

Krishna's Holy Land

Vishrama Ghat

Sri Vraja Mandala Parikrama should begin in Mathura, the place where Lord Krishna appeared. When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to the Holy Dham of Vraja, He first visited Mathura and took bath here at Vishrama Ghat. Then He took bath at the twelve ghats to the south of Vishrama Ghat: Avimukta, Adirudha, Guhya Tirtha, Prayag Tirtha, Kankhala Tirtha, Tinluka, Surya Tirtha, Chintamani Ghat, Dhruva Ghat, Rishi Tirtha, Moksha Tirtha, and Bodha Tirtha. Afterwards He took bath at the twelve ghats to the north of Vishrama Ghat: Gokarna, Krishna Ganga, Vaikuntha Ghat, Asi Kunda, Chatur Samudrika Kupa, Akrura Tirtha, Yajñika Vipra Sthana, Kubja Kupa, Ranga Sthala, Mancha Sthala, Mallayuddha Sthana, and Dashashwamedha Ghat.

After ecstatically bathing in each one of these twenty-five ghats, Caitanya Mahaprabhu began His parikrama of Vraja. Prabhu Nityananda also took His bath in all of these ghats before beginning His ecstatic parikrama of Sri Vraja Mandala. So we will also humbly follow in Their footsteps and take bath here in the sacred Yamuna at Vishrama Ghat in Mathura. Then we will also bathe in the twelve ghats north and the twelve ghats south of Vishrama Ghat along the Yamuna. It was here at this place that Lord Krishna and Lord Balaram came to take rest after killing Kamsa and his eight brothers. Vishrama means to rest, so we can see that Vishrama Ghat is very auspicious. Hare Krishna!

Mathura's Four Mahadeva's

Now that we have taken bath at all of the essential ghats of Mathura, we will go pay our humble obeisances to Lord Shiva. Since Lord Shiva is the eternal guardian of the Holy Dham, we must seek his permission so that we can successfully circumambulate Sri Vraja Mandala without difficulty. *Vaiṣṇavānam yathā sambhuḥ*, Lord Shiva is the greatest Vaishnava, as stated in Srimad-Bhagavatam, Canto Twelve, Chapter Thirteen, verse 16. So we humbly beseech Lord Shiva for his blessings in Mathura in the western quarter in his form of Bhuteshvara Mahadeva, in the northern quarter in his form of Gokarneshvara Mahadeva, in the eastern quarter in his form of Pipaleshvara Mahadeva, and finally in the southern quarter in his form of Rangeshvara Mahadeva.

We have purified ourselves in the sacred Yamuna and received permission from Lord Shiva's four expansions to make our parikrama. So now let us all give pranamas to the Vaishnavas for their mercy. Then we shall proceed onwards with our parikrama, duly cleansed and safely blessed. Hari! Haribol!!

Mathura devi

Now we have come to Mathura devi. Mathura devi is the presiding queen of Mathura. She is actually a direct expansion of Krishna's shakti. Just like Vrinda devi is to Vrindavan, Mathura devi is to Mathura. Mathura devi has decorated everything very beautifully here because she wants Krishna to be extremely pleased when He comes to Mathura and performs His pastimes. Mathura devi is a very close friend with Yamuna devi. Yamuna devi is Kalindi, and in another form Kalindi is Vishaka devi. Because of this very close relationship Yamuna devi has with Mathura devi, when Yamuna enters into the area of Mathura, she begins to encircle Mathura with her waters. She does not wish to leave the area of Mathura. She wants to fully enjoy her pastimes with Krishna here in Mathura as she did in Vrindavan. She does

not want to leave, not even for an instant. She must flow onwards anyway, but just to show her affection to Krishna she sends her waters flowing around Mathura. So just as Yamuna devi is a queen of Krishna, here in Mathura, Mathura devi is the queen of Krishna. Haribol!

Varahadeva Mandir

Now we will have darshan of Varahadeva as Sweta Varaha in his whitish deity form and as Adi Varaha in his reddish deity form. Varaha is the second incarnation of Krishna. In Satya-yuga Brahma was manifested from the lotus flower emanating from the navel of Garbhodakashayi Vishnu. At that time Brahma thought, "What is to be done? God has instructed me to begin creation, but what can I do? There is air, there is ether, there is light, there is water, but I see no earth. If the essential five ingredients are not present, creation cannot commence. How can this earth be discovered?" Reflecting for some time, Brahma was led to understand that the earth was submerged very deeply under the Garbhodaka Ocean. While contemplating how to resolve the earth situation, he came to the conclusion that it would be better to let the Supreme Lord direct the matter. At that moment from Brahma's nostril a very minute boar, no bigger than a fingertip, appeared. In a very short time this boar became as big as the sky. Roaring tumultuously, the Lord in His incarnation as Varahadeva entered the water. His hooves were sharp and His tusks were fearful. Diving into the water like a gigantic mountain, Lord Varaha searched for the earth by smell. Discovering the earth at the bottom of the Garbhodaka ocean, Varahadeva very easily took the earth on His tusks and safely placed it very splendidly in its proper place in the universe.

While rescuing the earth, Varahadeva angrily killed the demon Hiranyaksha who tried to impede Him. At that time Varahadeva was in His reddish form. This was one time He appeared. Another time He appeared in His shukla color. Shukla means whitish. This appearance of Varahadeva happened during the Cakshusa devastation of the middle planetary systems.

In Satya-yuga Brahma performed worship of Varahadeva in His Deity form. After Satya-yuga, Brahma gave Him to Kuvera, the treasurer of the demigods, to worship. During Treta-yuga, the demon Ravana became exceedingly powerful. Attacking Kuvera, he took the Deity of Varahadeva from him and brought Him to his kingdom in Lanka. After killing Ravana in Lanka for kidnapping His wife Sita-devi, Ramacandra reclaimed the Deity of Varahadeva. He brought Him with Him to Ayodhya, where He began worshipping Him.

After some time, an emissary from some saintly rishis came to Ramacandra distraught over a demon named Lavanasura who was disturbing their religious ceremonies in Madhuvan. Ramacandra, always desiring to please and protect the rishis and brahmanas, sent His younger brother, Satrugna, to defeat and destroy this powerful demon. Satrugna beseeched Lord Rama to give the Deity of Varahadeva to take with Him so that by worshipping Him, He would surely be victorious. Lord Ramacandra agreed and gave Varahadeva to Satrugna to begin worshipping. Satrugna brought Varahadeva to Mathura where he newly installed Him, and made Mathura His capital city after slaying the powerful demon Lavanasura. So from that time until today this Deity of Varahadeva is being worshipped. Hari! Haribol!

Kamsa Tila

Now we are at the site where Krishna killed the demon Kamsa. Kamsa had already killed six of Krishna's brothers and now he wanted to kill Krishna and Balaram as well. So he sent Akrura to bring the two Lords from Vrindavan to Mathura. The evil Kamsa then tried to kill Krishna with his soldiers, with a furious elephant, and with the strongest wrestlers in his kingdom, but all his attempts were in vain. At last after Krishna and Balaram had killed the

strong powerful wrestlers sent against them, Krishna became so angry at Kamsa, who had imprisoned His mother and father and grandfather for so many years. He leapt up on to the royal dias, grabbed Kamsa by the hair, knocking off his crown, and threw him down into the arena. Krishna jumped on top of him and hitting him angrily with His fists, Kamsa met his death. This all happened here at the remains of this fort called Kamsa Tila. Hare Krishna!

Dirgha Vishnu Mandir

Now we are in the Dirgha Vishnu Mandir. Dirgha means very large. When Kamsa had Krishna brought to Mathura and made many attempts to harm him, all of Krishna's friends and relatives became alarmed. Just to reassure them that there was no danger of Him being harmed in any way, Krishna expanded himself into a very large Dirga Vishnu form. After seeing this, the anxiety of His family members and friends was relieved and they became sure that Krishna would be victorious no matter what obstacles Kamsa would put in His way. So now let us humbly bow down to the lotus feet of Dirgha Vishnu and pray for His mercy. Gaura premanandi!

Janma Bhumi

This is the birthplace of Lord Krishna. The Supreme Lord Krishna at the battle of Kuruksetra five thousand years ago explained that Arjuna the reason why He descends and takes birth.

śrī bhagawān uvāca

yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavata bharata

The blessed Lord said, "Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practices, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion—at that time I descend myself. To deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion; I appear Myself millenium after millenium.

(Bhagavad-gita 4.7-8)

Krishna is the origin of all origins and, as the origin of all, He is the supreme absolute truth, as confirmed in the first sloka of *Sri Brahma Samhita*.

īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ

sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ

The supreme controller comprising eternal existence, absolute knowledge, and absolute bliss is the supreme truth, Lord Krishna. Krishna as the origin of all descends in His original form only once in a day of Brahma, which is every 4 billion, 320 million years. So you can see how fortunate we are to be able to relish His transcendental pastimes from authoritative sources at a relatively close period to His descent on earth. Lord Krishna took birth here 5,000 years ago at the end of the Dvapara Yuga. The Supreme Lord Krishna advented of his own sweet will along with His brother Balaram and their associates.

A that time this planet earth was terribly overburdened by demons who were ruling the earth as kings. The leader of the demons Kamsa was the king of Mathura and he had imprisoned Krishna's father, King Vasudeva, Krishna's mother Queen Devaki who was his own sister and King Ugrasena, his own father who was the rightful King of Mathura. All these atrocities were committed in a brutal and heinous attempt to permanently destroy religious principles. Here in a prison cell Queen Devaki gave birth to the Supreme Lord Krishna; but do not make the mistake of thinking that it was an ordinary prison cell or that Vasudeva and Devaki were ordinary human beings. In their previous past two lives they were the mother and father of Lord Krishna in his incarnation as Prishnigarbha and in his incarnation as Vamanadeva. They are nitya siddhas, eternal associates of the Lord, and as such they are totally liberated beings. Also do not think that Lord Krishna was conceived and born as an

ordinary child. The Lord appears by his own sweet will and desire, totally transcendental to the laws of material nature. When Krishna first appeared in Kamsa's prison, Yogamaya the internal potency of the Lord was born of mother Yashoda at Gokula. Lord Krishna ordered his father to immediately carry him across the Yamuna river to Gokula and exchange him with Nanda Maharaja's and mother Yasoda's new-born baby girl. Vasudeva and Devaki were astounded as their wrist and ankle chains opened along with all the prison doors and all the guards were snoring in deep sleep. Although the rainfall was terrible and the Yamuna was overflowing its banks with waves, the goddess of the river herself arranged for the waters to part so that Vasudeva could easily cross; but not before she had snatched baby Krishna from his arms into her waters so she could fondly caress the Lord. Vasudeva carried out the Lord's order and switched baby Krishna with Yogamaya. Then he returned to the prison cell of Kamsa in Mathura, closing all the doors and clamping on his chains so that the demon king Kamsa would not suspect anything. Mother Yashoda had had a difficult child birth and afterwards she had immediately fallen asleep. When she awoke in the morning to the sound of Krishna crying she just naturally thought that he had been born from her womb.

Now we shall return to Sri Keshava Gaudiya Math and after honoring maha prasada we shall take rest. Then we will be fully refreshed when we make our first steps in our parikrama tomorrow morning. Speaking of steps, all shoes should be left at home unless one's feet are injured and under no circumstances should any leather sandals be worn. The correct way to do Sri Vraja Mandala Parikrama is to do it barefoot, in a humble state of mind, chanting the holy names of the Lord incessantly. If done in this way one's efforts will quickly bear fruit. Gaura Premanandi!!!

Sri Keshava Gaudiya Math

Sri Keshava Gaudiya Math is named after the original deity of Keshavadeva, installed in Mathura by Lord Krishna's great grandson, Vajranath. By the mercy of his guru, His Divine Grace Om Vishnupada 108 Sriman Bhagavan Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada, my guru Srila Bhakti Prajnana Keshava Maharaja came to Mathura in 1954 leading a parikrama party through Sri Vraja Mandala during Kartik. We had with us about 500 devotees all thirsty for the nectar of Krishna katha.

At that time in Mathura there was some difficulty in finding places to stay because we had no math of our own here. My Gurudeva had wanted to establish a math in Mathura because Mathura was the capital and so it would be a very good location for preaching Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's message. We would preach in Hindi and form a solid base for preaching throughout north India. So after parikrama was over, Srila Gurudeva along with a small nucleus of devotees, myself included, began earnestly searching for a suitable place where a math could be established. At last this building we are presently in was found and arrangements were made to purchase it and Srila Gurudeva established a math here. Then I was ordered by Srila Gurudeva to remain here and develop a Hindi preaching program and maintain the math. Gradually after some time and effort our preaching bore fruit and many devotees began to fill our math. Sri Caitanya's message was translated from Bengali to Hindi, and so many thousands and thousands of books were distributed. At that time Srila Gurudeva became very pleased and built this temple and installed Sri Sri Radha Binode Bihari, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Govardhana Giriraj. His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami the founding father of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness came to this math and stayed for some years before taking sannyasa from my Gurudeva, His Divine Grace Bhaktiprajnana Keshava Maharaj in September of 1959.

Srila Gurudeva named the temple Sri Keshava Gaudiya Math Keshavadeva is the original deity of Krishna in Mathura. So in honour and glory of Keshavadeva, Srila Gurudeva named this math Sri Keshava Gaudiya Math. Also Srila Gurudeva's name was Keshava, Bhakti

Prajnana Keshava Maharaja. So everything was very nice and, auspicious. Both devotee and Lord, bhakta and Bhagavan were fully satisfied here in the establishing of Sri Keshava Gaudiya Math. Gaura Premanandi!! Han!! Haribol!!!

Madhuvana

After Mathura we begin Sri Vraja Mandala Parikrama at Madhuvan. Do you know what this place Madhuvan is? Can you guess how long Madhuvan has been in existence? This place Madhuvan is very, very ancient. It has been existing a very long time. In fact it is at this place Madhuvan where Dhruva Maharaja came at the age of five and following the instructions of Narada Muni performed great tapasya here which enabled him to have darshan with Lord Vishnu face to face. Now as you all know, Druva Maharaja lived in Satya yuga. Satya yuga is the golden age characterized by virtue, wisdom and religion. We live in Kali yuga, the dark age characterized by strife, vice, ignorance and irreligion. If we count backwards to the Satya yuga we find that the Dvapara yuga contains 864,000 years and the Treta yuga contains 1,296,000 years. So at the very least this place Madhuvan is 2,160,000 years old. Madhuvan has a long standing history. It is very ancient and very holy. Later on in Satya yuga the famous Ambarisha Maharaja who was emperor of the entire universe also came to Madhuvan to perform meditation and austerities. His palace and capital was at the present Madhya Pradesh area of India. He did not become famous because he was emperor of the universe. He became famous because he served the Supreme Lord with all the nine devotional limbs of his body. King Ambarisha first of all engaged his mind on the lotus feet of Lord Krishna. He engaged his words in describing the beautiful, transcendental qualities of Lord Krishna, his hands in cleaning the temple of the Lord, his eyes in seeing the transcendental forms of the Lord, his ears in hearing the glorious pastimes and activities of the Lord, his body in touching the bodies of the devotees of the Lord, his nose in smelling the fragrant, aromatic flowers offered to the Lord, his tongue in tasting the tulasi leaves offered to the lotus feet of the Lord and in chanting the holy names of the Lord, his legs in travelling to the holy places and temples of the Lord, his head in offering obeisances unto the Lord, and his desires in fulfilling the desires of the Lord. These are the qualities which made Ambarisha Maharaja famous. Although he was emperor of the whole universe with thousands and thousands of servitors he would not allow his servants to do any service for the Lord. He himself did every thing and in this way he devoted all his senses to the Lord beginning with hearing and chanting all the way to atmanivedam, complete surrender, and in his lifetime he attained the state of bhava which is devotional ecstasy and a state very rarely achieved by a devotee of the Lord. Ambarisha Maharaja once also made a vow that he would for one year stay in Sri Vraja Mandala and strictly follow the Ekadasi vrata, especially the maha Dvadasi. Those devotees who do not follow ekadasi properly very soon get hopelessly entangled in material existence. This incident of Ambarisha Maharaja took place in Satya-yuga.

Later in Treta yuga Lord Krishna incarnated as Lord Ramacandra in this world. Lord Ramacandra appeared in the line of Surya Vamsa and Ambarisha Maharaja was also born in the Surya Vamsa line. Lord Ramacandra was born in Ayodhya. According to the Ramayana of Valmiki, in Satya yuga a demon called Madhu took birth from the womb of Lola. This demon was totally inimical to the will of the Supreme Lord and his behaviour was always irreligious and demonic in nature. This demon Madhu wandered here and there until at last he reached his place in Vraja. Being very powerful and cleverly resourceful as demons often are he built for himself a small kingdom and called it Madhuvan. He started living here with his wife and son who were also demons. They were so terrible that they would not allow any sages or rishis to even come to sit and meditate in this area nor would they allow anyone to come and drink water or take bath at the banks of the Yamuna here. They would harass the yogis and sages munis at every opportunity giving them no peace. They would defecate from the air

upon these holy men when they were performing yajnas. They would cover these pure beings with puss and blood when they wanted to do worship. Finally in desperation these saintly souls sent an emissary to Lord Ramacandra in Ayodhya. They requested the Lord to give them relief from the harassment of these demons so they would be allowed to peacefully continue their meditation and austerities. Lord Ramacandra immediately agreed to go himself and slay these demons; but his younger brother Satrughna upon hearing the story requested of Lord Rama that he be allowed to render some service. Bowing down to his elder brother Satrughna said that he would be able to slay the demons Madhu and his son Lavanasura and the demoness Mayadana. Lord Ramacandra warned his brother that these demons were very dangerous and that it would be difficult to defeat them and that he being but a youth might not be able to slay them; but Satrughna insisted saying my Lord, by your grace I will certainly be able to vanquish them. It was at this time that he requested the murti of Varahadeva to worship that Lord Ramacandra retrieved after defeating Ravana in Lanka. Lord Ramacandra giving Varahadev to him, blessed him and gave him permission to go and Satrughna after collecting a strong army set off for Mathura dham. On his way to Mathura he passed by the great sage Valmiki's ashram in Prayag. Lord Ramachandra's wife Sita devi was living there in exile and she had just given birth to twin sons on that day. Valmiki as the family guru had just named them Lava and Kusha. Satrughna was feeling ashamed to approach Sita devi, so from a distance he offered his obeisances to her, circumambulated her and then after receiving the blessings of the sage Valmiki, he proceeded on his way.

Now the demon son of Madhu, Lavanasura possessed many mystical weapons for fighting and if he would have these within reach when Satrughna came to fight him, Lavanasura would be almost unconquerable; but if somehow or other he was not allowed to take these magical weapons then he could easily be defeated. This information had been given to Satrughna by the emissary before leaving Ayodhya.

When Satrughna arrived in Mathura he went at once into the forest searching for Lavanasura. Deep in the forest he saw a huge ferocious man returning from a hunt. On his spear he was carrying several tigers and a water buffalo and on his back he carried an elephant, a big fat snake and a crocodile, all dead. This obviously was going to be Lavanasura's dinner. Satrughna saw this dreadful sight; but undaunted he stood in the path of Lavanasura and confronted him, saying I am your enemy and I have come here to kill you. Lavanasura asked him who he was and he replied, I am Satrughna, the brother of Lord Rama. The demon said, ah yes I have heard about you. It is good that you have come. Just wait a few minutes until I go and get my weapons and I will fight with you. Satrughna told him, no he wouldn't wait. The demon replied, you can not fight me now because I don't have my weapons and for a ksatriya to fight someone without their weapon is a sin, so you must wait until I get my weapons.

Satrughna not moving a step told the demon, what is this talk about not having any weapons? You have a spear in your hand surely this was the weapon you used to kill all these animals. Use it to kill me. Furthermore you do not understand ksatriya etiquette. The etiquette is as soon as you see the enemy in front of you, you have to fight. You are simply a coward and you are using the excuse of getting your weapons so you can run away. We will fight now. And saying this Satrughna and the demon began a terrible fight and it was at this place Madhuvan that Satrughna by the grace of Lord Ramacandra slayed the demons Lavanasura and then Madhu and Mayadana. After that he converted Madhuvan to Madhupuri which became the capital and he went back to Ayodhya. This pastime was in the Treta yuga.

Now we come to Dvapara yuga. In Dvapara yuga the descendants of Bhoga and Vrishni became the kings of Mathura and Madhupur and Lord Krishna appeared to Vasudeva and Devaki in the Vrsni dynasty. Madhu means honey and as young boys grazing the cows, Krishna and Balaram used to come to this place Madhuvan and drink honey here with their

cowherd friends. As you can see there is a little pond here also. This pond is called Krishna kunda. Here in the temple is a deity of Lord Balaram. This is one of the few temples where the deity of Lord Balaram is black everywhere else his deity form is either golden or whitish. There is a specific reason for this. Once Lord Balaram was out in the forest grazing his cows when he came upon the gopis in a mood of intense vipralamba, or love in separation from Krishna. Some of the gopis were crying, some were talking incoherently, some were wandering here and there, some were laying perfectly still and could not move. So in order to alleviate their distress Lord Balaram began describing the wonderful pastimes and glories of Krishna and started chanting Krishna's transcendental names while doing this he became so absorbed that he himself became dark in complexion assimilating Krishna's blackish color.

So you can see that there are many kinds of madhu or honey. The first is the honey that Krishna and Balaram would come and drink from the trees. This is the honey from the bees. The second is the honey of the sweet nectarean pastimes of Lord Krishna and Lord Balaram. This honey is for the devotees and the third is for the gross materialists who think they see the reflection of honey in a mirror, which represents material life, and who think that by licking the mirror they are receiving the honey.

In Kali yuga we have the advent of Lord Caitanya who was Krishna himself, and along with him adventing a few weeks before was Lord Nityananda who is nondifferent from Balaram. They appeared 500 years ago in Bengal. When Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityananda came to Vraja, they came to recollect and relish all their pastimes that they exhibited in their original transcendental forms as Krishna and Balaram.

Remembering their wonderful pastimes and honoring and worshipping the places where these pastimes took place with one's physical body and mind is the highest austerity. It is also extremely blissful and very purifying. Just feel the breeze as it blows gently against our faces, smell scents of different flowers in the air. Look! There is a peacock flying to a tree. Look how beautiful it is. You hear the call that it makes. It calls, Kay Kaw, Kay Kaw. Kay means Krishna and just in remembrance to Srimati Radharani's answer to Krishna's call is Kaw. So the peacocks are always calling out, Kay Kaw, Kay Kaw, remembering Srimati Radharani and Krishna.

So now let us go down to Krishna kunda and take acaman, and after paying our obeisances we will go to the temple and have darshan of Lord Balaram in one of his only existing blackish deity forms, and then we will hear a very nice lecture on humility.

A vaisnava is decorated by the quality of humility. This is a vaisnava's best form of decoration. If one were to recognize who is a true Vaisnava, the most outstanding and prominent quality or characteristic would have to be humbleness. Even my own spiritual master, His Divine Grace Srimad Keshava Maharaja used to call himself an atheist out of utter humility because he felt that he was not giving enough devotional service to the Lord. Factually speaking these are the real Vaisnavas. We do not even have the faintest glimmer of humility. We become puffed up with all sorts of materialistic qualities like pride, conceit, arrogance, envy, vanity; all these things are filling our hearts. We are quick to shun ridicule and we are even quicker to seek praise. The qualities of a true Vaisnava are described by Lord Caitanya in verse three of his "Siksastaka".

*trnad api sunicena taror api sahisnuna
amanina manadena kirtaniyah sada harih*

Those who consider themselves more humble than a blade of grass, who think themselves lower than straw in the street, who are devoid of all sense of false prestige and who are always ready to offer respect to all beings. These are the true Vaisnavas. Such elevated personalities are very rare but they are the actual persons qualified to teach of the topics of the Lord and Krishna consciousness. Those that think that they have the factual knowledge and actual understanding, those who think they have read a lot practically speaking they are intoxicated

by illusion in the form of pride and vanity and they are unable to properly speak about the topics of the Lord and Krishna consciousness. I am a person of this last category with no qualifications at all, whatsoever; but because the Vaisnavas have ordered me to speak I am speaking. We do not have any access into the actual realm of spiritual mellows and rasas of Krishna; but because we are so contaminated by arrogance and puffed up by illusion we think that we are and have been approved and accepted and have entered.

Once my Guru Maharaja restricted a speaker from speaking about the more intimate pastimes of Krishna in Vrindavan, from the Srimad Bhagavatam. The Caitanya Caritamrita also forbids one from speaking indiscriminately about the more intimate pastimes of Krishna in Vrindavan. But the fact is, if these topics are riot discussed amongst elevated souls and sincere devotees and Vaisnavas, then who should they be discussed amongst. This is why Srila Vyasadeva, the literary incarnation of Lord Krishna did not explicitly describe these pastimes in any one of the Puranas. But his guru, Narada Muni objected telling him that this should be done. The world still has some people who are fit to hear about these pastimes. If Vyasadeva, who was completely qualified and knowledgeable about the more intimate pastimes of Krishna and his activities in Vraja, if he failed to reveal these things then they would be completely lost to the world. Also if he did not write about these things, after completing and writing all the scriptures he still would not feel satisfied. Therefore for the most ultimate good and benefit of the world he must write about these topics. Thereupon following the instructions of his spiritual master Narada Muni, Vyasadeva compiled all the various pastimes of Lord Krishna in the 18,000 slokas of the Srimad Bhagavatam, the crest jewel of all Vedic literatures. These pastimes had never been recorded previously in any of the other Vedic scriptures.

Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami thought in a similar way, he fell in a similar mood. He also was thinking of revealing the more intimate pastimes of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu who is non different from Lord Krishna. He was thinking that if these pastime were to get into the wrong hands they could be misused; but after reflecting intensively for some time on the matter he came to the conclusion to reveal the pastimes also. His understanding was like this... in a big mango orchard we will find only birds like parrots and they will come and eat the sweet fruits; but the neem trees attracts another kind of bird and that is the crow. Even the neem trees are right next to a mango orchard filled with fresh succulent, ripe fruits; still the crow never goes to eat the mango so then considering this Srila Krishna das Kaviraj decided to put in the intimate pastimes of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu in Sri Caitanya Caritamrita" realising that only the parrot like devotees will be the ones who will come to taste and relish these fruits. Whereas the crow like karmis and gross materialists will never come. So at a very ripe, old age Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami recorded all these very intimate and esoteric topics and blessed iswith them in the wonderful book, "Sri Caitanya Caritamrita".

Lord Caitanya is Lord Krishna himself and Krishna never gave to completely the highest mellow of devotional love in any other incarnation, as he did in his incarnation as Lord Caitanya. Lord Caitanya was so magnanimous that he gave that highest love to each and every person he met. He and Prabhu Nityananda would go from house to house distributing the Holy Name. Counting but how many lakhs of the Holy Name each devotee would take each day. They would shout to one and all. Please take the shel-Ler of the Holy Name. Please chant always the Holy Name. To purchase us, all you must do is chant the Holy Names of the Lord. "hey used to set up a market place just like a merchant would do n a bazaar and anyone who passed they would stop saying 'Haribol!! You there! How many lakhs of the Holy Name will you want today? One lakh! Very good! A conditioned soul automaticaiW purchases us when he chants one lalch of the Holy Name each day. I quickly relieve them of all their sinful activities. Hari! Haribolo!!

If Lord Caitanya had not descended to promulgate the sankirtan movement and to reestablish the science of devotional service to Krishna, the highest ecstasy, then who would have revealed this to the world? If Lord Caitanya had not appeared the world would have been without this benediction. And therefore we are supremely fortunate that all the previous Vaisnava acaryas so carefully and painstakingly recorded all these sacred and wonderful pastimes for us to be able to benefit by and relish. The compassion of a Vaisnava for the conditioned souls is a wonderful phenomenon. So whenever the Vaisnavas are discussing any topic, it is correct to approach that assembly in a mood of reverence. My Guru Maharaja instructed us never to read the 10th Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam. Why do the mundane philosophers and speculative wranglers go directly to the 10th Canto? Do you think they read it in the proper mood of reverence? It is highly improbable. I remember that although he restricted us from reading these particular pastimes it was not because he was forbidding us from reading it; but it was just to make sure that we would be extremely careful in approaching these subjects with the utmost care and reverence without a tinge of mundane contamination.

I remember that once I humbly approached my Guru Maharaja with a question from the eastern wave of the Gopala Campi whereas Srila Jiva Goswami describes the tying of the rope around Lord Damodara by Mother Yashoda. There Jiva Goswami describes wonderfully in detail this marvellous pastime. I asked my Gurudev how Jiva Goswami was able to describe in such perfect detail this mood of vatsalya rasa. As soon as I mentioned this my Guru Maharaja started crying and howling. This went on for some time, so much so that he exhibited a state whereas he could not howl and cry anymore. This I saw personally with my own eyes and only after massaging his feet and chanting the holy names of the Lord for some time did my Guru Maharaja, His Divine Grace Bhaktiprajnana Keshava Maharaja, come back to a normal state. Therefore these topics and this sentiment should be carefully exposed and partially hidden; but nevertheless they must be revealed according to time and circumstances, taking into consideration each individual's qualifications and eligibility.

In this way if the Vaisnavas distribute these topics to the world with the utmost reverence and humility, then this will be in the mood of our parampara heritage and we will be following the tradition of our great acaryas of the past. All the six Goswamis distributed these topics in this way. In fact, the Supreme Lord himself, in the form of Lord Caitanya, came and distributed this to them. Therefore we are extremely blessed that we can hear of these topics from such greatly compassionate and saintly souls like their Divine Graces Puri Maharaja, Janardan Maharaja, Gurupad Padma and Trivikram Maharaja. In this way, by their mercy, humbly following in their footsteps, we too will be able to distribute these nectarean topics to the world in the same manner that is with the utmost reverence and humility. Hare Krishna!

Talavan

Now we have arrived at Talavan, the place where Lord Balaram killed the ass demon, Dhenukasur. The pastime of the original spiritual master, Lord Balaram was enacted here. Nothing spiritual can commence without the mercy of the spiritual master. This applies also to Lord Nityananda, who is a direct, nondifferent expansion of Lord Balaram. Krishna das Kaviraja writes: "I have received the mercy of Madan Mohan, Govindaji, Gopinath, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Krishna, as well I have had the vision of the transcendental land of Vraja only by the inconceivable, causeless mercy of Lord Nityananda, who is nonjiferent from Lord Balaram the original spiritual master.

The prime duty of the spiritual master is to eradicate all the inarthas and unwanted desires within the hearts of his disciples. Our hearts are filled with so many unwanted material desires and offenses. Because of this we have great difficulty in properly engaging ourselves in devotional service. Our hearts are filled with pride, deceit, dishonesty, ignorance,

anger, lust, and forgetfulness of our true nature. So we must depend upon the mercy of the spiritual to help us and this mercy is what we will receive here at Talavan from Lord Balaram, the original spiritual master. Without receiving Lord Balaram's mercy it is not possible to complete Sri Vraja Mandala Parikrama, or successfully execute any form of devotional service, neither is it possible to get the shelter of the lotus feet of Sri Sri Radha Krishna.

This place Talavan is where Dhenukasu, the evil ass demon friend of Kamsa was living. He was a spy of Kamsa and he was an enemy of Krishna and any difficulties he could cause the inhabitants of Vraja, he would not hesitate to commit. This entire area was once covered with thousands of tall trees which would bear sweet and delicious fruits whose scent would be carried far and wide. Dhenukasu was the master of this forest and the leader of a large community of ass demons. In order to keep Kamsa happy these ass demons sent out to send hundreds of fresh, ripe tall fruits to him daily in Mathura and what was left they ate themselves. Know for certain that all these tall fruits were eaten only by demons. Not a single fruit was ever offered to the Lord, nor was any of these fruits ever offered to the devotees of the Lord. So we can ascertain that an asura or demon is anyone who does not want to first offer whatever they have to the Lord or to the Lord's bona fide representatives, who will surely offer it to Him first without any hesitation. To make matters worse, the whole ass demon community was vigilantly guarding this tall forest day and night to make sure that not a single fruit would ever be eaten by any devotee of the Lord. None of the cowherd boys had ever eaten a tall fruit from this forest and Nanda Maharaja and his community and King Vrishabanu and his community as well as all the Vrajabasis avoided this place like the plague.

As I mentioned earlier Dhenukasur was the demon leader in this forest. Now dhenuk means ass, and an ass is someone who applies all his senses, intelligence and energy only onto the material platform. One who sees only his friends, wife, sons, daughters and relatives as being everything and who believes this material world to be all in all having no conception of the absolute truth, karma, dharma, maya shakti, bhagavat tattva, knowledge of the Supreme Lord, this person is unrefutably veritable ass. Another activity of an ass is that it is a beast of burden. From the time it is born until the time that it dies, an ass is forced to carry heavy weights. Similarly a person who is an ass is also a dumb beast of burden, because this person is forced to carry the weight of all the sins he has accumulated over millions of lifetimes, and due to being exclusively on the material platform, this ass of a human being is born, exists for some time and lies without ever knowing that life has much more meaning than merely exerting all one's energy to satisfy one's senses. So we can see that being an ass is the morbid condition of the gross materialists and pleasure seekers who live their lives only on nana dharma or the dictates of the mind, with not even the lightest propensity for going beyond their mundane mentalities in their sense gratification.

One day Krishna and Balaram and their cowherd friends passed this way coming from a swim and play excursion. They were thirsty and a little hungry and when a gentle breeze brought the sweet smell of ripe, delicious tall fruits to their noses, some of the cowherd boys suggested that it would be extremely refreshing to eat some sweet, fresh tall fruits at that moment. Krishna agreed and asked who was in charge of this forest. The cowherd boys told him that the forest was controlled by an ass demon named Dhenukasu and that only demons are allowed to eat his tall fruits. Krishna and Balaram smiled at each other and immediately Balaram dashed into the tall forest and began shaking the tall trees very vigorously with his strong, powerful arms, using all the ripe fruits to fall to the ground. Upon seeing the fresh, ripe, succulent tall fruits falling to the ground, all the cowherd friends cheered happily and gleefully began gathering them and eating them joyfully. Even some passers by, also seeing the fresh, ripe fruits available, came and helped themselves and joined the fun also.

The ass demons outraged that anyone would dare to come to eat their tall fruits, they kicked up their legs and braying loudly raced for the cowherd boys. Seeing that Lord Balaram

was there nonchalantly shaking all the ripe tal fruits off the trees, Dhenukasur sneaked up behind him and braying angrily, tried to give him a mighty kick; but Balaram was prepared for him and he neatly sidestepped it and then with the speed of lightning he grabbed the demons hind leg with his left hand and whirling him powerfully around and around threw him into the treetops. Simply by this powerful whirling motion, the ass demon Dhenukasur lost his life and was sent to the abode of Yamaraj. Seeing the death of their leader the rest of the ass demons angrily attacked; but Krishna and Balaram grabbed each one of them by their hind legs and whirling them to death tossed them into the treetops. After all the ass demons were killed, Lord Balaram took his bath in this pond, named Sankarsana kunda in his honor Sankarsana is another name for Lord Balaram. The news soon reached Kamsa that the reason why he was not receiving fresh tal fruits any longer was because the entire ass, demon community was completely exterminated by Lord Krishna and Lord Balaram and that the whole countryside was now enjoying fresh tal fruits. This infuriated him immensely and he became even more determined to destroy the two Lords.

This pastime is significant in this way. That Lord Balaram is the original spiritual master and that he cleanses our heart of the ten offenses against the holy name. He also cleanses our heart of all anarthas, all undesirable qualities and all unwanted desires. This he exhibited wonderfully by killing the ass demon Dhenukasur who symbolizes and represents all undesirable qualities and unwanted material desires.

We will now take acaman from Sankarsana kunda and give our full and unreserved obeisances, prostrate ourselves in the dust and beg Balaramji for his mercy with our heart and soul while we reverently remember this pastime. Hari! Haribol!!

Kumudavan

This place is called Kumudavan. This is the smallest of the 12 main forests in Sri Vraja Mandala. Kumudavan was a favorite area of Krishna and his cowherd friends. In fact they were coming from here after swimming and playing when they went and ate fruits in the tal forest. Kumuda is a bright red flower that is to grow in this lake in abundance and this is why this forest got the name Kumudavan. Kapila Muni performed tapasya and austerities on the banks of this lake called Padma kunda, thousands of years ago. So let us all take acaman here and after putting these holy waters where Krishna swam and drank on our heads, give our obeisances to Kumudavan where Krishna and Balaram enjoyed so many wonderful pastimes. Hare Krishna!

Chatikara

This place here is called Chatikara. Lord Krishna was raised in the forest for three years and four months. But because there had been many attempts on his life by Kamsa's demons, like the evil demoness Putana, and the ghostly demon Sakatasura and the wicked whirlwind demon Trnavarta, the community elders along with Nanda Maharaja felt it would be safer for Krishna if they all moved to a new location. Some of the elders had heard of a most beautiful place on the other side of the Yamuna named Vrindavan. Finding the suggestion suitable the whole community gathered all the cows and all their household utensils and moving in mass headed for Vrindavan. They all crossed the Yamuna and on the way to Vrindavan they reached this place called Chatikara and liking it, they settled down here. First they put all their cowherd carts in a protective circle around them and then they enclosed the circle with a thick and sharp thorny fence. Feeling safe and protected they spent the night peacefully and the next morning began executing their normal cowherd duties. Before dawn everyone was up and the deities of Narayana and Lakshmi were duly worshipped at mangala arati. Then the cows had to be milked and milk had to be boiled and butter and curds and cheese and

milksweets had to be made and so many chores had to be done. Here in Chatikara is where Krishna and Balaram's cow herding lila began. Here is where they were first allowed to take out the young calves to graze and every morning they would take them out with the other cowherd boys and play. Once while watering the calves at the Yamuna and playing, a demon by the name of Vatsasura assumed the shape of a calf and mingled in with the other calves intending to try to kill the two brothers. Krishna however immediately noticed the demon's entrance into their midst and informing his brother Balaram he caught the demon calf by its hind legs and whirling it around forcibly over his head, tossed it into a tree where its life force departed and it fell down to the ground dead. So these pastimes all happened in this place called Chatikara. Haribol!

Ral

Now we are at Ral. This place is very near to Chatikara and sometimes Nanda Maharaja and his community use to stay here because there was nice fresh grasses here for the cows. Also this is the place where Srimati Radhika and Krishna had one of their first meetings and they use to meet frequently here. Hare Krishna!

Bahulavan

Now we have arrived at Bahulavan. This is the place of King Vrishabanu. Lord Krishna and his elder brother Lord Balaram use to come here with their cowherd friends to tend the cows here. Long ago in this forest a lion caught a cow and wanted to eat her. But she begged him to please let her go home and suckle her calf first and then she promised she would return after giving her calf to one of her sister cows for care. The lion agreed and sat down patiently to wait for his dinner. After feeding her calf and saying goodbye to her friends, the cow resolutely returned to the lion to keep her promise. The lion being extremely hungry immediately ran to eat her but Krishna feeling compassion for the brave, gentle cow, caused the lion to have a change of heart. The lion although hungry was noble and he appreciated the honesty of cow in keeping her promise. I have also heard the story where the calf of this cow came before the lion and implored the lion to eat him instead and Krishna made the lion feel ashamed and he allowed them both to live. But anyway this particular cow was named Bahula and thus this forest got the name Bahulavan. This place is very dear to Lord Krishna and many other pastimes were performed by him here. Haribol!

