcendental qualities. They can purify all conditioned souls from the reactions of their sinful activities by pouring upon them transcendental songs about Govinda. As such, they are very expert in increasing the limits of the ocean of transcendental bliss. They are the saviors of the living entities from the devouring mouth of liberation.
4. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Gosvāmīs namely Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭā Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭā Gosvāmī, who kicked off all association of aristocracy as insignificant. In order to deliver the poor conditioned souls, they accepted loincloths, treating themselves as mendicants, but they are always merged in the ecstatic ocean of the *gopī*'s love for Kṛṣṇa, and they bathe always and repeatedly in the waves of that ocean.
5. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Gosvāmīs namely Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭā Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭā Gosvāmī, who were always engaged in worshiping Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the transcendental land of Vṛndāvana, where there are beautiful trees full of fruits and flowers which have under their roots all valuable jewels. The Gosvāmīs are perfectly competent to bestow upon the living entities the greatest boon of the goal of life.
6. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Gosvāmīs namely Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭā Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭā Gosvāmī, who were engaged in chanting the holy names of the Lord and bowing down in a scheduled measurement. In this way, they utilized their valuable lives, and in executing devotional activities they conquered over eating and sleeping. They were always meek and humble, enchanted by remembering the transcendental qualities of the Lord.

7. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Gosvāmīs namely Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭā Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭā Gosvāmī, who were sometimes on the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa or the shores of the Yamunā, and sometimes in Vāṁśīvaṭa. There they appeared just like madmen in the full ecstasy of love for Kṛṣṇa, exhibiting different transcendental symptoms in their bodies. They were always absorbed in the ecstasy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
8. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Gosvāmīs namely Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhaṭṭā Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, and Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭā Gosvāmī, who were chanting very loudly everywhere in Vṛndāvana, shouting, “Queen of Vṛndāvana, Rādhārāṇī! O Lalitā! O son of Nanda Mahārāja! Where are you all now? Are you just on the hill of Govardhana, or are you under the trees on the bank of the Yamunā? Where are you?” These were their moods in executing Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa Śyāma-kuṇḍa kī jai!

Chapter 10: Dates and Devotees

During the last five-hundred years many great devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa have done bhajana in Vṛndāvana and visited Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Of course, until the time of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa were practically invisible. These divine lakes of *prema* were existing in an unmanifest form as two tiny ponds in the middle of some paddy fields. Other than naming them Gaurī and Kalī kuṇḍas, the local Vrajavāsīs ignored them.

However, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His various forms as Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, Advaita Ācārya and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, along with many of the Lord's *premabhaktas* have realized the location and supreme significance of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Therefore, they came here from time to time to lovingly serve Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa.

This chapter lists the years and gives brief descriptions of the visits of Lord and His devotees. From this list we can understand that the beautiful form of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is always attracting Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. Other important dates and devotees are listed to give a historical context. Years listed are according to the Christian calendar. Most of the information here comes from Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Sanskriti Aur Sahitya, printed by Govinda Deva Mandira, Jaipur

1100- Rise of poet Jayadeva Ṭhākura

1130

1374 Birth of poet Vidyāpati

1383 Birth of Candīdāsa, the Pada-karta

1434 Appearance of Advaita Ācārya

1441 Appearance of Śacī Mātā

1450 Birth of Haridāsa Ṭhākura

1455 Śrī Advaita Ācārya visits Vṛndāvana and meets the old rasika poet Vidyāpati. Advaita Ācārya Prabhu found and worshiped a Deity of Madana Gopāla. Later Sanātana

Gosvāmī built a temple for this same Deity who became known as Madana Mohana.