Santanu Kunda

Santanu kunda has been named after King Santanu. Long before the pastimes of Lord Krishna occurred on this earth, King Santanu use to come to this kunda and perform austerities. He was an extremely pious king and he was aware that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna was to incarnate soon at the end of Dvapara yuga, so he use to worship Lord Krishna here. After sometime, being pleased with his worship, Krishna appeared before him with his brother Balaram and granted him a benediction. King Santanu asked for an exceptional son. Lord Krishna gave him the benediction that he would get a son that would be as strong as Balaram, would be famous throughout the world and would be able to choose the time in which he would die. So according to this benediction Bhishma, one of the 12 mahajananas, was born to King Santanu from Ganga devi. Therefore this kunda is known as Santanu kunda. Lord Krishna came to this kunda and performed various pastimes with His cowherd friends and calves on the banks of this kunda.

Govardhana Hill

Now we are at the hallowed grounds of Govardhana hill. Over two million years ago in Satya yuga a powerful rishi, Pulastya muni was taking Govardhana to his ashram retreat so he could perform tapasya on its beautiful slopes filled with flowers, caves and streams. But Govardhana had put a condition on the rishi that wherever he was put down is where he would remain. Pulastya muni had agreed but while passing over Sri Vraja Mandala had stopped here to relieve his bladder. Placing Govardhana down momentarily he quickly went to heed the call of nature, but to his dismay when he returned he found that Govardhana would not move even one hair breadth from where he was put down. This angered the rishi and he cursed Govardhana to shrink the width of one mustard seed each day; but this hardly bothered Govardhana For he knew that this was land where Lord Krishna would one day come and display his wonderful pastimes. And also it has been noticed that Giri Govardhana has been feeling intense separation from Krishna over these last 5,000 years and that this intense feeling of separation is what is causing Giri Govardhana to shrink more and more as time passes by.

I can see so many of you eagerly trying to get Govardhana Silas. Be careful please. You can not just go and pick up Giri Govardhana like you are at a market place. You should not pick them up at all Those of you who have already slyly stashed them away, just take them out and put them back. Wherever you found them you must go and put them back in exactly the same place; otherwise your parikrama which is suppose to be auspicious will be only a big disaster for you.

First of all to get a Govardhana Sila you must beg the permission of the Vaisnavas; but only if you are qualified to worship Giri Govardhana. To know if you are qualified you must find out from your spiritual master. Do not ever take it yourself. You must receive it from the hands of a Vaisnava and after taking his permission the Vaisnava who will give it to you will weigh it and you have to leave an equal amount of gold as the Govardhana Sila you are taking out of Vraja. In this way no offense is made and you will receive the full blessings of the Vaisnavas. Those of you who have continued to keep Giri Govardhana in spite of my warning just come up here now with your gold and we will see if the weights are equal. If you have the opulence to do this then you may take Giri Govardhanji Out of Vraja. Do you think that Giri Govardhana is worth any less than gold? Giri Govardhana is worth millions of times more than gold. Giri Govardhana can give you Krishna prema. Gold can only give temporary, material comforts. So please go at once and put them back, or else your offense today will cause you a great disaster in your life.

Sri Giriraja Govardhana plays many roles in the pastimes of Lord Krishna. He is Krishna's friend, he is Krishna's protector, he is Krishna's playland, he always looks after Krishna. He is also the witness to Krishna's most intimate pastimes. Every blade of grass, every stream, tree, creeper and flower bears witness to Krishna's unlimited pastimes. This is why Krishna manifested Himself in the form of Govardhana Sila. If anyone receives the mercy to be able to serve Giriraja Govardhana then that fortunate soul can surely attain the lotus feet of Sri Sri Radha Krishna. Lord Caitanya gave Raghunath das Goswami his Govardhana Sila to worship instructing him to worship Sri Giriraja with gange's water, gunja mala and Tulsi manjaris. Caitanya Mahaprabhu told him that in this way he would surely attain the eternal service of Radha and Krishna.

One may be a very elevated devotee or only a neophyte, but both twice born souls will receive inconceivable mercy from the worship of Sri Govardhana Sila. In fact Giri Govardhana is intimately referred to as the best of the devotees of Krishna. This title has also been applied to Yudhisthira Maharaja; but in actuality the position of Giriraja is considerably more intimate. For Giriraja is sometimes on the platform as Krishna's eternal servant and

sometimes on the platform as Krishna's dearest friend and associate and sometimes Giri Govardhana is able to even take the platform as Krishna Himself. There are two things in all of Sri Vraja Mandala that possess tremendous, unlimited capacity to bless the devotees and give Krishna prema as well. One is Yamuna devi and the other is Sri Giri Govardhanji.

So we should pray to Giri Govardhana that we are able to increase our attachment to his worshipable objects of adoration the lotus feet of Sri Sri Radha Krishna. Of course we are not eligible to go too deeply into these pastimes which are very intimate and confidential; but if Giriraja is merciful unto us, by his mercy, gradually the true significance of these highly esoteric pastimes will be revealed within our hearts. And by the mercy of Giriraj in some far, distant, future life we will certainly be engaged as the servant of a servant of a servant of a servant to the lotus feet of Sri Sri Radha Krishna serving in their transcendental pastimes. So let us all offer our most humble obeisances to Sri Giriraj Govardhanji and beg him that he grant us his unconditional and unreserved mercy. All glories, all glories to Sri Giriraj Govardhan! Hari! Haribol!!

Dan Gati

The place in which we just now have circumambulated known as Dan Gati. Previously Govardhana hill was one yojana in length, that is eight miles and extremely high; but ever since Lord Krishna left this world, out of intense separation from him Giri Govardhana is slowly sinking into the ground at the speed of one mustard seed a day. The gopis would pass through here with their stock of butter, milk, cheese and yoghurt on their way to the other side of Govardhana hill to sell them. There was no other passage for many miles through Govardhana. The shape of Giri Govardhana is like that of a peacock. His two eyes are Radha kunda and Shyama kunda. His mouth is the Mukharavinda, Puncari is his backside and is like the peacock's tail feathers when he slightly raises his plumes for dancing. Where we are now standing is like the narrow stretch of the peacock's neck, and this narrow stretch is called Dan Gati the place where taxes were collected.

Once here in Vraja there was a big yajna being conducted by all the sages at Govinda kunda. A lot of ghee, milk and yoghurt is always required for a yajna and so the gopis were carrying these things through here going to Govinda kunda on the other side of Govardhana. Naturally Krishna and the cowherd boys heard the news also and so they came here before anyone else and blocked the road. Krishna was with his friends like Sudama Madhu Mangal, Sridama and others like that. Krishna stopped the gopis and told them that if they wanted to pass through they had to pay tax. Every day they passed through here freely without paying taxes; but today they had to pay tax. So pay up, he told them. The gopis like Lalita and Vishaka challenged Krishna saying, what sort of taxes should we be paying and who are you to demand taxes from us. Krishna said, don't you know this kingdom belongs to me. The gopis retorted very sarcastically does this place belong to your father or did it belong to you grandfather? Since when did you claim this place to be yours please tell us? Krishna said, whether my father owns this place or whether my grandfather owned this place is of no consequence 'The fact is that I am the King of Vraja and this is part of my kingdom. Lalita and Vishaka looked at each other and then told Krishna that as far as they were concerned Srimati Radhika is Vrindavana's Ishwari, the Queen of Vrindavan which means that this is Her kingdom and she is the soul proprietor. We haven't heard of another one. Since when did it change hands and you became the proprietor. Krishna said, haven't you heard that Vrinda devi is my wife? This place is known as Vrindavan, named after her and all that belongs to the wife naturally becomes the legal property of the husband after marriage. Therefore I am the King of Vraja, this is my property and if you want to cross over you must pay your taxes. So you had better pay up and be on your way.

The gopis started clapping their hands and laughing and joking, saying to Krishna that he was a big liar, and Vrinda devi would never be his wife. So Krishna said, why don't you ask Vrinda devi and find out directly from her? The gopis agreed and they went to get Vrinda devi. When the gopis arrived at Vrinda devi's and asked her whether this mischievous rascal Krishna was actually married to her, Vrinda devi immediately denied it saying that she would never think of marrying such a naughty boy. It's a fact Vrindavan does belong to me; but I have voluntarily surrendered it to the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani and that is why the proprietress of Vrindavan is not me but Srimati Radhika. The gopis heard this and laughing and clapping raced back to Krishna and called him a liar and a rascal. Krishna of course pretended to be shy and totally ignoring the gopis remarks said. I don't care what Vrinda devi says, if you want to pass this way you have to pay me tax and calling his friends they got sticks and blocked the road. So seeing no other way around Krishna's impertinence the gopis gave Krishna a little of everything they had, a little butter, a little milk, a little yoghurt, like that. Srila Rupa Goswami describes this particular pastime in detail in his book "Dan Keli Kaumudi". In the pastime of Dan Keli milk, yoghurt, ghee, cream, butter are all symbolic. Actually what Krishna really wants is our love and devotion not our material possessions Krishna is always hankering for his devotees love. The possession offers are simply symbolic for him. What he wants is all our love. Gaura Premanandi!!

Dan Nivartan Kunda

One day soon after Krishna had taxed the gopis. Lalita and Vishaka conspired to have revenge on him. Complaining to each other they said, we have been used and abused enough, that was unfair and highly rascalish. We must give him the same back, but double. So clapping their hands gleefully they got all the gopis together and hid themselves in the forest groves around this place which is called Dan nivartana kunda. Krishna who had got so cocky by this time was walking around here with only a few of His cowherd friends. The gopis by sign language, like reflecting the sun in mirrors to each other surrounded Krishna and his sakhas. Hundreds of gopis grabbed Krishna and his friends and tying their sikhās to the tree branches and holding them still boxed their ears good for them and made them promise never to harass the gopis again from that day onwards. Furthermore they said, today you are the ones who must pay taxes. So pay up! What do you have to pay with and who gave you permission to graze Your cows here? Krishna meekly said, we don't have anything to pay for taxes. The gopis said, you don't? Why not? This property belongs to Srimati Radharani, Vrindavana's Queen and for the audacious behaviour that you exhibited by taxing us the other day, for this you have to be punished. Krishna, you must bow down to Srimati Radharani's lotus feet and beg her forgiveness. Krishna seeing that there was no other way out of the situation, shyly looked at his friends and bowing down to the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani begged her forgiveness. That is why this place is known as Dan nivartana kunda, the place where the tax was excused. Hari! Haribol!!

Annyor

The place we have just arrived at is called Annyor. The reason why it is called Annyor is because in Bengali annyore means bring more, bring more, and after hearing the story of Annyor you will know why it is called this.

Once the Vrajabasis brought thousands of samosas, pakoras and kachoris and tons and tons of milk and filled up Manasi Ganga and also filled up Surya kunda. Thousands and thousands of puris and milk-sweets like rasagullas, sandesh, gulabs and tons and tons of sweet rice. Just then Krishna came and said, why are you doing all this? They said, we are bringing all these things to worship Indra because he is the demigod in charge of rain and

water is very important for our living. Krishna said, there is no need to do it. You don't have to worship Indra for rain. Where does it say that only by worship of Indra one can receive rain? There are so many places that do not do worship to Indra that still receive rain. Also we do not derive any special benefit from Indra, even if he is in charge of rainfall, he pours rain on the ocean, and the ocean certainly doesn't need any water. It is better that we offer all these nice preparations to the cows, to the Brahmanas and to Govardhana hill, then all our desires will be fulfilled. Look at all the cows eating happily the nice grasses of Govardhana and from that grass we get milk and from the milk we get butter and yoghurt and so many nice eatables. So you can see that actually Govardhana hill is providing all this for us, not Indra. As the name suggests, go means cows and vardan means increasing the pleasure of. Go also means the calves, the cowherd boys the senses. So Govardhana means to please all of these and he is the maintainer of all of these. So let us worship Govardhana hill a once. So began the splendid and magnificent puja and worship Giri Govardhana with tons of ghee and yoghurt and all the things necessary to execute the ceremony properly by the brahmanas.

After this in order to erase the last doubts of any Vrajabasis who still were unsure about His authority on the matter. Krishna said, have everyone bring as much prasadam as they have and Govardhana will accept everything. Then Krishna jumped up on top of Govardhana hill and took the form of Govardhana himself. He became huge with long arms that extended miles and wherever, when prasadam was offered immediately he extended his long arms and collected it and started putting it into his huge mouth and eating it. Within minutes he ate all of the prasadam that was offered to him, all the thousands and thousands of rasagullas, gulabs, ladhus and puris and all the tons of sweet rice. In seconds all the kundas and all the lakes that were filled with milk and yoghurt, He just drank right up. All the mountains of pakoras and samosas and kachoris were suddenly gone. Everything was finished. Not a thing remained. Krishna as Giri Govardhana had eaten everything by a mere twinkling of an eye. Then Giri Govardhana started calling out loud, annyore, annyore, bring more, bring more, annyore, annyore, bring more, bring more. The Vrajabasis realising that they had no more to give all became dismayed and began to worry. Then Krishna taking on his small cowherd boy form once more folded his hands together and started praying to Giri Govardhana. He prayed, O Giri Govardhana we are just poor cowherders. Where will we get more? How can we offer more than what we have already given to you? But Giriraja Govardhana 'continued to cry out loudly, annyore, annyore, bring more, bring more! Krishna then said, whatever we had we collected and gave it to you for your complete pleasure and satisfaction then we worshiped you as opulently as we could. So kindly accept this and be satisfied, blessing us for our endeavour. Then the Brahmanas offered fresh tulasi leaves to Giri Govardhana and only after receiving these did he became totally and completely satisfied. He said, tiptos meen, tiptos meen, which means now I am completely satisfied, and then exhibiting his wonderful mystic powers, Krishna as Giri Govardhana miraculously returned all the food that he had eaten exactly as it was given to him. All the lakes and kundas were filled once more with milk and yoghurt and sweet rice. And the thousands of rasagullas and gulabs and ladhus and puris and samosas and pakoras and kachoris were given back just like they were before except now they were mahaprasada. It is a fact and this confirms it that when one gives to Krishna, you never lose, You can only benefit by giving to him. Krishna always gives back thousands of times more. Many times in ways we cannot even perceive. You can never, ever lose by giving to Krishna. Never! Gaura Premanandi!! Hari! Haribol!!

Govinda Kunda

Now we have arrived at Govinda kunda. Here, after Indra's pride was smashed by Lord Krishna he came in great fear and accompanied by a surabhi cow from Goloka Vrindavan, he immediately fell down at the lotus feet of Krishna. He was conscious of his offense to the

Supreme Lord and now being well aware of his subordinate position he appeared before the Lord and offered many prayers. After he had finished Lord Krishna said, my dear Indra although you are king of the demigods, I have stopped your yajna to revive your memory that I am your eternal master. You should always remember that. After this the transcendental surabhi cow offered her obeisances and along with Indra performed abhishek to Lord Krishna. Ganga devi appeared from the heavenly planets and Krishna's lotus feet were bathed with Ganges water, milk, lotus flowers and Tulsi manjaris. this place, Govinda kunda was originally filled with these ingredients from the abhiseka ceremony of Krishna's lotus feet along with yoghurt, honey and ghee. Of all the places of pilgrimage this place is one of the most auspicious. Govinda kunda is directly manifested by the will of Lord Krishna.

Our great acarya, Sri Madhavendra Puri also came here feeling deep separation from Sri Sri Radha Krishna. He had taken a vow that he would not beg for his meals; but he would only take what came to him of it's own accord without any effort on his part. So three days passed by and Madhavendra Puri hadn't eater anything. On the fourth day a beautiful blackish boy dressed in yellow dhoti came with a pot of milk and placed it before Madhavendra Puri. The beautiful blackish boy smilingly said, please drink the milk I have brought you because nobody fasts in my village. What kind of meditation are you doing? Madhavendra Puri in turn asked the boy how did you know that I was fasting and who are you and where do you reside? The boy replied, I am cowherd boy, I reside in this village and I must go very soon to milk the cows; but I shall return and with that he left. That night Madhavendra Puri could not sleep. At the end of the night after chanting Hare Nama he dozed a little. In a dream he saw the very same boy. The boy came to him and taking his band took him to a bush in a jungle. The boy said, my name is Gopala. I am the lifter of Govardhana hill. I was originally installed by Vrajanath, Krishna's great, grandson. When the Mohammedans attacked, the pujari who was serving me in the temple hid me in this bush. Please bring the people from the village and have them remove me with care. Then please build me a temple on top of Govardhana and install me in that temple. Madhavendra Puri followed the instructions of Gopala perfectly and after installing the Lord with great pomp and splendour spent quite some time here in ecstasy performing devotional service and bhajan. The place of his bhajan kutir is still here and if you look can see it looking very elegant on the other side of Govinda kund.

*ayi dina-dayardra natha he
mathura-natha kadavalokyase
hrdayam tvad-aloka-kataram
dayita bhramyati kim karomy aham*

"O my Lord! O most merciful master! O master of Mathura! When shall I see you again? Because of my not seeing you, my agitated heart has become unsteady. O my most beloved one, what shall I do now?"

This verse was originally spoken by Srimati Radhika, when Krishna left Vrindavan to accept the kingdom of Mathura. By Her mercy Sri Madhavendra Puri composed it again. This was so that Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu would have the transcendental pleasure of tasting it afresh. Only Srimati Radharani, Lord Caitanya and Madhavendra Puri are able to understand the true purport of this verse. From this you can beGiri to understand the extremely, elevated position of Sri Madhavendra Puri.

Sri Madhavendra Puri was the guru of Isvara Puri who was the guru of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He was also the guru of Prabhu Nityananda and Advaita Acarya. Sri Madhavendra Puri is the original seed of the tree of devotional service to Krishna in madhurya rasa. His line belongs to the Brahma Madhva sampradaya originating from Lord Krishna to Brahma, from Brahma to Narada, from Narada to Vyasa and from Vyasa to Madhvacharya. Sri Madhavendra Puri's acceptance of this sampradaya in the line coming from

Madhvacarya means he is also in our parampara lineage of disciplic succession. Now there were 14 spiritual masters in disciplic succession between Madhavacharya and Madhavendra Puri, and during that time the process of deity worship had become dreadfully dry, full of ritualistic ceremonies with very little feeling of love for the Lord.

Sri Madhavendra Puri was the first person in our disciplic succession to exhibit ecstatic symptoms of love for Krishna in madhurya rasa. Before him there was no realisation of vipralambha, intense love in separation from Krishna, nor had anyone in our parampara line previously exhibited devotional service in madhurya rasa to Krishna. Sri Madhavendra Puri introduced these feelings for the first time and it is in him that this most precious seed of devotional service first fructified. Without being in the parampara line of Sri Madhavendra Puri it is not possible to have access to the sublime mellows of ecstatic transcendental devotional service.

krsna prema tanha yanha tanhara sambandha

tahan vina e ipmra kahan nahi gandha

‘This kind of relationship can be experienced only when one has a relationship with Madhavendra Puri. Without him, even a scent of such transcendental ecstatic love is impossible.’ (Sri Caitanya Caritamrta Madhya lila 17.173)

So we, the members of the Brahma Gaudiya Vaisnava sampradaya in the Madhvacarya line are eternally grateful to Sri Madhavendra Puri for this great benediction and wonderful blessing. Now in all humility let us give our full obeisances to Sri Madhavendra Puri for his mercy where he use to sit and perform bhajan here at Govinda kunda and for giving us the greatest benediction ever blessed upon this world... Krishna prema! Gauri Premanandi!! Hari! Haribol!!!

Puncari

Now we have come to Puncari. This place is part of the area where Krishna performed his rasa dance with the gopis. Just look around you, see how beautiful this place is. You can imagine how beautiful it must have been back during Krishna’s times. So many different groves filled with blossoming flowers. The air filled with the scents of wonderful fragrances and the sound of sweetly singing birds.

I remember coming to this place forty years ago with my most beloved spiritual master, Srila Bhakti prajna Kesava Maharaja. Many of you were not even born yet. At that time this place was even more beautiful. This whole place was overflowing with kadamba trees in full blossom. In this beautiful and romantic place Lord Krishna performed his rasa dance and this place where we are standing right now is also part of that place. If you look over there you can see a tamal tree next to a kadamba tree. The tamal tree signifies Krishna and the kadamba tree signifies Srimati Radharani. Krishna always only wears yellow dhoti which is the colour of Srimati Radharani and what colour does Srimati Radharani wear? She puts on dark bluish coloured saris, the colour of Krishna. Hari! Haribol!

Shyam Dhak

This place is known as Shyam Dhak and as you can see it is filled with thousands and thousands of kadamba trees and there are also some very beautiful ponds in the vicinity. When Lord Krishna at the age of seven had totally broken Indra’s pride and humbled him. Indra came to this particular forest to beg for forgiveness. From here he proceeded on to Govinda kunda where Indra performed Lord Krishna’s abhiseka and received forgiveness of his heinous offense by the mercy of Surabhi. Here also there is a seat for Indra and also a very peculiar thing. The leaves of the kadamba trees in this forest are shaped like cups and Lord Krishna and his cowherd friends use to drink buttermilk and eat curd out of these leaf cups.

Even to this day you can take the leaves from these trees and fill them with any liquid and drink from them. They are naturally made this way. So they are trees of Dhak and therefore this forest is called Shyam Dhak. Now we will hear a very nice lecture about vipralambha.

All the Goswamis that came to Vrindavan came in the state of vipralambha, intense separation from Sri Sri Radha Krishna Sri Madhavendra Puri also came here in this state. Lord Caitanya .Mahaprabhu also came here exhibiting this state of consciousness. And in this mood feeling great ecstasy and love of Godhead they visited these holy places of pilgrimage in Vraja Mandala. Nothing could pacify or relieve this mood of intense separation.

Therefore following in their footsteps the mood of the Gaudiya vaisnavas is to cry in intense separation and that crying is nectarean. When Krishna left the company of the gopis, Srimati Radhika and Lalita and Vishaka began to desperately search for him in one forest grove after another, crying bitter tears of intense separation. Those who have the proper understanding of what is love in separation, they in actuality are the only ones who can understand this mood. In this intense mood Srimati Radharani spoke to the kadamba tree saying, where is that sweetness? You are so sweet. Where is that sweetness now? O where is my sweeter than the sweetest, Supreme Lord Shyamasundara, with the blackish complexion, who use to always brush and braid my hair, who use to always wear a gunja mala around his neck and a peacock feather in his crown. O where is He? Where is He? Finally after wandering for some time she came upon Govardhana hill and she prayed to him. O Govardhanji, I remember you, you are that friend from Gokula, and now you are here in this form almost piercing the sky. You know where my beloved is. Please tell me where he is hiding. O Lalita, Vishaka I have looked for him everywhere I went to Shyama kunda, I went to Radha kunda, I went to Govinda kunda. I searched for him everywhere but I was not able to get even the faintest whiff of his scent. I could not even catch the slightest glimpse of my beloved. like this Srimati Radharani was crying like a mad woman; but if we simply hear this and then repeat it to others will this give us the eternal shelter of devotional service to Sri Sri Radha and Krishna? I do not think so. We can take shelter of their lotus feet only by the causeless mercy of Sri Gurudeva. Only by the divine blessings and grace of the Vaisnavas and guru can we achieve this, and this is because the guru's words never fail. Just take the example of Nalakuvara and Manigriva. They did not perform any tapasya or devotional service to Krishna; but because Krishna wanted to honour the words of his pure devotee Narada muni, Krishna delivered them.

Srimati Radharani continued in her mood telling her intimate girlfriends Lalita and Vishaka, I can not understand what is happening to me. Why is this happening to me? Where is that wonderful love of mine, Govinda? Where is that sweeter than the sweetest, blackish cloud complexioned Shyamasundara? He why is more dear to me than all my life. Where did he go? Without finding Him, my life is useless. I don't even know how I am still alive. I don't even know how I am still continuing to breathe. Be cause without Shyamasundara I am already dead. Wailing like this and acting in an extremely mad way Srimati Radharani was even falling into the arms of Lord Balaram so delirious was she in not being able to find Krishna.

So this is the condition of vipralambha and all these pastimes of Radha and Krishna were performed in the places we are visiting. But by just visiting these places, will that give us the mood of intense separation from Sri Sri Radha Krishna? What can we do? We are just conditioned souls. We don't have any real taste for these pastimes. We are just stuck in this material world in complete ignorance. But after everything is said and done there is no other way out, we have no choice. Where can we go without them? How can we live without them? We must take shelter o their lotus feet lifetime after lifetime and they must take care c their fully surrendered devotees and this is all achieved by the mercy and grace of Sri Gurudeva.

After some time when Krishna finally appeared before Srimati Radharani, she related everything that happened to her since the time he had disappeared. Krishna said, o my most beautiful one o most illustrious shining and brilliant jewel of the night. I am extremely pleased with you, kindly tell me what you desire. At that time Srimati Radharani asked for three wishes. She said, "O Shyama please promise me that you will remain here in Vraja for all times; but without being seen by those whose eyes are not anointed by the salve of devotional service to you." The second wish was, "please Shyamasundara never disappoint all the devotees who are somehow residing in Vraja, hoping to attain your lotus feet, never leaving, sustaining their lives by their love for you alone." And the third wish she asked of Krishna was that He always gives his devotees the shelter of His lotus feet, showering them constantly with his mercy." Now if you noticed Srimati Radharani had just been feeling intense separation from Krishna and yet even though she had just been feeling extremely depressed and despondent, when Krishna asked her what did she desire, she did not think of herself. She thought of the suffering devotees of the Lord. This is a symptom of the mood of vipralambha. No matter how unfortunate or grief-stricken the devotee feels A true devotee is still always more concerned with the welfare of other devotees.

Where is our intense yearning for Krishna? When will we in total desperation and utter despondency cry and lament with intense separation of love for Krishna? We don't have even a single drop of it in our hearts. If we did how could we bear to stay alive What allure could life hold for us if we felt like this? Actually if we do have any hope or yearning to one day feel like this, then let that hope and yearning be for the shelter of the lotus feet of Srimati Radhika. And surely by Guru's grace if one does have that sincere hope and yearning, maybe not now, but at least some time in a far, distant future lifetime, Srimati Radharani and Krishna will fulfil this desire. This is the desire that we should always have within our hearts.

Navala Kunda and Aspara Kunda

The two kundas that we see in front of us are called Navala and Aspara kundas. When the rasa dance was being enacted and all the gopis were dancing with Krishna. At that time Krishna became overwhelmed with ecstasy and he went to this lake here called Navala kunda. Navala means evergreen, and Krishna being also an evergreen personality came to this kunda to enjoy its cool waters. The beautiful ladies of the heavenly planets are known as Apsaras and when the gopis became overwhelmed in ecstasy at the rasa dance, all their ecstasy came and formed this lake called Apsara kunda wanting to be close to Krishna a Navala kunda. Now we will here a very nice lecture on rasaraja and mahabhava and some of the more deeper aspects of love in separation.

Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu has been described as the rasaraja and mahabhava. These characteristics are eternal; but what are the actual meanings of rasaraja and mahabhava? Krishna is the rasaraja, he is the enjoyer of all spiritual mellows and Srimati Radhika is the mahabhava because she exhibits the highest spiritual ecstasy. So this means Srimati Radharani as mahabhava and Krishna as rasaraja are eternally embracing each other, and they, have appeared as a united form in the embodiment of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

As close as Lalita devi was to Srimati Radhika and Krishna, still she had never witnessed in their pastimes where due to intensive and intimate conjugal love Krishna slowly took on the complexion and mood of Srimati Radharani. Lalita devi never even got a glimpse of this most precious, loving exchange. Yet in her expansion as Ramananda Ray in Caitanya Mahaprabhu's pastimes, Lalita devi was able to witness this wonderful pastime happening as Mahaprabhu exhibited it. Lalita devi as Ramananda Ray saw Srimati Radharani and Krishna embracing each other eternally in the form of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. She saw in the form of Lord Caitanya, Krishna the rasaraja being gradually influenced by Srimati Radhika's mood of mahabhava. 'She saw Krishna's darkish complexion slowly being covered by Srimati

Radharani's golden complexion. She witnessed all these pastimes in an acute mood of ecstatic reverence, and seeing them for the first time Lalita devi in her expansion as Ramananda Ray realised that Lord Caitanya was experiencing intense separation or vipralambha and ecstasy of reunion at every moment, and this realisation caused Ramananda Ray to fall to the ground unconscious in deep ecstasy.

So from this we can conclude that vipralambha is the supporting cause of ecstasy and not the principle cause, and that it is the meeting again in reunion where the sublimes mellows are exchanged not in the anxiety of separation.

Those who have not scrutinizingly studied the scripture Srimad Bhagavatam, and who have not conscientiously comprehended Sri Caitanya Caritamrta, and who have also not properly understood books like Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu, Brhad Bhagavatamrta, Ujjvala Nilamani, Krishna Karnamrta and other literature of this nature. These people consider vipralambha, the mood of separation to be the highest level of ecstasy. Our previous acaryas also considered vipralambha to be an exalted state; but after much reflection they perceived vipralambha as a prerequisite to highlight and more fully embellish and amplify the ecstasy of reunion. If there would only be vipralambha for all of eternity what would be the use? What would be its service? Vipralambha is necessary only because it intensifies the ecstatic feelings of reuniting again. If during the entire period of time Srimati Radharani was separated from Krishna there was no crying and lamenting and shedding of tears in intense mood of separation; then how could all the symptoms of ecstasy and the ecstatic loving exchanges between them as described in Srimad Bhagavatam manifest themselves in such a state of elevated emotional ecstasy. By seriously studying the Srimad Bhagavatam one can clearly come to the conclusion that the period of feeling vipralambha lasts for only three months, whereas for nine months the ecstasy of meeting again is experienced.

You must consider that the mood of separation in Vraja is certainly not what we think it is from our mundane, materialist point of view. It is quite different. Krishna never leaves Vrindavan. How can Srimati Radharani feel the mood of intense separation from Krishna when she's closely encircled in Krishna's embrace? And how can Srimati Radhika feel separation because of anger in intense love when both she and Krishna are sitting next to each other? Yet still Srimati Radhika is feeling vipralambha. And how does the feeling of vipralambha arise when she and Krishna are playing together? An example of this last pastime is that one day while Srimati Radhika and Krishna were performing their pastimes a big, black bee suddenly flew into their love grove. Now Krishna is sometimes called Madhusudana because he killed the Madhu demon, so a bumblebee is sometimes called Madhusudana, madhu means honey. When Krishna saw the bee he jokingly said, hey Radhe be careful or that bumblebee may sting you. Srimati Radhika becoming afraid ran into Krishna's arms and he playfully making a joke on one of his names said to her, hey Radhe there is no need to fear anymore Madhusudana has already gone. As soon as Srimati Radharani heard the words that Madhusudana had already gone she was bitten by the snake of vipralambha and fell immediately to the ground shedding tears and beating her breast crying out, O my beloved Madhusudana has gone. My beloved Madhusudana has gone. What is to become of me?

So you can see that the mood of vipralambha is much more complex than possibly the way you envisioned it to be before. And those who still persist in advocating that vipralambha is the highest, they do not yet have the spiritual maturity and understanding to realize that it is not possible for anything to be more elevated than Srimati Radharani and Krishna's ecstatic loving exchanges in reuniting again. If we follow a natural progression of thinking we know that only something precious is lamented over when lost. The something precious is the ecstatic pastimes of Sri Sri Radha Krishna. They are the subject. The verb which follows the subject is vipralambha, lamented over. Without a subject a verb is useless and similarly

without reunion vipralambha, so from these observations we can all see that the feeling of vipralambha although necessary to intensify reunion, is totally dependent and completely subordinate to Sri Sri Radha Krishna's ecstatic loving exchanges. Vancha kalpa tarubhya Ca, krpa sindhu bhya eva Ca, patitanam pavanebhyo, vaisnavebhyo namo namaha.

Rasastali

This place is known as Rasastali. As you can see it is very close to Puncari. Rasastali is where Lord Krishna performed his rasa lila pastimes. And what shall I now speak about rasa lila? I have no qualification or eligibility to do so. I simply pray to the lotus feet of Lalita devi that she will intercede for me to Srimati Radharani that one day she and Krishna will shower their nectarean mercy upon us all. On that most auspicious day in some future lifetime I may have the capacity to correctly understand rasa lila, free from mundane impurities with the proper mood of reverence in a humble state of mind; but at this time I am totally incapable, being bound inescapably by the darkest modes of ignorance.

If you look around you can see that there are tamal trees and kadamba trees. If you notice they are all in pairs. These trees are not from recent times like a few hundred years. These trees date back 5000 years and then they were not so fey in number as now. Then there were lakhs of these trees. These trees you see here actually witnessed Lord Krishna's rasa dance and thus they are worshipable by us. That is why we have come here to Rasastali today to beg the mercy from these trees, praying at their lotus feet that they give us the purity to see and understand Krishna's eternal pastimes in our hearts, as they have. These trees are not ordinary trees. They are all transcendental personalities who were witnesses to Lord Krishna's pastimes, and we pray to them that we can gradually develop the desire to serve Krishna with all our hearts and minds, and then our human lives will be successful.

It must be understood that if one wants to make advancement in spiritual life, one must cry, one must shed bitter tears of separation if one wants to serve Sri Sri Radha Krishna in that ecstatic mood. If we want to sincerely serve them, then we must get attached to this mood of intense separation, otherwise without this mood it is not possible to attain their lotus feet in devotional service. This mood of separation as it intensifies not only exhibits ecstasy when feeling estranged from them; but also like the ecstasy of a lover seeing his beloved after some time the same ecstasy is even more intensified. So when you see them you cry tears of joy and when you don't see them you cry tears of ecstatic joy. Always from crying to more crying, from more bitter tears to more bitter tears, from more lamentation to more lamentation. Are you willing to do all this? The six Goswamis.. Rupa, Raghunatha, Jiva, Sanatana, Raghunatha Bhatta and Gopal Bhatta all were deeply steeped in this mood of separation constantly.

So, this place we see before us is not an ordinary place. This place, Rasastali erupts with so much spiritual sentiment and emotion that it can not be contained within a human being heart. Just by thinking about it the six Goswamis would be rolling around in the dust here in maddened ecstasy, crying out with acute lamentation. Such is the potency of this place. Let us also fall down in the dust and although we are not able to attain the ecstatic heights of love in separation at least we can give our most humble and sincere obeisances. Hari! Haribol!

Surabhi Kunda

Now we are standing at the auspicious location of Surabhi kunda. When Indra after harassing the residents of Vraja realised his mistake and understood his true position as nothing but an executive manager of universal affairs, he went to his guru Brhaspati and humbly asked him what he should do. Brhaspati told him that he had made a grievous offense against the lotus feet of Nanda Maharaja, Mother Yashoda and all the residents of

Vraja and that he would have to beg their forgiveness in some way to become free of this offense. He told him, you can't go to Lord Krishna direct, you have to go through someone who is very dear to Krishna and take shelter from them. Then it will be possible for you to approach him. Brhaspati told him, he should go to Surabhi and take shelter from her because the Surabhi cow is very dear to Lord Krishna so Indra following the Instructions of his guru went to Surabhi and asked her would she give him shelter and intercede for him with Krishna. Surabhi was a little surprised at first that the king of the demigods would come to her but then she agreed.

Meanwhile Krishna was inspecting all around Vraja Mandala to see what damage the seven day rain and flooding by Indra had caused to the residents of Vraja, and to see what help they needed. Krishna was especially anxious about Govardhana hill because Krishna had used him to shield the residents of Vraja from Indra's powerful onslaught of lightning bolts. But actually those powerful lightning bolts of Indra felt like tiny little pinpricks to the huge form of Giri Govardhana who was in the utmost ecstasy a being held by the little lotus finger of Lord Krishna's left hand. So as Krishna started walking towards this kunda, Indra saw Him from a distance and upon seeing Him fell immediately to the ground offering his obeisances. But Krishna did not care about Indra's obeisances and he completely ignored him. But when Surabhi approached Krishna and said, O Lord, please be merciful to Indra, in ignorance he has made a mistake only then did Krishna take pity on Indra. If one commits an offense against the lotus feet of Lord Krishna only Sri Guru and the Vaisnavas, the surrendered devotees of the Lord can rectify the situation and redeem the offender from the offence, otherwise there is no chance of redemption. If the spiritual master and the Vaisnavas are happy and satisfied then you can be sure that Krishna is also happy and satisfied. So when Krishna saw his devotee Surabhi he became very pleased, and he promised her that if she you so desired that Indra should be forgiven, then he would certainly be pardoned by him. So this is Surabhi kunda, the place where surabhi got Indra forgiven for his heinous attack against the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the most holy residents of Vraja.

In Kali yuga those people who are gross materialists, who have no interest in love of Godhead and in Krishna, if they come to this place even by chance, by the mercy of Surabhi they will have entry into the world of Lord Krishna's transcendental abode, such is the mercy of Surabhi kund. Those who are millionaires have no real need to make a lot of money because they have sufficient funds. Whereas those who have very little are always hankering for more. In the spiritual sense there is no question of ever having enough, no matter how much spiritual wealth one has. In the spiritual sense, a person who is completely full spiritually should always take a humble position acting as if he does not possess any spiritual qualities whatsoever. Take Lord Caitanya who was Krishna himself. He would always say, I don't even have the slightest tinge of love for Krishna. Srimati Radharani is also lamenting in the same mood saying, I do not have even a drop of love in my heart for Krishna, otherwise how is it that I am still alive. This is the very unique characteristic of pure love of God, that it captivates everyone and everything that it comes in contact with.

Those who have nothing should always be hankering to have more, even Srimati Radharani who has the power to even captivate the mind of Krishna, she always laments that she has no love and attraction for Krishna. And those who have nothing like us, who are completely turned away from Krishna in every sense of the word, we should be the ones to have the most intense desire to have this love and attraction for Krishna. This love and attraction is such a wonderful phenomena that it does not depend on anything or anyone. It can come at any time, under any circumstances, for any reason. It does not depend on who, why, what is their background, what is their birth or what are their qualifications. Also it does not depend on how many scriptures one has read, or how many slokas one has memorised. or how many disciples one has. But one thing is certain, when this love and

attraction does come for Lord Krishna, immediately Lord Caitanya will shower his full compassion on this fortunate soul.

What were Jaghai and Madhai's previous qualifications? They were nothing but worthless drunks, sex-mongers and murderers; but still Lord Caitanya showered them with his mercy. What was Naga Kaliya's qualification? This snake was so sinful that even his breath was able to kill all the plants and wildlife in its area of residence and yet Kaliya received the lotus feet of Krishna upon his head. What were the demoness Putana's qualifications? She was so evil that she used to steal little infant babies from their cradles and drink their blood and devour them. When she gave Krishna her poisonous breast to suck Krishna accepted and while he was sucking Putana tried to push Krishna away, but Krishna pulled her closer and liberated her. Now she holds a position as Krishna's nurse in Vaikuntha-loka. What pious activities did all these demons perform? What was their status on the ladder of devotion? Still even though these demons were the most evil and black hearted, the Lord out of his causeless mercy redeemed them.

So similarly if we approach Krishna and pray to him saying that our hearts are full of deceit, dishonesty, lust and envy and ask Krishna to please remove these impurities, then Krishna will certainly help us. If he was able to redeem all these demons who were totally inimical towards him, why wouldn't he help us who desire to be totally surrendered to him; and this is why we have come here to surabhi kunda to pray to her that she intervene with Krishna like she did for Indra so he will give us his full and unconditional mercy. Hari! Haribol!!

Airavata Kunda

This pond is called Airavata kunda and is the place where Indra's elephant carrier, Airavata came and put the water from the celestial Ganges here, with which he bathed Lord Krishna. From here we will go to the village of Jatipura, the place where Sri Madhavendra Puri lived. Hare Krishna!

Jatipura

Now we have arrived at Jatipura. As you can see it is on the parikrama path of Govardhana hill. This place is called Jatipura because Sri Madhavendra Puri used to live here. Since he was a sannyasi, another name for the renounced order is called jati. Thus after him this place is called Jatipura. He used to live here with his worshipable Lord, Sri Gopalaji and he used to worship him here. He used to worship Krishna in his form of Gopal and it was here where he offered him the huge bhoga offering of 56 preparations. Also the big annakuta at the appearance of Gopa was performed here at this place called Jatipura. Hari! Haribol!

Chakra Tirtha

This place is called Chakra Tirtha. Before Indra's pride has been totally crushed by Krishna, he had sent the powerful samvartaka clouds usually used at the end of the material manifestation. At this time Krishna had his Sudarsana chakra whirling above Govardhana to protect him and to subdue the force of the clouds and rain. When Indra was finally forced to accept defeat the chakra stationed itself here and has been worshipped ever since.

During Sri Caitanya's appearance Sanatana Goswami always used to perform his bhajan near to Lord Shiva, that way he felt protected. When he was staying in Vrindavan he used to stay at Gopishvara. When he was in Kamyavan he was living next to Kamesvara and here when he was in Govardhana he would stay at this place called Chakreshwar Shiva. Sanatana Goswami and Lord Shiva were very close and that is why he always chose his bhajan kutir close to where Lord Shiva resided, after requesting his permission to stay there. Once while

he was staying here performing his bhajan he was plagued with so many mosquitoes always biting him that he could not stand it any longer and he began to pack his belongings to go elsewhere. When Lord Shiva became aware that Sanatana Goswami was leaving he disguised himself as a Brahmana and approached Sanatana asking him what was his reason for leaving. Sanatana told him that the mosquitoes were biting so fiercely that he could not properly execute his devotional service. Lord Shiva breathing a sigh of relief told Sanatana to stay one more night and he promised that he would not be plagued by mosquitoes any longer. Sanatana agreed. Lord Shiva immediately sent for the demigod in charge of insect life. Lord Shiva was feeling very sad because for him there is nothing more pleasurable or joyous than the association of a pure devotee of the Lord, like Sanatana Goswami, and to Lord Shiva there is nothing more sorrowful than the separation of such a pure devotee of the Lord. When the demigod in charge of insect life arrived, Shiva told him that a pure devotee of the Lord was being harassed by mosquitoes and that he wanted all the mosquitoes in the area to depart at once and never return. That night Sanatana Goswami was able to do his bhajan in complete peace and to this day the area around this place very seldom has any mosquitoes.

Sanatana Goswami when he would travel throughout Braja would sleep under a different tree every night. He used to eat very frugally, usually only a chapati or two, spending all his time writing books on devotional service and instructing Gopal Bhatta Goswami to compile Hari Bhakti Vilasa as instructed by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. HBV explains the basic duties of a devotee, love of Godhead, Vaisnava duties and activities of devotional service to Krishna, and all this was compiled under the direction and guidance of sanatana Goswami. Hari Bhakti Vilas is especially important for householder devotees. They should direct their lives according to the instructions found in this book.

Every morning Sanatana Goswami would go for parikrama around Govardhana and often he would do 1008 dandavats. Whenever he saw another Vaisnava he would give his full obeisances. He would sleep only two or three hours a day and at night he would burn dry leaves and with that light he would write his books. That is how he was spending his life. If someone wants to do bhajan properly he should take inspiration from Sanatana Goswami and direct his life in the service of the Lord in this manner. He was the epitome of compassion. His heart cried out in anguish for the conditioned souls. He directed his life in trying to uplift the masses who are engrossed in materialistic activities, yet he never felt that he was doing anything special. He was always in a humble state of mind. So here we should pray to Sanatana Goswami that by his grace we may be able to take shelter from him and direct our lives by his example, then our life on earth will also be successful. Now we will hear a very nice lecture comparing the glories of Sri Vraja Mandala Dham with its direct nondifferent, manifestation Sri Navadvipa Dham.

Let us always seek the shelter of Sri Navadvipa Dham. Navadvipa Dham is a nondifferent, direct manifestation of Sri Vraja Mandala. One must always take shelter of Navadvipa Dham. The Holy land of Krishna always weighs and analyses the offenses made by the living entity. But Lord Caitanya, his manifestation, His holy name and his holy Dham do not consider aparadhas or offenses. This is why we always have to take the shelter of Navadvipa Dham. If anyone takes the name of Lord Gauranga with tears in his eyes full of love for the Lord, then that purchases the Lord immediately and He relieves them from all sinful reactions.

Lord Krishna is also extremely merciful. Krishna always measures his mercy like on a balance scale. According to the devotion of the individual he gives equal measures of his mercy. As Krishna tells Arjuna at the battle of Kuruksetra.

*ye yatha mam prapadyante
tams ta thaiva bhajamy aham*

"As they surrender to me, I reward them accordingly." (Bhagavad-gita 4.11)

So Krishna's reward is always extremely measured. Whatever one desires from Krishna, Krishna will surely give; but exactly in equal proportion to the individuals surrender.

Now in Lord Caitanya's pastimes we see that the Lord distributed profusely and freely to everyone without consideration of surrender, devotion, position or status. When Lord Caitanya travelled through the Jharikhanda jungle from Jagannath Puri to Vrindavan with Balabhadra Bhattacharya we see that he inundated wild, ferocious tigers and elephants with love of Godhead. All the jungle animals that Lord Caitanya passed would jump up and start dancing, chanting the name Krishna, Krishna! He distributed Krishna prema freely to every living entity that he came

*anarpita carim cirat karunayavatirnah kalau
samarpayitum unnatojjvala rasam sva bhakti sriyam
harih purata sundara dyuti kadamba sandipitah
sada hrdaya kandare sphuratu vah saci nandanah*

There were many precious incarnations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; but none were so generous, kind and magnanimous as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, for he distributed the most confidential aspect of devotional service, madhurya rasa of Sri Sri Radha Krishna. This is why Lord Caitanya's holy name and the name of Lord Nityananda who is the original spiritual master. Their names can exonerate and redeem anyone from the most heinous offenses and aparadhas.

Our previous Acharya's Jagannath das Babaji Maharaja and Gaura Kishore Maharaja and even the Goswamis, they resided for many years in Vraja Mandala. But they felt that they had to go to Navadwipa Dham because in Navadwipa Dham there is no consideration of eligibility or qualification. Navadwipa Dham is the total embodiment of compassionate magnanimity and all encompassing mercy of the Lord. We also following in the footsteps of our previous acaryas shall take full shelter of the holy names of Nitai and Gauranga and the holy abode known as Navadwipa Dham. Because they have come to specifically give us the highest benediction any living entity can receive, and that is love of Krishna. Lord Caitanya is the rasaraja and the mahabhava. He is the enjoyer of all spiritual mellows and he exhibits the highest spiritual ecstasy but Lord Nityananda is even more merciful than Lord Caitanya. It was by his grace that Lord Caitanya redeemed Jagai and Madhai. If Lord Nityananda is pleased with you Lord Caitanya immediately showers his mercy upon you. But if Lord Nityananda is displeased with you then Lord Caitanya punishes you double.

So in conclusion by taking full shelter of Prabhu Nityananda and Lord Caitanya, they out of their causeless mercy will reveal to us our eternal service to Lord Krishna, Krishna's eternal abode and how we can become maid servants of the maid servants of the maid servants of Srimati Radharani. All this can only be revealed by Prabhu Nityananda and Lord Caitanya's mercy. Gaur Premanandi!! Hari! Haribol!!!

Sakhi Sthali

Now we are Sakhi Sthali. This is the place of Chandravali. This is where she used to meet with Krishna and it is not far from Shyamakunda. Once a man wanted to give Raghunath das Goswami some curd to drink from a little leaflet. Raghunatha das asked the man from where did he get the curd from. The man replied, oh I have got it from Sakhi Sthali. Immediately Raghunatha dasa pulled back in horror exclaiming, I will not take. I will not take. Why do you offer me something from Sakhi Sthali? Don't you know that it is the place of Chandravali? Furious with the man he went away. Raghunath Goswami is thinking, I am the servant of the servant of Srimati Radhika exclusively. It is not proper that I ever take anything from Chandravali, she is the rival of the one that I eternally worship and adore, so let me go far away from this person or else my bhajan will be spoiled. This is the mood that we must always have while performing our bhajan. We must never associate closely with the gross

materialists unless the association is exclusively for the service of Krishna otherwise it can completely spoil our delicate creeper of devotional service.

Uddhava Kunda

The place where we are now is the place where Uddhava after meeting with the gopis and admiring and appreciating their exalted position desired to have a future birth as merely an insignificant clump of grass in Vraja Mandala. Then he would be able to have the dust of the gopis feet on his head. Uddhava was the cousin of Krishna and his best friend and being the disciple of Brhaspati who was the guru of the demigods it is clear to see that Uddhava was extremely qualified. Uddhava came and spent nine months in Vrindavan and when he came here he completely had forgotten where he was. When Uddhava was leaving Dwaraka he was thinking, how can I live in Vrindavan without the company of Krishna? How will I be able to do this? I think I shall surely die. Uddhava actually didn't want to leave Krishna but because Krishna had instructed him to go and pacify the gopis in his place, he went. Krishna, being a loving friend of Uddhava really sent him to Vrindavan so he could study the highly elevated, ecstatic devotional standard of the gopis.

When Krishna sent Uddhava to Vrindavan, he gave him his yellow dhoti to wear, the fresh vaijayanti flower garland made from five different, fragrant flowers which he would wear each day, some of his jewellery and his gold turban. Krishna gave Uddhava all these things to wear because he wanted it to be absolutely clear that Uddhava was sent by him. Afterwards He took Uddhava to Balaram's mother, Rohini to get her blessings. When they arrived, Krishna said to Rohini, mother, I am sending Uddhava to Vrindavan to find out all the news about my step-parents Nanda and Yashoda and all my cowherd friends and my dear gopis. Also Uddhava can go and pacify them for me telling them that I am all right and that I have not forgotten them. Mother Rohini looked at Krishna in astonishment saying, how can you send your servant in place of you and expect him to be able to pacify all those who love you more than their own lives? I do not understand this type of thinking at all. Instead of pacifying them, sending Uddhava will simply increase their mood of separation from you and agitate their extreme lamentation. Unless you go yourself they will never be pacified. Actually my son, I was thinking that you were a very kind-hearted person; but now I can see you are extremely hardhearted. You received so much love from Nanda and Yashoda. They sacrificed so much for you, they shed tears for you, they were harassed by demons because of you. For ten years they devoted their entire lives to you and now instead of you going yourself like a loving son should do, you are sending your servant. And all these years you didn't even think to go to Vrindavan even once. How can you be so cruel? While Mother Rohini was speaking her son Lord Balaram came. Understanding the situation immediately He said, Mother Rohini is right my brother, how can you be so cruel? Don't you know that Nanda Maharaja and Mother Yashoda have almost become blind from crying incessantly for so many years in separation from you? Your cowherd friends have almost shrivelled up and no longer laugh or play so distraught are they, and the gopis, they who have dedicated everything to you continue to walk around Vraja mandala like ghosts. They don't eat, they don't sleep, 24 hours a day they are doing nothing but lamenting and crying over you. This is the truth my brother, believe it. But still Krishna was not convinced and so he sent Uddhava in His place to Vrindavan.

When Uddhava arrived in Vrindavan he saw all its wonderful beauty in a pastoral panorama before him. He saw thousands and thousands of cows all mooing contentedly with their udders full of milk. He saw hundreds and hundreds of gopis going about their daily duties like in a dream. Some of the older gopis were sitting like statues and they were singing the glories of Krishna's childhood lilas and his wonderful pastimes. As these gopis went about their daily duties, singing the glories of Krishna, tears of sadness ran down their faces in a

never ending flow but what amazed Uddhava the most was that by just thinking and crying and singing about Krishna, Krishna was actually always present before them. Further contemplating Uddhava thought, I have just now left Krishna in Dwaraka and I don't have this mood, this mood of the gopis is so full of potency that it allows them to always be with Krishna. In fact I now realize that Lord Krishna is only partially present in Mathura and Dwaraka and every other place; but here in Vrindavan he is fully manifest with all his beauty and all his attractiveness. Reflecting thus he opened his eyes and looked around. This time he noticed that everyone in Vraja Mandala was all dried up, everyone was sad and melancholy. No one seemed to have any life. Everyone moved around as if they were in a dream.

When Uddhava approached Vrindavan in Krishna's chariot, from a distance all the gopis saw him. They started talking to themselves excitedly. Who is this coming in such a magnificent chariot? One of them said, it must be Akrura, another said, he already came once and took Krishna away from us why is he coming back? We don't need any information about Mathura, we already know that Krishna killed Kamsa, Akrura doesn't have to come and tell us that. Another one said, no, no, no you are all wrong. Can't you see his colour and complexion? It is very dark and look, he is wearing a yellow dhoti and a yellow turban. Another one said, I can not mistake that garland that he is wearing, ever, that is Krishna's garland. This must be a messenger from Krishna. He looks like Krishna, he dresses like Krishna, he is even wearing Krishna's flower garland, look at the beautiful chariot he sent him in. Krishna is just a cowherd boy, but he is sending his servant in a golden chariot. Another gopi said, Krishna is just trying to show off. He just wants to show us how rich and powerful He is. Uddhava, hearing these things said to himself, why did I come here in this chariot showing so much pomp and grandeur? If I had a hole to crawl in I would crawl into it now. I feel ashamed, I have no devotion for Krishna in comparison to the gopis. Previously Uddhava had thought his devotion for Krishna was the best; but now after seeing and hearing the gopis he realised that their elevated position was actually more supreme. So instead of going directly to them he decided to approach Nanda Maharaja and Mother Yashoda first to try to pacify them.

When Nanda Maharaja heard the sound of the thundering hooves of the horses that were pulling Uddhava's chariot he went out to have a look, he said to himself, O my Lord, is that Krishna? His heart skipped a beat; but no it was not Krishna. But who could this beautiful dark boy be and where has he come from? He is even dressed exactly like Krishna, ah it is Uddhava. Now, when Uddhava saw the state and condition of Nanda Maharaja and Yashoda mayi he was mortified, he could not believe his eyes. The whole royal courtyard was unkempt, the stoves for cooking were unused and spiders had made their webs there. He noticed that Mother Yashoda was lying in a corner in a catatonic stupor. Nanda Maharaja not even ask about Krishna, he is so emotionally disturbed. So instead he asked about his brother Vasudeva and his son Balaram; but the name of Krishna got stuck in his throat and he was unable to voice it. As soon as Nanda Maharaja would start to think about Krishna he would break down and start sobbing unbearably. Finally unable to contain his pain any longer he cried out, my Krishna; but he could not utter anymore before he broke down and sobbing fell to the ground Uddhava, his mind totally shocked by the state of affairs thought I have never seen anything like this before. I have never seen anyone show such intense feelings of love for another person. Then lifting Nanda Maharaja up from the ground he said, all glories to Sri Nanda Maharaja and Uddhava fell down and embraced his lotus feet. While he did this he was thinking, Krishna has sent me to pacify the residents of Vraja; but how can I pacify anyone seeing them in this condition. Uddhava was intelligent, he knew everything about psychology, he was an expert diplomat and he was able to quickly perceive the essence of a situation in a very short time. He was thinking that if he should try to pacify Nanda and Yashoda this would simply increase their mood of separation and cause them anguish so he

decided to remain quiet. Rising to his feet he saw Nanda Maharaja crying in intense vatsalya rasa and Uddhava reflecting was astounded and felt ashamed a little because he realised that he could never bring himself to cry in this fashion in his mood of sakhya rasa to Krishna.

Uddhava unable to control his own emotions blurted out, O Nanda Maharaja, you are glorious. There is nobody else like you in all the worlds. Nanda Maharaja looked at Uddhava in astonishment thinking to himself, what is this dear boy babbling about? He said to Uddhava, you are telling me that I am fortunate. What do you mean and what facts do you have to support this conclusion? Can you please by logic show me this hypothetical analysis. Uddhava said, yes I can. You had the opportunity to have the Supreme Personality of Godhead in his original form as your son. You had the opportunity to take him on your lap, to laugh and play with him, to sometimes reprimand him, to take him in your arms and in every way to be a loving and devoted father to him. You, Nanda Maharaja had this most wonderful and precious opportunity and now you are crying so intensely in separation from the Lord. Truly you are the greatest of souls and the most fortunate.

Nanda Maharaja gravely composed himself and smiling a little sadly at Uddhava said, my dear Uddhava you are clearly very immature. I can now see that even your milk teeth have not come out yet and you still have all your baby fat. You still need time to ripen. Actually I am exactly the opposite of what you think. I am the most unfortunate of human beings because although I had constant association with the Supreme Lord, I thought he was just my son. Let me tell you a story that might give you a little wisdom.

Once there was a man who found a philosopher's touch stone, a cintamani which grants all desires. That man was thinking, I found such a beautiful stone, let me keep it in some place safe somehow or other someone stole this cintamani from him. So naturally he started looking frantically everywhere for it. People noticing asked him, what have you lost? He replied, I just lost a most beautiful stone and I am trying to find it. The people told him that was not an ordinary stone you had; that was a cintamani and that could have fulfilled all your desires. The man was thunderstruck, he said, that was cintamani and I didn't know! What have I done, what have I done? Now Uddhava, my dear boy, you mean to tell me that I am fortunate when I have this Supreme Lord in my home day after day and still I thought he was just my son. I am the most ignorant of foolish people, just like the man with the cintamani. Now he has gone away from here to Mathura and Dwaraka and I have no opportunity of serving him yet you want to call me fortunate. And even if I had known he was the Supreme Lord when he was here, why was I able to continue to live once he had gone. What kind of a father am I? When Lord Ramachandra's father, Dasaratha found out that his son had gone into the forest in exile he was in so much pain and grief and lamentation that he cried out in anguish, Hare Rama, Hare Rama and left his body. Why didn't I leave my body when my son left? No my dear Uddhava, please do not insult me again with your silly suppositions and infantile assumptions. I know what I am. I am the most unfortunate of human beings.

After this conversation Uddhava was very confused and upset. He couldn't sleep that night. In the morning after taking bath and performing his duties he decided to approach the gopis.

When Uddhava approached the gopi's he passed through beautiful kadamba forest. The meeting with Nanda Maharaja had given him a startling new revelation in the matter of devotional service and as a representative of Krishna he was determined not to appear as an immature devotee in front of the gopi's also While immersed in thoughts like this he suddenly came upon hundreds and thousands of gopi's just lying around on the ground in deep lamentation for Krishna. They were all in various groups and they were singing and talking about Krishna's pastimes. They had no desire for eating or sleeping or even seeing their family members; the only thing that was sustaining their lives was thinking about Krishna, and sometimes one of the gopi's would remember a particular pastime that was

especially precious to all of them like Krishna's pastime of dancing so wonderfully on Kaliya's heads or Krishna's lila of holding up Govardhana hill. Hearing this pastime one of them would start sobbing uncontrollably and then all the gopi's would break down and start wailing and weeping. Then after some time they would compose themselves a little and begin glorifying Krishna all over again. In this way they were living day by day. Uddhava seeing this extraordinary display of mahabhava realised that he would not be able to pacify the gopi's by his abilities alone, first he decided to read Krishna's message to them. So approaching Srimati Radharani and offering his obeisances he humbly explained to Her that he had a message from Krishna for them and then receiving her permission he began to read it. The reason why Uddhava read the message was because when Krishna wrote it He was so pained that he was not able to write what he was feeling coherently. In this message Krishna told the gopi's that separation from him was impossible and that to increase their super excellent love for him was the reason he had purposely separated himself from them. He further told them it was not possible for them to be replaced in His heart. Just by hearing the words of Krishna spoken by his bona fide representative, Uddhava cooled off the gopi's burning fire of separation and saved them from certain death. From this point on they were able to adjust their deep lamentation within the boundaries of life and they were grateful to Uddhava for this. Uddhava was also grateful to the gopis and he realised that in every situation they were always worshipable because they were jivas completely attached to the lotus feet of Krishna. This understanding gave him the insight to totally reconstruct his views towards devotional service. After spending some time with the gopis he went to a place where we will go later called, Uddhava kyari and there he became inspired to have a future birth simply as a blade of grass in Vrindavan, so that the dust from the lotus feet of the gopis would fall upon him, because even though he was Krishna's cousin and best friend he didn't feel that he was qualified to take the gopis foot-dust in his present life. This should be a lesson to us all in regards to the humility of a Vaisnava. So let us all now give our humble obeisances to Uddhava and beg him to bestows upon us, even the semblance of this humility, then our lives can become successful. Hari! Haribol!

Radha Kunda

We are now having darshan at the most holy waters of Radha Kunda. Radha kunda is the most sacred and exalted place in all creation. Beyond the material worlds is the spiritual abode of Vaikuntha and beyond that the area known as Mathura is the supreme abode. On earth the holiest country is India. In India the most holiest place is known as Mathura, within Mathura Mandala the holy place known as Vrindavan is best because that is where Krishna performed His rasa lila, out of all places in Vrindavan, Govardhana is the best because Govardhana hill is Krishna Himself and the most holiest place in Govardhana is Radha kunda. Totally and fully transcendental the glories of Radha kunda have been sung and eulogised by all the greatest sages and saints, and as Shyama kunda which is right next to it is nondifferent from Lord Krishna, Radha kunda is also nondifferent from Srimati Radharani.

After killing the bull demon Aristasura who was sent by Kamsa, Krishna desired to sport with the gopis. But when he approached them, Srimati Radharani and the gopis refused Him saying, don't touch us. You just killed a male cow. You will have to purify Yourself by bathing in all the holy places in the three worlds. Krishna thinking that if He did this He would be separated from Srimati Radharani replied, why should I have to wander throughout the three worlds? I will bring all the holy places here and take my bath in them. Stamping his lotus heel into the ground all the sacred waters of all the holy places came and appeared before him. The Yamuna, the Ganges, the Saraswati, the Sindhu, the salt ocean, the ocean of milk, all the most holy waters of the universe came so Krishna could take bath in them. After purifying himself by bathing, Krishna told the gopis that He was pure, but that they were

contaminated because although Aristasura had assumed the form of a bull he was still a demon and they must take a sacred bath to wash away their sin of siding with a demon. Hearing this Srimati Radharani told the gopis, we will make an even more beautiful kunda. So She and the gopis began digging and in a very short time a kunda was dug by them. Krishna seeing their kunda informed them that it was very nice but there was no water in it. Better you fill your kunda with water from mine. But Srimati Radharani said no, this is not possible, Your kunda is contaminated by your terrible sin of killing a cow. Then she got all her gopis to form a line and bring pure water from Manasi Ganga in thousands of pots. Krishna not wishing to see even one bead of perspiration on Srimati Radharani's forehead gave a signal to the leader of all the holy waters from all the sacred places. This deities with tears in his eyes and palms joined together gave choice prayers to Srimati Radharani explaining to her that he and all the sacred waters had come here to live by the stamp of Krishna's lotus foot. But that now they could clearly see that their lives would be totally successful if they could come and live in her kunda. Srimati Radharani smiling at her beloved Krishna from the corners of her eyes accepted and all the holy waters receiving the mercy of Srimati Radharani broke through the walls of Shyama kunda and quickly filled Radha kunda with their sacred waters. Krishna very pleased told Srimati Radharani that Her kunda would always be His favourite place and that it would always be as dear to Him as She was. Srimati Radharani replied, I will always come and bathe in Your kunda and anyone who has devotion for this kunda or who bathes here or who lives here is sure to become very dear to Me.

When Lord Caitanya came here to Radha kunda 500 years ago nobody had any knowledge of where either Radha kund or Shyama kunda were. The Lord therefore went and discovered them both. At that time they were only two small pools of water in two rice paddy fields. Lord Caitanya first took His bath in the pool now known as Radha kunda and then he took bath in the pool known as Shyama kunda. Many years later Raghunath das Goswami was approached by a rich merchant who wanted to do some guru seva and Raghunatha dasa had him excavate both kundas to the present size and shape they are now.

Nowadays there is a tendency by many to consider Varsana as the crest jewel of all Srimati Radharani's lila; but according to the Goswami's and authoritative sources this is not the correct understanding. Lord Caitanya himself has said.

kundera madhuri yena radhara madhurima
kundera mahima yena radhara mahima

The attraction of Radha kunda is as sweet as that of Srimati Radharani. Similarly, the glories of this kunda are as glorious as Srimati Radharani. (Sri Caitanya Caritamrta, Madhya lila 18.11)

Varsana, Nandagram, Gokula, Vrindavan are without question certainly very elevated places. In all these places there is no difference transcendently in essence; but there is a slight variation in rasa. In Gokula, Krishna exhibited his early childhood pastimes in vatsalya rasa. In Vrindavan, Krishna was performing his rasa lila, that was panchayata rasa. Meaning there were different categories of gopis there. There were nitya sakhi gopis, prana sakhi gopis, priya sakhi gopis, param prestha sakhi gopis and also those sages who from the time of Lord Ramacandra had prayed at his lotus feet. They also became gopis. All these various and different classes of gopis entered into the arena of rasa lila, and that is why Srimati Radharani became angry and left the in anger the rasa dance. So in order to pacify her anger Krishna came after her and then Srimati Radharani and only the most intimate gopis enjoyed rasa lila with Krishna. This is actual rasa lila. We see in the different places where Krishna came to pacify her and braided Srimati Radharani's hair or massaged her lotw feet or the place where he lifted her up in his arms. You can see there that the impressions of his feet are deeper than othew places. We have all seen these things. Naturally at Nandagran where Krishna's parents were living and at Varsana where Srimati Radharani's parents resided no display of conjugal

feelings were ever disclosed. At these places the mood of sakhya rasa was enacted. But here at Radha kunda only madhurya rasa was performed. This is why this place is so special. This is why all our previous acaryas acknowledged Radha kunda as the crest jewel in all the three worlds. Here only the most intimate girlfriends of Srimati Radharani were allowed to come here. Not even Nanda Maharaj and Yashodamata or King Vrishabhanu and Kirtida could ever come here. But even Krishna's friends couldn't come here excepting the priyanama sakhas who are very intimate with Krishna. Those intimate friends who assist Krishna in meeting Srimati Radharani like Madhumangal, Sridam, Sudama, Arjun only they can sometimes come; but even then they must remain on the Shyamakunda side. Here there are also eight kundas surrounding Radha kunda and Shyama kunda. These kundas represent the eight principal gopis who are called sakhis. They are Lalita, Vishaka, Chitra, Indurekha, Champakalata, Tungavidya Rangadevi and Sudevi.

Radha kunda is the most elevated place in the universe, and not only in this material manifestation; but in the spiritual sky Goloka Vrindavan as well. A place more holy and sacred does not exist. When bathing here one should strictly follow the instructions of one's spiritual master implicitly, in this way no offense will be made. For example if one's spiritual master or the guru of one's spiritual master requested his disciples not to enter the water when they take bath here, then that request should be considered as a direct order from the Supreme Lord Krishna Himself. The spiritual master always knows what is best for his disciples in all respects and his orders must always be obeyed. Jay! Jay! Sri Radhe!! Jay! Jay! Sri Radhe!! Jay! Jay! Sri Radhe!! Shyam!!!

Shyama Kunda

If you look you can notice that the shape of Shyama kunda is made in an irregular way. This is because when Raghunath das Goswami finished excavating Radha kunda and was beginning work on Shyama kunda, Yudhisthira Maharaj appeared to him in a dream and requested him not to cut down the trees on the bank of Shyama kunda because he and his four brothers are residing here as these trees performing bhajan. The next day by the order of Sri Raghunathji the plan of excavation was altered and the blessed, illustrious Pandavas: Yudhisthira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva were allowed to continue their bhajan in peace.

Now we shall all take darshan of these trees and begging the Pandavas for their mercy take their dust from the ground below them upon our heads remembering their pastimes with Krishna. Then we will all take darshan of the samadhis of Raghunath das Goswami, Raghunath Bhatta Goswami and Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami who wrote Sri Caitanya Caritamrta here. Then we shall go to that small mandir you see on the other side of Shyama kunda. This is Lord Caitanya's pada pitha and the Lord's lotus footprints are enshrined there. After circumambulating this mandir and falling to the ground giving full dandavats, we will beg Lord Caitanya to bestow upon us his mercy and to nullify any offense we may have inadvertently committed by thought, by word or by action in this holiest of holy, supremely most sacred spot. Jay Jay Sri Radhe! Jay Jay Sri Radhe! Jay Jay Sri Radhe! Shyam!!!

Kusuma Sarovara

Now we are at Kusuma Sarovar. This place is so very beautiful. Once all the places of Sri Vraja Mandala were as beautiful as this. Look at the cool, clean, fresh water here. How inviting! Just look at the majestic and elegant architecture on the opposite side. So perfectly symmetrical and marvelous. Srimati Radharani used to come to this beautiful place with her sakhis and pick flowers for Krishna's garland before, going to meet him. In Caitanya Mahaprabhu's time this place was known as Sumanah Sarovara and in the Sri Caitanya

Caritamrita it has been described that ere after he went to Radha kunda. Sarovara is a kunja grove known as sometimes Krishna would get the Srimati Radharani's hair. Also close by is a great acarya Srila Bhaktisiddhanta recorded during his parikrama of Sri Babaji recited Sri Vraja Mandala go down and take acaman and sprinkle give our obeisances to this place.

Lord Caitanya took bath along the banks of Kusuma ...?shoka kunja. This is where opportunity to braid Srimati... temple to Uddhava. Our Saraswati Prabhupada has Vraja Mandala that Udd... Mahima here. So let us now sprinkle water upon our head. Haribol!!

Mukharavinda

Now we have arrived at Mukharavinda of Govardhan. Mukharavinda means his lotus mouth. if you remember before it was explained that Govardhana is formed in the shape of a peacock. Radha kunda and Shyama kunda are the eyes, Dan Gati is its long neck, Puncari is its back and tail feathers and Mukharavinda is its lotus mouth. The peacock often curves his neck and puts his head under its stomach, this is a classical pose that a peacock makes sometimes. Giri Govardhan is formed in this classical pose as if he is putting his head under his stomach.

Many people say that Jatipura is the mouth of Giri Govardhan, some people even say that Dan Gati is his mouth. But according to the scriptures and our previous acaryas the place where we are right now, Mukharavinda is the lotus mouth of Govardhan. Following the strict scriptural injunctions even Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu came here to make his offering to the lotus mouth of Giri Govardhan. Also our Goswamis, Rupa and Sanatana and our previous acaryas, His Divine Grace Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada and my own spiritual master Srila Keshava Maharaja, they all came to the mouth of Govardhana here at Mukbaravinda and made their offerings to Giriraj. Also from time immemorial all the Annakuja offerings were made here so for us this is the place to give our offerings because this place has been authorized by our parampara. Just like a Salagram Sila has his face in all directions, his nose, his eyes, his mouth are in all directions. According to the scriptures he has thousands of hands. So similarly Govardhana can have his face in many, many directions. Govardhan's mouth can be in any direction and every direction and it is anywhere and everywhere; still following our disciplic succession and following the scriptures Mukharavinda is the place of Giri Govardhan's lotus mouth. So everyone can come and offer your samosas, and your sweet rice, and milk sweets and whatever other nice eatables you have prepared. Our pujari has plenty of tulsi leaves so if your preparation is without please take some tulsi from him and offer her with your offering, then Giri Govardhana will be completely satisfied. So now we will offer our humble obeisances to Giri Govardhanji and begging him for his mercy make our offerings. Gaura Premanandi! Haribol!

Manasi Ganga

Here we are at Manasi Ganga. Once Nanda Maharaja and Mother Yashoda desired to make a pilgrimage to bathe Krishna in the waters of the holy Ganges. How could this be possible? It is the Yamuna which flows through Vraja. Krishna not wishing to have his mother and father travel such a long distance just for Him, revealed to them that Ganga devi had already manifested herself in Vraja as Manasi Ganga and that they could go and bathe there. Nanda Maharaja and Mother Yashoda were amazed that Ganga devi had manifested herself in Vraja and they were not aware of it, so they asked Krishna to tell them all about it. Krishna related how once he had to kill a wicked demon, named Vatsasura who had assumed the form of a baby calf. After killing the demon his cowherd friends told him he would have to bathe in the holy Ganges to purify himself. Not wishing to travel so far

away, by His mystic power, Krishna caused the river Ganges to appear here and then he took his bath. In this way He pleased His friends and Ganga devi who had been hankering for an opportunity to bathe the Lord's lotus feet.

From where we stand now the gopis use to cross over to the other side and Krishna somehow or other was the boatman. When the gopis requested Krishna to take them over, Krishna told them that his boat was very old and that it was dangerous to travel in it. But Srimati Radhika and the gopis insisted until finally Krishna agreed, but He mischievously added that they would have to help row. The gopis agreed and they all got in and began rowing. But in a very few moments Krishna noticed the water was swiftly coming in a hole from the side. He told them we are carrying too much weight. We must throw all the pots of milk and butter overboard. The gopis seeing the water come, quickly threw all their pots over the side. Then Krishna told them that the boat was still over loaded and that they would all have to throw their heavy gold jewelry over the side too. At the same time Krishna threw all his weight on one side of the boat so mud water rushed in. The gopis shrieking in fear took off all their jewelry and tossed it overboard also. But still Krishna would not relent, he threw all his weight to the other side of the boat and the waters gushed in told them that the boat was still too heavy and that they would have to take off their clothes and throw them overboard as well. At this time all the gopis became exceedingly fearful and Srimati Radhika throwing herself into Krishna's hands said, O boatman, o boatman! Somehow or the other make it possible to take us across. Whatever you want I will give you. Only please take us to the other side. Then on Srimati Radhika's request, Krishna became very pleased and sticking a cork into the hole stopped the water from coming in and then taking the oars Himself rowed them all peacefully across. So like this Krishna and the gopis performed so many pastimes here at Manasi Ganga. So let us now take acaaman here and remembering this pastime give our humble obeisances. Hare Krishna!

Manasi devi

Now we have come to Manasi devi temple. People mistakenly call this place Manasa devi; but it is not Manasa devi, it has gone through a philological change and people mistakenly call it Manasi devi. What need is there for a Manasi devi temple in Govardhan? In actuality this place is Manasi Ganga. Ganga devi had come here to bathe Krishna and in appreciation she was doing puja and offering choice prayers to Yamuna devi for giving her this opportunity. This temple to the goddess Manasi Ganga is one of Vraja Mandala's four main devi temples, the others being ?ga Maya devi in Vrindavan, Pataleshwari devi in Mathura and Vrinda devi in Kamyavan. So now we will take darshan of Manasi Ganga and as it is getting late we will return to our residence for the night and have mahaprasad and take rest. Haribol!

Haridev Mandir

Here is a very ancient temple of Haridev established by Krishna's great, grandson Vrajanath. The treacherous muslim King Aurangzeb even came here and destroyed the top of this temple. We will now go and surely have darshan of Lord Haridev, because if one makes parikrama of Govardhana and does not have Haridev's darshan, one's parikrama is not considered to be complete. Who is this Haridev? Why Haridev is none other than Krishna Himself, who held Govardhana hill for seven days with the little finger of his left hand. It is Krishna in the form of Lord Hari in the pose of Govardhanhari that is residing in this temple. So let us all go and have darshan of Lord Haridev otherwise our parikrama which is so important to us will not be complete. Gaura Premanadi! Haribol!

Surya Kunda

Now we have arrived at Surya kunda. This place is extremely potent and overflowing with auspiciousness. It was one of the places where Srimati Radharani and Krishna could safely meet each other.

Every Sunday Srimati Radharani would come to this place and worship Surya, the sungod. This was the only place her mother in law would allow her to go and so Srimati Radhika would come here and do puja. And who were the pujaris of this temple to perform the puja when she would come? They were two very respectable looking brahmanas, one was the guru and one was the disciple. They came fully equipped with their padukas on carrying their sacred books and holding an umbrella. You can guess who the guru was but the disciple was Madhumangal. On the way to the temple Kutila and Jatila saw them and asked them, are you brahmanas? They replied, yes we are sons of brahmanas. Jatila then asked them, where did they stay? Madhumangal answered we stay in Mathura. Whose sons are you Kutila asked? The guru replied we are the sons of Gargacarya. Being satisfied with their answers Kutila and Jatila requested that they perform worship for them. The guru and his disciple told them actually we do not have anything to do with women. We are brahmacaris from birth and thus contact with women is not in our best interests. Anyway since we are sattvic brahmanas we do not worship any demigods and deities. We only worship Surya and nobody else. Kutila and Jatila excitedly replied, but Surya is who we want you to worship. Please do this worship for our daughter in law, Radharani? The guru replied, well since you are worshipping Surya too and it's for your daughter in law, we will make an exception and offer the worship; but generally we don't do it. Also we do not take any dakshina or gifts for our service either. A brahmin should not take donations for service. Kutila and Jatila agreed and they all left for Surya Kunda.

When they arrived, her mother in law said, "Radharani we have a very excellent, first class brahmana to do all the worship for you. He is a brahmacari from birth and he knows all the mantras and he can also chant them very nicely. He will execute a very good standard of worship for you. Srimati Radharani recognizing her beloved, agreed and the puja began. But instead of worshipping Surya they actually had arranged for Srimati Radharani to worship Krishna. So after the worship Jatila and Kutila wanted to give some ornaments from Srimati Radhika as dakshina. Madhumangal refused saying we never touch anything from women. My gurudev would never think of it. But Kutila and Jatila insisted saying that some dakshina must be given because to worship is complete without dakshina. So then Madhumangal said, Alright I am the disciple I can take it but my guru will never take it. I will make some good use of it. After performing this pastime Krishna would return here again the following Sunday and in this way He and Srimati Radharani would enjoy Their pastimes.

Here also the puspa caran pastimes were enacted. Puspa means flowers and caran means picking, as well mala granthan or threading of the flower garlands took place here. Sometimes Krishna himself would come here and make a very beautiful garland using various colorful flowers. When he was finished he would give it to one of the sakhis of Srimati Radhika, who would present it to her. As soon as Srimati Radharani would see it she would know that Krishna had made it because instead of smelling the flowers she could smell Krishna's transcendental scent and she would happily accept it.

So these are some of the wonderful transcendental pastimes that use to go on in the area of Surya kunda. Jagannath das Babaji Maharaja did bhajan here for some time and the samadhi of Gaura Kishore das Babaji's sannyasa guru, Sri Bhagavat das Babaji is also here. So now let us all look towards the sun remembering Surya, the sungod and giving our obeisances to him here at Surya kunda, pray to him that we have the understanding to have the direct perception of these pastimes of the Supreme Lord. Gaura Premanandi! Hari! Haribol!!

Kamyavana

Kama means desires and this is the place where all desires of the devotees are fulfilled. This place is completely surcharged with transcendental potency. Every tree, every flower, every bush, creeper and herb. Every grain of dust, every stone, every kunda, all that we see with these eyes that we possess are not being perceived by us as they actually are. We are not able to see these things with the right vision for without a doubt everything here as well as the rest of Sri Vraja is certainly cintamani and Krishna is eternally performing his pastimes here.

As Raghunath das Goswami so wonderfully writes: everyday Lord Krishna is taking the cows out for grazing along with his cowherd friends. These are the places where these lilas are constantly being enacted, but by just coming to Kamyavan will all our desires be fulfilled ? Shastra is saying, the Goswamis are saying, the Lord himself is saying: yes, by going to Kamyavan, the forest where all desires are fulfilled one is able to have this opportunity. Receive the blessings of Kamesvara Mahadeva, who grants all desires, receive the grace of Vrinda devi by whose mercy even the impossible can become possible. Vrinda devi must be unreservedly granting us her grace even now, otherwise how could we, being as unworthy and unqualified as we are be allowed to even enter Sri Vraja Mandala. Here we will see the temples Radha Govinda, Radha Madan Mohan and Radha Gopinatha and have darshan of Vrinda devi. Gaura Premanandi! Hari! Haribol!!

Bimala Kunda

This was a favorite place of Krishna and his cowherd friends when He was young and even when He was grown He displayed wonderful pastimes here. One such pastime was enacted with the Pandavas during the time they were in exile.

The Pandavas had been living here for sometime peacefully with their beloved wife, Draupadi, when one day after they had finished eating, the powerful sage, Durvasa muni came with 60,000 rishis, all very hungry. Durvasa had been sent by wicked Duryodhana.