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1465 | Birth of Sanatana Gosvami & Ramananda Raya |
| 1470 | Birth of Murāri Gupta and Rūpa Gosvāmī |
| 1473 | Appearance of Nityānanda Prabhu
Appearance of Viśvarūpa & Vallabhācārya |
| 1479 | Śrī Mādhavendra Purī visited Govardhana and Aniyora, and established the worship of Gopāla Rāja, Śrī Nāthajī. He also came to Rādhā-kuṇḍa and did <i>bhajana</i> on the eastern bank of Śyāma-kuṇḍa. There is a shrine there marking his sitting place. |
| 1482 | In Vṛndāvana, Śrī Advaita Ācārya takes <i>mantra</i> diksa from Mādhavendra Purī. |
| 1483 | Birth of Lokanātha Gosvāmī |
| 1486 | Appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu |
| 1487 | Appearance of Gadādhara Paṇḍita Gosvāmī |
| 1491 | Sannyasa of Viśvarūpa, Dis Mādhavendra Purī |
| 1494 | Birth of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī |
| 1496 | Appearance of Viṣṇupriyā Devī
Disappearance of Jagannātha Miśra
Birth of Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja |
| 1500 | Birth of Gopala Bhatta Gosvami |
| 1501 | Nimai Marries Lakṣmīpriyā Devī |
| 1502 | Lakṣmīpriyā Devī dies of snake bite |
| 1504 | Nimai Marries Viṣṇupriyā Devī |
| 1505 | Birth of Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī |

- 1509** On Lord Caitanya's order, Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī and Bhugarbha Gosvāmī came to Vṛndāvana. They uncover many places of Rādhā-Śyāmasundara's eternal pastimes, but not Rādhā-kuṇḍa.
- 1509** Installation of Radha-Vallabha at Vṛndāvana
- 1510** Nimaī takes sannyasa
- 1511** Birth of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī
- 1514** Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu stayed two months in Vṛndāvana. He arrived on Kārtika Pūrṇimā, and stayed for Mārgaśīrṣa and Pauṣa months [November-December]. Overwhelmed in prema, the Lord toured Vraja's twelve forests. In an ecstatic mood of compassion, He revealed the greatest gift: the location of Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa!
- 1515** Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī come to Vṛndāvana uncover the lost places of Rādhā-Mādhava's blissful pastimes.
- 1530** Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī moves to Vṛndāvana
- 1531** Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī moves to Vṛndāvana
- 1534** Lord Caitanya's disappearance
- 1535** Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī arrives in Vṛndāvana
Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī arrives in Rādhā-kuṇḍa.
- 1541** Dissappearance of Lord Nityānanda
Rūpa Gosvāmī finishes Bhakti-rasāmr̥ta-sindhu
- 1542** Appearance of Rādhā-Dāmodara and Rādhāramaṇa in Vṛndāvana.
- 1545** Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī purchased the land around Rādhā-

kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa to preserve this precious place for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. He also built a bhajanakuṭīra at Śyāma-kuṇḍa.

Birth of Gopāla-Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī

- | | |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1550 | Disappearance of Advaita Acarya Prabhu |
| 1554 | The final renovation of Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa was completed under Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī's management. The first mahānta [senior sevait] of Rādhā-kuṇḍa was Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, then Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, and then Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dāsa [a prominent disciple of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī]. |
| 1563 | Disappearance of Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī |
| 1564 | Disappearance of Sanātana Gosvāmī
Disappearance of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī |
| 1573 | Jiva Gosvami meets Muslim Emperor Akbar in Vṛndāvana, which he called Fakirabad [place of ascetics]. |
| 1575 | Chaitanya Bhagvata finished by Vṛndāvana Dāsa |
| 1580 | Rādhā Madana Mohana Mandira opens |
| 1581 | On the banks of Śyāma-kuṇḍa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī completes the magnificent Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta. |
| 1582 | Śrī Jāhnavā Devī visited Vṛndāvana and spent four blissful days at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. She met with Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī and Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī. |
| 1582 | Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, Śyāmānanda Prabhu, and Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura Mahāśaya came to Rādhā-kuṇḍa to have |

darśana of Dāsa Gosvāmī. Afterwards, they take the Gosvāmī's books to Bengal.

1583 Disappearance of Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī

1585 Disappearance of Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī

1588 Disappearance of Kṛṣṇadasa Kavirāja Gosvāmī

1588 Disappearance of Lokanātha Gosvāmī

1590 Rādhā Govinda Mandira opens in Vṛndāvana

1608 Disappearance of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī

1611 Disappearance of Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura

1630 Disappearance of Śyāmānanda Prabhu

1646 Birth of Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura

"My my tongue be overwhelmed in ecstasy by tasting the nectarean mellow of Rādhā's holy name. May I freely wander the footpaths of Vṛndāvana, which are marked with the glorious footprints of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. May my hands be engaged only in Śrī Rādhā(*Rādhā-rasa-sudhanidhi*)

Śrī-Śrī Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī ki jai!

References

AP	Ādi Purāṇa
AVP	Ādi-varāha Purāṇa
BG	Bhāgavad-Gītā Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu Bhakti-ratnākara Bhakti-sandarbha Brahma-saṁhitā Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta
CB	Caitanya-bhāgavata
Cc.	Caitanya-caritāmṛta Caitanya-candrāmṛta Dāna-keli-kaumudī Gīta-govinda Gīta-mālā Gītāvālī Gopāla-campu Govinda-līlāmṛta
HB	Hari-bhakti-vilāsa V
HV	Hari-vamsa Purāṇa Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta
LB	Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta Mahājana-rācita Gīta Manah-śikṣā

NOI Nectar of Instruction

PP	Padma Purāṇa Prārthāna Prema-bhakti-candrikā Rādhā-rasa-sudhanidhi Ṣad-gosvāmy-aṣṭaka Sanat-Kumara Saṁhitā Sankalpa-kalpa-druma
SD	Sārārtha Darśinī Śikṣāṣṭaka
SKP	Skanda Purāṇa
SB	Śrīmad Bhāgavatam
SPT	Śrīla Prabhupāda Tape Śrī Upadeśāmṛta Stava-māla Stavāvalī Utkalikā Vallariḥ
VK	Vilāpa-kusumāñjalī
VR	Vraja-rīti-cintāmaṇi C
VVS	Vraja-vilāsa-stava Vṛndāvana- mahimāmṛta

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Everyone wants happiness, peace and love but few know how to get it. Be all you can be, and more through these practical tips to better living, well being and fulfilment. Topics include: behaviour, compassion, difficulties, family life, old age, hope, karma, patience, success, and 100 more. Now read one and grow.

Sweet Notes – 2

Everyone wants happiness, peace and love but few know how to get it. Be all you can be, and more through these practical tips to better living, well being and fulfilment. Topics include: competition, desires, fear, freedom, love, protection, sacrifice, time and 100 more. Now read one and grow.

Prayers to Sri Nrsimhadeva

God comes in many forms to teach, to reform and to love. In this form as Lord Nrsimhadeva – ½ Lion, ½ Man, you will experience His ultimate expression of Divine power and protection. Just read this prayer and see.

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Learn about the true identity of Guru, and how you can love, serve and surrender to your Divine master with all your heart. This helpful little book contains 14 offerings of loving praise expressing a disciple's gratitude, respect and attachment to his eternal guide and friend.

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This is the most popular prayer in Vrndavana. It was composed by Lord Siva in Sanskrit. With the choicest melodious words, this prayer minutely describes the beautiful sweet form, attributes and divine play of Srimati Radharani. Reciting this prayer will free you from all your problems and quickly grant you the eternal service of Radha and Krsna in the divine realm of Vrndavana.

Lord Siva also glorifies Lord Sri Krsna in another prayer in this book entitled Krsna Krpa Kataksa. Reciting both prayers together will definitely fulfill all your pure desires.

Gauranga Gita

In the Vedas, the ancient seers of truth reveal a prophecy of a Golden Avatar of Love Divine who would descend in India at the beginning of the present age of Kali. The Vedas refer to this Golden Avatar as Sri Krsna Caitanya, and He is the self-same Lord Sri Krsna who spoke the timeless wisdom of the Bhagavad-Gita.