When Durvasa Muni visited Hastinapura, Duryodhana pleased him very much and then asked him for a favour, he said to Durvasa Muni, "My cousins the Pandavas have been living in the forest for some time and it would be very nice if you could go and visit them, they will be very happy to see you, but in order not to inopportune them you should reach their ashrama at a certain time. According to Duryodhana's calculation it would have been after Draupadi had served her five husbands and herself had taken prasada".

Durvasa muni told Draupadi that he and his followers were extremely hungry and that after taking bath they would return and would expect a suitable feast to be prepared. Now Draupadi had a cooking pot that could provide food and drink for as many people as was necessary; but it would only be able to be invoked once each day, and once it was washed it would not be usable till the next day.

Now as Duryodhana had foreseen the Pandavas had just finished a sumptuous feast and in fact Draupadi had just finished washing the pot when Durvasa muni and his 60,000 rishis had arrived. Now she was in quite a predicament, because Durvasa muni was an extremely powerful sage who was known to give very disagreeable curses to those who displeased him. Draupadi not finding any solution for the problem within herself and not wishing to disturb the Pandavas with household problems, she immediately thought of the lotus feet of Krishna and praying to Him, beseeched his help. Krishna at once came to the aid of his surrendered devotee, Draupadi. Arriving, Krishna told her that He was very, very hungry and that He immediately would like something to eat. Draupadi almost fainted, that was her dilemma, she had nothing. Krishna then asked her where was her pot. She explained that they had just finished eating and she had just thoroughly washed it. Krishna told her to bring the pot to

Him, when Draupadi brought the pot, Krishna inspected it and noticed that there was one, minute particle of spinach stuck to the side of the pot. Krishna took it and ate it and then drinking water told Draupadi, now I am fully satisfied, fully satisfied.

Naturally when the Supreme Lord is fully satisfied everything else everywhere is automatically satisfied. All over the earth and throughout countless universes and planetary systems all the inhabitants and living entities from a one celled amoeba through the human species up to the highest developed demigods, felt fully satisfied and not the slightest feeling of hunger existed. To the contrary, everything felt completely satisfied according to the mode of sustenance with which it was necessary for it to exist.

The plants felt they had plenty of water and sunshine. The fish felt full with no need to eat. The animals felt no hunger so they all relaxed. All human species were feeling the bliss that comes after eating a well prepared meal. The yogis that subsist on air alone felt totally satisfied that they had received enough air and the yogis that stop all their bodily functions and remain in this world by meditating upon the brahmajyoti, the glaring effulgence of the Supreme Lord, they felt totally satisfied by their meditations. The demigods in the higher planetary systems and universes also were completely and totally satisfied in every way.

So from this it is apparent that Durvasa muni and his 60,000 rishis were also feeling completely satisfied. While taking bath Durvasa muni suddenly felt that his stomach was full to the brim, in fact he was sure that he could not even eat another bite. When he discovered that all his followers felt the same way, he became alarmed. What to do? Draupadi had prepared a feast for them by his order, how could they refuse.

At this time Krishna told Bhima to go fetch Durvasa muni and his 60,000 rishis and bring them here for prasadam. Bhima took his club and went to get them. Draupadi said, but we have nothing to feed them when they get here. Krishna smiled at her telling her not to worry. In the distance Durvasa muni saw Bhima approaching with his club looking fierce and terrible.

Bhima will kill us all if we do not come and accept prasadam, he quickly gathered his rishis and not even drying or dressing themselves properly they immediately fled away from here not looking back and not stopping until they reached Brahmaloaka.

Here also Duryodhana came with a mighty army including Bhishma and Karna and Drona and among them, in order to capture the Pandavas, Yudhishthira Maharaja and his four brothers. At this time the king of the demigods, Indra sent the commander of his army, Citragupta here to arrest Duryodhana and bring him back in bondage at once. Citragupta came here with his forces and defeated Duryodhana. Duryodhana's troops were forced to flee for their lives in haste. Duryodhana captured and bound by Citragupta began to weep and wail in grief. Yudhishthira Maharaja heard his crying and thought to himself, oh my cousin Duryodhana is in trouble, he is crying, let me offer him some help. So thinking like this Yudhishthira Maharaja sent Arjuna and Bhima to go rescue him.

They went at once and Arjuna fought fiercely against Citragupta defeating him and at that time Citragupta came to him and implored why was Arjuna fighting against him. Duryodhana is the enemy of the Pandavas so by Indra's order he had defeated the Pandavas strongest enemy. Arjuna told him that he had been ordered by his brother King Yudhishthira to rescue Duryodhana.

You should know that our uncle, Dhrtarastra has 100 sons who are our cousins of which Duryodhana is one. We Pandavas are five brothers, but when an enemy comes from outside we become 105. Whether we fight amongst ourselves according to ksatriyas code or not it does not matter; but if an enemy comes we are one. Arjuna then took Duryodhana to Yudhishthira Maharaja. Yudhishthira Maharaja told Duryodhana that he should return to his father's kingdom happy that he was free and alive and that if ever he was in difficulty in the future, he should not hesitate to call on him, for he would always help him. Hearing these

words from Yudhisthira Maharaja who he had originally come to make prisoner infuriated Duryodhana like a poisonous snake bereft of its fangs. He burned in shame and in envy at being treated so magnanimously by the saintly Yudhisthira Maharaja and he swore to himself he would take revenge for this insult as soon as possible.

Here also one of Duryodhana's allies, King Jayadratha who was very inimical to Krishna and the Pandavas, kidnapped Draupadi. She called out in fear while being carried away and Arjuna and Bhima very angrily set out in pursuit. Catching this king Arjuna wanted to kill him at once, but Draupadi felt pity for him and told Arjuna not to kill him but to set him free, so by the mercy of Draupadi he was released and she and Bhima and Arjuna returned here to Bimala kunda.

Krishna and his sakhas and cowherd friends use to always come here and drink water and take bath. They would all have great fun splashing and playing water sports in this kunda. Also they would bring the cows to refresh themselves by drinking the cool waters here. All these pastimes took place here at Bimala kunda.

Caran Pahari

This is also a place where Krishna use to perform His early childhood pastimes. Caran-pahari belonged to Nanda Maharaja's father in law, the parents of Mother Yashoda. Nanda Maharaja and his family would stay on this side and King Vrishabhanu and his family use to stay on the other side. Krishna also use to bring his cows here for grazing and often he would eat lunch here with his cowherd friends. There are many places like this where Krishna would perform similar pastimes. Altogether there are 84 different kundas where Krishna would enjoy with His cowherd friends.

Once Krishna was grazing his cows and while He and his cowherd friends were playing, the cows started going in all directions very far away. As it was getting late Krishna was concerned about how they would collect all the calves and cows together. So Krishna started playing his flute and the calves and the cows hearing its melodious call happily began coming towards Krishna from far and wide. Krishna closed his eyes and smiling sweetly began to play such an extremely beautiful and tender melody that whoever heard it felt that their heart had been opened for the first time, almost to the point of falling unconscious.

This place where we have just walked to is called Moochana, which means unconscious. The mood and melody of what Krishna was playing is not possible to get on other instruments such as harmonium. It is only possible on the flute or one of the Indian string instruments like the veena. Hearing these very tender notes after some time the mountains started melting and immediately the lotus feet impressions of Krishna could be seen on the stones. if you look here you can see the impression of Krishna's left foot and there a little higher you can see the impression of Krishna's right foot. Many, many great sages and acaryas have come to this place to have darshan of these impressions, Ballavacarya, Madhavacarya, Madhavendra Puri, Goswamis and as many celebrated and holy saints as you can imagine have come to see this place and pay their humble respects. Also Lord Caitanya and Prabhu Nityananda have also had darshan here and so has Advaita Acarya. One should not make the offense and have the mundane mentality to think that someone had come here and sculptured these impressions of Krishna's lotus feet onto the stones. These impressions have been here for over 5,000 years without a doubt.

So let us all give our humble obeisances remembering these pastimes and pray that our present impressions may one day be as blissful as these stones were when Krishna played his transcendental flute here. Gaura Premanandi!

Luk Luki Kunda

Now we are at Luk luki kunda. Luk luki means hide and seek and Krishna used to hide from the gopis and then surprise them here in a unique way. One time Krishna was playing here with his cowherd friends when Srimati Radharani came to the other side of the kunda to get water. Krishna seeing her, dived under the water and caught hold of her lotus feet giving her quite a fright. The water here used to be so clear that Krishna would be able to differentiate Srimati Radhika's feet from the rest of the gopis. But all in all it was in good fun and if Srimati Radika's lotus feet were not in the water He would give a good scare to Lalita or Vishaka or the other gopis when the opportunity presented itself. So let us all take acaman from this kunda and sprinkling the water upon our heads, remember this pastime. Haribol!

Bhojastali

Where we are now is the place where Krishna killed the demon Vyomasura. One day while Krishna was playing with his cowherd friends on the top of Govardhana hill this demon came and disguised himself as one of Krishna's cowherd friends named Shaka. The cowherd boys were playing a game where some would be constables, some would be thieves and some would be sheep. The thieves would come and steal the sheep and the constables would come and catch the thieves. Krishna immediately realised that a demon had entered their midst. So giving Balaram a secret signal, Krishna took the side of the constables and Balaram took the side of the thieves as well as the demon. While playing the demon stole many of the cowherd boys who were playing the roles of sheep and putting them in a cave in this mountain you see, sealed the mouth with stones. When Krishna saw that so many of his friends were missing, He caught hold of the demon and a terrible fight began. While this fight was going on the whole earth was swaying to and fro, so much so that Lord Balaram had to put his foot firmly down in order to keep the earth from tottering. You can see the impression of Lord Balaram's lotus foot right here. So let us all come and give our obeisances to Balaramji. Finally Krishna killed the wicked demon, Vyomasura and then following the demons footprints he went to the cave where we will go next. Haribol!

Vyomasura-Guha

Now we are at Vyomasura Guha, the cave where Vyomasura hid the cowherd boys. After killing the demon, Krishna discovered this cave where the demon had hidden his cowherd friends. Krishna released them and brought them all back to the place where they had been playing. By then it had got quite late and the boys requested of Krishna to feed them as they were quite hungry. So Krishna took all the cowherd boys and went a short distance from here, the same way we have just walked and as you can see, this forest grove is very beautiful. It has a nice sarovara next to it and it is extremely pleasant. At this place Krishna and his cowherd friends had a very nice lunch after he killed the demon Vyomasura. Hare Krishna!

Pichel Pahari

This place is called Pichel Pahari. This is where Krishna and all his cowherd friends use to come and slide. You see this long, smooth rock up above us. This was the slide they used playing in childhood fun Pichel means to move from upper to lower, so this is how they enjoyed themselves at this place. Now we shall also climb up and sliding down we shall think of Krishna and Balarama and all the cowherds fully enjoying themselves. Hari! Haribol!!

Dharma Kunda

Now we are at Dharma kunda Dharmaraja in disguise spoke to his son, King Yudhisthira who was looking for his brothers. His four brothers had gone out to get water and coming

upon a beautiful lake they were asked by Dharmaraja four questions. If they could answer the questions only then would they be allowed to drink without being harmed. None of the brothers were able to answer all of the questions; but being thirsty they drank anyway and they died. King Yudhisthira being concerned about his four brothers went to look for them and he came upon Dharmaraja who was disguised as a sage. Dharmaraja told him that only if he answered the questions correctly would his brothers be brought back to life. Yudhisthira answered the questions correctly and Dharmaraja then told him he could then get the life returned of one of his brothers. King Yudhisthira started reflecting on the best course of action. He thought, I am the eldest son of Mother Kunti, the great Arjuna and the mighty Bhima are also from her womb. Madri is Kuntidevi's sister and her two sons are my half brothers. I should take the eldest of them, Nakula. So when Yudhisthira asked for Nakula it took Dharmaraja totally by surprise, so much so that he out of curiosity questioned Yudhisthira on how he came to such a decision. Dharmaraja told him that he would have expected him to pick the great archer Arjuna or at least the mighty armed Bhima. Then Yudhisthira explained his thought process of ksatriya etiquette and why he picked Nakula. Hearing his explanation Dharmaraja became extremely pleased and revealing his true identity as Yudhisthira's father, Dharmaraja returned the lives of the four brothers. Hare Krishna!

Kamesvara Mahadeva

This temple is one of the four main Shiva temples in Vraja. King Vrishabhanu used to come here and after taking bath in the kunda he would pray to Lord Shiva in his form as Kamesvara to grant him children. In answer to this prayer Kamesvara blessed him and Srimati Radharani appeared and then her sister Ananga Manjari was born and then her brother Sridama was born. Kamesvara Mahadeva is very merciful and by his mercy we can also receive his blessings and have all our desires fulfilled here in the forests of Kamyavana. Kama means desires and Lord Shiva is called Kamesvara because he can fulfil all desires.

Actually we desired to come here and by his mercy he allowed us, for in reality we do not have the eligibility to even enter this forest which is so filled with Lord Krishna's intimate pastimes. If you look in the distance you can see two mountains sometimes referred to as Brahma mountain and Visnu mountain. You can see that the mountains have two different colours. One mountain is a little yellowish or golden, that mountain is Srimati Radhika and the darkish mountain is Shyamasundara. Now we shall all go to Setubandh Rameshvara and learn what pastimes Krishna enacted there. Hare Krishna!

Setubandh Rameshvara

Now we are at Setubandh Rameshvara. You can see that it is a very rocky place. Once Krishna and the gopis were gathered here and the area in front of them was filled with water all the way to the other side where there was a village on a hill where the gopis wanted to go. Not wanting to have to travel all the way around the gopis said to Krishna. You have bragged to us that you are Lord Rama. Lord Rama ordered monkeys to make a bridge of stones all the way across the ocean to Lanka. Here there is water, here there are many stones and here also are many monkeys. Show us that you are indeed Lord Rama and have these monkeys make a bridge for us to walk across. Krishna smiling began to play upon his flute and as he played hundreds and thousands of monkeys began to gather around Krishna very respectfully, not at all mischievously as monkeys usually are prone to act. Krishna then ordered them to quickly build a bridge for the gopis to walk across. The monkeys all saluted Krishna and then taking the stones, in a very short time they built a beautiful bridge and Krishna and his sakhis crossed over to the other side. The gopis became very pleased at Krishna's phenomenal display of mystic power, but they told him that still he was not Lord Rama and that the

monkeys did not make this by his order alone. But nevertheless, somehow or the other this bridge has been built, so we believe that you somehow must be the head of these monkeys who can be as mischievous as You are.

Setu means bridge and Krishna re-enacting Lord Rama's radiant pastime gave this place the name Setubandh Rameshvara. This place is very sacred. Also Sankara, Mahadeva is here as well. So let us all give our humble obeisances to this place and remembering this pastime, take the dust upon our heads. Hari! Haribol!

Yashoda Kunda

This kunda is called Yashoda kunda and this is where Mother Yashoda used to come and churn butter and wash her pots. Next to this kunda you can see the bhajan kutir of Prabodhananda Sarasvati, he wrote many wonderful poems in praise of the holy dham of Vraja and he was the spiritual master of Gopala Bhatta Goswami. Next to his bhajan kutir is Nanda kunda, Nanda Maharaja used to come here to take his bath. Hare Krishna!

Radha Madan Mohan, Radha Govindaji, Radha Gopinatha

When the three original deities of Radha Madan Mohan, Radha Govinda and Radha Gopinatha were forced to leave Vrindavan because of the demonic treachery of the Muslim Aurangzeb, on their way to Jaipur they stayed here at Kamyavan for three nights. These three deities Madan Mohan, Govindaji and Gopinatha are very essential in establishing ones relationship with Krishna. These three deities have very specific qualities. Worship of Madan Mohan is essential for re-establishing our forgotten relationship with Krishna. This is called sambandha. In the beginning of spiritual life we must therefore worship Madan Mohan so that he will attract us and eradicate our attachments to gross materialism. After we have become a little more advanced we worship Govindaji in the form of loving devotional service. This is called abhideya. Govinda is the reservoir of all pleasures, when we worship him we become pleased. Later by the grace of Krishna and guru, when we achieve perfection in devotional service, then we can appreciate Krishna as the pleasure deity of the gopis in his form as Gopinatha. This stage is called prayojana. This is the stage that we are always seeking to have. Now we shall go take darshan of these three temples: Radha Madan Mohan,

Radha Govindaji and Radha Gopinatha. When we get to the temple of Radha Gopinatha you will notice that it is in the house of a grhasti. The story goes that Krishna in his form as Gopinatha came to the house of a Vrajavasi to steal a little butter. But as sometimes happens in life, he got caught by a gopi. The gopi told him, normally you come and go as you like; But this time since I have caught you, you are going to have to stay and accept worship here for sometime. Since then Gopinatha has never left. That is why Gopinatha is installed in the home of a householder and not in a normal temple as is customary.

Vrinda devi

Now we are at Radha Govinda Mandir. This is the place where Vrinda devi resides. There is no other place in all of Vraja where Vrinda devi is worshipped. Vrinda devi is an expansion of Srimati Radharani and her partial expansion is Tulasi devi in Vaikuntha. Vrinda devi is a very intimate associate and girlfriend of Srimati Radharani. Krishna's expansion as Narayana married Tulasi devi in one of his pastimes.

According to the Goswamis Vrinda devi has a very unique and elevated position in Sri Sri Radha Krishna's pastimes. She arranges the secret and intimate meetings of Srimati Radharani and Krishna. In fact without Vrinda devi's mercy it is not possible to enter into these confidential pastimes even as a listener in an audience. Vrindavan is the land of Vrinda devi, she is the queen and proprietress of Vrindavan and in the past she once offered all of

Vrindavan which is her kingdom to the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani. That is why Srimati Radharani is considered the actual queen of Vrindavan and the actual king is Lord Krishna.

One day Srimati Radharani was thinking, Vrinda devi is so wonderful. She has given me everything; her lands, her kingdom, she always is so helpful, always arranging for me to meet Krishna. I wonder how I can reciprocate and return this favour and do something lovely for her like she has for me. So one day Srimati Radharani called all her most confidential associates like Lalita devi and Vishaka devi and made a plan. They made a beautiful throne, big enough for two and when Vrinda devi came somehow or other they got her to sit down on it, and they did it in such a way that Vrinda devi didn't suspect anything. As soon as she sat down on the throne some other gopis led by Vishaka brought Krishna and had him also sit down unsuspectingly next to Vrinda devi. At that time Lalita devi came and playing the role of a priest started chanting all the mantras invoked for a marriage. Srimati Radharani herself exchanged the flower garlands between Krishna and Vrinda devi and got them married and in this way a wonderful wedding ceremony was enacted in this place.

Actually none of the most intimate gopis ever harboured the thought of meeting Krishna alone or having any intimate relationship with him. It was Srimati Radharani who always through a lot of planning and scheming to give her closest girlfriends this opportunity and make them sit on the left side of Krishna, the place where she in reality is the only one qualified to sit. The gopikas were always planning to arrange meetings between Srimati Radhika and Krishna and Srimati Radhika is always planning to make Krishna meet with the gopis.

Vrinda devi was previously installed in the Radha Govinda temple in Vrindavana, but during the Mohammedan invasions she was taken from the temple for safety reasons to travel to Jaipur. On the way to Rajasthan the King of Jaipur had stopped here at Kamyavana to rest. Beginning his journey again he found that his men could not move Vrinda devi any further and they had to leave her here and proceed without her. In this way Vrinda devi being very dear to Srimati Radharani and Krishna was able to remain within Sri Vraja Mandala.

"O devi, pilgrims to Kamyavana will command respect in my world. Bath in Vimala Kunda will wash away all of one's sins. Anybody who dies here will stroll through My abode."
(Mathura Mahatmya 351-352)

This forest is situated at a distance of 37 miles from Mathura, and has a parikrama (circumambulation) of 14 miles. It was here in Kamyavana that the Pandavas spent their childhood. It is said that there are 84 kundas and 84 deities here, the most important of which is Vimala Kunda.

Govinda temple: In this temple is the presiding deity of Vrindavana, Vrindadevi, which was discovered by Rupa Gosvami on the bank of Brahma Kunda in Vrindavana, and was installed by him in a small temple next to Radha-Govinda Temple (Vrindavan). Later, due to fear of the Moguls, the king of Jaipur decided to take Vrindadevi, Radha-Gopinatha, Radha-Madan-Mohan and Radha-Govinda to Jaipur. But when they reached Kamyavana, Vrindadevi refused to go any further. This deity was originally installed by Vajranabha.

"O Vrinda! We are devoid of devotion due to hundreds and thousands of offences for which we have been hurled into the ocean of material existence, and we are being cast about by the horrible waves of lust, anger, etc. Therefore, we are seeking your shelter. Showing compassion please pick us up from this mundane ocean, which is so difficult to cross over. We offer our respectful obeisances unto your divine lotus feet." (Vrindadevi-astaka 8)
Cintamani Dham

"Kamyavana is very attractive to the heart of Krishna. By having darshana of Kamyavana and its beautiful lakes, material existence is crossed. The many tirthas of Kamyavana defy description. (Bhakti Ratnakara, fifth wave)

Although large and extravagant temples are not to be found here, Kamyavan is a favourite place among staunch Vaishnava pilgrims who wish to view actual relics of the past age when Lord Krishna as a carefree cowherd boy actually played in the groves of Vraja. The name of the town is understood to have originated from Kamyavana or "the forest where all desires (kama) of the demigods and devotees were fulfilled" as explained in the Adivaraha Purana.

Kadamba Khandi

This beautiful forest filled with lovely kadamba trees was a favorite place of Srimati Radharani and Krishna. They enjoyed many wonderful pastimes here in the sanctuary of this forest. Narayana Bhatta Goswami performed bhajan here and revealed many of the hidden, holy places of parikrama by the grace of Lalita devi in his book Sri Vraja Bhakti Vilasa. Hare Krishna!

Caurasi Khamba

Now we have arrived at Caurasi Khamba, or the place of the 84 pillars. This was the palace of Nanda Maharaja. He had palace in three different places. The palace in Nandagram was the most important one. Next was his palace in Mahavan Gokula, this one also has 84 pillars and the third one is here at Kamyavan. Nanda Maharaja would hold court here. He and his brothers Upanada and Abhinanda and Sunanda and Nandana would sit and hold assembly here. When Nanda Maharaja used to sit on his throne he would have Krishna and Balaram sit on either side of him and then he would gravely decide upon matters concerning his kingdom. So let us offer our obeisances here and then we shall move onwards. Haribol!

Badarinath and Kedarnath

All the most sacred places in India have manifested themselves here in Sri Vraja Mandala. Even Kedarnath and Badarinath are also present. Once Nanda Maharaja and the cowherd men expressed a desire to go to the Himalayas on pilgrimage to these holy sites. Krishna informed them that Kedarnath and Badarinath had already manifested themselves here in Vraja and that he would take them there. Krishna also told them that by going to this Kedarnath the pious results that they would acquire would be thousands of times more than what they would ever have gotten by going to the Himalayas and that the same benefits would also apply to the Badarinath here as well.

We have been to the Badarinath here. It is difficult to get to because no bus can travel there. The only way to get there is by tractor or by foot. It is an exact replica of the Badarinath in the Himalayas. Just as Ganga devi has manifested there, here also she has manifested. There is an extremely steep path with about 400 steps very difficult to climb here and just like in Kedarnath and Badarinath there is a hot spring, here also there is a hot spring. There is practically very little difference between the two, except that here they are on a smaller scale, but as far as pious results are concerned, here in Vraja the benefits are thousands and thousands of times more. This road that you see is the road which goes there, but since it is not possible for us to go there at this time we will offer our obeisances to Kedarnath and Badarinath from here. Haribol!

Uchagrama

Now we are at Uchagram, the appearance place of Lalita devi. This is where she was born. Rupa Goswami writes, "Oh Lalita devi Srimati Radharani and Krishna are performing their pastimes in different groves of Vrindavan; but actually they are doing this always under your shelter. Since these transcendental lovers are under your protection and within your shelter nothing is impossible or too far fetched for you to accomplish. Knowing this as your position

I do not need to take permission from anyone else. If you shower your mercy upon me then by your grace I will be able to enter into these pastimes."

So we can see that to enter into spiritual life one needs the mercy of a guru. But the guru also prays to the disciple for mercy. Sanatana Goswami exhibited that when he was writing the Brihat Bhagavatamrita. In his invocation he wrote I have been able to write this treatise by the mercy of Sri Sri Radha Krishna, Sri Caitanya and Prabhu Nityananda and also by the grace of one who has received all the mercy of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Rupa Goswami. Sanatana Goswami was the guru of Rupa Goswami and yet he prayed for his disciple's mercy. The humility of a Vaisnava is a wonderful phenomenon.

Lalita devi is again being described by Sri Rupa Goswami, he says, as she waits patiently at the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani and Shyamasundar after having made a beautiful bed of flowers for them to lie on when they are exhausted from their transcendental pastimes. When she sees even one bead of perspiration on their lotus feet then Lalita devi wishes to expand herself into a thousand forms to be able to cool and fan them and wipe it away. And what is Lalita devi's complexion? Rupa Goswami has compared it as thousands and millions of times more charming and soothing than the rays of that full moon in autumn which excites Krishna and inspires him to perform rasa lila. That is the complexion of Lalita devi.

Due to the results of many pious activities in our previous lives we have the opportunity now to see and experience the different places of Sri Vraja Mandala under the guidance of such rasik devotees like their Divine Graces: Puri Maharaja, Janardana Maharaja and Trivikrama Maharaja. Now His Divine Grace Trivikrama Maharaja will continue the glorification of Lalita devi with quote from Sri Rupa Goswami's, Lalitastakam.

Actually I am simply rechewing the chewed. I am merely relishing the remnants of the deliciously satisfying discourses that the most distinguished and erudite Puri and Janardana Maharaja have just given. But because the remnants were so delectable, I will savour them a little longer. The quote from Sri Rupa states, that anyone residing within the area of Sri Vraja Mandala with any sort of desire in his heart; whether he is eligible or not whether he is a devotee or not, whether he is qualified or not, does not matter! If anyone in Sri Vraja Mandala has even the slightest desire to serve the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani, then Lalita devi immediately fulfills that desire and takes this blessed soul directly under her protection giving him her full shelter.

In reality we do not have even the slightest opportunity for any of this. We are totally bound and shackled hand and foot in the grossest form of material ignorance without any devotion. Yet the Vaisnavas are so merciful that they have revealed to us in their words all these great possibilities which gives us hope and which shows us the way in which we can attain the almost unattainable. Just by hearing these slokas gives us hope that in some distant future life by the ever-flowing mercy of Lalita devi we may be able to attain this platform. Lalita devi is our only hope.

Lalita devi has an extremely elevated and impeccable position. She is considered by Srimati Radharani to be Her siksha guru. Lalita devi in order to do her service is willing to go to any lengths for this. Srimati Radharani has been described as shaking in fear when She has done something wrong. Lalita devi would chastise Her as well as Krishna, but this chastisement is only out of intense love and devotion fully in the mood of surrender. Whenever Krishna tries to be clever and tricky with Srimati Radharani, Lalita devi quickly intervenes and being more clever and tricky makes Him act in a nice manner. And also whenever she sees Srimati Radharani doing something wrong, like not sitting properly or by not dressing properly when She is in a rush to go meet Krishna. Lalita devi immediately tells Her, sit properly, tie Your sari correctly before You leave the house, don't run when You go to meet Krishna, You just ate. In these ways she would correct Her and this is why she is considered Srimati Radharani's siksa guru. So this is the birth place of Lalita devi and let us

now offer our full obeisances and pray at her lotus feet that she will always be compassionate towards us and give us her mercy. Without her grace it is not possible to enter into the service even as a maid servant of a maid servant of a maid servant of a maid servant of the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani and Krishna. So pray with a humble heart and beg her for her benedictions. All glories to Lalita devi. Hari! Haribol!!

Sakhi Giri Parvat

Sakhi Giri Parvat is the village of Lalita devi. It is very near to Varsana. This place is named Sakhi Giri Parvat because all the intimate sakhis like Lalita, Vishaka, Chitra, Champatala and Tungavidya would play about this area. In fact there are some impressions from the lotus feet of the gopis on top of this mountain. If devotee goes there in the proper mood and there is sufficient light and feels correctly the Vraja atmosphere, then it would be possible to see them. But whether the devotee discovers them or not these impressions are certainly there. The gopikas had a special playing spot on top called Chitrasila and all the sakhis would come here and engage in their girlish pastimes. They would draw pictures on the ground and those drawings are still there to be seen. Just like in Caran Pahari we all saw the lotus feet impressions of Lord Krishna, here this whole place is imprinted with the lotus feet impressions of Srimati Radhika, Lalita devi, Vishaka devi and the rest of the sakhis. Hare Krishna!

Sikhalini Sila

Now we have arrived at the place called Sikhalini Sila. Once the gopis were playing here together and suddenly Krishna appeared on the scene. Krishna was seven years old at the time. Srimati Radharani is always very pleased with Lalita devi, and so She wanted to surprise her. So as soon as She saw Krishna She called him to Her and placing Lalita devi's hand in His began chanting the mantras for a wedding and performed their marriage ceremony. Now just before Krishna had arrived the gopis had put liquid vermilion on Lalita devi's feet called alta, and some of this alta spilled on the ground around here. These red colors that you see were spilled 5000 years ago and the more one tries to rub and clean them the more distinct they become. Also this place is where Srimati Radharani and Krishna threw colors at each other during Holika. Recently over 8000 Vaisnava's from the Ballavacarya sampradaya came and performed Holi here. This is where Krishna and the cowherd boys and Srimati Radharani and the gopikas would come and pelt each other with all different colors. I see some of you pouring water on the rocks and trying to rub the colors off. Make sure the cloth you use is not your dhoti or sari otherwise you will have some red spots on it and it will be very difficult to remove. Gaura Premanandi!

Trivenikup

This place is called Trivenikup. Kup means well for water and Triveni came by the grace of Balaram and Lalita devi. Balaram lived in this area for sometime, He use to take bath here everyday before dawn and Lalita devi used to come and take her bath here just after dawn. Those people who take bath from the waters of this well, will have every fruit which is possible to receive from bathing at Triveni. Hare Krishna!

Deha Kunda

Deha Kunda is next to the mandir of Lalita devi. Here is where the gopis mentally and physically gave everything to Krishna. Deha means physical body, so this kunda is where this was given. Now we shall go and see the exact birthplace of Lalita devi and then we shall continue our parikrama and go to Dauji Mandir. Hari! Haribol!

Dauji Mandir

Now we have come to the mandir of Lord Balaram. The question some of you might be thinking is that how is Lord Balaram's place so close to Srimati Radharani's in Varsana and Lalita devi's in Uchagram? According to the etiquette Lord Balaram's place should not be here. In all of Krishna's pastimes and incarnations Lord Balaram is always there in different forms and manifestations and He is there to always serve Lord Krishna. Sometimes He is serving in the mood of dasya as a servant, sometimes in the mood of sakya as a friend. Just like when He is playing with Krishna as a cowherd boy. Sometimes He even accepts service from Krishna and He serve Krishna in the mood of vatsalya, and as the elder brother He looks after Krishna and takes care of Him, sometimes He even chastises Krishna. Now in the conjugal mellow of madhurya rasa He is also there. To be able to participate in the intimate pastimes of Krishna, Balarama has expanded into the form of Ananga Manjari, the younger sister of Srimati Radharani. Therefore understanding in this light you can see that it is not at all peculiar that Lord Balaram's place is so near to that of Srimati Radharani's and Lalita devi's. Just like Krishna expands and manifests into many different forms, similarly Lord Balaram also expands into many different forms.

Once Narada Muni went to Dvaraka to see Lord Krishna. In one of Krishna's 16,108 palaces he saw Krishna just getting married to one of his queens. In another palace he saw Krishna playing chess with his dear friend Uddhava. He entered another palace and saw Krishna performing ritualistic ceremonies, in another palace he saw Krishna enjoying prasadam with one of His queens, in another palace he found Krishna playing with His small children, in another palace he found Krishna practising fighting with sword and shield, in another palace he witnessed Krishna consulting with ministers and deciding affairs of the kingdom, in another palace he found Krishna silently meditating and in another palace he saw the Lord taking rest.

In this way just like in the 16,108 palaces Lord Krishna had expanded into, so many Krishnas were manifesting there pastimes. Wherever it was required Krishna's devotees like Vasudeva and Devaki and Uddhava also expand themselves and participate in the many pastimes of Krishna. All these activities are extremely difficult to conceptualize and understand by our mundane considerations. These activities are totally transcendental and we should never try to understand them by our mundane minds and intelligence. Even Lord Brahma, the creator of material forms of life and Indra the king of the demigods is perplexed, confused and subject to illusion about these transcendental pastimes. So what should we say about our mundane, materialistic state of consciousness?

The illustrious Vajranath Krishna's great, grandson built the temple here. It was broken down several times but it was repaired each time. Narayana Bhatta Goswami, who was an intimate contemporary of the six Goswamis, revealed many of the places of spiritual importance here in Sri Vraja Mandala under the guidance of Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana Goswamis, he was living here and doing his bhajan at this place. He was the one who revealed all the spiritual places in this area, and so the Vrajabhasis considered him to be their guru and took initiation from him.

Now let us all pray to Lord Baladev that he be merciful to us because without his mercy it is not possible to enter into Vrajarasa. Just like it is not possible to enter into Lord Caitanya's service without the mercy of Lord Nityananda, who is nondifferent from Lord Balaram. So praying at Lord Balaram's lotus feet and giving our humble obeisances we beseech Him to grant us His blessings, that we may enter into the understanding of these radiant pastimes with the proper mood and correct mentality without the slightest tinge of mundane materialism. Hari! Haribol!

Varsana

Varsana was the capital of King Vrishabanu, the father of Srimati Radharani. She grew up here. As you can see Varsana is full of opulence and majesty. The hill Varsana is situated on four peaks. Each peak represents one of Brahma's four faces. Brahma once requested of Krishna to be able to serve him in His manifest pastimes on the earth. Krishna instructed him to take the form of this mountain, as it would in the future be Varsana.

Sankari Khor

Now we are at Sankari Khor, which means thin, narrow path. This was the only way to pass to the other side of the mountain in the area so everyone had to go through here. Whenever Krishna was grazing his cows in this area he had to pass through here and whenever Srimati Radharani and the gopis wanted to go to the other side they would have to pass this way also. Whenever they heard that Krishna was grazing His cows nearby they would excitedly pack up their milk butter and curds and come to pass through here. They did not pack up all their milk products to sell, they had a different purpose in mind. Do you think that King Vrishabhanu's daughter, Srimati Radharani, the queen of Vrindavana would just go to the market place to sell butter and milk and curd? It was simply an excuse for them to get out of the palace and go try to meet Krishna. She would tell Her parents there is a yajna at this place today, or She would tell them there is a puja at that place and the Brahmanas need ghee and milk product to perform it. Then Her parents always wishing to please the brahmanas would allow Her to go with Her gopikas.

Krishna would be around here grazing His cows and when He saw them coming with His cowherd friends would run to this spot and block the pass. Krishna would then demand payment saying that He had been appointed by the king to collect taxes from everyone that passed this way. He said, you gopis come through here all the time with your milk products for sale I'm sure you make a nice profit. Well now it's the king's turn to profit. Pay your tax and you can pass through. And don't take too long or else I will have to also tax you for all the flowers you take from the kingdom everyday. Pay your taxes and you can pass otherwise you cannot.

The gopis would start complaining to Srimati Radhika that Krishna had a lot of nerve and who did He think He was to harass them in this manner, He should be paying them taxes for grazing His cows all over Vraja. The gopis would start pushing and the cowherd boys would push back. Sometimes the gopis broke through and sometime were held back; but it was all enacted in the spirit of good-natured fun as children everywhere will often do. Sarees were pulled, sikhas were yanked, gopis were jostled and milk was spilt. If you look around you can see many white spots on the stones, these are actually the places where the milk splashed over and this is the remains.

Once all the gopis got together and ganged up on Krishna and His cowherd boys. There were about 200 gopikas against about 20 or so cowherd boys. Surrounding all the boys the gopis tipped a big pot of milk all over Krishna and his friends, when this happened Madhumangal got very upset. He said, this is not right, I am a brahmana boy, but because I am associating with vaisyas I have to go through all this aggravation. Normally brahmanas are always respected, no one would ever think of throwing milk upon one. But just look at me, I am covered from head to toe with milk.

At that time the jewellery that he had received from Srimati Radharani at Surya kunda fell out of his garments and the gopis recognising it picked it up and started calling Madhumangal a thief. Madhumangal started running after them saying, give me back my jewellery, it belongs to me. I'll have you know I am brahmana and a brahmanas curse is unalterable. The gopis laughing gleefully passed the jewellery back and forth over the head of

Madhumangal and then even some of the cowherd boys joined in and amidst much laughter and playing Srimati Radharani and Krishna would meet. So these are some of the ways in which They spent time together, enjoying themselves while performing their pastimes. Hari! Haribol!

ChiksoIi

Now we are at the village of ChiksoIi. This is the village of Citra devi. Citra devi took birth here at this place. It is situated at the lower end of Sankari Khor. On the upper side is located Varsana.

Gahwarvan

Now we are at Gahwarvan. Gahwar means cave in the mountain. Many caves are here. At the top of this mountain is a mandir of Srimati Radharani and Krishna. This is the place of King Vrishabanu and many wonderful pastimes happened here.

Dohani Kunda

Here we see Dohani kunda and next to it is Bihar kunda and next to this is the playground of Srimati Radharani. In this playground Srimati Radharani and the gopis use to play by throwing clumps of earth at each other. As you can see this place is very beautiful. There is a very nice atmosphere here. Previously in Krishna's time there were hundreds of thousands of cows, all grazing peacefully and it was here that they would all be milked, dohani means to milk. From here all the milk would be distributed throughout Vraja. When I came here 25 years ago these kundas were beautiful with crystal clear water; but now due to negligence they do not look nice any more. Bihar kunda is where Srimati Radhika and Krishna use to meet alone together and share in intimate loving exchanges. There were so many pastimes shared by the two of Them here that they are unaccountable. Those who are rasik devotees filled with that confidential mellow they will be able to perceive and appreciate these pastimes in the core of their hearts. It is not possible for any single human being to recount all of these transcendental pastimes. But it is possible for us to recall a few of the pastimes that our Gurudeva has given us. You in your turn can relate these pastimes to others as we have given them to you. So now we will give our humble obeisances and take some water from these kundas upon our heads and we will move on. Hare Krishna!

Mor Kutir

Way, way up on the top of that hill you can see a red brick building without any windows. This place is called Mor Kutir. As it is a bit of a climb all the elderly people should wait here at the bottom for us to return because the climb might be too strenuous for you and you might slip and fall. Mor Kutir is the place where Srimati Radharani and Krishna became the peahen and the peacock and danced together. Both Srimati Radharani and Krishna were attracted to the activities of the peacocks. Whenever the peacocks would see fresh, blackish rainclouds in the sky they would begin to dance. So trying to imitate the peacock's mood Srimati Radhika and Krishna began dancing and tried to imitate the stance of the peacocks. Many saintly persons have come to this place to do bhajan and remember this pastime. Hari! Haribol!

Dan Garh

This place is called Dan Garh, the place where taxes were levied. Krishna used to block the way here and make the gopis give Him their milk sweets and curd as a form of taxation.

This pastime occurred very frequently much to the pleasure of Krishna and the cowherd boys. Hare Krishna!

Vilas Garh

Now we are at Vilas Garh, the site of many of Krishna's amorous pastimes. Once Krishna decided to play a trick on Srimati Radharani and dressing exactly like a gopi entered this place Vilas Ghar dressed in a sari with jewellery on and kept His head down acting very shy tried to move about like a woman would. But of course Srimati Radharani and Lalita devi were not fooled for one second. Krishna maneuvered in such a way that He would be able to massage Srimati Radharani's feet as She was relaxing. Afterwards He began fanning Her and offering fresh fruits and nice little services. Srimati Radhika being very pleased said to the gopikas, look we have a new gopi amongst us, pointing to Krishna. I have never seen her before, but because she is executing such nice service, I think we should reward her. The best reward I can think of is that we take off all these old clothes that she is wearing and give her a fine new silk sari and fresh clean undergarments. Lalita, Vishaka, go get these things at once and also get some new jewellery for her. Everything should be new. While Lalita and Vishaka were getting the new items Srimati Radharani addressing the new gopi told her, you mustn't be shy, let the gopikas loosen your clothes. We are all women here, there is no need for modesty. Why should there be shyness amongst us. And the gopikas began to loosen his clothing. But Krishna began to resist, He knew He had got into deep trouble and that there was little time to escape; but by then Lalita and Vishaka had returned with the new sari and they began unbuttoning his blouse. Krishna tried to resist squirming this way and that, but the gopikas held Him tight. When all the buttons on the blouse were undone two big mangos fell out and all the gopis became immersed in laughter. Actually the reason why Krishna came dressed like this was because He knew Srimati Radharani was extremely angry with Him and She had come here to make maan. So Krishna had devised this plan to pacify Her and to humourously cool Her anger. But when Srimati Radharani saw Krishna feeling embarrassed and a little ashamed she immediately forgave him. In the same way if we somehow or other accidentally make offenses if we go and beg the mercy of the Vaisnavas, they too will always forgive us by the grace of Srimati Radharani. Gaura Premanandi!

Maan Garh

Now we are at Maan Garh. This is where Srimati Radhika would exhibit maan when she was extremely angry with Krishna. Here the Supreme Lord Krishna would fall down in the dust at the lotus feet of His beloved Radharani and humbly beg Her to forgive him. One time during rasa lila, there were so many gopis from so many classes and categories present that Srimati Radhika refused to accept it and with Her sakhis ran off in a huff. Krishna totally dismayed by Her absence immediately followed Her here and falling onto the dust entreated Her to come back. But no matter how hard He coaxed or cajoled, requested or beseeched, He could not break Her mood of maan. Finally out of pure humility to Her dominance of His heart, tears flowed from His eyes and fell onto Her lotus feet. At feeling Her lover's tears of love upon Her lotus feet Sri Radhika's heart softened and Her mood of maan was broken.

So let us also fall down into this dust and humbly pray that all the dust from this place, the trees, the birds, the grass, everything, bless us so that we will be able to perceive and relish these pastimes within our hearts. But please be very careful and do not try to judge this place and these pastimes from a mundane point of view. These pastimes should be always held in our hearts, we should always bow our heads down to such pastimes and not try to analyze them with our material intelligence. If we do, then everything will be lost. Actually I had no intention of speaking about this pastime, but the mood and atmosphere of the place

inspired me and I was also thinking that I may not ever get a chance to speak about this pastime again. Reflecting upon these things I narrated this very confidential pastime to you. Hare Krishna!

Dan Mal

This place is known as Dan Mal. This is where the gopis would swing Srimati Radharani and Krishna. One time Krishna was visiting here with the gopikas and a brahmana came to this place. Seeing Krishna playing here and knowing him to be the son of Nanda Maharaja who possessed 900,000 milking cows, the brahmana thought that it was a most auspicious time to ask a boon. This brahmana had a wife whose tongue was sharper than a barber's razor and she had sent him out that morning with the ultimatum, do not come back without a suitable dowry for our daughter. It is understandable in householder situations all over the world that the brahmana was now trying to pacify his wife.

Approaching Krishna respectfully the brahmana said, my dear Krishna even at such a tender age Your reputation as being the protector of the brahmans and refuge of the cows is already spread throughout the three worlds, since I am a brahmana I come to you. My daughter is now of marriagable age and being a poor brahmana I do not have anything to give for her dowry and although she is modest and shy in all respects she is unable to get a husband. I come to You for shelter and protection. Krishna looking around at the gopis said, and whom am I supposed to protect you from? The brahmana replied, my wife, because if I go home tonight without a dowry for our daughter she is going to throw me out.

The gopis hearing this outburst turned their heads to hide their smiles. Krishna feeling a bit uncomfortable said, but what can I do? I am only a cowherd boy I have nothing. The brahmana with all his hopes broken managed to gasp, nothing? Krishna reflected for a while and then gravely said, the most precious thing that I possess is my beloved Srimati Radharani. I am giving Her as a donation to you. She is yours. Then Krishna made sankalpa, He actually made a vow in His mind and gave Her away. When Srimati Radhika heard what Krishna had done She began wailing and crying. The brahmana also was not very happy about His donation and began complaining to Krishna saying "I already was in trouble at home with my wife because I didn't have a dowry for one daughter and now You have given me another daughter to have to get a dowry for. My wife will cause a scandal if I return home with another unmarried daughter. No definitely, I can not do it. I won't be able to accept this donation." But Krishna said "it's too late, I already made the promise to give Her to you. What can I do? I can not retract it." When the brahmana heard this he began wailing and crying along with Srimati Radharani. So then Krishna seeing that the situation was not agreeable to either of them told the brahmana that he was sorry that he had nothing more valuable than His beloved Srimati Radharani. The brahmana bowing his head in resignation started home. When he had left Srimati Radharani suggested to Krishna that it would be nice to do something for this poor brahmana. Krishna agreed and had the gopis bring a scale and on one side placed Srimati Radharani and on the other side piled up all Her golden jewellery and that of the gopis. When the weights were equal took the ornaments and jewelery and had the gopikas take it after the brahmana who receiving it immediately shouted Haribol and began to dance in ecstasy. Taking his dowry upon his back he danced out of sight and we believe he danced all the way home.

So this is only one of the innumerable pastimes of Krishna. There are so many it is impossible to count them all. Most of them are not even written in the scriptures. They have been handed down orally from guru to disciple from time immemorial and they reside in the hearts of the pure devotees. There are very slight references and allegories in some parts of the scriptures, a symbolic sloka here or a metaphorical description there. These are the only hints that have been given and only the pure Vaisnava devotee who is seasoned and steeped

in this mellow is able to understand the true meanings and import of these hidden pastimes. Only the pure Vaisnava devotee is qualified to deliver these nectarean transcendental pastimes to the thirsty devotees. Now we shall continue our parikrama and go to Sriji Ka Mandir, the temple of Srimati Radharani. Astha Sakhi, the temples to the eight sakhis where they use to play with Srimati Radhika and King Vrishabanu's palace and King Vrishabanu's khar and then we shall go to Pili Pokhar. Hari! Haribol!!

Pilli Pokhar

Now we are at Pili Pokhar. Pili Pokhar means yellow pond why is this place called like this? Listen, once for a festival Srimati Radharani had gone to Nandagram where Krishna lived, actually Mother Yashoda was very affectionate to Srimati Radharani, she loved Her very much. Whenever she saw Her she just could not stop from thinking, wouldn't it be wonderful if Radharani and my darling Krishna would get married. Although neither of them was anywhere near marriageable age, still Mother Yashoda thought like this and was extremely attracted to Her.

She used to think, how beautiful She is, what an exquisite face, look how modest and demure and perfectly poised and composed She is. What wonderful qualities She possesses. If I could somehow arrange for Her to marry my son Krishna it would be marvellous. So the very next time that Srimati Radharani came to Nandagram, mother Yashoda was unable to control herself, somehow or the other she cleverly applied some turmeric paste to Srimati Radharani's hands. Do you know what it means to apply turmeric paste to the hands of a young girl? The custom is that when the bride's father and the groom's father have agreed that their children will be married and the marriage contract has been agreed upon and accepted by both parties, then this vow becomes solemnized by applying turmeric paste on the hands of the future bride. But as we have heard mother Yashoda has just applied turmeric paste to the hands of Srimati Radharani without the necessary exchange of promises and agreements and vows what is to be done? Srimati Radharani looked in amazement at the turmeric paste on Her hands, What was She to do? I'll tell you. She became ashamed and afraid at the same time because now She won't be able to return to Varsana. Once all Her neighbours and friends, saw her yellow hands they would think, has She already been married or is She already betrothed? Why didn't we hear about this? And Her mother and father, King Vrishabanu and Queen Kirtida, what about them? Surely they did not give their consent for any marriage arrangements. So Srimati quickly came to this pond and vigorously washed Her hands in the waters of this pond. The water became yellow from the turmeric and as you can see even today the water is still yellow. After Srimati Radharani had washed Her hands She went back to Varsana, but some towns people had witnessed the pond turning yellow and deducting what had happened came and reported it to Srimati Radharani's parents. When King Vrishabanu and Queen Kirtida heard the news they began to dance in ecstasy, they were so jubilant. Hugging and embracing each other for their great good fortune they said, how lucky we are, how wonderful it will be to have Krishna as a son in law and how nice will be to have Mother Yashoda and Nanda Maharaja as our relatives by marriage. King Vrishabanu and Queen Kirtida were so happy that they called Srimati Radharani and embracing Her told Her that they had accepted Nanda Maharaj's and mother Yashoda's proposal and that Srimati Radharani could consider Herself betrothed to Krishna. Then a plate was prepared and filled with different precious jewels and gems, pearls and gold. This was the custom in those days when one accepted a marriage proposal for one's daughter. Then this plate was sent to Nandagram to Mother Yashoda and Nanda Maharaja by royal courier. When Nanda Maharaja and Mother Yashoda received this priceless plate from King Vrishabanu and Kirtida they became so jubilant that they began also to dance in ecstasy. And when all the townspeople heard the news they ran to Nanda Maharaja's palace and began

singing. All over the city of Nandagram could be heard the jubilant chanting of Radhe Shyam! Radhe Shyam! But then after some of the excitement had gone down Mother Yashoda looked at the plate and began to think, this plate is filled with the most priceless jewels I have ever seen, every gem is worth a king's ransom. We have cows and butter and milk and curds; but we do not have any jewels anywhere near this quality and grandeur. Thinking like this she said to Nanda Maharaja, my dear husband when we accept this proposal we must send the plate back filled with rare and valuable jewels and we don't have any. What are we to do? While they were discussing this matter they suddenly realized that the palace was full of guests that needed attending too. So leaving the plate on a table they went to take care of their guests needs.

Krishna coming in and seeing the beautiful coloured gems lying on the table took every one of them and wrapping them in some cloth ran out to his father's agriculture fields and there He threw all the jewels onto one that was newly ploughed. Krishna as a young boy was thinking, many times I have seen my father's farmers throwing seeds on this ground, after some time crops grow and we have food to eat. We don't have such priceless jewels in our house; but if I take these and plant them, soon they will grow into trees and we will have a lot of jewels and gems. Then we will have so many, that a plate won't be big enough, a bullock cart will have to carry all the jewels that we will send, and we will have so many. Then my father will be so proud of me. Thinking like this Krishna threw all the jewels on the field and this is where we shall go next. Haribol!

Mukta Kunda

Mukta kunda has a very, very unique history. After attending their guests Mother Yashoda and Nanda Maharaja returned to the table and were shocked to find that not a single jewel remained. Frantically they began to look here and there and then they realized that only one person in all of Nandagram could be the culprit, Krishna. So they had Krishna brought to them and they told Him, Krishna, You are such a nice boy, you can have all the milk sweets and butter that you want if you tell us what you did with the jewels on that plate? Krishna frankly admitted, yes mother, yes father, I took the jewels and I have safely planted them in our fields for cultivation so that they will soon grow.

Nanda Maharaja smiling said, don't you know that you can not plant jewels like you do with rice, wheat and vegetables. It does not work that way my son. Krishna replied, no, no, I am sure they will grow, let us go to the fields and see. The worst that can happen is that we have to pick them up again. So they went with Krishna and Krishna pointed at the field and said, look it's growing and sure enough they saw that a small sprout was growing, and in no time right before their very eyes this sprout had grown into a big tree full of jewels and priceless gems. The place where this tree once stood is now called Mukta kunda. Krishna then gathered so many jewels and gave them to Nanda Maharaja and mother Yashoda. They were very happy to receive the jewels and gold, they made many, many, gold ornaments like necklaces, bangles, crowns and anklebells, all studded with these precious and priceless jewels. They placed the ornaments on a plate and sent them by royal courier to King Vrishabanu and Queen Kirtida, all the excess jewels they piled on a bullock cart and sent that as well as their acceptance of the marriage proposal.

What happened next is extremely informative because as we all know Srimati Radharani and Krishna were not ever publically married. So what events transpired that kept this from taking place? Wait, you will soon find out in a very nice lecture about Yogamaya who in Sri Yajna is Purnamasi.

As we all know life does not always transpire as neatly and as perfectly as we would like it too. This can apply to transcendental pastimes as well. Listen closely, Purnamasi who is Yogamaya, Krishna's internal potency watched this whole pastime unravel in amazement. She

then suddenly realized that the whole situation was completely impossible. Why? The reason was that this is Sri Vraja Mandala. Here there is no place for madhurya rasa in the mood of husband and wife. In Sri Vraja there is only room for madhurya rasa in the mood of beloved and paramour. It has to be this way, Krishna desires no other mood here. So Yogamaya had to devise a plan to prevent this marriage from happening at any cost.

Yogamaya's expansion in Vrindavan is Purnamasi, and Purnamasi's position in Vraja is very, very elevated. Every single person residing in Vraja considered Purnamasi as his or her siksa guru and whatever she said instantly became law. So it was natural for Nanda Maharaja and Mother Yashoda to go to her with the news of Krishna's betrothal to Srimati Radharani and receive her blessings before actually performing the wedding ceremony. Purnamasi reflecting on this matter perceived the way to put a stop to the marriage. She said, actually at the present moment the astrological configurations are not auspicious. Also the individual charts of the bride and groom are not in perfect harmony at the present time. If these children, and I must say, they are not yet at the proper marriagable age. If these children get married at this time there will be a lot of problems and difficulties and the marriage will not last. There is time. They are both still very young. Later, when the astrological configurations improve and they are both a little older, I will send for Gargacarya from Mathura, the royal astrologer for the Vrishni dynasty. He will scrutinize their charts carefully and make the final decision, as for now forget about this marriage, in the future we will see.

So this is how Yogamaya's expansion, Purnamasi stopped the marriage. For if she had allowed the marriage to happen then Srimati Radharani would have become like one of Krishna's 16,108 queens in Dvaraka and we would never have known about the ecstatic, mahabhav symptoms that She exhibited. All the ecstatic pastimes of Sri Sri Radha Krishna would not have existed because they would have been existing in the mood of sakyra rasa as husband and wife. And not that of madhurya rasa, beloved and paramour, where the apex, the pinnacle, the paramount exhibition of loving ecstatic exchanges were expressed. Hare Krishna! Jay Jay Sri Radhe! Jay Jay Sri Radhe! Jay Jay Sri Radhe.. Shyam!!!

Anjanokh

Where we are now is the birthplace of Vishaka devi. She was born here from father Subanu Gopa in the womb of mother Devadani. One time Srimati Radhika was sitting here putting on her makeup while the gopis were dressing themselves very nicely. She was just about to put on some anjan, which makes the eyes look extremely beautiful, when Krishna began playing His flute. She and all the gopis started running towards Him. Krishna took Srimati Radhika's hand and sat Her down on His left side and looking at Her began to think how beautiful She looked. But then He looked at Her and asked how it was possible that there was no anjana on Her eyes? Srimati Radhika told Him that She had no time, for as soon as She heard His flute, She immediately ran to Him. Krishna gallantly told Her that He would apply it on for Her. So Krishna told the gopis to bring some anjana and in this place He applied it to Srimati Radharani's eyes and She looked very beautiful. Hare Krishna!

Prema Sarovara

Now we have come to Prema Sarovara. Here Srimati Radharani and Krishna exchanged many intimate and confidential pastimes. Once Srimati Radharani was sitting in one of the groves here when suddenly a big black bumblebee came buzzing in and started circling around her lotus feet, taking them to be lotus flowers. Becoming afraid she requested Krishna to make it go away. Krishna made a sign to Madhumangal and told him to chase it away. Madhumangal ran and chased the bee very far away. Now as you all know madhusudan is a name for bees and also a name for Krishna. When Madhumangal returned he proudly

announced, I have chased madhusudan very far away, he will never return. No sooner had Srimati Radharani heard that Madhusudan would never return, even though Krishna was sitting right next to Her, She was immediately struck by the arrow of separation. She fell to the ground weeping and beating Her breast crying, O my beloved Madhusudan is gone, my beloved Madhusudan is gone. Seeing this ecstatic display of love in separation, Krishna became overwhelmed and He also began to shed tears of ecstasy. So both of them were shedding incessant tears of love for each other and these tears ran down and formed this lake. This water is the melting of their hearts. Their hearts melted together in love and becoming tears formed these waters called Prema Sarovar.

Now let us all give our humble obeisances here at this spot and pray that our hearts which are filled with the frozen ice of unwanted desires, melt a little and allow us to understand the true significance of these glorious pastimes. Now we shall hear a very nice lecture about why Krishna left Vrindavan.

After the pastime of Prema Sarovara, Krishna reflecting began to consider not to stay in Vrindavan any longer. Krishna had decided to leave Vraja and it has been described by the Goswamis that after this time Krishna prepared to go to Mathura. Why did Krishna go to Mathura and why didn't come back? And even if He didn't come back to stay, why didn't at least come to visit and find out how everything was in Vraja? These are always the questions that serious students of Krishna katha desire to know and Srimad Bhagavatam extensively explains this puzzling phenomena. By the mercy of the Vaisnavas I will attempt to speak about it.

In Mathura, Kamsa had two queens, Prati and Asti. They were the daughters of King Jarasandha. After Krishna had killed Kamsa, the widowed queens taking all their belongings returned to their father's palace. Jarasandha all during the time that Krishna was living in Vrindavan had been assisting Kamsa in his attempt to harass the Vrajabhasis and destroy Krishna. So when his daughters returned they approached their father sobbing and wailing, tearing their hair and clothes, complaining to their father about the unfair murder of their husband, Kamsa. They told their father that Kamsa had actually done nothing. He was just watching a wrestling match in the arena and Krishna and Balaram came and murdered him and all his brothers. Jarasandha hearing this became very enraged and swore to his daughters that he would destroy both Balaram and Krishna along with all the Yadu dynasty.

The external consideration is that Jarasandha wanted to take revenge due to the plight of his daughters. As we know he would attack Krishna 18 times in the future. Krishna knew this would happen and He also knew that if He stayed in Mathura He would have the protection of a big fort, a strong army fully equipped with weapons, horses, chariots and elephants and professional, seasoned soldiers with which to fight and defeat Jarasandha. Then He thought that if He were to stay in Vraja, Jarasandha would know that Mother Yashoda and Nanda Maharaja were His real parents and that Vraja was the place where He actually lived.

Then Jarasandha would bring his armies and attack. The residents of Vraja are all concerned with cows and agricultural development. They are vaisyas no ksatriyas. The only weapon they know is a goading stick for tying cows. They never learned how to fight. They will be massacred. Thinking like this Krishna decided to stay in Mathura until Jarasandha was defeated and subdued. Krishna had by this time annihilated so many demons and disturbing elements; but there were still a few left.

So according to Srimad Bhagavatam Krishna returned to Mathura for these external reasons; but we see that even after He defeated and subdued Jarasandha, still He did not return to Vraja. So the conclusion is there must be some esoteric reason why Krishna did not return to Vraja. There must be some very confidential, internal reason for this seemingly contradictory behaviour. Krishna thought, there is no way I can take all the residents of Vraja with me to Mathura or Dvaraka, This is not possible. What would they do? How could the

gopis and the cowherd boys live in Dvaraka? Dvaraka is so opulent and filled with such grandeur and splendour. They would feel totally out of place if I brought them there. In Dvaraka my beloved gopis would not find the Yamuna, they would not find beautiful little forest groves, they would not find peacocks playing or forests of kadamba trees and I would never want to take them away from Govardhan. Also Mother Yashoda and Nanda Maharaja would not feel comfortable in the court of Devaki and Vasudeva, they all would feel out of place. And my most precious and beloved Radharani, I could never take Her from the paramount position of beloved and paramour and place Her on the platform as one of my queens.

My queens only love me in the mood of awe and reverence and oppulence; but my most worshipable Radharani's sweet, precious love is in the mood of paramour and beloved and is always superior to the mood of my queens. It would never work. It is impossible. Yet if I remain in Vraja will that be best for my beloved Srimati Radharani? So many times I was embracing Her in my arms and even then She was under the influence of love in separation and with all the gopis would start crying and lamenting. No, it's impossible. If I stay here I will just be a source of pain and distress to Her and the gopis. But if I am away then they will be overwhelmed with strong feelings of separation, always remembering the wonderful pastimes we shared together. Always thinking about me in this intense mood of separation will keep Me eternally situated within their hearts and it will be as if I am always here.

What does viraha mean? Viraha means the external perception goes inside and then the outside world ceases to exist and transcendental bliss is felt and experienced within. Now in reunion it is just the opposite. All the feelings that one keeps safely in one's heart bubble out and all these emotions are externalized. The beloved is there before me, now I can take him in my arms, whisper sweet words in his ear and show him how much I love him. The internal perception has stopped and the external process has begun. So in vipralamba or the mood of separation all emotions are internalized; but in reunion all these same feelings are expressed externally.

So considering all these things in this light Krishna left Vrindavan for Mathura, and once there after killing Kamsa, He reinstated his grandfather Ugrasena as king and then put all the affairs of the kingdom in order and fortified the kingdom in expectation of Jarasandha's attacks. It is said that after killing Dantavatra, Krishna came back to Vraja and there along with all His associates, gopis, friends and all the residents of Vraja disappeared and terminated all of His madhurya pastimes of conjugal love at this time. Then He went to Dvaraka and exhibited the remainder of His pastimes in the mood of complete splendour and full opulence. These esoteric and highly confidential revelations are undoubtedly complicated and difficult to understand from our mundane, materialistic points of view. Never the less we hope and pray that one day in some distant, future birth we will receive a Vaisnavas mercy and then we will be able to relish and fully appreciate them. Gaura Premanandi! Hari Haribol!

Sanket

At this particular place only Krishna's beloved sakhis and manjaris were allowed to come. Others in the mood of less than ecstatic madhurya rasa had no eligibility to enter here. This is where Vrinda devi makes all the arrangements for the meetings between Srimati Radhika and Krishna This place is in between Nandagram and Varsana and is very near Jaccati. This was the meeting place of Srimati Radharani and Krishna and this is the place where only ecstatic loving pastimes were performed.

Both Srimati Radharani and Krishna would always find some way or the other to get out of their palaces and come and meet here in Sanket. They would fool their parents and then by prearranged plan meet here. They would cover the light in their bedrooms so no one could

see their shadow or they would pretend to fall asleep early in the evening so they could be excused to go to bed and then slip out and meet. These pastimes are all described in detail in the Govinda Lilamrta and because we don't really have the eligibility to speak about these intimate pastimes it is better we leave it like this.

In Sanket no male person could ever enter. This was a dark deep forest and even sunlight could not enter. Each one of the sakhis and manjaris had their different groves and kunjās and no unauthorized female was ever allowed in. So from this you can see that extremely intimate pastimes took place here. Sometimes Krishna would go to Srimati Radharani's grove while Chandravali and her party led by Padma would make a nice bed of forest flowers. After Krishna had spent some time with Srimati Radharani He would go to Chandravali's grove and the hour being very late Krishna would relax on a beautiful bed of wild forest flowers covered from head to foot with kumkum and sindhu from the intimate associations He just had with Srimati Radharani. Chandravali and Padma seeing this would wish to make fun but because Chandravali loved Krishna in a mood of passivity she would not address Krishna directly about this but would refer to it in an indirect manner. Krishna still being totally bemused and bewildered by His association with Srimati Radharani would answer Chandravali by calling her Radharani. Many confidential and intimate pastimes like these were enacted here. These pastimes are not for our observations at this time because they are too elevated and esoterically profound for our comprehension. Now let us take the sacred dust from this place and apply it upon our head and wish, hope and pray that in some distant future birth we may be able to take part as a listener and hear about these highly confidential and intimate pastimes.

Sanket devi

Now we are at the mandir of Sanket devi. Sanket devi is Yogamaya. She arranges the meetings between Srimati Radhika and Krishna in Sanket. Krishna comes at a certain time in the night and Srimati Radharani as well, after receiving a sign from yogamaya. The sign might be a double rainbow in the sky at an auspicious time or a smile on the face of the moon when it first rises or darkish rain clouds over head with excessive lightning but no thunder, things like that.

Sanket Bihari

Now we are at Sanket Bihari mandir. Bihar means to do pastimes and murtis of Krishna and Srimati Radhika and the gopis are here for having enacted so many pastimes at this place.

Rasa Sthali

This is Rasa Sthali so named because it was a favorite site of rasa lila for Krishna. By Krishna's mystic potency, when yogamaya would give a sign that was very auspicious. Srimati Radharani would gather up the gopis and they would all come and meet Krishna here for the rasa dance. Now we shall hear a very nice lecture about Krishna's mystic potencies.

Krishna spent 96 years and eight months in Dvaraka and then after finishing His transcendental pastimes, Krishna took all his associates and devotees in their original forms and returned back to the spiritual world. Although it is mentioned that the members of the Yadu dynasty were fighting amongst themselves and that they all totally destroyed each other, factually all this was going on like activities in a dream state. In reality it did not happen at all; but like one's consciousness during a dream appears as real these activities were perceived as real also.

These transcendental pastimes of Krishna are extremely esoteric and difficult to comprehend. It is impossible for them to be understood by mundane considerations such as logic, reason or mental speculation.

All these exhibitions of the Yadu dynasty fighting and killing each other, Nanda Maharaja and Mother Yashoda crying their eyes out, Srimati Radharani and the gopis lamenting and almost dying due to separation from Krishna, these things are not actually transpiring at all. This is not the proper way to perceive these activities. This is not the correct understanding. These exhibitions are all happening due to the mystic potencies of Krishna. Factually they all went back to the spiritual sky in their original forms along with the Lord and everything else was simply caused by Krishna's transcendental mystical potency.

This mystic potency of Krishna is powerful and bewildering. When Brahma stole the cowherd boys and calves, even Lord Balaram who was at home that day celebrating His birthday, was not able to comprehend that Krishna had expanded into an exact duplicate of each boy and calf along with their corresponding mentalities, personalities and all of their accompanying paraphernalia; their flutes, their goads, their bugles, their buffalo horns, their binding ropes, their lunch tiffins, their jewelery, everything.

This is just one example of the many millions of pastimes that show the magnitude and awesomeness of Krishna's transcendental mystic potency.

We read in the scriptures that Lord Krishna does not take a step out of Vrindavan or in Mathura it is said that He never leave Mathura and in Dvaraka it is said that He never leaves Dvaraka. The same understanding applies for Lord Balaram. So where does Krishna go? This is the meaning of aprakrita lila. This is the lila that appears to disappear. These aprakrita lilas are still going on they are eternal, but we can not see them. So when the Lord displays these aprakrita lilas only the rasik devotees can see them from within their hearts and they can see them manifest in the real Vrindavan and not the maya Vrindavan, which is all that we are able to see. These aprakrita lilas are eternally and constantly going on. By the mercy of the spiritual master and the Vaisnavas we may be blessed in some distant, future life to see these pastimes manifest within our hearts also. *Vancha kalpatarubhyas ca, krpa sindhubhiya eva ca, patitanam pavanebhyo, vaisnavebhya namo namaha.*

Gopal Bhatta's Bhajan Kutir

This place was the bhajan kutir of many of the Goswamis. In fact Gopal Bhatta Goswami did bhajan here for a long, long time. Where we are presently is his bhajan sthali. Also in some places in this area Srimati Radhika and Krishna would swing and sometimes in some hidden grove Krishna would perform rasa lila. There are many little intimate pastimes like this in the area of Sanket. Hare Krishna!

Nandagram

This mountain that you see is called Nandisyara. This is the place of Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva had prayed ardently to Krishna to be allowed to witness His transcendental pastimes. Lord Shiva performed tapasya for many centuries and Krishna becoming pleased asked him what he wanted. Shiva said please allow me to become a mountain in Vrindavan, then the gopis stepping upon me would leave me the dust from their lotus feet. If that is too much to ask for, let me be just a stone on the road so that those blessed souls who are the sweepers of the Holy Dham and who are constantly in contact with the dust of Vrindavan, would as they pass by sweeping, rub their feet upon me. This is all that I desire. At hearing this Lord Krishna became very pleased and granted Shiva this boon. Shiva took this form of Nandisvara Mountain and Nandagram is built upon him. So now let us pray to Lord Shiva that he bless us to always have humble desires like him that will please the Supreme Lord Krishna.

Nanda Maharaja and his community lived in Nandagram just prior to the advent of Lord Krishna. Once due to unfavorable sign a meeting was called of all the residents and an assembly led by Upananda, the elder brother of Nanda Maharaja decided that it was better to leave Nandagram at once and find a more suitable place for living. They reasoned that Nandagram must not be very auspicious at the present time because Nanda Baba and Yashodamayi are not having any children, there is hardly any nice grasses growing for the cows and the Yamuna is so far away, thinking like this they decided to move to Gokula immediately.

It is very beautiful there, right on the bank of the Yamuna, with nice fresh and sweet grasses for the cows to graze, they will become fat and healthy and maybe this place will be so auspicious that Nanda Maharaja will get a son. So they got everyone to pack. All the people from the village, the Vrajabhasis, even those from the lower classes who lived outside the village, everyone was called and they all moved in mass to this new place called Gokula. Very soon after moving to Gokula, mother Yashoda bore Nanda Maharaja, the Supreme Lord as their son, Krishna.

Many people, especially the modern day Vrajabhasis who are a little unknowledgeable and misinformed about the actual tattva think that Krishna actually appeared in Mathura. This is not the truth. Krishna appeared in Gokula in His full fledged form as the Supreme Lord with all His potencies. Krishna's partial expansion, His four armed expansion of Narayana, appeared in Mathura in the womb of Devaki in the dungeon of Kamsa's palace.

After staying in Gokula three years and four months they began to be harassed by the demon friends of Kamsa, like Putana and Trinavarta. So leaving Gokula, Nanda and Yashoda took Krishna and Balaram and with their community went to Chattikara and Vrindavan. And Vrishabanu Maharaja and his community went to Raval. After here Nanda Maharaja went to Dig and after there he went to Kamyavan, the place of Yashodamayi's parents. Vrishabanu Maharaja at this time also came to Kamyavan with his family. After this they went to a place named Kelavan and after staying there for some time they returned to their original places of Nandagram for Nanda Maharaja and Varsana for Vrishabanu Maharaja.

Here in Nandagram is the first time Krishna and Balaram took out the cows for grazing. Before in Vrindavan and Chattikara and at other places, they took only the calves for grazing. Now They had grown enough to be allowed to take the cows. Kokilvan is also very near here and Krishna used to disguise himself and meet Srimati Radharani there. This is also where all the gopis got married.

From here Krishna would take the cows for grazing. We will go there later. That is where Rupa Goswami was doing his bhajan. In the evening when it was time to return home, Krishna would play the flute and calling the cows, they all would come running. The cows were divided into herds by their color: red, black, white, or yellow. In each color there were twenty-five further divisions making a total of one hundred herds. Added to this were eight groups for the cows that were spotted, speckled, with heads shaped like a mridanga or with tilak marks on their foreheads. This totaled up to be 108 different herds of cows.

The reddish cows had names like Aruni and Kumkumi, the blackish cows had names like Shyamali and Krishangi, the whitish cows had names like Dhavali and Candani and, the yellowish cows had names like Pitambari and Pingali. Each of the 108 different herds had a herd leader and when Krishna would call them with His flute, each herd would happily come running to meet Him. As they would come Krishna would touch the herd leaders snout with His hand and count each herd on a string of 108 jewel beads. If any cow was missing amongst the nine lacs milking cows belonging to his father, Krishna would immediately go chasing after her and call her by name. Krishna knew the name of every cow in all of the 108 different herds and the cows hearing their names would bellow in joy and come running.

You see this road coming from Varsana to Nandagram. This the way Srimati Radharani used to come along with Paurnamasi to cook for Krishna each morning. This is the place where Krishna and the entire family would take prasad. Nanda Maharaja would sit down with Krishna on one side and Balaram on the other. He would feed the first mouthful to Balaram and the second bite he would give to Krishna. Then he would take food himself along with his family. The cowherd boys and their families would take their meals at the same time and they would all enjoy prasad together.

Sometimes when Krishna was sitting here eating, Srimati Radharani would be looking from that window to see what Krishna was doing. She had just made some special laddus some manohar laddus that are very sweet and very nice and She was anxiously watching to see how Krishna would react when He ate them because she had cooked them especially for him. When Rohini devi placed the sweets on His plate, Krishna knew immediately that Srimati Radharani had made them. Looking from the corner of His eye to make sure that She was looking, Krishna picked it up with a big smile on his face. But no sooner had He bitten into it then His smile changed to a frown. Knowing that Srimati Radharani was watching He would slyly slip them all onto the plate of Sridam, Her younger brother, who would eat them all beaming with pleasure. The actual esoteric understanding is that the way to surely please one's beloved is to please the loved ones of one's beloved. This is the actual way to please one's beloved. Srimati Radharani's younger brother was fully satisfied and so naturally seeing him satisfied and understanding that Krishna had been only playing, She also became fully satisfied.

Now let us all reverently and humbly pay our obeisances to this place. These places are rarely to be seen by such exalted beings like even Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva. We have been able to come here only by the accumulation of pious actions in our past lives and by the mercy of the Vaisnavas. From here we will go to the place where the Brahmar Gita was spoken and after we will go to the place where Nanda Maharaja called the assembly when he was worried about Krishna's health and well being. It is a very important place because the Supreme Lord Krishna is always thinking about everyone's well being, always concerned about everyone else, but who thinks about the Supreme Lord's well being? It is Nanda Maharaja and that is what we will learn about next. Gaura Premanandi! Hari! Haribol!!

Nanda Bhavan

Now we have come to Nanda Bhavan in Nandagram. This temple has the Deities of Krishna and Balaram. Krishna is next to Yashodamayi, and Balaram is next to Nanda Baba. This is where Krishna and Balaram spent Their childhood pastimes. This is the palace of Nanda Maharaja in Nandagram where he and his family resided. Nanda Maharaja and Vasudeva were cousins, both of them had the same grandfather, Surasena. Surasena had two wives, one was from a Kshatriya family and one was from a Vaisya family. From these two wives he had two sons. The Kshatriya son was the father of Vasudeva and the Vaisya son was the father of Nanda Maharaja. Nanda Maharaja had four brothers Upananda, Abhinanda, Sunanda and Nandan. They were the five sons of Parjanya. Now all these sons except for Nanda Mahara had only daughters and Nanda Maharaja at that time did not have any children although he and Yashodamayi earnestly desired one. Parjanya during this period was very old, but he still had the hope that he would see a grandson before he died, which is a natural wish for any grandfather. He would go to the temple of Lord Shiva here and pray to him that his son, Nanda Maharaja would bless him with a grandson. Lord Shiva did indeed bless him and the Supreme Lord Krishna appeared. Hari! Haribol!!

Yashoda Kunda

This body of water that we see in front of us is called Yashoda kunda. Everyone used to go and take bath in Pavana Sarovara and it was always crowded mostly by men. Yashodamayi wanted to take bath in a quiet and private place, so she chose this place for her own and sometime she would bring Krishna here for bathing. Let us go on top, up here is where Krishna performed his haubilau pastime. Hare Krishna!

Haubilau

Once Krishna was so engrossed in playing that forgot about everything, bathing, eating and resting. On this day He just did not care what time it was or what He had to do. Mother Yashoda was very anxious and worried about Him. She was nervously looking and waiting for her little son to appear so she could bathe Him and feed Him and let Him take a nap. Still Krishna did not come. Finally she sent Mother Rohini to go find Krishna, Balaram, and their friends and bring them back. Rohini devi came to this place and began calling loudly, Krishna, Balaram it is time for taking baths and having lunch; but when the two boys heard her calling They ran the other way and hid themselves. Rohini devi ran after them, but it was not possible for her to catch these two mischievous boys as They ran round and around trees and large stones.

Exhausted, she told them that she was going home to tell Yashodamayi and have her come and get them. When Mother Yashoda was informed she marched down here and began calling and looking for Krishna and Balaram. But the two boys were so busy playing that They did not even notice that Yashodamayi had come. She quietly crept upon Them and in a soft voice she said, "What are you two boys supposed to be doing? Don't you know it's well past the time for Your bath and lunch? You should both be taking rest at this time. You boys go home also and if your mothers are angry with you for being late you can come and take your lunch with Krishna and Balaram." In this way she tried to entice them, but Krishna and Balaram were not willing and immediately they ran away. Mother Yashoda, knowing that she would be unable to catch Them, suddenly had an idea. She said, "If you don't hurry up and come the bogeyman will get you." The boys turning around asked, "What is a bogeyman?" Yashodamayi answered, "You don't know the bogey man? With huge mouth and sharp pointy teeth, long ears, and horrible red eyes with hair sticking straight up and fire coming from his nose. This bogeyman is coming to get Us and put Us in a sack for his supper if we don't hurry away from here. He is just around the corner. Krishna and Balaram told her, "There is no bogey man, we don't believe in that." But Mother Yashoda said, "Oh yes there is. I can hear him coming now." Looking back, behind fearfully she let out a cry and turning back towards the boys she began running in fear. Krishna and Balaram, who had never seen Yashodamayi act in this way before, thought that it must be true. Grabbing each others' hands with all the cowherd boys ran after her as fast as they could all the way home.

When they got home safe but out of breath, mother Yashoda quickly bathed and dressed Krishna and Balaram. She then brought them to the dining room where Nanda Maharaja was waiting patiently. Each boy sitting on either side of him began relating to him between bites about the dreadful hau and how they narrowly escaped capture. So this is the place of Krishna's haubilau pastime and it is a little above Yashoda kunda. Haribol!

Charan pahari

You may remember that we already had darshan of Charan pahari in Kamyavana. Now we are looking at the lotus feet impression of Krishna here, it is near Pavan Sarovar.

When Akrura came to Nandagram from Mathura and alighted from the shiny, new chariot that Kamsa had given to bring Krishna and Balaram back to Mathura, Akrura looked

on the ground at the numerous footprints and he immediately recognized the lotus feet impressions of Krishna. When he saw the Lord's lotus footprints, known by the symbols of Lord Narayan and Lord Vishnu, the chakra, the flag, the goad, the lightning bolt, the lotus flower, all together the nineteen symbols which appear on Lord Krishna's lotus feet. Both His feet and His hands are marked with different symbolic impressions, and these symbols have never been seen in any other incarnation except in the incarnation of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. When Akrura saw the dust on the ground that had been blessed by the lotus feet of the Lord, he instantly fell down like a stick and began to roll in this dust in ecstasy. The little lake that we just had darshan of is known as Khir Samudra or the ocean of milk and now we will go to the top of this little hill and have darshan of Ksirodakasayi Vishnu. He is lying on the bed of Ananata Sesa and Laksmi devi is massaging His lotus feet. So we will now go and beg Ksirodakasayi Vishnu for whatever mercy He desires to give us and after offering Him our humble obeisances move on from here. Gaura Premanandi!

Nanda Bag

This beautiful place that we see before us is called Nanda Bag. It was the garden of Nanda Maharaja and all the wonderful fruits, flowers and vegetables were used for the satisfaction of Krishna and Balaram. Their flower garlands were made from the flowers here and their meals were taken from the fruits and vegetables also. Hare Krishna!

Nanda Baitak

Now we are in Nanda Baitak. Nanda Baitak means the place where Nanda Maharaja calls for an assembly. Nanda Maharaja and Mother Yashoda did not have any children for a long time. This is where the leaders of the community would come and discuss how they could have a child. When there was any danger, difficulty, or natural calamity they would all assemble here and solve the problem figuring out the best course of action. If you look to your right you can see the direction of Nanda-kunda which is very close to here.