Now in one book you can access the complete teachings of Sri Krsna Caitanya who was affectionately known as Lord Gauranga. Gauranga Gita is a virtual encyclopaedia of Gaudiya Vaisnava philosophy and practices arranged in an alphabetical format. Find out everything Sri Krsna Caitanya said about love, family, God, yoga, meditation, soul, karma, society, liberation, the spiritual world and many more interesting subjects...

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You can master the science of mantra yoga by practicing the 60 easy yet esoteric techniques described in this book. The chanting of Vedic mantras either in kirtana with music or as japa in solitary contemplation has become very popular the world over. When transcendental mantras are chanted properly, they have the power to transform the consciousness and transport the mind to the highest realm of divine bliss and tranquillity. Read Art of Chanting and learn the process of perfection.

Appreciating Vrndavana Dhama

Vedic scriptural references and the author's personal experience of living in Vrndavana for 25 years blend harmoniously together to unravel the sweet charm and hidden mysteries of Lord Krsna's divine play land known as Vrndavana. More than the book, Appreciating Vrndavana Dhama is an enchanting journey wherein you will experience Lord's pastime-filled forests, talking trees, living dust, loving animals, blissful people, the damsels of Vraja, the Divine Couple, the rapture of bhakti, Sri Krsna's love groves, and classic medieval temples. Turn the pages and begin YOUR journey through the land of endless enchantment.

Appreciating Navadvipa Dhama

Sri Krsna Caitanya, the Golden Avatar of Love appeared in Navadvipa Dhama situated along the Ganges river, West Bengal, India. This book describes the transcendental identity, glories, power and beauty of every feature of this most sacred place on the planet.

Sarartha Darsini

The majesty, magic, power and sweetness of Lord Sri Krsna's amazing exploits in the forest of Vrndavana, the city of Mathura and the island paradise of Dvaraka are beautifully portrayed here in this classic book of commentaries on the Tenth Canto of the Srimad Bhagavatam. In Sarartha Darsini you will hear secret dialogues between Radha and Krsna and

discover the hidden inner meaning of the divine deeds of the Dark Lord Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Radha Kunda Mahima Madhuri

The fifty holy places located around Radha's fabled lake of love are fully described here. You will discover the prayer huts of the hermits, the tombs of the saints and the temples of Radha and Krsna. The book is full of fascinating stories about Radha and Her loving exchanges with Her beloved Sri Krsna. The unique identity and significance of Radha-kunda which is the holiest place in Vrndavana, is fully revealed in this wonderful book.

Jagannatha Puri Guide Book

Jagannatha Puri is definitely the most colourful and intriguing of all India's holy places. The book contains in-depth description of all the rites and rituals performed in the ancient temple of Lord Jagannatha. There is also a step by step guide to every holy place inside the massive temple complex and a full description of all the special spots around Puri which are sacred to Lord Jagannatha and to Sri Krsna Caitanya. With its maps, location descriptions and 8 planned day trips, this book is a must for every visitor to Jagannatha Puri.

Sri Caitanya Mangala

This is the oldest biography of Sri Krsna Caitanya, the "Golden Avatar of Love" who appeared in India in the 15th century. With flowing beautiful language this book describes the life, teachings and inner ecstasies of Sri Caitanya Mahäprabhu. Every incident comes alive as the reader immerses himself in Sri Caitanya's blissful pastimes from His boyhood days to His taking Sannyasa. Like a master musician, Locana Das Thakura uses words to carry one to the land of lila, wherein the Golden Avatar of Love Divine shares the most intimate exchanges with His closest associates. Enter the land of eternal love by turning the pages of this devotional classic!

Gaudiya Vaisnava Biographies & Samadhis in Vrndavana

The essential teachings on SPIRITUAL PERFECTION from the lives of 80 Gaudiya Vaisnava Saints are revealed here in this two part book. You will also learn about the hidden truths behind the burial tombs (called Samadhis) of the ascended masters of pure devotion. Find out how to approach the samadhis, how to pray and how to connect with the saints of the past absorbed in Samadhi. For seekers of the essence, looking for a direct experience, this book is a must.