Now I will relate one of the many hundreds or thousands of incidents that occurred here in Nanda Baitak when an assembly would be called for.

Once Nanda Maharaja's elder brother Upananda called for an assembly of all the Vrajavasis. When they arrived he explained to them that, "Krishna, the son of Nanda Maharaja is not an ordinary child. He is definitely something extraordinary. If he is not an expansion of Lord Vishnu or Lord Brahma or Lord Shiva, then he is some exalted demigod, or at the very least, a very great liberated yogi. Krishna has killed so many powerful demons that nobody else could kill, and He did this as a baby and as a child. At the age of seven He lifted Govardhana hill on His little finger. Whoever heard of such things? Gargacharya warned us that this child Krishna was an extraordinary and exceptional child, having all the symptoms of Lord Narayana himself. So remembering these things mother Yashoda should stop pulling His ears, should stop chastising Him, should stop chasing Him around with a stick, she should stop calling Him a thief, she should stop tying Him up with ropes, and she should allow Him to do whatever He wants."

At that moment Nanda Maharaja interrupted him saying, "You can say all you want about what you think my son's inconceivable potencies are, but I see Him only as my son. You are saying that He is so elevated and that He must be a demigod and so forth and so on. But we see in life that even ordinary people can control their senses, like anger, greed, and control their food habits. But Krishna, He has no control whatsoever. He will eat fifty times a day. And do not ever let the food be cold or not enough sugar put in the milksweets, unless you want to see Him have a colossal temper tantrum! And if anyone reports that any butter, curds, or milk was stolen from their house, you can be sure that my son is the culprit.

“There is no bigger thief in the whole of Vraja. I am of the opinion that your assessment of my son is grossly misjudged and miscalculated. Even if you use the argument that, because my son is an expansion of the Supreme Lord, He is able to act anyway He pleases. How do you explain that at night when it rains and there is loud thunder and lightning, He comes running into my room frightened as can be and jumps into my bed scared to death? And how do you explain that when He has a stomach ache He comes crying to Mother Yashoda and until she takes Him in her arms, cooing over Him and smothering Him with kisses, He will not be pacified. Please explain to me how such an extremely elevated demigod or yogi can act like this?

“And what about His lying? At every step He’s telling lies. You ask him did You eat mud? He will say, no He did not. You ask him did You steal butter? He will say, no He did not. If you ask Him was He harassing the gopis, He will say He was not even in the area. Tell me, is this the normal behavior of someone very elevated? No, no, no. You are mistaken, Krishna is just my son. Even the demons, like Hiranyaksa and Hiranyakasipu were able to control their senses and follow strict tapasya. But Krishna, He can not remain a single minute without eating, He is always greedy for sweets. He always answers back to His superiors and He is a first class thief.

“And to make matters worse He boasts about what He has not done and He lies about what He has done. How can this be? If this is how an elevated being acts then I see no reason to be elevated. I see Krishna just as my son, if He causes any mischief I will quickly chase Him with a stick and chastise Him, and if He causes more trouble I will tie Him up.” And looking around thinking of all the millions of pastimes he and all of them had shared with Krishna, Nanda Maharaja losing his gravity broke down and started laughing, “Saying, you don’t understand, you don’t understand. Krishna is such a mischievous fellow.” And then the Vrajavasis and the cowherds all began laughing. They laughed and laughed, and they laughed so hard that tears came to their eyes and their stomachs began to ache, then when the last bit of laughter had finally died down, they looked around at each other and began laughing all over again. They forgot all about Upananda’s proposal and what he had been talking about, and they even forgot why they were there. The only thing that they could not forget was their beloved Krishna, and in reality all these assembly’s were called for one reason and that was to make a decision that would ultimately benefit Krishna. That was they were really interested in and this is what we are really interested in also, only actions that praise, glorify, or serve the beloved Lord Krishna.

As has just been thoroughly illustrated Nanda Maharaja always considered Krishna, only as his son. He never saw Krishna any other way as long as Krishna was living with him. That is because Vrindavan is the place where the fullness of madhurya or the sweetness of conjugal love is expressed. The further one is from Vrindavan and Krishna, in varying degrees this mood reduces. Here in Nandagram it is reduced to vatsalya rasa, in other areas such as the ashram of Sandipani Muni, this mood is expressed as sakhya rasa. In Mathura this mood is modified even further as dasya rasa and in Dvaraka the mood of madhurya has decreased to aisvarya or awe and reverence. In Vrindavan there is so much awe and reverence, more than anywhere else, but here it is covered by madhurya. That is why although Vasudeva and Devaki had a form of Krishna as their son in Kamsa’s dungeon and later had Krishna when He and Balaram came to Mathura, still they had the feeling that this was the Supreme Lord and so aisvarya dominated their mood towards Him. Whereas Nanda Maharaja and Yashodamayi never felt that Krishna was the Supreme Lord while Krishna was under their care and protector, he thought of him only as his precious son.

The difference between madhurya and aisvarya is that in madhurya rasa, Krishna is perceived just like any other human being, Like when He is playing with His cowherd friends or stealing a little butter or being chased by His mother with a stick; but in aisvarya He

exhibits extraordinary qualities. So wherever and whenever these extraordinary qualities are being displayed there is aisvarya. This is why Vrindavan is considered to have the maximum of aisvarya because here after Brahma stole all the cows and all the cowherd boys, Krishna expanded Himself and became each and every cow and each and every cowherd boy along with their corresponding mentalities and personalities. But that is not all. Krishna even expanded into their goading sticks and their bullhorns and all the paraphernalia that each boy had. This is the maximal manifestation of aisvarya ever displayed. When Krishna's expansion of each cow and cowherd boy returned to their respective homes you will recall that there was an extreme increase of love from their family members. This extreme increase and manifestation of love was in the mood of madhurya and it was this that covered the actual presence of aisvarya. Krishna's mystic powers were so potent that no one, not even Lord Balaram was able to perceive them.

In describing how madhurya and aisvarya are in equal degrees in Mathura, we can give the example that when Lord Krishna and Lord Balaram went to the arena of Kamsa to fight the two wrestlers, Canura and Mustika. After killing them Krishna leaped onto the royal dais and knocking off Kamsa's crown whirled him down to the wrestling mat and killed him in a flash. Watching all this Devaki and Vasudeva stood thunderstruck in total awe and reverence as they contemplated that only the Supreme Lord could accomplish such a Herculean task. Afterwards when Lord Balaram had also swiftly killed Kamsa's eight brothers, when He and Krishna approached their parents Devaki and Vasudeva, they just stood there looking awestruck in total mood of reverence. Krishna was expecting some heartfelt reciprocation of emotions, after all His parents had not seen Him since the day He was born. But Devaki and Vasudeva seeing Krishna as the Supreme Lord and not as their son remained firm in their mood of aisvarya. Krishna who is always hankering and desiring for His devotees love, seeing His parents regarding Him only in a mood of awe and reverence, began to cry. When He began to cry Mother Devaki's heart opened immediately and flooded with vatsalya rasa, she took Krishna upon her lap, and covering His head with her sari tried to breast feed him. Lord Balaram in the meantime had come and threw Himself down at the feet of his father. Vasudeva also feeling a flood of vatsalya rasa raised Him up and taking Him upon his lap smelled His head hugged Him and treated Him very lovingly in a fatherly way. So from this example experienced by Krishna and his brother Balaram, we can see that both madhurya and aisvarya manifest themselves equally in Mathura.

Now let us look at how aisvarya and madhurya manifest themselves in Dvaraka. Once Brahma came to visit Lord Krishna in Dvaraka. He had seen a few of the Lord's pastimes in Vrindavana and had been thoroughly bewildered and confused by Krishna's mystic power and potencies when he had stolen the calves and cowherd boys; but he still desired to have some more association with the Lord. So when he arrived at the gates he told the palace guards, go to your master, Lord Krishna and tell him that Brahma has arrived. When he said this he said it with a slight touch of arrogance. When the guard sent a message to the servants through the proper channels, Krishna immediately could understand that Brahma was puffed up and had become a little insolent. So Krishna sent word back to ask which Brahma was that was waiting to see him. When Brahma heard this he was astounded, he had thought previously to hearing this that he was the only Brahma there was and now his ego was completely crushed to find out that he wasn't, so he told the guard that he was the four faced Brahma.

Krishna in Dvaraka knows the past, present and future; but this is not so of the Krishna in Vraja. Although Krishna in Vraja has this potency most certainly, madhurya, or the sweetness of his pastimes covers it. Krishna in Dvarka is mostly in His four handed form and very rarely does He manifest his two handed form. In Dvarka He is full of opulence and splendor. When the message was relayed to Krishna that it was the four faced Brahma, Krishna decided to

further teach him a lesson and he had His servitors demand exactly which four faced Brahma was he. Because there were so many Brahmas he would have to satisfactorily identify himself before he would be granted the privilege of an audience with the Supreme Lord. Brahma visibly deflated replied, I never heard of any other Brahmas; but I am the creator of this material universe, also I am the father of the four Kumaras and Narada Muni. I have four faces and four heads and I cannot believe that there are other Brahmas and I never knew about them. So when Krishna heard what Brahma had said ordered that he be allowed to come in.

As soon as Brahma was ushered in through the palace gates he was completely flabbergasted and stood totally petrified like a dummy. For what he saw in front of him were hundreds of Brahmas all with more heads than his. Some Brahmas had 64 heads, some had 100 heads, some had 1,000 heads. And according to how many heads they had they were allowed to be nearer to or further from the Supreme Lord. The Brahma who was at the furthest position away from the Lord, had eight heads and in front of him was a Brahma with 16 heads, and in front of him was a Brahma with 32 heads and this went on and on with each Brahma having more heads being able to be closer to the Supreme Lord.

All the Brahmas were humbly engaged in offering choice prayers to the Lord and in praising the Lord with sweet words. Some were singing with tears in their eyes, some were kneeling with folded palms, some had even placed their 1000's of heads on the ground in supplication and surrender to the Supreme Lord. When the Brahma who created our material universe saw this magnificent display of devotional service being performed by Brahmas who were all more superior to him, his arrogance and insolence evaporated so quickly that his four heads began to spin and he became dizzy. His whole dream of being able to march forward and meet Krishna and take part in His pastimes as an important figure was totally shattered. Then when he fully realized that he was the most insignificant Brahma present there, this was of course after he had looked around to see if there was a two headed Brahma present, to his dismay there wasn't. At this time he fell to the ground like a stick and touching his four heads to the floor he began rolling around thinking, what a fool I have been, what a fool I have been. I never properly understood the actual potency of the Supreme Lord before, or even my actual position as his servant. O Lord please forgive me for being such a fool. Please forgive me for being such a fool.

So in Dvaraka the predominating mood is *aisvarya* or awe and reverence. There is very little *madhurya* and the *madhurya* that is exhibited by Krishna's queens like Rukmini, Satya and others is not the same quality as the *madhurya* in Vrindavan. The love of Krishna's queens in the mood of *madhurya* in Dvaraka does not have the capacity to captivate and bring Krishna under their control like the love that Srimati Radharani and the gopis had with Krishna in Vrindavan. The Goswamis said, that the *madhurya* that Krishna's queens had in Dvaraka was *sakhya*, or friendship in the mood of husband of wife. They said that this *madhurya* is not actually to be considered *madhurya rasa* at all. *Madhurya* means it has to be a love between the beloved and the paramour. And also here in Dvaraka the *madhurya* mood of Krishna's 16,000 queens is more in the mood of *dasya* or servitorship which is a symptom of *aisvarya*. Just like Sita devi's relationship with Lord Ramacandra is in the mood of servitorship, so the same is true here in Dvaraka. So now I hope you have clearly understood the difference between *madhurya* and *aisvarya* and how they manifest themselves in Vrindavan, Mathura and Dvaraka. Gaur Premanandi!!

Pavana Sarovara

Now we are at Pavan Sarovar. Here Nanda Maharaja and all the male members of his family use to come and take bath. Krishna when He would return from grazing the cows would come here and give the calves a nice bath and drink this water. Srimati Radharani

would come here too and cook for Krishna. Here also we will see the bhajan kutir of Sanatan Goswami, he spent a long time here performing bhajan. Here he wrote so many books like Hari Bhakti Vilas, Brhad Bhagavatamrta, Dasama Tippani and others.

Pavan means something that purifies. Does this mean that we become purified by taking this water or that we become 100% faultless? No it does not mean that. It means that by taking this water upon our heads as acaman we receive the mercy to enter and to begin to understand these lilas of Krishna. We get the mercy so that we can begin to relish the taste of these pastimes and gradually we can become purified. We do not have even the slightest desire of hearing these things or the smallest interest in chanting Krishna's names. But by taking this water it will create an interest and attraction in our hearts and we will one day be able to truly relish and appreciate these pastimes of Krishna. This is Pavan Sarovar's special potency for purifying.

Srimati Radharani was a favorite of Mother Yashoda. Whenever Srimati Radharani would come mother Yashoda would treat Her just like her own daughter. She loved Her as much as she loved Krishna. When She came in the mornings to cook for Krishna, Mother Yashoda would immediately embrace Her and inquire about Her family and their well being.

Mother Yashoda would then invite Her to wash Her hands and take a little breakfast before beginning to cook for Krishna. She told Her that everything was prepared for Her, the vegetables were washed and diced, the fresh cow milk had just been boiled for the milk sweets, and all the spices were laid out. Srimati Radharani was naturally a little shy as a young girl in the house of her beloved would be and when Mother Yashoda saw that She was a little hesitant in accepting she said, my dear child why are you feeling shy? This is your house you have the right to do anything you want here, feel free, and as of today I give you the keys. Now this house is your responsibility, you take care of this house, you are in charge. With that Mother Yashoda left and Srimati Radharani went to the kitchen to cook for Krishna.

When Srimati Radhika was in Jawat burning in the fire of separation from Krishna, Her body was burning so hot internally that the heat from it would evaporate any body of water that was near to Her. But here in Krishna's kitchen where there were at least 50 ovens all lit and burning brightly. (Lalita devi and Vishaka and all the sakhis had come before and prepared everything.) Here She was totally cool and calm and in a very short period of time She had made dozens of wonderful preparations and all of them exactly in the way that Krishna loved the best. Krishna at this time would be peeping in through the window trying to get a look at her. He could smell the cooking from outside and immediately He would know that His beloved Radharani had come to cook for him.

After all the cooking was done Mother Yashoda and Mother Rohini would lovingly serve all the prasadam to Krishna and Balaram and their cowherd friends, who would begin eating happily. Srimati Radhika would be standing behind the curtain where she could not be seen and she would watch Krishna enjoy His meal and she would be completely pleased and satisfied.

So many pastimes like this are happening and even now they continue to happen. What I have related to you is a mere semblance of the pastimes that actually transpired. These pastimes are eternal and they are happening eternally. They are never subjected to the laws of time and space in the material condition which we are subject to. Now let us give our dandavats begging this place simply for the mercy to always be attracted to the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani and Krishna and then let us move on to a very sacred and mysterious place called Uddhava Keyari. Hare Krishna!

Uddhava Keyari

The place we have now arrived at is full of spiritual mysteries. It is a very unique and confidential location. Uddhava wanted to come to this place but he became so perplexed that he lost his way. When Krishna had gone to Mathura after being taken away by Akrura, the gopis spent months together in this place we are now. They did not eat or sleep or bathe or change their clothes, they were completely oblivious to all material considerations. They would not even return home to their families. They just laid around here totally shattered in utter despair. If there is any place in Vraja that could symbolize the most intense mood of separation, then this place is it. This place where we now stand within the boundaries of Nandagram exemplifies the highest mood of love in separation.

Once a bumblebee mistook Srimati Radharani's lotus feet to be actual lotuses as it buzzed and whirled around them. It has been revealed that Krishna came in the form of a black bumblebee just to see with His own eyes the condition of the gopis deep in the mood of separation. He also wanted to relish the nectarean mood of Srimati Radharani's love. But witnessing their extraordinary symptoms and realizing the depth and magnitude of their love for Him he was amazed and wonderstruck. To try to evaluate the glories of Nandagram is beyond our ability to mentally tabulate because this place is far beyond all material considerations and designations. It is possible to give you a hint so you will be able to understand just a little about how glorious Nandagram truly is.

Laksmi devi, the goddess of fortune is the consort and wife of Lord Narayana. She is constantly receiving all kinds of service in the mood of opulence and grandeur from all the residents of Vaikuntha; but she herself came here to Nandagram in all humility and disassociating herself from all splendor and luxury she executed devotional service for 24 hours just like a maidservant. Here even the goddess of fortune scrubbed pots and cleaned floors with her own hands. So such are the glories of Nandagram. This area is where the early childhood pastimes, the mischievous pranks, the playful jokes are scattered by the millions. And here also is the most intimate and intense mood of love in separation, vipralamba, exhibited.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakur explains in the Tika, that Krishna lived from birth to three years and four months in Gokula. From Gokula they went to Vrindavan from three years and four months till He was six years and eight months then they moved to Nandagram from six years and eight months till He was ten. Then from the age of ten till 28 years and four months He lived in Mathura and then for the next 96 years and eight months he lived in Dwaraka until he was 125 years old.

If one has studied Srimad Bhagavatam a little one can perceive that during Krishna's last days in Nandagram before departing for Mathura, there was an acute increase of demons harassing Nanda Maharaj's community and the residents of Vraja. Kamsa in a frenzy to destroy both Balaram and Krishna sent his last most powerful demons, the bull demon Aristasura, the horse demon Kesi and the magician demon, Vyomasura. When these three had failed to return because of being killed by Krishna, Kamsa then decided that he better change his tactics. All the most powerful demons on the earth had been destroyed and annihilated by either Krishna or Balaram and Kamsa realised that the only way he would have a chance to kill the two Lords was to somehow get them both to come to Mathura. So as a last gasping, desperate hope, Kamsa sent for Akrura.

Kamsa knowing fully the art of diplomacy had Akrura sit down on a comfortable seat and placing his hand in his said, my dear Akrura, most benevolent one, I am depending on you to do me a favour out of your respect and friendship for me. Please go to Nandagram at once, without delay and bring Krishna and Balaram here to me in Mathura. Now when Akrura was called by Kamsa it was Dvadasi, he had fasted on the Ekadashi and early the next morning

Kamsa had called him and ordered him to bring back Krishna and Balaram. Akrura was thinking, yes it is true I am being sent as a horrible messenger from a demon; but never the less this is my golden opportunity to see the lotus feet of Krishna and Balaram. Akrura of course knew that the two Lords were all powerful and that nothing could harm Them and even before breaking his Ekadashi fast he started off on his journey, which is actually against the rules and regulations. But Akrura thought, the wonderful nectar that I will receive by seeing the lotus faces of Krishna and Balaram will be millions of times more beneficial for me then properly breaking my fast, and besides I can break my fast by taking prasad at the house of the Lord.

When Akrura arrived in Nandagram and delivered the message, all the gopis began whispering, he should not be called Akrura, this means merciful, he should be called Krura, the unmerciful. He is so unkind he is taking our beloved Krishna away from us without even trying to console us. When Nanda Maharaja heard about this, his heart began to beat so rapidly in anxiety that he felt it could not be contained within his chest. When Mother Yashoda heard the news she fainted. The same Mother Yashoda who would run ten times to the fields and pasturing grounds each day to see if Krishna had eaten or if the food pleased Him or if He wanted something else. She would be constantly thinking, is He dressed nicely enough, does He need a bath, has He fallen down and hurt Himself, did I give Him enough sweets. As soon as Krishna would leave her sight she would begin to feel faint, and now Krishna was going all the way to Mathura. Who knows when He will return? She could not bear the thought and thinking like this she could not stop her tears and so she just cried continuously. Seeing Krishna coming into the courtyard and realizing that He was still there with Her, she immediately took a big quilt and covered Him with it and embraced Him tightly so nobody could take Him away from her. It was Nanda Maharaja who after some time was finally able to persuade mother Yashoda to let Krishna go. All these wonderful pastimes took place in these sacred and holy grounds.

Srimati Radharani has reached the highest state of ecstasy, this state often turns into madness and delirium; but even in this acute state She would never come in front of people who were senior to Her in terms of age and position, as a matter of etiquette and respect. But now, even She could not control Herself any longer and right in front of Nanda Maharaja and Yashodamayi and all the senior members of the community, She began crying and rolling around on the ground. Then wailing hysterically She threw Herself down in front of the horses that were pulling the chariot that was taking Her beloved Krishna away from Her. Forcing Akrura to stop, she pulled Herself up by the very reins that were being used to take Her beloved away. Then somehow finding the strength, She ran to Lord Balaram's side of the chariot and embracing His lotus feet with tears streaming from Her eyes begged Him as the elder brother not to allow Krishna, who was Her life and soul to ever depart but to remain here always with Her.

At one stage Srimati Radharani's delirium increased and looking around She uttered, is this Uddhava or is this My Shyamsundar? Is this a chariot and if it is, is this supposed to take Him away, from me? No! No! No! I think I must be seeing a mirage, yes, this is a mirage; and unable to contain Her pain, anguish, and suffering any longer She fell lifeless to the ground unconscious.

At this time Lalita devi told Vishaka, I must go and fan my lady, look She is lying there crumpled like a withered flower. I must go get a lotus leaf so I can fan Her and bring Her back to consciousness before She dies of grief. So saying this, Lalita devi ran to Pavana Sarovara, but unbeknown to her, Srimati Radharani's intense, burning mood of vipralamba had dried up Pavana Sarovara and there was not a single drop of water there. How can a lotus survive without any water? It can't and Lalita devi was not able to find one.

The story of the Bhramar Gita took place here. When Uddhava finally arrived here he saw Srimati Radharani lying on the ground in total abandon. The burning fire of separation which was incinerating Her was so intense that if She fell down onto some muddy ground, within moments it would become dry and dusty. Sometime during Her delirious state of ecstatic love another black bumblebee came and She started speaking all sorts of things to it. At one point She began advising the bee. She said, did you come here to hear about this other black person that I know? Because if you only once hear about Him then you will be in danger, just like He put us in danger.

One should definitely not ever hear about Krishna, because as soon as one drop of His nectarean transcendental activities are poured into one's ears, immediately one becomes distasteful towards all material attractions and attachments. A father is attached to his firstborn son, but hearing about Krishna he will leave him with his mother. A newly wedded wife happily married to a good husband hears about Krishna and wants to leave her home. A young boy perfectly brought up, well mannered, totally obedient to the will of his parents, hears about Krishna, and then shamelessly abandons them. This is the effect that one has when one simply hears about His activities.

One will give up all attachment for family, home, wife, children and all that is materially precious to people in this world. Acting in this way one makes his relatives and loved one's very unhappy as one is forced to wander always in search of Krishna. So be very careful before you hear about Him or else you too will be in a terrible predicament.

What Srimati Radharani is saying is very prophetic and as a warning to you all, those of you who are with us now on Sri Vraja Mandala Parikrama for 1988 and those of you who will be hearing about this in the future. We can see that for the last 20 years, Krishna has been empowering a great number of His devotees and representatives, sending them out into the world with Srimad Bhagavatams and Bhagavad-gitas under their arms. They are on patrol, looking for those souls who are interested in hearing about Krishna. It has been reported many, many times that as soon as these souls hear about the transcendental pastimes of Krishna immediately they run away from all material attachments forgetting about parents, wife, family and home.

So you better think twice and be very, very careful before associating with this Krishna's people. They are only interested in hearing and talking about Krishna's transcendental qualities and pastimes all day long, and in between eating all the prasada they can get their hands on and distributing the nectar of Krishna katha throughout the world, they sing and dance to His glories. So unless you also wish to participate in this kind of activities, then I would seriously advise you not to ever allow the name of Krishna to enter your ears, otherwise you will be floating across this dangerous ocean of materialism safely aboard the creeper of bhakti, dancing in ecstasy. Haribol!

Now to continue the story, Srimati Radharani said, further more since you are black just like Him you must have His qualities also, so kindly leave the vicinity. By seeing you my anger has increased. You go now far away from here. I don't want to have anything to do with anything black anymore. The bee replied, I know Him, He's not as bad as you make Him to be. What are His faults? Srimati Radharani said, you do not know much about Krishna, but we have heard how hard-hearted and ungrateful He is from Paurnamasi. You want to know what his faults are? Did you know that in the treta Yuga He took birth as a dark person, and then this dark person took his wife to the forest. There, Surpanakha one of Ravana's sisters came to him in a very alluring and beautifully exquisite form proposing marriage to him. But he was so captivated by the beauty of his wife that he refused her offer, spurning her, and not only that, afterwards he cut off her ears and nose as well. Was that a noble thing to do? She was unable to marry anybody after that. Then again, this same dark person, born in a ksatriya royal family, had to kill an enemy of a friend as part of an agreement. Instead of killing this

person, named Vali, who in actuality was not this dark person's enemy at all, instead of killing him like a ksatriya, face to face, this dark person killed him just like a hunter, from behind a tree. Do you think that was fair? He never even gave Vali a chance. But that's not all, in another life he took birth as a brahmana boy known as Vamanadeva. This Vamanadeva was a dwarf who once surreptitiously approached Bali Maharaja, who was master of the three worlds during an auspicious sacrifice and tricked him into giving away all he had under the pretense of begging for charity. Do you call cheating good? After taking all that Bali Maharaja possessed this brahmana, Vamanadeva sent him all the way down to Pataloka.

The bumblebee replied, perhaps this blackish person had good reason to perform these things; but there is one thing! I do not understand. You are saying that this blackish person is not good and that He is a cheater and dishonest and cruel; but if all this is true then why are You and your gopi friends always talking about Him, singing His pastimes, chanting His glories and praising hi name all the time? What is the reason for this I would like to know? Can't you speak about anything else? Srimatj Radharani looked at the bee very gravely and said, that is the crux of the problem, once anybody hears the name Krishna even one time everything else is finished. One loses taste for everything and anything that is not connected with Him. One simply yearns and desires to hear more about His transcendental pastimes again and again and again not caring for family or friends or loved ones. This is the reason why we are not thinking, singing or chanting about anyone else but Him, it is because we are totally powerless to do anything about it.

When Uddhava saw the extreme griefstricken condition of Srimati Radharani and the gopis, he was thunderstruck. They all appeared just like wilted flowers giving a last farewell fragrance before departing on. Uddhava felt tremendous compassion for them and began immediately talking very authoritatively about Krishna's transcendental pastimes, but halfway through he realized that his devotion to Krishna and his understanding of the more intimate regions of Krishna's ecstatic mellows, was extremely shallow and limited compared to that of the gopis. At that moment the gopis became worshipping to him and falling down at their lotus feet offering obeisances, he spoke the famous sloka that is in Srimad Bhagavatam, beginning "asam aho carana renu jusam aham shyam". Uddhava only desires to become a creeper or a blade of grass in Vraja, waiting patiently for the dust of the gopis lotus feet to fall upon him when they run to meet Krishna. This was Uddhava's dream, to be born as an insignificant blade of grass in the land of Vraja. O the humility of a Vaisnava is a wonderfu phenomena. *Vancha kalpa ta rubias ca kripa sinhubhya eva ca patitanam pavane byo vaisnave byo namo namah.*

Sri Rupa Goswami's Bhajan Kutir

This is Rupa Goswami's bhajan kutir, he lived here a long time writing about the transcendental pastimes of Krishna. So many important Vaisnava literatures he wrote, like Ujjvala Nilamani, Padyavali, Lalita Madhava, Dan Keli, Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu just to name a few

Tera Kadamba

Here also is the famous Kadamba tree that Rupa Goswami would sit underneath when he wrote. Whenever he would write about the paintul pangs of separation that radha and Krishna would feel, all the leaves from this tree would fall off, just like tears running downthe face of someone in pain. The tree would be actually crying feeling the mood of Sri Rupa Goswami. Yet when Sri Rupa would be writing about shambo or the ecstatic loving reunion between Srimati radhika and Krishna, then this kadamba tree would immediately start

sprouting and blossoming fresh new leaves and flowers, so joyful was he that Sri Radha and k where again reunited.

These events occurred less than 500 years ago you may speculate and question how is it possible? Trees are subject to the an even lower evolutionary position than the humans are, yet by the mercy of a Vaisnava this kadamba tree was able to understand and appreciate intimate and confidential subject matters which even we are not yet eligible to comprehend.

So you can see that even a tree can be delivered by the mercy of a Vaisnava who is a bona fide representative of the Supreme Lord. Let us all now give our humble obeisances to this most wonderful kadamba tree that gave Sri Rupa Goswami sweet fragrances and shelter from the sun. Even companionship to the extent that this tree was able to assimilate and then reciprocate the same mood as Rupa Goswami and express it visibly by the shedding and regrowing of it's leaves and flowers. Let us beg this all merciful tree to shelter us from the darkness of ignorance and to bless us to always desire the sweet nectarean fragrances of Sri Sri Radha Krishna's pastimes. Hari! Haribol!!

Chach Kunda

Mother Yashoda use to churn yoghurt here and from that she would extract the ghee, and whatever was left was called chach. There was so much milk, yoghurt, butter and ghee in those days that all the chach would just be thrown away in this kunda. This is why this kunda is called Chach kunda. Of course today with so much modernisation and new methods of making milk products, fresh chach is very rarely made except by a few grandmothers who can still remember the process that they learned from their grandmothers. I can recall sometime before when some very tasty chach was presented to me; but for all practical purposes chach is very rarely heard of today although back then there was so much of it, it had to be thrown away in this kunda. Hare Krishna!

Lalita Kunda

Now we have come to the place where Lalita devi would arrange secret meetings between Srimati Radharani and Krishna.

Just look around, see how beautiful the place is. There are very nice kadambha and tamal and pilu trees decorating this area. These trees are very old and ancient, look their are one, two, three, four peacocks flying overhead and if you notice it feels like it is always spring here. This place is overflowing with the nectarous pastimes of Sri Radha Krishna. I will now narrate to you just one of the millions of pastimes that took place here, which I have heard from the mouths of the Vrajabhasis here.

There is an authoritatively accepted branch of sastras called stela purana which is the history of a particular place passed down from generation to generation by the local brahmanas and pandits of the area. So this narration can be considered as part of the stela purana of the this area.

One time Srimati Radharani and Krishna were talking very intimately, Krishna was discussing Narada Muni very extensively, He was explaining that Naradaji was famous for instigating disputes and quarrels between people. So Krishna instructed Srimati Radharani to be very careful and no to ever closely associate with Narada. He will start such a fight between us that we will be totally finished and not want to see each other again. Srimati Radharani said, "What fight could he possibly cause between Us? We will never have a fight." Krishna shrugging His shoulders said, "Anyway, do not say I did not warn You."

One day Narada Muni was in the area of Vraja and he came to Vrindavan singing the glories of Krishna, hoping to be fortunate enough to see some of the Lord's pastimes. Krishna, hearing the very sweet singing of Narada and becoming extremely pleased, granted him a

wish. Narada humbly folding his hand said, “My dear Supreme Lord, I have only one request, that You and Lalita devi sitting side by side, swing together in this spot, I only want to see this.” So Krishna said, “All right, this is not such a big request. It will come to pass.” Narada Muni receiving the Lord’s blessings went away.

One time Srimati Radharani was a little late in coming here to meet Krishna for a scheduled rendezvous. Krishna took this opportunity to fulfil His devotee’s request and called Lalita devi to come and swing with Him. Lalita devi, of course, refused because she gets pleasure from arranging and watching Srimati Radharani and Krishna’s intimate relationships. She does not want to participate, so she refused.

But Krishna insisted. Taking her by the hand, He made her sit next to Him and the sakhis began to swing them. When Narada who was passing by saw this happening, he immediately went to Srimati Radharani’s house and told Her, “Oh, You are sitting here so complacently. Don’t You know what is going on? You better go and find out what is going on! In the same place where You were supposed to have a rendezvous with Krishna someone else is already there in Your place. Actually You trust Lalita too much, You think she is so faithful to You. Maybe in front of You she is, but behind Your back it is another story. If I were You, I would immediately run to that spot and see for Yourself.”

Srimati Radharani became very anxious and went straight to the spot. From a distance She could see Lalita devi enjoying with Krishna on the swing, being swung by all the sakhis. Seeing this, Srimati Radharani became very upset and ran away from the place crying.

After sometime Krishna found out that she was very angry with Him and was not talking to anyone. Krishna tried to pacify Her in many ways, but She rejected all His attempts. She was not willing to hear any excuses. Lalita devi thought, “Oh my goodness, what am I to do? I had no intention of causing my lady any pain or sorrow, and now She is upset with me as well.

Krishna tried in so many ways to coax or cajole Her, but She would not relent. Finally Krishna said, “I warned You never to fall into close association with Narada Muni did I not? But You did not listen to Me. Now see what a mess we are in.” Krishna then told her of the request that he granted Narada, explaining to Her that Narada was so expert at causing riffs and arguments that he even fooled Her. So now I hope You understand and in the future never trust this person again.

Javat

Javat is the place of Srimati Radharani’s husband’s family. As you know Jatila is Srimati Radharani’s mother-in-law and Kutila is Her sister-in-law. We should always remember never to criticize them no matter how abominably it may seem that they treat Krishna. We should give one thousand dandavats to their lotus feet because they are always worshipable by us.

Once Jatila saw Krishna and she became immediately alarmed and disturbed. She called out to Him saying, “Oh You black snake! You venomous poisoner and ravisher of young girls! What are You doing here?” Krishna looked at her and with a slight smile replied, “Oh you evil witch hiding amongst the elderly gopis, I have come to bite you with My fangs.”

At the time Uddhava was accompanying Krishna. When he heard this most unusual exchange of words, he fell down on the ground laughing. Krishna turning to him said gravely, “You know Uddhava, when all these old ladies of Vraja hurl abuses and chastise Me, at this time I became very blissful and happy. There are so many great sages, philosophers, and erudite scholars who compose very sweet and wonderful verses praising Me in such delightful ways. But I do not feel even one drop of the joy or ecstasy from hearing them as I do from the association and exchanges that I have with the elderly gopis of Vraja.

Now I will relate to you a nice little lila that happened here. Once when Srimati Radharani was small she was playing with Her girlfriends. Suddenly the powerful sage Durvasa Muni

appeared coming in their direction. All Her girlfriends ran away to their homes as soon as they saw him; but Srimati Radhika remained there where She was. When he came closer, She offered him dandavats. Seeing this, Durvasa Muni became very pleased and blessed Her saying, “O Radhe, whoever eats food cooked by You will enjoy the taste of ambrosial nectar, will never become ill, and their life span and youthfulness will surely increase.” Blessing Her Durvasa Muni went on his way.

Everyone very soon came to know about this blessing. So Yogamaya as Purnamasi along with Mother Yashoda came and told Jatila that she must send her daughter-in-law Srimati Radharani to the house of Nanda Maharaja everyday so that She can cook for Krishna. Hearing this, Jatila was feeling very much uneasy, but she could not but follow the instructions given by Purnamasi. So from that day on she would send Srimati Radharani every morning to cook for Krishna, accompanied by Her sakhis and girlfriends.

Now although Jatila sent Srimati Radharani, she was not at all very eager and pleased to do so. So she would create difficulties and situations that would impede and hinder Srimati Radhika from going. Once when Jatila acted in this way, she caused Srimati Radharani to feel the excruciating agony and pain of love in separation from Krishna. Just a moment would feel like yugas, and in separation from Krishna the whole world appeared to be empty to Her. Caitanya Mahaprabhu expressed a similar mood many times as verified in His Sikastaka.

*yugayitam nimesena caksusa pravrsayitam
sunnyaytam jagat sarvam govinda virahena me
(Sri Sikastaka, verse 7)*

“O Govinda! Feeling your separation, I am considering a moment to be like milleniums. Tears are flowing from my eyes like torrents of rain, and the world seems void without You.”

Srimati Radharani’s husband, the son of Jatila is named Abhimanyu or Ian Gosh as he is called in Bengal. He is a mayic expansion of Krishna and his purpose is for enhancing Krishna’s pastimes.. Actually Abhimanyu is none other than Krishna. He is the manifestation of Krishna’s shadow. Krishna is the husband of all the gopis. Nobody else can be the husband. When Brahma stole all the cowherd boys and calves, Krishna expanded into all the cowherd boys and calves. What was but a moment to Brahma was a full year on earth. In that year, Krishna told His father that the coming year was a very auspicious year for marriages. All the cowherd boys and gopis should take this opportunity and get married as soon as possible. Purnamasi had also agreed that the coming year was very favorable for marriages. So all over Vraja, Krishna expanded as all the cowherd boys married all the gopis including Srimati Radharani.

Srimati Radharani is the embodiment of Krishna’s Hladini shakti, His highest internal potency. So it is out of question that Krishna’s shadow Abhimanyu could have any contact with Srimati Radharani or any of the gopi’s husbands have any contact with them. The gopis were totally surrendered to Krishna in every condition that exist in life and no other position was desired. It would not have been possible for Abhimanyu to even as much as touch Radharani’s hand. Her status of being married to him after Krishna released him and all the cowherd boys from Brahma’s abduction was a formality only to help insure that ecstatic madhurya rasa would be ever present in Vraja. How else could the delicate mellows which precipitates the intimate conjugal relationship between beloved and paramour be able to remain ever fresh

Some pranks of Srila Vishvanath Chakravarti Thakur

The name Javat is symbolic too. Ja means there and vat means tree. Under this banyan tree was the house of Srimati Radharani’s in-laws, the home of Her husband’s family.

Once Krishna, feeling so much separation from Srimati Radharani, pretended to be bitten by a snake. Krishna fell down and became unconscious and everyone frantically began

looking for someone who could cure Him before the poison took full effect. Many people were called, but none was found suitable by Mother Yashoda. Finally Purnamasi arrived with Gargacarya. After consulting with each other, they advised that the only way that Krishna could be saved was that if in the whole of Vraja there was one chaste woman. Chaste woman means a woman who is totally devoted and faithful to the man she loves in thoughts and in actions. This chaste woman should carry a pot with one hundred holes in it, filled to the top with Yamuna water and not spill a drop. With that water she should bathe Krishna. Then by the power of her chastity, this woman would be able to nullify the poison and Krishna would be saved. The power of this chaste woman would be so great that the water from the Yamuna would not be able to run out of the hundred holes. Immediately they began asking who was the chastest woman in Vraja.

It was reported to them by many that Kutila who was the sister-in-law of Srimati Radharani was such a lady of chaste and faithful character. Also her mother Jatila was also considered to be one of spotless chastity. Both of them were rather proud of their status as the chastest women of Vraja. Being mother and daughter, they both considered that it was due to their family lineage that they alone held this honor. So when she was approached to save Krishna, Kutila came forth willingly saying, "Yes, what you say is true. My mother and I are the chastest women in Vraja. I will take the water and save Krishna with it."

She took the pot with the hundred holes and, dipping it in, filled the pot with water. She then confidently lifted it up. But to her chagrin and embarrassment, no sooner had she taken the pot out of the water, than all the water ran out of it. Without hesitation everyone started jeering and laughing at her saying, "Look at the very, very chaste woman who was going to save Krishna! The water ran out even before she pulled it up. Ha, ha, ha! You are not chaste at all. Let us go and find her mother."

But Jatila, seeing the fate of her daughter and caring not to be insulted also, had already slipped away. Taking another pot with only few holes in it, she went to a pond to secretly test if she was as chaste as she thought she was. She dipped the pot in and as soon as she pulled it up, all the water immediately ran out. Seeing this, Jatila decided it was better not to be seen in the vicinity for a while. So she discreetly disappeared and could not be found when she was sought by the Vrajavis.

Now the whole community was in a predicament because if there was no chaste lady to be found, Krishna could not be saved. They were beginning to feel desperate. Finally Purnamasi, who was considered the guru of everyone in Vraja, and whose word was absolute law, came forward and said, "I think that we have all wasted enough time. We must now go and call Srimati Radhika. She is the only one who can do it and then Krishna will be saved."

So all the people went to Srimati Radharani to request Her to do it; but She immediately refused saying, "No, no, no! I am not going to do it. Everyone is always ridiculing Me, saying that I am a kalakini, a woman of ill repute, and that I do not have a good character. Especially My mother-in-law Jatila and her daughter Kutila, they complain about me the most. No, no, no, it is out of the question. I could not think of doing it. You must find someone else." Hearing this, the people became dismayed. They informed Her that Purnamasi said that there was nobody else who could do it now that Kutila had failed, and Jatila could not be found. When Srimati Radharani heard that, She replied, "If Jatila and Kutila come to Me and insist that I go, then, and only then, will I do it."

So all the people went and got Kutila and they brought Jatila out from where she was hiding. Purnamasi and Yashodamayi and others told them that they must go at once and tell Srimati Radhika that She must go and save Krishna. "She will only go if you both insist, and if She does not go then there is nobody else who can save Krishna." Then Purnamasi, exhibiting her mystic potency, told them, "Both of you have tried and both of you have failed.

So now you must do your part and insist that your daughter-in-law go save Krishna. If anything happens to Krishna, then Nanda Maharaja will leave his body, Yashodamayi will leave her body, and then I, Purnamasi will also leave my body.”

Hearing this, Jatila and Kutila out of fear hurriedly went to Srimati Radharani and ordered Her to go. But she refused. Then they tried asking Her nicely, but she still refused. At last out of desperation, they began begging Her. She still refused saying, “No, I am not going. You always accuse me of being kalakini and so I do not want to see another man’s face.” Hearing this, Jatila and Kutila finally fell down at Srimati Radhika’s lotus feet and begged Her to forgive them and to please go and save Krishna before it was too late.

At that moment, Lalita and Vishaka came and entreated Her to go. Then Srimati Radharani relented and agreed to go. Srimati Radharani went to the Yamuna, took the pot, and dipped it in. When She raised it out of the water, not a single drop fell out. She then took the pot upon Her head and, gracefully like a celestial swan, carried the pot to Nanda Maharaja who was waiting for Her. And he and Gargacharya sprinkled the water upon Krishna. Krishna regained consciousness by the power of Srimati Radharani’s chastity and became alright once again.

Once Abhimanyu came home, and as soon as he arrived his sister Kutila came to him saying, “My brother, you never believe me when I tell you the truth. Go out to the forest this minute and you’ll see what’s going on in your family. You always say that your wife never meets with any other man, so I am telling you now to go and see for yourself.” At first Abhimanyu did not want to go, but after sometime when Kutila kept insisting, he thought, “Why should my sister lie to me? She must know something.” Thinking like this he quickly made his way into the forest.

Meanwhile Srimati Radhika was feeling a little edgy and nervous. A lot of time had passed and She felt that if She did not leave soon, She would be caught. Looking out among the trees, She saw Her husband approaching rapidly. She became extremely fearful and in anxiety began to panic. Krishna consoled and pacified Her saying, “Do not worry, just stand exactly as You are and leave the rest to Me.” Suddenly Abhimanyu angrily stomped in. But when he came in although Krishna was standing directly in front of him, he did not see Krishna. Instead he saw the form of Kali and Srimati Radharani worshipping mother Kali’s feet. Such was the power of Krishna’s mystic potency, and such was the splendor of the pastimes He performed here.

Kokilavan

Now we have come to Kokilavan. Kokila is a cuckoo. Sometimes Krishna used to dress up like a cuckoo bird and cry out in a high voice imitating the sound of a cuckoo. Do you know why Krishna would act like this? You see this badri tree here? Krishna would climb up this tree in the night and call out loudly like a cuckoo in a high voice. Krishna had already informed Vrinda devi that as soon as she heard his cuckoo call, to come immediately to this place. He would also call the gopis by imitating the cuckoo’s call. The gopis, upon hearing it, would sneak out of their houses in the middle of the night and hurry to meet Him. So like this Krishna enjoyed His pastimes. Hari! Haribol!!

Parsau

This village is called Parsau. Here when Akrura was taking Krishna and Balaram to Mathura, the gopis, crying and weeping, came and blocking the road forced the chariot to halt. Krishna feeling pained at seeing their distress climbed down and consoling them promised He would return safely and that it would surely be either tomorrow or the day after

tomorrow. In Vraja, parsau means day after tomorrow. So because Krishna made a promise here that He would return the day after tomorrow this village got its name. Haribol!

Chatravan

This place Chatravan is the place where Krishna used to proclaim that He was the king of Vrindavan. He used to also have a white umbrella, which is a symbol of royalty for the Yadu and Vrishni dynasties. He told the cowherd boys to go and inform all the gopis that they must stop coming here taking all the fruits and flowers that rightfully belong to the king. If they continued to do so they would be punished. This happened here in Chatravan. Hare Krishna!

Umerao

Here all the gopis proclaimed Srimati Radharani to be the Queen of Vrindavan and that as yet She has not chosen a king. So any rascal who proclaims to be the king but who has not been chosen by the queen must be caught and chastised. The gopis, hearing of Krishna's boasting that He was the king of Vrindavan, got together many thousands of gopis and capturing Krishna and His friends brought them to Srimati Radhika and forced Krishna to bow down to the lotus feet of Srimati Radhika. Umerao means monarch and here Srimati Radhika became the monarch over Krishna, thus this place is called Umerao. Haribol!

Khadirvan

Now we are in Khadirvan. This name is taken from Khaira. Khaira means to chase or pursue. When the demon Vatsasura assumed the shape of a calf intending to kill Krishna and Balaram, the two brothers pursued him through this place before catching and killing him. Here too is the bhajan place of Lokanatha Goswami and also in this forest are many, many mimosa gum plants Hare Krishna!

Baithan

This place is called Baithan. Whenever there were any problems concerning Krishna. Nanda Baba, Upananda and all the senior Vrajabhasis used to meet here and solve whatever difficulties that may have arisen at the time. Haribol!

Charan Pahari

This range of low lying rocks is called Charan Pahari. We will now all go see and give our obeisances here to Krishna's lotus feet imprints along with some of his cows. The sound Of Krishna's transcendental flute caused the rocks to melt. Hare Krishna!

Kosi

Now we are at Kosi. What is the meaning of Kosi? Kosi is taken from the Sanskrit words kah asi, which means who are you? This was the answer Srimati Radhika gave Krishna when he came once to see Her. Sometimes at night Krishna would be coming from this direction on His way to Nandagaon and He would pass by Srimati Radharani's house. But due to the ever present vigilance of Jatila and Kutila, Krishna would be unable to call to Her, so He would make various noises with His hands, mouth, and fingers to attract Srimati Radharani's attention.

Hearing these noises She would come to the window and say, "Who are you?" Krishna softly would reply, "It is Hari". She would answer, "Hari?" In Sanskrit hari mean lion. So Srimati Radhika would reply, "We do not need any lion here at the moment. What do you want to do, eat us? Better you go back into the jungle where you belong." Krishna would say, "No, no I am not that hari, I am Sri Hari." She would reply, "Srehari you say?" Srehari is

another name for monkey and so She would tell Krishna, “Isn’t it past your bedtime, monkeys must go to bed early at night so they can be a nuisance and pester everybody during the daytime. Monkeys are always causing mischief, stealing butter and fruits and breaking things all the time. No! No! It is better you go back to your home and go to sleep.” Krishna then said, “No, no, no. I am not that kind of srehari. Actually, I am Shyamasundara.” Another meaning for Shyamasundara is fresh blackish rain clouds. So Srimati Radharani answered, “What do we need rain for at this time? All this will do is put out are fires and we need them to boil the fresh cow milk that we have. If you must rain somewhere, better you go do it far away from here in a desert someplace! I am sure your water will be useful there.” Krishna then said, “No I am not that Shyamasundara, I am Cakri.” This is another name for Krishna who holds the cakra, but cakri can also mean potter. Whenever there is a marriage the potter makes many, big, earthen pots for cooking large amounts of food for the guests. So Srimati Radharani told Krishna, “We have no need for a potter here. No one is getting married. Best you look elsewhere for a wedding to sell your pots.” Krishna replied, “I am not that kind of cakri. Don’t you know me? I am Madhusudan.” Now madhusudan can also mean bumblebee and Srimati Radhika quickly used Her wit and retorted, “I am sorry, Mr. Bee, but all the flowers are asleep for the night. You will not be collecting any honey here.” Krishna then stopping all pretenses of disguise and wit finally answered, “It is me, Krishna.” But She knowing that Krishna can also be the name of a black snake told him, “You are dangerous, you have come here to bite us, we do not like snakes around here. Please go away at once.” In this way Srimati Radharani and Krishna enacted their pastimes. Whatever Krishna would say, She would cut it up and make a joke out of it. Thus increasing their transcendental pleasure.

These are just a few of the millions of pastimes that they performed in these places and they are still being continuously enacted eternally. Gaura Premanandi!! Haribol!

Paigram

At this place Nanda Baba and Krishna used to milk the cows. Pai means to milk and thus this place is called Paigram. Hare Krishna!

Kharaut

This village is the place where once Balaram concerned about His younger brother who had killed so many demons, asked Krishna if He was alright. Kharaut means are you well and so this name was given to this place. Haribol!

Sheshsayi

At this place Krishna proclaimed to the gopis that He was Shesh Bhagavan, and that He sleeps on the bed of Ananta. The gopis immediately challenging Him demanded that He back up his boasts by showing them. Krishna then called Anantadeva who came to this kunda. Krishna took His seat upon him and the gopis saw that Krishna was indeed what He claimed Hari! Haribol!

Khelanvan

We have now arrived at Khelanvan it is full of esoteric meaning. When Krishna left for Mathura, Srimati Radharani was looking all over Vraja for Him. She went from one village to another. She went to all the twelve sacred forests, still She could not find Krishna anywhere. Finally She came here to Khelanvan. As She was coming, She was telling Lalita devi, “I looked everywhere for your friend, but I could not find Him. Maybe He is in Khelanvan playing because He used to love to play there. Come let us go there.”

Then Srimati Radhika called Vishaka saying, “Yamuna devi let us go, I want to see where Krishna is”. Yamuna devi said, “Don’t you see Krishna is playing with His hands outspread in the middle of these blue lotuses in my waters.” Srimati Radharani said, “Is that so?” Taking Vishaka’s hand, She jumped into the Yamuna. Yamuna devi is Surya the sun god’s daughter, so suddenly they both found themselves on the planet of the sun. Surya began to ask Her why was She lamenting so much, because the person She was looking for was right there. Yamuna devi then told her father not to make the mistake of thinking that by his power he could alleviate their mood of separation. Like when on the night of rasa lila Krishna had disappeared and caused Radharani and all the sakhis much consternation. Then when Krishna assumed His four handed Vishnu form just to make us forget this feeling of separation, we completely disregarded it and only asked for our beloved Shyamasundar. But He was not able to maintain that Vishnu form any longer in the presence of Srimati Radharani’s love and was forced to again manifest His two-armed Krishna form. So like this you can see that here simultaneously is existing the mood of separation as well as the ecstasy of reunion. Gaura Premanandi!

Ram Ghat

Now we are at the place of Balaram’s pastime called Ram Ghat. When Krishna was in Mathura, He refused to come to Vraja. Even after repeated requests, He still would not come. So Lord Balaram told Him there was not a single person as cruel as Him in this whole world. He said, “You are very cruel, My brother. You are traveling all over this earth. You are going to Hastinapura, Mithila, to the Madras provinces, even to the heavenly planets, and still you cannot make the trip to Vraja. Even if you do not want to stay, at least You can go and see Your father and mother and find out how they are doing. Is there anybody that can just totally forget His parents? And what about Your friends and the gopis? They are all waiting desperately to see You. You’re not just going to turn Your back on those that love You? You are the only person that I have ever seen with such peculiar habits. Come, My brother, let both of Us go to Vraja and see Our parents and meet with all Our friends and girlfriends. Let Us go at once.”

Krishna, hearing the words of His brother, broke down and crying said, “It is true, it is a fact. There is nobody more capricious or ungrateful than Me. What can I do? My heart is just filled with capriciousness. I do not want to be ungrateful to those who have loved Me and taken such good care of Me, but I cannot help it.” Talking like that to His brother Balaram, Lord Krishna fell down on the ground unconscious. At this time Balaram decided that even if Krishna would not go, He would go. Leaving Krishna in Dvaraka, He came to this place Rama Ghat.

When Lord Balaram arrived in Vraja, He met with His mother and father, Yashodamayi and Nanda Baba and His cowherd friends, and the residents of Vraja and all the gopis.

There are two classes of gopis: mother class and sakhi class. The mother classes are the older gopis who feel the mood of vatsalya rasa towards Krishna and Balaram. The sakhi class are those gopis that feel that they are the beloved of either Krishna or Balaram in the mood of madhurya. There are five types of sakhis: nitya sakhis, prana sakhis, priya sakhis and param prestha sakhis. Many of them are attracted to Krishna only in madhurya rasa, and many of them are attracted to Balaram only in madhurya rasa. The factual etiquette is that those gopis attached to Krishna in the mood of madhurya rasa would be attached to Balaram always in the mood of friendship only. And those gopis who were attached to Balaram in the mood of madhurya rasa would be attached to Krishna in the mood of friendship only. It is not possible for any gopi to be attracted to both Krishna and Balaram in the mood of madhurya rasa.

At that time Lord Balaram made a solemn promise to the gopis who were attracted to Krishna that He would in the future bring Krishna to them. Then Balaramji, assembling His

own gopis, danced rasa lila here at Rama Ghat to His full satisfaction, while the gopis attracted to Krishna watched in appreciation from a distance.

Actually many people wonder why is Balaram performing the rasa dance? This has already been explained very nicely in the Caitanya Bhagavat. Balaram is the Supreme Lord. The only difference between Balaram and Krishna is just in the color of their complexion. Other than that there is no difference. They are both the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

After performing the rasa dance, Balaram and His gopis became enchanted by a marvelous scent. The demigod in charge of the ocean, Varuna, sent his daughter Varuni in the form of liquid honey which flowed from the hollow of the trees. The sweet smell of this liquid honey made the whole forest aromatic. Captivated by its allure, Balaramji and His gopis drank the honey which was like the nectar of the soma drink.

After drinking this delicious ambrosial beverage, Balaramji and the gopis became thirsty. Lord Balaram requested Yamuna devi to come so that they could refresh by drinking her waters and enjoying water sports. But Yamuna devi, not truly understanding Lord Balaram's exalted position as Jagadiswar, the Lord of the universe that maintains everyone, refused to come. When Yamuna devi refused to come, Lord Balaram became very angry. With His plough He ploughed a path, and forcibly brought Yamuna here by His irresistible power.

Actually the Yamuna was flowing straight from Vrindavan to Mathura, but because of Lord Balaram, she began flowing in the wrong direction and became curved. When Yamuna devi saw the power of Lord Balaram, she realized that she had made an offense. She came forward in person and fell at His lotus feet begging His forgiveness with choice prayers.

Yamuna devi has two manifestations. One as the wife of the ocean and the other is her manifestation of the river Yamuna, which is very dear to Krishna. Yamuna devi is an expansion of Vishaka devi and only a partial manifestation of Vishaka devi is the river Yamuna. One must always understand these details in the proper perspective, otherwise one will be unable to factually comprehend the true significance of these pastimes.

Let us astutely analyze the situation. Lord Balaram forced the Yamuna river which is a partial expansion of Vishaka devi, to render him service. He did not force Vishaka devi, to the contrary, that would be rasabhasa, then there would be a wrong exchange of rasas because Vishaka devi is one of Krishna's beloved gopis. Only Krishna can be her Lord and no other can ever execute that authority. The same exact rule applies to the gopis attached to Balaram.

After hearing the choice prayers of Yamuna devi, Balaram became pleased and forgave her. Then He and His gopis quenched their thirst in her excellent waters and enjoyed many water sports. Now let us give our full obeisances to this spot, Rama Ghat. Begging for Lord Balaram to always forgive us like He did Yamuna devi, let us take this water upon our heads. Jaya Baladeva! Hari! Haribol!!

Akshaya Vat

Now we are at a very ancient site. This big huge banyan tree is called Aksaya Vat. This tree actually had darsan of Krishna five thousand years ago. Previously the Yamuna was very, very wide, even her tributary and streams were large and broad. Krishna would come here to graze the cows with His friends. They used to hang their tiffin boxes on the branches of this tree. They would play water sports in the Yamuna and drink her water. After taking bath they would sit down under the shade of this big, huge banyan tree. So in the very nice shade here Krishna and all His friends would sit down and take prasad together.

Immediately surrounding Krishna would be His eight intimate friends. Surrounding them were the sixteen primary friends. Then the thirty-two principal friends. Then the sixty-four associate friends, and so forth and so on until literally thousands and thousands of His cowherd friends sat around Him. The wonderful thing was that every single cowherd boy saw

Krishna sitting only near him and that Krishna would look at him and smile or laugh. In this way they all enjoyed very nicely. So now we shall enter the Munjatavi. Hare Krishna!

Munjatavi

This forest that we are now in is called Munjatavi. After eating and enjoying prasada the cowherd boys would rest. Now the cows were grazing very nearby and when one patch of fresh green grass and clover was eaten they would move on to another patch. Gradually they had moved so far away while grazing that they could not see Krishna any longer. They had entered into the Munjatavi which is inside a very big forest, called Isikatavi. The cowherd boys noticing that the cows were no longer visible jumped up and ran after them without even telling Krishna as they usually did. By following the signs of the cow's hoof-prints, fresh cow dung, and patches of grass that were eaten, they were able to track the cows into this extremely dense and thick forest. When they went in and found their cows, they became so perplexed that they could not find their way out again.

At that time, one of Kamsa's demons, Vyomasura, thinking that Krishna and Balaram were in the forest too, saw this as an opportunity to get rid of the two Lords, both at the same time. So he set fire to the forest. Now the Mungavan forest is not only very dense and thick, but extremely dry as well. When Vyomasura set it on fire in his feeble attempt to incinerate Krishna, the whole forest went up in flames in a matter of minutes. Then this demon turned into a strong breeze and blew on the flames so they would burn hotter and hotter. He blew the flames in such a way that the fire almost surrounded the cowherd boys and their cows.

The cows feeling intense discomfort from the heat began bellowing loudly and all of Krishna's cowherd friends began to panic. When the heat had become almost unbearable and a state of total desperation was in effect, all the boys cried out for Krishna, "O Krishna! O Krishna! Please come and save us! Krishna! Krishna! Please do not let this raging fire destroy us. O Krishna please help us!" Krishna, of course, heard their cries for He is never far away from His surrendered devotees. Krishna is always near to help and protects us, and never failing at once He came to save them from the danger.

Actually this pastime is full of symbolism and significance, there are a lot of things to learn from it. The living entities are like cows and the green grasses are like the objects of the senses, sound, smell, sight, taste, and touch. The living entity is surreptitiously enticed away from his constitutional position as loving servitor to the Supreme Lord, by the living entities' attachment to sense objects. Thus the living entity is trapped eternally in the raging forest fire of material existence, birth after birth after birth. Through all species of life in the upper and lower planetary systems, sometimes enjoying for thousands of years the heavenly planets and sometimes suffering for thousands of years in the hellish planets. Still in both conditions of life trapped in a material body and subjected to the three-fold miseries of old age disease and death.

Of course Krishna is very close by. As paramatma, Krishna is ever present within the core of every living entity's heart. But due to our forgetting Krishna, even though He never forgets us, we hurriedly run after these objects of the senses as if our lives depended upon it. We literally become the slaves of our senses. Even when, by some good fortune or by accumulation of pious activities or by the mercy of the Vaisnavas and saintly souls, we finally are united again with spiritual life, still we are not completely purified of our attachment to mundane material objects.

This means that even though we have voluntarily come to serve the Supreme Lord Krishna, we are still not able to give up our material desires and attachments. But Krishna, being extremely merciful, is very concerned about the living entities being destroyed by the raging fire of material existence. And as the paramatma He monitors each living entity's progress back home. When He sees that a living entity has the opportunity to come back to

Him, Krishna gives them His special mercy in the form of acute distress and problems in the material existence. This is just to remind the living entity not to forget Him. After being buffeted about and repeatedly burned and scorched by the raging fires of sense gratification, if we call out sincerely to our gurudev and to Krishna, then we will be rescued and we will go back again to the right path as loving servitors of the Supreme Lord.

When the cows started bellowing and the cowherd boys started calling Krishna, He immediately came to their rescue. He told all the cowherd boys to close their eyes because last time when He had eaten some earth, they told his mother. When He went home, His mother was angry with him and made Him open His mouth to see. So this time when Krishna swallowed the whole forest fire in an instant He was taking no chances of getting Mother Yashoda upset. Also he did not want to upset His friends who might faint or become ill at the shock of seeing Him swallow such a raging fire. As their eyes were closed the cowherd boys started thinking that Krishna was going to save them by chanting mantras and that since one should not chant mantras in front of anyone that is why He told us to close our eyes.

Seconds later when Krishna told them they could open their eyes, they saw to their amazement that everything was exactly as it was before. They were all sitting under this banyan tree as they were before in circles of eight, sixteen, thirty-two and so forth around Krishna taking prasad. All the cows were close by grazing peacefully and the raging forest fire that they had been trapped in had just vanished. The boys sat astounded for a moment or two. Then realizing that they were safe and once again close to Krishna, they clapped their hands gleefully and blowing their buffalo horns loudly began to cheer Krishna jubilantly. These pastimes took place here.

So we can see that to be saved from the raging forest fire of material existence, one must call out to the spiritual master and Krishna. The spiritual master is the bona fide representative of the Supreme Lord. Thus empowered by Krishna, he is equally competent to relieve his devotee of all distresses. As soon as anyone calls out to the spiritual master or Krishna sincerely, then that fortunate individual is immediately rescued and freed from all dangers. It is only by the medium of the spiritual master that Krishna is able to hear the call of a living entity. This is why the importance of a bona fide guru from a bona fide parampara in a bona fide sampradaya is essential. Nothing can manifest properly without the essential ingredients necessary to make it manifest properly. Similarly speaking, spiritual attainment can factually not be received without the mercy of a bona fide spiritual master because the Supreme Lord does not recognize any living entity that does not follow this procedure.

The Supreme Lord Krishna and His brother Balaram followed this principle implicitly. They accepted as their guru, Sandipani Muni and went to live in his ashram. They fully observed the rules as strict brahmacaris, serving their guru humbly with love and devotion. By receiving knowledge and instruction from him and by serving him faithfully, both Lord Krishna and Lord Balaram satisfied their guru Sandipani Muni in all respects. Duly initiated by him, They received the twice born status.

So if the Supreme Lord accepted the guru disciple relationship as an authorized and bona fide process, then one should with great enthusiasm, humility and unflinching obedience always serve Sri Gurudev with love and devotion. Because only by Sri Gurudev's mercy can we become eligible to receive the mercy of Krishna. And this mercy is so powerful and potent that even at the moment of death if we can remember Sri Gurudev and Krishna. Then Krishna will surely come to our aid. Never, never forget Krishna. Always remember it is never too late to call out to him for help, even if it is at the moment of death. Gaura Premanandi! Haribol!!

Tapovan

This place is called Tapovan. Here the gopis worshipped Katyayani devi and prayed to her that they would get Krishna as their husband. They performed much tapasya here and that is why this place is called Tapovan from the word tapasya. Hare Krishna!

Chir Ghat

Now we are at a very auspicious place called Chir Ghat. This is where Krishna stole the clothes of the unmarried gopis while they were taking bath to purify for the worship of Katyayani. Krishna climbed up a tree with the stolen clothes, requesting the gopis to come one at a time to claim them. The gopis were extremely chaste and shy and at first did not want to come. But at last surrendering everything to Krishna including their pride, they came to Him in humility and loving devotion. Now we shall also give our humble obeisances to this place. Remembering this pastime, we will pray to the lotus feet of the gopis that we may receive even one drop of the mercy that is here. Haribol!

Baigram

Now we have arrived at Baigram. Bai means fear. Here Nanda Maharaja had a terrible fright. One day very early in the morning, Nanda Baba went to the Yamuna to take bath with some of his associates. The day before was ekadashi and they had all observed full fasting and now it was the proper time to take bath. Somehow it was calculated wrongly and Nanda Baba entered the waters of the Yamuna too early at a time that was inauspicious. The servants of Varunadev captured him and took him away to their underwater abode. As Nanda Maharaja was being dragged under the waters, he called out loudly for Krishna and Balaram to save him. The two Lords understanding the hearts and minds of all living entities went immediately to the abode of Varuna and demanded the release of their father. Varuna apologized profusely as he was releasing Nanda Maharaja for the gross offense that one of his servants had made by arresting the father of the Supreme Lord. Actually, in his heart Varuna was dancing in ecstasy at the supreme good fortune of having the opportunity to see both Krishna and Balaram face to face. Varuna then worshipped the two Lords to Their satisfaction and distributed suitable gifts befitting Their position. Then after accepting Varunadeva's humble obeisances, They took their father back to Vraja. So because Nanda Maharaja had a frightful experience here, this place is known as Baigaon.

Nanda Ghat

This ghat is called Nanda Ghat. This is where Nanda Baba was abducted by a servant of Varuna late one night. Jiva Goswami spent some time here in this area. In fact, for sometime he accepted residence in a vacant crocodile hole here. The reasons how and why Srila Jiva Goswami spent time here is very interesting. Listen as I will now relate.

When Rupa Goswami was in Vrindavan writing his Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu, Jiva Goswami was there with him attending to his needs and serving his uncle in various capacities. One day, Jiva Goswami was fanning Sri Rupa while he was writing. It was hot and the air was thick and heavy. And although Sri Rupa did not ask to be fanned, Jiva Goswami was always looking for ways to please and serve his guru. Just then Vallabhacarya, a very old sadhu came to visit Sri Rupa.

He was very old. He was senior to Caitanya Mahaprabhu, so he was much senior to Sri Rupa Goswami. Sri Rupa got up at once and, after giving his dandavats, offered him his seat with all due respect. Vallabhacarya asked what book was he writing and Sri Rupa replied that he was writing Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu. Vallabhacarya asked to look at it, so Sri Rupa handed it to him. Vallabhacarya took it from him and read the mangalacaran, the first sloka

which begins akhila rasamrita murti. He liked the book, but he felt that some corrections were required. Sri Rupa, on hearing this, told him to please take it and correct it as he saw fit. Then excusing himself went to take bath at the Yamuna.

During the whole conversation, Jiva Goswami had been standing there watching. When Sri Rupa had gone to take bath, Vallabhacharya turned to him and asked him who he was. Jiva Goswami humbly replied that Srila Rupa Goswami was his guru and that he was there as his servant. At this time Jiva Goswami had finished his Sanskrit studies under the tutelage of Madhusudana Vacaspati who was in the same family as Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya in Benares.

Jiva Goswami had also received a lot of mercy from Lord Nityananda and after coming to Vrindavan he continued studying under the direct supervision of his uncles Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatan. As their conversation continued, Jiva Goswami questioned Vallabhacharya as to what discrepancies were there in Sri Rupa's Bhakti Rasanirita Sindhu that he found needed correcting. Vallabhacharya raised the question where in the scriptures are the names Stadika and Valli mentioned. Then he also raised some other questions regarding Sri Rupa's interpretation of certain mellows. Jiva Goswami defeated and rejected each and every one of Vallabhacharya's arguments and confirmed and established in an exemplary manner the excellency of Sri Rupa's erudition. This astounding display of scholarship coming from a young boy totally confounded Vallabhacharya. He began to consider that if this young boy who was just a disciple could so easily defeat all my arguments, then what to say of his guru. Vallabhacharya went to the Yamuna, and falling at Rupa Goswami's feet, begged his forgiveness. Explaining that his eyes had been opened by the young Jiva, he said that it was just his eccentricity that caused him to act in this way. By observing his disciple, he could understand what a great personality Sri Rupa was. Saying this, Vallabhacharya went on his way.

When Rupa Goswami returned after bathing in the Yamuna, he called Jiva Goswami to him and said, "Why for such a small thing did you make such a big story?" Vallabhacharya is a senior devotee to us. Besides, he did not mean any harm. Did not Mahaprabhu teach us to be more humble than a blade of grass, or be more tolerant than even a tree? Couldn't you be a little more tolerant for an old revered Vaisnava? If he wants to say something you should have let him say it. You are not worthy to be a servant of a servant of a servant of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Go back to your home! You are not fit to stay here."

When Jiva Goswami heard these words from his guru, he was thunderstruck. But following obediently his guru's instructions, he humbly offered his obeisances and sadly left Vrindavan. Factually speaking, Jiva Goswami was absolutely correct because he was defending the words and protecting the integrity of his guru. This is the prime duty of a disciple, to always establish and distribute the guru's teachings. So from his point of view, he was right. But nevertheless, Rupa Goswami would not accept his behavior.

When Jiva Goswami, following the order of his spiritual master, left Vrindavan, he headed east and crossing the Yamuna went to Baigaon and lived there. In those days many crocodiles used to build their homes on the banks of the Yamuna, and in one of their vacant and discarded holes, Jiva Goswami took residence. He did not eat, he did not sleep, and he did not go anywhere. He just cried and wept tears of bitter lamentation at being separated from his gurudev. The people of Vraja were amazed to see him performing such tapasya and they wondered who he could be.

One day Sanatan Goswami was passing through Baigaon. As soon as the people of Vraja saw him, they started calling Baba Goswami has come, Baba Goswami has come. Baba means elderly, and in fact, he was the eldest of the Goswamis. When the Vrajavasis saw him, they became very happy because just by the presence of saintly souls everything becomes auspicious and Sanatan Goswami was like an affectionate father to them.

As they ran up to him offering dandavats, they told how they have heard of the austerities he had performed while in association with Caitanyadeva, such as giving away a valuable blanket in exchange for an old castaway. And how in Jagannath Puri He was eating the food that even the cows and dogs had rejected. But they told him that these austerities were nothing compared to the tapasya that a newcomer to the area was performing in an old musty crocodile hole on the banks of the Yamuna. His whole bhajan consists of crying out, “Krishna! Krishna! Guru, guru! Rupa and Sanatan!” while shedding profuse tears.

Hearing this, Sanatan Goswami could understand that this person must be Jiva Goswami. He went immediately to the banks of the Yamuna. As soon as Jiva Goswami saw him, he tried to get up, but he was too weak so he just gave his dandavats directly from the ground. Sanatan Goswami lifted him up and embracing him said, “Come I am taking you back to Vrindavan.” But Jiva Goswami was too weak to walk, so he had to be carried all the way back to Vrindavan. Sometimes someone would leave some plain chapati dough for him and he would mix it with Yamuna water and just eat that. This caused ulcers in his stomach and further contributed to his poor condition.

When Sanatan Goswami arrived at Sri Rupa’s place in Vrindavan, he left Jiva Goswami outside. Going in, he began to talk strongly to Sri Rupa. Sanatan Goswami asked him, “What was their duty towards the living entities drowning in the material ocean?” Sri Rupa replied, “To save them.” Then Sanatan Goswami asked him, “Do you not have any compassion for the jivas in the world?” Sri Rupa replied, “Yes, of course I have compassion for them.” Then Sanatan Goswami said, “But you did not show any compassion to Jiva.” Hearing these words from his older brother, Sri Rupa realized his mistake and immediately went and embraced Jiva Goswami. Taking him inside, he saw to it that he was taken care of until he had fully recovered.

Many sahajiyas say that Rupa Goswami rejected Jiva Goswami, but this is an outright lie and they are only asses and fools to say this. Jiva Goswami displayed the characteristics of a perfect disciple. And because Rupa Goswami saw Jiva as an extension of his own self, his own person, he could take the liberty to say things strongly in certain situations on the external level, but inside on the internal level there was never any rejection in Sri Rupa’s heart. They were one soul and one heart. Hare Krishna!!

Vatsavan

The place that we are now in is called Vatsavan. This is where Krishna killed the demon Vatsasura, who had come disguised in the form of a calf to kill him and his elder brother Lord Balaram. Here also was the pastime where Lord Balaram killed the demon Pralambasura, who had taken on the form of one of the cowherd friends of Krishna while they were playing. When Krishna and Balaram detected that a demon was among them, Krishna put his arm around the demon’s shoulder saying, “Now you will stay with me and I will always stay with you, even if you want to go I will not let you.” So they started playing a game where they divided themselves into two groups with Krishna on one side and Balaram on the other. The condition was that whichever side won would become the riders and the side that lost would have to become the horses and carry them. So Krishna’s side lost. At that time Krishna with his arm still encircling the demon handed him over to Lord Balaram whose side had won. Lord Balaram took him from Krishna and hopped upon the demon’s back. Immediately, the demon bolted with the speed of wind far away into the distance. Krishna then gave his brother a secret sign, and Balaram prepared himself. At that time the demon flew up into the air and took on a huge horrible and terrifying form. But no matter how big he became, Balaram’s weight felt like it was going to crush him. The demon twisted and turned trying to dislodge him off his back. Then Lord Balaram simply hit the demon’s head with his two fists and cracked it open like a coconut and the demon crashed down to the ground dead. So this took

place here and now let us all give our humble obeisances to this place and beg Balaramji for his causeless mercy.

Here also is where the cowherd boys use to wrestle with each other. One time Krishna was bragging in front of the gopis how He had valiantly completely defeated Sridam. Then Krishna went further saying, "In fact I defeated all the strongest cowherd boys. Nobody is as strong as I am." The gopis looked at Him and laughing said, "You are just a big liar. You are not telling the truth. We have already heard that Sridam defeated you ten times in succession. So just stop all your bragging. We know it is all lies."

Krishna still insisted that he was the strongest. The gopis challenged Him that if he could defeat the strongest among them, then they would agree that he was a good fighter. If he could not, then he would have to never again come around them and bother them with his empty boasting.

So Lalita devi took Srimati Radharani and tied Her hair and pulled Her sari up tight and tucked it into Her waist, getting Her ready to wrestle. But when they began, Krishna naturally, quite easily caught hold of Srimati Radharani and threw Her effortlessly to the ground. Then all the gopis cheered amongst much laughter. So these are just some of the radiantly wonderful pastimes that took place here. Hari! Haribol!!

Parikham

This place called Parikham is where Brahma tried to test Krishna. Pariksha means to test. When Krishna killed the demon Aghasura, Brahma was flabbergasted when he saw the atma from the demon enter the feet of Krishna. Seeing this in wonder and amazement, Brahma stole away Krishna's cowherd friends and cows to test His potency. It was extremely perplexing for Brahma to accept how this little cowherd boy could act so wonderfully He wanted to test and see if Krishna really was the Supreme Lord as he had been informed. So coming from the word pariksha is this place called Parikham. Hare Krishna!

Chaumuhan

Now we are at Chaumuhan. Chaumuhan means four heads. After Brahma had been confused and totally befuddled by Krishna's superior mystic potencies, he realized that he had made a grievous offense. Falling down like a stick, Brahma placed his four heads in the dust at the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, then weeping began offering choice prayers from his four mouths. Some of the cowherd boys seeing Brahma for the first time began laughing asking Krishna who is this with four heads. So this place got to be called Chaumuhan, from the four heads of Brahma. Haribol!

Sapauli

This place is where Krishna killed the snake demon, Aghasura who was the younger brother of Putana and Bakasura. He was sent by Kamsa to finish off Krishna and Balaram and get vengeance for the killing of his brother and sister. This demon was as big as a mountain and very long. But when Krishna saw all His cowherd friends fearlessly entering the demon's huge mouth depending on Him alone, Krishna also entered the mouth of this demon. Expanding Himself in the demon's throat, he caused the demon to suffocate and lose its life. Hare Krishna!

Bhadraavan

This is one of the twelve forests of Vraja. You must try to imagine how beautiful this forest was five thousand years ago when Krishna enjoyed His pastimes here. The cuckoos were constantly singing the sweetest of songs. The peacocks were dancing madly all over the

place. The parrots were chattering gaily. The tamal and kadamba trees were exuding the most fragrant of scents. This whole forest was busy in the activity of being a beautiful place for Krishna to enjoy. Haribol!

Bhandirvan

Now we have come to Bhandirvan. This is the place of the rasamaya and rasamayi. One is the hero, the possessor of all the different mellows, and the other is the possessor of all the emotional sentiments that make up a heroine. We must be cautious and take great care that we do not see this in a mundane material way. Actually there is no such thing as rasa in this material world. What the rhetorical wranglers and speculative philosophers have attributed to be rasa is just lowdown lust.

There is a very nice description by Srila Jayadeva Goswami, where he talks about when Lord Krishna was an infant and Srimati Radharani, the daughter of King Vrishabanu was also very young. Some of these informations are also available in the Brahma Vaivarta Purana. Once when Nanda Maharaja was out with Krishna grazing the cows they came here. Suddenly the sky was overcast with dark billowing rain clouds and the rumbling roar of thunder could be heard in the distance. Nanda Maharaja was in a dilemma. He could see that a torrential thunderstorm was approaching and he did not want Krishna to get wet and catch cold. But if he left to take him home, what would happen to the cows? By the time he return, the cows would be scattered everywhere. Just then he saw Srimati Radharani passing by not far away. He called out to Her saying, "O my dear sweet Radharani. I see you are going home. Please take little Krishna along with you or else I am afraid He will catch cold from the rain that is surely coming." Little Srimati Radhika agreed and Nanda Maharaja embraced his son fondly and bid Him farewell. Both Srimati Radharani and Krishna were about four years old at the time and taking each others hand they walked together for some distance and where they went and what they did we will find out when we go there next. Hari! Haribol!!

Bhandirvat

Now we have arrived at Bhandirvat. Can you realize or even imagine how sacred this place is? This is the place where Srimati Radhika and Krishna were married. Listen attentively as I relate the lila. As soon as they reached the banks of the Yamuna, looking at each other smiling, they took the form of a young boy of fifteen or sixteen and a young girl of thirteen or fourteen.

This of course is not possible for us to do. When we are young, we are just young, and when we get old we must stay old. It is not possible for us to change our bodily formations and corresponding mentalities except by the normal human material growth process. But we are not speaking about just normal human beings. We are eloquently elucidating upon the pristine pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Krishna and His hladini shakti, His highest internal potency which is Srimati Radharani. For them anything and everything is possible.

As soon as they transformed themselves, Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva appeared along with Narada Muni and a wonderful wedding ceremony took place between Srimati Radharani and Krishna. Kettledrums sounded and flower petals fell from the sky as Lord Krishna and His beloved Srimati Radharani lovingly exchanged flower garlands and the gandharva marriage was consummated. These radiant pastimes all happened here in this place.

Another nice pastime took place here. Malarksetra or wrestling was enacted. Krishna's friends dressed Him as a wrestler and Srimati Radhika's girlfriends dressed Her as a wrestler. Then They engaged in a wonderful wrestling match. But be extremely careful that you do not think of Their wrestling as an ordinary exhibition of physical prowess. That would be

offensive and unforgivable. The wrestling between Srimati Radharani and Krishna was not a test of strength or show of power. It was a physical declaration and exhibition of eternal love. Each one trying to increase the other's love with love. Just reflect on how transcendently marvelous this must be, to fight to increase the other's love with love. What an amazing and fascinating revelation.

So I see that some of you were not aware that Srimati Radharani and Krishna were actually married. It was totally transcendental and extremely esoteric in every way and at the time the entire earth as well as the upper and lower planetary systems were all permeated with auspiciousness.

As related before, as soon as young Srimati Radhika and Krishna arrived at the banks of the Yamuna they stood under this banyan tree and changed into a young couple in their teens. At this time Lalita devi and Vishaka and Citra and the sakhis and manjaris came and dressed them up very beautifully. Then Lord Brahma was flying overhead after having performed a yagna in Pushkar. Seeing this extraordinary display of heavenly beauty by the wonderful couple, very much captivated, he alighted and went to pay his humble obeisances. After doing so he found that Lalita devi had prepared a seat for him and he was asked to recite the Vedas. So Brahma sat down and began reciting the four Vedas from his four mouths bowing his four heads in reverence.