Ananda Vrndavana Campu

This is probably the most poetic and intimate portrayal of Sri Krsna's life in Vrndavana that has ever been written. Five hundred years ago, Sri Kavi Karnapura, the author, was blessed and empowered by Sri Krsna Caitanya to write transcendental literature about Radha and Krsna. This book overflows with unexcelled charm and wit, and rich metaphorical language in its portrayal of Bhagavan Sri Krsna's action-packed, love-filled adventures in blissful Vrndavana.

Guaranteed, this book will be one of the most satisfying and rewarding books you have ever had.

Krsnahnika Kaumudi

This book is concise, fast-moving, emotive and filled with details, color and fun. Ride the waves of Kavi Karnapura's words into the highest dimensions of Radha-Krsna's divine play,

Their eternal eight fold daily pastimes (asta-kaliya-lila) wherein love, beauty, sweetness and charm prevail in every thought, word and deed.

Madhava Mahotsava

How did Srimati Radharani become known as Vrndavanesvari, “Queen of Vrndavana”? This 16th century classic describes Radha’s coronation ceremony wherein all the damsels of Vraja and the celestials of heaven attend the royal ceremony which includes nine luxurious baths and elaborate dressing and decorations. A surprise climax fills all with joy as Bhagavan Sri Krsna suddenly appears to place the symbolic coronation flower garland around the neck of His eternal beloved, the beautiful Sri Radha. Read this wonderful divine play and be transported to a land of joy, a land of mirth and a land of love.

Gayatri Mahima Madhuri

Learn how to tap the power of the secret mantras given by your guru. This book combines an in depth word-by-word analysis and the author’s 36 year experience to show you how to unleash the full power, mystery and sweetness of India’s most famous seven vedic mystic mantras. Learn today how to properly chant and meditate to realize the magic within the mantras.

Bhavansara Sangraha

A moment by moment minute description of Radha Krsna’s action packed, love-filled activities in the spiritual world. The best parts of all the Gosvami works have been collected here to vividly describe the wonderful eight-fold eternal daily pastimes (asta-kaliya-lila) of Radha-Krsna and all their loving associates in the divine realm of Vrndavana.

This book is a must for anyone who truly wants to know what Radha and Krsna do throughout the day in the spiritual world.

64 Super Excellent Qualities of Sri Krsna

This little book contains description and example of Lord Sri Krsna’s 64 divine qualities. You will learn how to experience God’s qualities in your everyday life, and thus become a blissful spiritual being yourself.

Radha Govinda Meditations Techniques

This book teaches one the easiest and the most powerful form of meditation. By practicing these meditation techniques you will increase your mental power, experience inner peace and attain a profound vision of God.

Sankalpa Kalpadruma

This book transports one to the spiritual realm where eternal life moves joyfully free from the limits of time. Discover the world of serving Radha and Krsna in the enchanting Lord of Love Divine.

Nama Aparadha

This is the age of light and sound. Magical mantras are everywhere found. But to attain perfection one must not make these ten mistakes. Now learn the way – read and realize.

Srila Prabhupada at Radha Damodara

Srila Prabhupada the world famous founder of the Hare Krsna movement (ISKCON) lived in seclusion for 6 years before leaving India to spread the teaching of Bhagavan Sri Krsna all

over the world. Srila Prabhupada passed his time in Vrndavana in a small room in the medieval temple of Thakura Radha Damodara besides the Yamuna river. Read about his daily practices, prayers, realizations and profound experience of divinity during those quiet years of introspection and solitary life.

Seeing Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in Puri

This mini spiritual guide takes you in the footsteps Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and shows you each sacred place wherein the Lord of Love (Prema Purushottama) experienced ecstasy in communion with divinity. All the astounding and wondrous activities of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in His exchanges with Lord Jagannatha in Puri are fully described here.