At this time Lord Shiva appeared along with Narada Muni. Then Brahma married Krishna and Srimati Radharani by the gandharva method, which is the exchange of flower garlands and the chanting of Vedic mantra. At this time flower petals fell from the sky and all over the upper planetary systems auspicious signs and vibrations could be perceived. The Siddhas on their planet began composing and chanting choice prayers to the Supreme Lord and the celestial singer the Gandharvas began singing wonderful songs glorifying the Supreme Lord. The demigods became overwhelmed with joy, the inhabitants of the heavenly planets began to dance in ecstasy as the sound of kettledrums, and bugle horns reverberated throughout the three worlds.

Immediately after the marriage was performed everyone and everything vanished. Krishna and Srimati Radharani returned to their previous childish forms and taking each others hand they continued on their way to Her father, King Vrishabhvanu's palace. Gaura Premanadi!! Hari! Haribol!!

Venu Kup

Many people especially the women come here. Those who are barren and those who are not having any sons. They come here, and making a vow, take a little bit of cow dung and bathe with the waters from Venu Kup pray to have a son, and usually they are blessed with one. Of course we have not come here with the same intention, that is only fruitive desire to have a son and this and that. Nevertheless this has been going on for a long time and women who were considered barren have been having children from bathing with the water here at Venu Kup where we will now take acaman and drink the waters also. Hare Krishna!

Bansivat

Now we are in Bansivat. There is a very tall banyan tree here. Wherever there was a tall tree in a high place, Krishna would climb up that tree and play the flute to call the grazing cows. Krishna also performed rasa lila dance here. There are many places where Krishna performed rasa lila, but amongst them all this place of Bansivat is one of the main ones.

Another reason why this place is very important is because the day before Krishna left for Mathura, He promised Sridam that he would come right back. Sridam taking Krishna's word said, "Alright when you go, I will wait for you right here and I will not leave this place until I

see you return. But if you take too long I will simply give up my body not caring to remain alive without you.” Previously the Yamuna flowed very nicely right past this spot, and Sridam told Krishna that he would jump into the Yamuna and give up his body. Now Sridam was the brother of Srimati Radharani and was extremely dear to Krishna. So Krishna just pacified him saying, “Do not worry. I will definitely come back tomorrow, and if not tomorrow, certainly by the day after tomorrow. No later than that.” So Sridam waited one day, two days, three days, four days and still no sign of Krishna. He waited one week, two weeks, three weeks, four weeks and still Krishna did not come. This went on and on and on and on and still Sridam waited for Krishna but Krishna did not come. So here now we see a deity of Sridam and he is still waiting for Krishna in acute separation hoping that He will soon come.

When Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to Vrindavan, He came this way. At this spot he called out, “Sridam!” to the deity form and embraced it telling him that he had come back. Also Nityananda Prabhu and Advaitacarya came to this spot and also the Goswamis spent some time here doing bhajan. So let us pay our dandavats to this place and to Sridam Prabhu and then let us proceed on our parikrama. Hari! Haribol!

Matvan

This place Matvan is where the people here use to make pots. Mat means pot and so this village which use to make all the clay pots for Brahmanas, wedding ceremonies and many other things. Hare Krishna!

Baelvan

Lakshmi devi came here to do tapasya, desiring to participate in the rasa dance. Krishna told Lakshmi devi it was not possible for her to be admitted into the mellow of rasa lila in her present condition and status. Krishna told her that first she must be born as a gopi and then in the line of gopis, she would be allowed to enter the rasa dance. Lakshmi devi is the goddess of fortune and she performed tapasya for many, many years in order to be able to enter into the arena of rasa lila. But still Krishna told her she was not eligible to enter rasa lila until she was able to have the supreme good fortune of being born as a gopi in Vraja. So this excellent example of etiquette can give an astute and erudite devotee an understanding of how extremely elevated the position of the gopis truly is. Hari! Haribol!

Mana Sarovara

The place that we have just arrived at is called Mana Sarovara. Maan as you know is very transcendental. Maan means anger which is born from extreme love and possessiveness for the lover. But this maan cannot be compared to the materialistic conceptions that a male and a female exhibit in a relationship. What they consider to be maan is nothing more than simply mundane low down lust. But we are not talking about lust, we are talking about maan. This maan that we are talking about is even revealed within the scriptures. For example in the Srimad Bhagavatam we see that Kaikeyi did maan during the pastime of Lord Ramacandra. To make her come out of that mood of maan, Dasarath had to give up his life. But Srimati Radharani’s maan is not this type. When she is in maan, all the time She feels increasing ecstasy. She feels more and more the sublimest of mellows. She is more and more intoxicated by divine bliss. There is a world of difference between Srimati Radharani’s maan and the maan of this material world, which is mere lust. This place is therefore called Mana Sarovar because Srimati Radharani came here in this mood of maan.

Srimati Radharani is strongly vama, which means left winger. If She should at any time become subservient to Krishna’s mood, then the conjugal exchanges between them would be unbalanced and not exude that delicious taste of rasa that gives them both such exultation

and satisfaction. Left winger means the beloved feels that the lover belongs entirely to her. She is able to feel independent from Krishna at times, but She always thinks He is Her sole property.

During the rasa dance one time Srimati Radhika was showing a very favorable attitude to Krishna. She told Him that Her legs were a little fatigued so if He wanted to carry Her anywhere He liked it was quite alright with Her. When Krishna heard this, He was immediately intrigued and pondered thinking, “My Radhe is a left winger. She never gives so easily what I desire even when She wishes to. How come She has become so submissive? I wonder what She is up too.” Krishna is not as attracted to Srimati Radhika in this mood of submissiveness, thus the taste of rasa is not as exquisite and succulent for him. The Goswami’s have described that once during rasa lila Srimati Radharani became very insulted at the different qualities of gopis present. It seems that there were some gopis included that She did not feel were internally qualified to associate on the same level as She and Her sakhis. Anyway She left in a huff of maan, and Krishna, immediately missing Her presence, went chasing behind Her. She however totally ignored all His supplications and Krishna’s attempts at cleverness and wit were completely futile. She was so angry in this mood of maan that She kept Her face turned away and wouldn’t even look at Him. Finally in desperation Krishna threw Himself down at Srimati Radharani’s lotus feet embracing them. When Krishna raised His head up to look at Her, there were red marks on His face head from the alta, the red dye that anointed Srimati Radhika’s lotus feet. Only at that time did Srimati Radharani deign to look at him with side long glances and half closed eyes, to see what he was doing.

This is maan, transforming into the change of maan. This is the very special quality of Krishna’s pastimes. That is why He has four qualities which are extraordinary above all other incarnations. One of these is lila vaishista or the uniqueness of His pastimes. Such pastimes as He performed with Srimati Radharani in the form of maan and in the form of maan banjan. Maan banjan means, where Krishna tries to break Srimati Radhika’s maan. These types of activities give the extraordinary uniqueness to Krishna’s pastimes.

In the material world, maan is always identical with confrontation and conflict. Here on earth, maan is simply the exploitation of one personality over another to establish or increase in oneself a value of worthiness. In the material conception one has to nullify completely the emotional stability of the other, but not so on the spiritual plane. On the spiritual platform when Krishna falls at the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani, His ecstasy quadruples madly in an exorbitant abandon of leaps and bound onto immeasurable heights of indescribable delights.

Srimati Radharani is Krishna’s hladini Shakti. That means She is the embodiment of happiness, bliss and ananda. Every single particles of Her being is completely saturated and filled with this bliss. Ever cell, every molecule, every atom of Her most worshipable self is pure spiritual bliss. Srimati Radharani is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna’s highest internal potency. How could She possibly be anything else other than the purest spiritual bliss?

Srimati Radharani’s girlfriends and sakhis are repeatedly beseeching Her to forget Her mood of maan. The gopis are both fearful and concerned that their Lord and lady might have difficulties in reconciliation. So they do everything in their power to facilitate reunion. Sometimes they plead with Her, sometimes they even threaten Her, depending on how unrelenting Srimati Radhika has become towards Krishna’s advances. While the gopis are engaged in those activities the cowherd boy friends of Krishna, like Sridam, Sudam, Madhu Mangal and others would make funny faces to try to get Srimati Radhika to laugh or smile and break Her mood of maan.

While you are minutely reflecting over all these considerations, remember that with spiritual maan, the main impetus and primary aim of all these activities is solely to increase and enhance Krishna’s ecstasy and joy. This is actually the essence of bhakti yoga, to always

seek to increase the pleasure and satisfaction of the Supreme Lord through our devotional service. Jay, Jay Sri Radhe! Jay, Jay Sri Radhe!! Jay, Jay Sri Radhe! Shyam!!!

Lohavan

Now we are at Lohavan. Here Krishna killed a demon called Lohajunga. There is a big pond here where Krishna us to take a boat and row the gopis across. Also many times Krishna was herding the cows here.

Dauji

Now we have arrived at Lord Balaram's place called Dauji. Dauji is an affectionate name for Balaram meaning elder brother. This Deity was installed in dedication to Him being elder to Krishna. During the Muslim invasions, He was hidden in this kund called Kshira Sagara, or ocean of milk, which is next to here. It is said that in Vrindavan, there is Govindadeva, in Mathura, Keshavadeva, in Govardhan, Harideva and here in Gokula, Dauji, Baladev. Vrajanabha the great, grandson of Krishna from Dwaraka installed these four Deities, five thousand years ago.

All these places are very ancient, dating back thousands of years. Here Lord Balaram is in a blackish Deity form. The reason why Balaram is blackish is because He was so absorbed in thoughts of Krishna that gradually Krishna's complexion covered His own original golden complexion completely. Who is sitting behind Balaram? It is Revati devi. She is Lord Balaram's eternal consort in Dwaraka. When Lord Balaram appeared 500 years ago as Lord Nityananda to participate in Lord Caitanya's pastimes, Revati devi appeared as Lord Nityananda's wife, Jahnava devi. Some of you may be wondering why Revati devi is sitting behind and not next to her husband, Lord Balaram. There is a reason for this. In Vraja, Srimati Radharani is the only Queen. Here She is the most prominent personality and Queen to everyone. All other females must take a second position. This is why Jahnavi devi is sitting behind her Lord, because she does not wish to offend this etiquette. Now we will learn about the marriage of Lord Balaram.

Lord Balaram married Revati devi in Dwaraka. Revati devi was the daughter of King Raivata. After she came of marriageable age, he was looking for a suitable husband for her. But his search was in vain. He was not able to find anyone to give his daughter's hand in marriage. Now Raivata's search began in the Satya-yuga and almost at the end of Treta-yuga he still had not found a suitable husband for his daughter.

Finally as a last resort he went to Lord Brahma. Brahma told him that a suitable husband will appear at the end of Dvapara-yuga in Vraja and his name will be Balaram. Brahma also told Raivata that because his daughter was from Satya-yuga, she would be taller than Balaram. Another example of this is Mucukunda, who was also from Satya-yuga being a descendant of King Ikshvaku. When he was delivered by Lord Krishna after burning the asura Kalayavana to ashes, he came out of his mountain cave and discovered that human beings had degenerated to pigmy size by his standards. Even the trees were greatly reduced. Back then five thousand years ago, the average height of a man was about twelve feet. So you can imagine how strong the influence of Kali yuga must be. Now the average height of a man is only six feet tall. The further Kali yuga progresses, the more degraded the human species becomes.

Anyway to get back to the story. At the end of Dvapara-yuga Raivata came to Vraja and approached Lord Balaram to accept his daughter's hand in marriage. Balaram accepted his proposal and placing His plow on the shoulders of Revati devi pulled her down to the correct size to match His height

Lord Balaram is serving Krishna in every respect. Without the mercy of Dauji, the elder brother, it is not possible for one to attain Krishna's lotus feet. Lord Balaram serves Krishna in

all the different mellows, right from dasya all the way up to conjugal. To insure Krishna's pleasure and satisfaction, Lord Balaram expands as Vraja Mandala. He even expands as Krishna's personal possessions, His throne, crown, bed, ornaments, and clothes. Every single material thing that Krishna's uses is an expansion of Lord Balaram. So in this way Balaram is always serving Krishna in every way.

When Lord Balaram appeared in the pastimes of Lord Ramacandra as Laksmana, He had to undergo many unpalatable experiences. This was because as Laksmana, He had to execute many of Lord Ramacandra's orders against His own will. Many instances of this occurred. For example Lord Ramacandra requested Laksmana to take Sita devi to the forest and then just leave Her there. He did not really want to do it. It was too painful for Him, so He was hesitating. Lord Ramacandra seeing this, took His hand, placed it on Laksmana's head, and made Him swear that He would do it. Afterwards not wishing to break His oath, He was forced to leave Sita devi in the forest alone and unprotected. But it was quite against His will. Revolting in opposition to the order, Laksmana asked Lord Ramacandra, "What wrong has Sita devi committed?" Lord Ramacandra replied, "She maybe faultless, but this is what I require You to do."

There is another instance involving breaking an order given to Him by Lord Ramacandra. When Laksmana, Sita devi, and Lord Ramacandra were all living in exile in the forest, one day a beautiful golden deer appeared before Them. The deer was so wonderful that Sita devi desired it madly. She pleaded with Lord Ramacandra to get it for Her. Lord Ramacandra ran off to capture it for Her. But before going, He instructed Laksmana to stay with Sita devi and not leave Her for any reason.

The deer was actually the demon magician Marichi. He succeeded in drawing Lord Ramacandra far away from Sita devi and Laksmana. Using trickery, they were both made to believe that Lord Ramacandra was crying out saying, "Help Me Laksmana! Help me!" Naturally Laksmana wanted to help His brother, but He knew it was more important to follow His brother's order. But as soon as Sita devi saw that He was not going She immediately accused Laksmana of hoping that Lord Ramacandra would be destroyed so that He would finally be able to possess Her. Laksmana was shocked and horrified at Her false accusations. After putting a protective ring of fire around Her, He fled to search out Lord Rama. So these things stayed in His heart.

Another circumstance that caused Him pain was when Sita devi came back from Ashokavan in Lanka. All the monkey armies gathered to greet Her. Sugriva, Lasmana, Vibhishan, and Lord Rama were all standing together to receive Her. There was a tumultuous cry from the monkey army in jubilation. They were all waiting to see their mother, Sita devi return. But before She reached their camp, Lord Ramacandra had the palanquin stopped and requested Mother Sita to walk. Laksmana had to carry out that order and He did not want too. Although the reason Lord Ramacandra requested this was so that the monkeys could see their mother Sita, why should She have to walk just like any ordinary person? But nevertheless He had received an order and He had no choice but to carry it out.

When Sita devi finally walked to where Lord Ramacandra and Laksmana were standing, Lord Ramacandra told Her, "Actually we did not fight this war for Your sake as the cheers from the monkey army might imply. We fought this war in order to re-establish the glory of the Raghu Dynasty. So You have just come from the house of our enemy. You have stayed so long amongst the demons, we do not know exactly what Your position is. But I do not think I can take You back in this condition. So You are free to go anywhere you like."

Mother Sita was extremely upset to hear this. She said to Lord Rama, "Why did you not let Me know about this earlier. Then I could have taken poison and ended My life well before all this fighting, bloodshed, and waste of human life had taken place. It all could have been avoided."

Then Mother Sita turned to Laksmana and said, "Although I know I have offended You in many ways, I want to ask of You one last favor. I want You to light a wooden pyre. Please do this for Me as My last request. I believe it is because of My offenses to you that I have to suffer like this today. I remember the first time I offended You was as soon as I came to Ayodhya after getting married.

The very first night you were standing on the veranda waiting to carry out the slightest order and desire of Lord Rama. I had approached my Lord at that time hoping my presence would prompt you to leave, but you were not intimidated in any way. I had told you, "My dear brother why don't you leave. I am here now I can take care of Lord Rama's needs." But you still remained firm and held your ground.

You were thinking, and I see now you were right, that you had been serving Lord Rama for all of your life and in one day someone was going to come and take your service away. You just calmly looked towards your brother. Lord Rama, of course, was in a dilemma. He did not know exactly what He should do. If He allowed Sita devi to have Her way Laksmana would be unhappy and if He supported His brother's position then His wife would be unhappy. So Lord Ramacandra said, "I cannot solve this problem. We have to consult and take the advice of Our spiritual master, Vashista.

So the next morning when Vashista came, Lord Ramacandra said, "You have to solve this problem for me, I cannot do it. Vashista Muni said, "There is not a single problem that You cannot solve. So if You can not solve it, how do You expect me to?" Lord Ramacandra replied, "What you say is not a fact. Since you are a guru, your advice is always respected. Whereas, if I would give a decision regarding this matter it could be interpreted that I was partial or showed favoritism. So in order to keep my reputation intact, I want you to solve this problem." Lord Ramacandra then told Sita devi and Laksmana to give their side of the situation so that their gurudev Vashista could fairly judge.

Sita devi began saying that at Her marriage ceremony Lord Rama vowed before the fire and Vishnu that He was accepting Her as His maidservant, to worship and serve Him in every respect. He then would take care of Her in every respect, for this service to Him. Understanding these conditions I married Him and came here to serve Him. So I have the right to serve Him as promised before Lord Vishnu.

Then Laksmana said, "From my birth I have been serving Lord Rama in every respect. Through childhood, adolescence, and young manhood all the way to this present moment, He has had no other to carry out His commands but me. Now suddenly in one moment, I am to lose everything that I have dedicated my very existence to. This is not dharma.

Vashista Muni pondered over the situation for some time and then He agreed that both of them had the right to serve. Laksmana would have the right to serve Lord Ramacandra in all His public dealings and all public matters, affairs of state, and court administration. As soon as Lord Rama left His inner chamber Laksmana would have the right to serve Him. Sita devi would have the right to serve Lord Rama in all private matters, in the areas of their private quarters and in all aspects of household life. This judgement, although given by their gurudev, Vashista Muni, was not at all agreeable to Laksmana. He was extremely dejected by it. Sita devi told Laksmana that She was aware that She had offended Him at that time.

Another time She had offended Him was when the three of them were in exile in the forest of Dandakaranya. She had sent Lord Rama after that beautiful golden deer that had completely captivated Her mind. She had insulted Laksmana by accusing Him of not having any love for Lord Rama and by deceitfully desiring Her, He would let Lord Rama die so He could enjoy Her. Laksmana said He would rather die than bear such insults. Although He left a protective ring of fire around Sita devi, by insulting Him, She forced Him to break His word to Lord Rama and leave Her alone. In this way Sita devi explained that She had offended Laksmana in so many ways and that is why She believed that She was forced to face those

reactions that She had to face at that time. Sita devi then told Laksmana, “So now in My last hours, please forgive all My numerous and heinous offences. This I am begging You. Now mercifully prepare My pyre and light it.”

When Laksmana heard these astounding confessions from His worshipable object, He felt ashamed. Looking over at His brother helplessly, He was expecting that Lord Ramacandra would intervene and say that everything was all right. That He would say that Sita devi was chaste and pure and that He was accepting Her back. Lord Ramacandra, however, remained silent uttering not a word.

As Laksmana prepared the pyre, it was as if He was not even there so much did this action go against every part of His being. While He was doing this, Sita devi made an announcement before everyone saying, “If I am chaste, if I have remained pure, then the fire will be reduced to a simmer and cool down like ice. Then all the three worlds will testify that I was a chaste wife to My Lord.” Sita devi was saying this while Laksmana was just about to light the fire.

At that time Laksmana made a solemn vow that never again under any circumstances in any incarnation of the Supreme Lord would He incarnate as the younger brother. Because as the younger brother, etiquette dictates that He must be in the second position and follow implicitly whatever the elder brother desires. In this incarnation so many things had happened that were so painful for Him to bear. He never wanted to be put again in a situation where He would not be able to act by His own sweet will.

We see in Srimad Bhagavatam that in His incarnation as Lord Balaram, He is Krishna’s elder brother. Before the battle of Kurukshetra was fought, Lord Balaram being so intimately connected to parties of both sides once again found the situation too painful. This time as Krishna’s elder brother, He didn’t have to fight if He did not wish to. So instead, Balaram abstained from all fighting and went on pilgrimage to all the holy places in India.

Also we see in Sri Caitanya Caritamrita that Lord Nityananda, who is nondifferent from Balaram, is considered the elder brother of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. And at the end of Kali yuga, 427,000 years from now, the Supreme Lord Krishna incarnates again as Kalki in the village of Sambhala, as the son of Vishnu Yasa, as confirmed in Srimad Bhagavatam. Then if Lord Balaram incarnates along with Him, it will most definitely be as Dauji, the elder brother.

Anyway Laksmana lit the fire. When it was blazing, Sita devi walked into it. As soon as She stood on the pyre, the pyre just cooled down and faded away. Then Agnideva, the fire god, brought out the real Sita devi, taking away the illusory maya Sita into the embers that still remained from the fire. The real Sita devi shone like the sun and all the three worlds were illuminated by the splendor that manifested from the power of Her chastity.

If anyone wants to attain the lotus feet of Srimati Radhika and Krishna and be able to taste and fully relish Their pastimes, then one must first approach the lotus feet of Lord Balaram or Lord Nityananda. This is a mandatory prerequisite. For only by receiving Their mercy can this realization be possible. Lord Nityananda and Lord Balaram are nondifferent. That is why it has been confirmed by the Goswamis that once one gets the mercy of Lord Nityananda, one becomes eligible to receive the ecstatic prema of Srimati Radharani and Krishna in Vraja. So simply always embrace the all-merciful lotus feet of Lord Nityananda and receive the desired goal.

Neither Lord Balaram nor Lord Nityananda accept any offenses whatsoever, and are so merciful that if one simply worships Lord Nityananda this fortunate soul is automatically worshipping and pleasing Lord Balaram. It has been described that Lord Nityananda and Lord Balaram are the friends of the most fallen and wretched of people and since in Kali yuga we are these people, let us always diligently and steadfastly seek the shelter of Lord Nityananda and Lord Balaram. Gaura Premanandi! Han! Haribol!!

Mahavan

Now we have arrived at the auspicious forest of Mahavan. Factually speaking Gokula and Mahavan are one and the same place. They are just two different names for the same site; but no to cause any confusion I will elucidate upon each. This is the place where baby Krishna killed the wicked demoness Putana when she smearing poison on her breast came to kill him. Here also baby Krishna killed Trnavarta, the whirlwind demon who had kidnapped baby Krishna from his mother, Yashoda and took him high into the air to dash him to the ground. Here also baby Krishna killed the ghost demon Sakatasura who had hidden himself in the form of a cart to try to do some harm to him. These early pastimes all happened here. Now we shall go to Brahmanda ghat and see what transpired there. Hare Krishna!

Brahmanda Ghat

This is the place where Krishna playfully ate dirt. When Mother Yashoda heard this, she anxiously caught Krishna to scold him telling Him to open His mouth. Krishna obeyed Yashoda's order and opened His mouth wide. At the same time he denied the whole affair, saying that His friends were lying on him because they lost in games and his brother was bribed by some sweet balls and rasgullas to join in the conspiracy. But Mother Yashoda was determined. Quickly she opened Krishna's mouth and peeked in. But she did not see any clay or mud.

What she saw took her breath away. She saw the entire universal creation. She saw Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva, Mahavishnu lying on Ananta Sesa in the casual ocean. She saw unlimited dimensions totally unfettered by time and space, completely beyond the imagination and scope of earthly reality. She even saw herself sitting on the ground holding Krishna on her lap and looking in his mouth. Stunned and shocked by seeing this, she quickly went and took some cow dung thinking she was possessed by demons or that maybe some evil was about to occur or perhaps she was dreaming, she did not know what to think. So she took some cowdung and started chanting mantras to counteract any reactions that might be forthcoming.

But in Vraja no one chants mantras to the Supreme Lord. Here the Lord is just a small little boy playing around with His friends, causing mischief just like an ordinary child. In Vraja there is no feeling of awe and reverence and the worshipping of the Lord by prayers and mantras and Vedic hymns. In Vraja the Supreme Lord is simply one's son, one's friend, or one's lover and this wonderful and most ecstatic relationship is only to be had in Vraja. Whether Krishna shows His universal form lifting Giriraj, swallows a forest fire, subdues Kaliya, or kills Putana or Bakasura or all these demons, Krishna while performing these wonderful pastimes makes all the Vrajavasis think that He is doing this just by the mercy of the Lord.

Krishna does not want to be worshipped in Vraja. Here Krishna wants no pompous adoration or feelings of awe and reverence in the mood of aisvarya. Here in Vraja, Krishna wants to be loved only as the small little darling boy of Mother Yashoda and Nanda Maharaja just like any other darling little boy He does not want any of His devotees to offer Him awe and reverence in Vraja. So now let us take a little water upon our head and give our humble obeisances remembering this mood. Gaura' Premanadi! Hari! Haribol!!

Caurasi Khambha

These pillars you see here in the temple of Nanda Maharaja are called Caurasi Khambha. If you remember we saw another Caurasi Khambha in the village of Kamyavan. Both places have eighty-four pillars. There are 8,400,000 different species of life within the material

worlds. Each of the eighty-four pillars symbolizes 100,000 species of life, thus representing the total material existence. Hare Krishna!

Nanda Bhavan

Here at this temple called Nanda Bhavan is where Krishna and Balaram lived with Nanda Maharaja and Yashodamayi. These very big and powerful murtis that you see are Lord Balaramji and Nanda Maharaja and Mother Yashoda. Krishna is present as a little boy and if you look you can see that He is swinging in a cradle. Now let us all go and pay our respects to Krishna's sister Yogamaya, in her form as Durga here. Haribol!

Yamalarjuna Bhanga

Now we are in the month of Kartik. Hari Bhakti Vilas states that in the month of Kartik one should offer lamps to Lord Damodara each day and worship Him with the Sri Damodarastaka beginning:

*namamviswaram saccidananda rupam
lasat kundalan gokule brajamanam*

To the Supreme Lord whose form is eternal knowledge, existence and bliss, who is beautifully shining in the divine realm of Gokul. (Hari Bhakti Vilas from Padma Purana)

Here is where the Damodara lila was enacted and where Krishna delivered Nalakuvara and Manigriva, the sons of Kuvera, the treasurer of the demigods. These two demigods, because of inappropriate behavior, were cursed by Narada Muni to descend down from the heavenly planets and become two arjuna trees here on earth.

Once Mother Yashoda became very angry with Krishna for being naughty and hiding after breaking a butter pot. Taking up a stick, she went looking for Him. When Krishna saw His mother coming with a stick He began to run in fear but Mother Yashoda was able to capture Him, who even great yogis and sages can never come near, simply because she was a great devotee.

Seeing that Krishna was overly afraid because of the stick she carried, she tossed it aside and instead took some rope and began to bind Him to a wooden mortar for grinding grains. But when she went to tie it, she found that it was too short by two inches. So she added more rope and tried to tie it around Krishna but again the rope was short by two inches. Again and again she attempted to tie He who can never be tied except by the rope of devotional service. Finally the Supreme Lord playing the part of a little child in front of his mother became compassionate towards her and allowed her to tie Him up. Then Mother Yashoda went back to her household duties.

Left alone Krishna dragged the wooden mortar between the two trees and the mortar being too big could not pass through and got stuck. Then Krishna, in order to fulfill the promise of His devotee Narada Muni, that the two sons of Kuvera would be released by Him, the Supreme Lord pulled strongly and the twin arjuna trees fell down with a thunderous roar.

Out of them came two celestial gandharva figures, Nalakuvara and Manigriva. After assuming their original forms they offered first to untie Krishna, but the Supreme Lord informed them that if they did that His mother might get angry with them, so instead the two demigods offered choice prayers and praises and circumambulated him three times.

Krishna being pleased gave them prema bhakti, love of godhead and not only that but He made them His eternal associates as Snigdakanta and Madhukanta. In the eternal lilas of Krishna that are constantly being enacted, their service is to eternally narrate in sweet voices the Lord's pastimes. Every evening when all the relatives and friends of Nanda Maharaja come to the assembly hall, Snigdakanta and Madhukanta come there also and chant and sing the pastimes of the Lord.

Then they go to Varsana to King Vrishabanu's assembly hall and there also they sing Krishna's pastimes very, very beautifully. The wonderful and astonishing potency that the Lord had blessed them with, was that when they were relating a pastime, it is as if the Lord is there performing the pastime in front of the eyes of everyone, so nicely is their harmonious singing and poetical chanting of these pastimes. Gaura Premanandi! Haribol!!

Gokula

As has been already explained Gokula is actually the same as Mahavan. There is no difference except in one's preference of name. Here is the place where Krishna appeared in His unlimited, transcendental form as the baby son of Nanda Maharaja and Yashodamayi. This all occurred while simultaneously Krishna expanded and appeared in his four armed Vishnu form to Vasudeva and Devaki.

Factually speaking, Krishna in His original form was never in Kamsa's dungeon in Mathura. Krishna was born as the son of Nanda Maharaja and Mother Yashoda. This has all been confirmed by our previous acaryas. Vishvanatha Chakravarti, Rupa Goswami, Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada all have verified this as being correct and true. So now let us fall upon the ground in the dust of this place and pray that in some future life, millions of years from now, we might have the ability to be able to correctly understand these pastimes and as well be able to properly execute loving devotional service in accordance with this understanding. Hare Krishna!

Raval

Let us all now give our most humble and sincere obeisances completely devoid of all pride and any sense of false prestige, for now we are standing on most hallowed and sacred ground. This is the place of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas most cherishable and worshippable object, the appearance place of our most beloved Queen of Vraja, Vrishabanunandini, Srimati Radharani.

King Vrishabanu and Queen Kirtida are the father and mother of Srimati Radhika. They moved here from Varsana with the hope that by being closer to the Yamuna they would be blest with a child. The name Vrishabanu has significance with the sun. Bhanu means sun, and what does the sun do? The sun shines its light and by its heat purifies everything. The sun also evaporates the water from the ocean and forms fresh rain clouds. The sun is thus considered an ocean of mercy. Just like when the moon rises if one is at sea it appears that it has risen out of the ocean, similarly in the ocean of Vrishabanu the moon of Srimati Radharani appeared.

Srimati Radharani's name is not mentioned in any of the revealed scriptures. There is a specific reason for this. Both Srila Sukadeva Goswami, the son of Vyasadeva and Srila Sutadeva Goswami the disciple of Sukadeva Goswami, considered the audience to whom they were speaking and thought it best not to mention Srimati Radharani's name. Although Srimati Radhika's name is not directly mentioned it can be detected deductively by inferential reasoning and innuendos. Just like if one describes cheese, and butter and curds and yoghurt and cream but does not mention the source from which all these things come. Any intelligent person is able to realize that the source of all these items is milk. Similarly in the Srimad Bhagavatam all the symptoms of Srimati Radharani are described so it can be easily surmised by one who is knowledgeable of the scriptures that the source of all these symptoms is Srimati Radharani. It was not necessary to again write about Krishna's pastimes in the Srimad Bhagavatam. There are so many Puranas that depict the Lord's pastimes. Then what was the special reason for writing Srimad Bhagavatam? The special reason was Srimad Bhagavatam had to introduce and describe the glories of the gopis and especially to establish Srimati Radharani's supremely elevated position as the most beloved of Lord Krishna.

Srimati Radharani is the supreme enjoyable potency, the universal mother, the hladini shakti of Krishna, the embodiment of His highest internal potency, but she was born blind. She would not open Her eyes. She did not want to see this world. She wanted to open Her eyes and see only one face, Krishna's. Narada Muni was well aware of the Supreme Lord's appearance on this earth and he knew that the Supreme Lord's pleasure giving potency the ananda shakti must appear also. As soon as Srimati Radhika appeared Narada Muni was able to ascertain that the ananda shakti of the Lord was present on the earth and he immediately went to the palace of King Vrishabanu. At first King Vrishabanu did not want to show him a blind daughter, but then he thought Narada Muni is a saintly sage maybe by his touch and by his blessings my daughter's eyes will open, so he brought his daughter out for him to see. Narada Muni immediately offered his full obediances to the infant and after offering many prayers and giving his blessings, Narada Muni departed.

Shortly after Nanda Baba, Yashodamayi and baby Krishna came to see the daughter of King Vrishabanu. At that time Sri Radha was resting in a cradle, while Yasoda Maiya and Kirtida were talking Krishna went straight up to radha's cradle and helping himself with his hand pulled up and looked inside the cradle. Immediately Her lotus eyes fluttered open and the very first thing she saw in this material world was the blue blackish lotus face of Krishnacandra and a most wonderful smile came upon her lotus face. It has been described by Prabodhananda Saraswati that Srimati Radharani's influence on Krishna was so great that as soon as He would see Her his flute would slip out of his hands and when His golden crown would fall from His head He would not even notice so intensely was He attracted to Her. Srimati Radharani can attract Krishna in so many ways by Her wonderful qualities that Krishna can not remain away from Her. That is why another name for Radha is Hare, because Hare means She steals the heart of Krishna by completely inundating Him with love. That is why within the greatest of mantras, the Mahamantra this name Hare is found. Krishna becomes so delighted and pleased when we chant Hare, Hare, because we are invoking His beloved and Srimati Radharani becomes so ecstatically joyful whenever we chant Krishna, Krishna because She sees that we the conditioned souls are remembering our father, the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna.

The Goswamis are all praying to be able to take shelter of Her lotus feet. Rupa Goswami writes, O Krishna, O Govinda, O Shyamsundar I beg you to please make me a maidservant of the maidservant of Srimati Radharani. This is the only request that I beg of you. This is why we only desire to be the maidservant, of the maidservant, of the maidservant of Vrsabhanunandini, Srimati Radharani, and be the servant of the servant of the servant of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Who is the most merciful, an ocean of kindness, whose heart is always melting with compassion.

So our ardent prayer is that we somehow or the other receive this mercy for She is the most merciful personality. Maybe not in this lifetime, maybe not in the next, or the next, or the next but surely within a million lifetimes from now we will get this mercy. It is no doubt extremely difficult to become a servant of the servant of the servant of Lord Caitanya or the maidservant of the maidservant of the maidservant of Srimati Radharani. The qualifications must be astronomically high, but that is no reason for us to step back. We should not be fearful, we should not be weakhearted, we should not be deterred from our desired aim. We shall pray at the lotus feet of all the Vaisnavas and gurudev that they give us the dust from their lotus feet and with their blessings and mercy we will assuredly be able to continue along the path. So we hope that the Vaisnavas will shower their mercy upon us, and this mercy that we desire is that they would connect us to a maidservant of a maidservant of a maidservant to the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani. This is the only mercy that we desire Jay Jay Sri Radhe! Jay Jay Sri Radhe!! Jay Jay Sri Radhe!!

Ambikavan

This place where we now are is called Ambikavan. Here Nanda Baba came with all his family and friends to do puja to Mahadev. Late that night a big frightful snake came and choosing Nanda Baba began swallowing him alive. Nanda Baba called out in great fear for Krishna to come and save him and Krishna hearing the cries of His father came at once and saved him. This lila happened here. Hare Krishna!

Akrura Ghat

The place where we are now is called Akrura Ghat. When Akrura was taking Krishna and Balaram from Nandagram to Mathura at the order of Kamsa, he took bath here and saw both Krishna and Balaram in the waters in their forms of Ananta Shesa and Maha Vishnu.

Yagesthali

When Krishna sent the cowherd boys to receive charity from the brahmanas in the form of food. The brahmanas all born in caste families were too puffed up to even consider the request, even though they knew it was from Krishna and Balaram. The brahmanas totally ignored them and would not even speak. So the cowherd boys left without securing any food. Hare Krishna!

Bhatrol

This is the place where the wives of the brahmanas gave bhat. Bhat means food and when the brahmanas refused to even consider Krishna and Balaram's request for a little food, Krishna then requested His friends to go to the brahmanas wives whom He knew were very devoted to Him. The cowherd boys went to the brahmanas wives and very humbly requested them for some food. As soon as the brahmanas wives heard the names of Krishna and Balaram they immediately went into their kitchen and pantries and put together a sumptuous feast for Krishna and Balaram and the cowherd boys. Most of the preparations had been already made for the sacrifice that their husbands were performing and some of the preparations like the gulabs and the sweet rice which were cooked never made it to the sacrifice; but instead were offered to Krishna and Balaramji for their satisfaction. So this wonderful pastime happened here and it should be a lesson to all of us that rituals, sacrifices, and tapasya do not mean anything unless they are done for the satisfaction of Krishna. Otherwise one is just wasting one's time, illusioned into thinking one actually making spiritual advancement like the brahmanas were in this situation. Haribol!

Vrindavan

Vrindavan is the most prominent and auspicious forest out of the 12 forests of Vraja. It is the 12th forest of Sri Vraja Mandala Within this forest flows Yamuna devi. Within this forest is Seva kunja the place of rasa lila. Within this forest stands the might Govardhan hill. Within this forest is the most sacred and holy Radha kunda. Although Vrinda devi was the presiding deity, she is factually an expansion of Srimati Radharani. So the actual tattva is that Srimati Radhika is the true, sovereign queen of Vrindavan.

Actually the 12 forests of Vraja are divided into two sections, those that are on this side, the eastern side of the Yamuna belongs to Lord Balaram. These forests are Bhadravan, Baelvan, Bhandiravan, Lauhavan and Gokula Mahavan. These are the places where Lord Balaram is the presiding deity and is the most prominent and principle personality in all the pastimes. Those forests that are on the western side of Yamuna belong to Lord Krishna and these forests are Bahulavan, Kamyavan, Khadiravan, Kumudavan, Madhuvan, Talavan and

Vrindavan. Here Krishna is the most prominent personality. They are Krishna's forests and He is the most predominating personality along with Srimati Radhika. Radhe! Shyam!

Kaliya Hrada

This area of water that we are now standing in front of is called Kaliya hrada. This is where Krishna playfully subdued the naga snake demon Kaliya by forcefully dancing upon its hundred heads. This snake was able to live here due to a curse from Saubhari muni which would not allow even Garuda, Lord Vishnu's carrier to come and eat his favorite repast, which is snakes. After Krishna had totally subdued this naga and it was within an inch of losing its life, the naga patnis who were the wives of Kaliya prayed to Krishna for their husband and Krishna spared the serpents life banishing him to the ocean forever. This ancient kadamba tree that you see is the very tree that Krishna jumped from into this water 5,000 years ago. So let us all give our dan-davats at the foot of this tree and sprinkle some water on our heads from this place. Hare Krishna!

Prabhodhananda Saraswati's Samadhi

This is the samadhi tomb of one of our great Gaudiya Vaisnava acaryas, Prabhodhananda Saraswati. He was the uncle and siksha guru of Gopal Bhatta Goswami and he was one of Lord Caitanya's staunch followers. In the Gaura ganodesa dipika it is revealed that in Lord Krishna's manifest lila, Prabhodhananda Saraswati was the sakhi Tungavidya. Prabhodhananda Saraswati wrote very beautiful and wonderful poems about Vrindavan and we are eternally grateful to him for this. Haribol!

Dvadasaditya Tila

This hill that we are on has a very unique story. Dvadasa means 12. After Krishna finished playing with Kaliya and had banished him from the holy dham forever, He came out of the water but began to feel a little chill. At this time the 12 Adityas, the sons of Prajapati and Aditi, desiring to render some service to the Supreme Lord Krishna, appeared as 12 suns and gently dried the Lord and took away His chill here. Hare Krishna!

Praskandana Tirtha

Praskanda means perspiration and when the 12 suns appeared and began shining their warmth all over the transcendental body of Krishna, the perspiration which dropped from the Lord formed this tirtha here called Praskandana tirtha. Hari! Haribol

Radha Madan Mohan Mandir

This beautiful temple is called Radha Madan Mohan. Adwaita Acarya first discovered the deity during his sojourn here. After worshipping it for some time Adwaita Acarya placed it in the care of a brahmana from Mathura named Purusottama Chaube, when he met Sanatan Goswami turned the deity over to him. Now Sanatan Goswami had no possessions except his great devotion for Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He used to do madhukari everyday door to door for his meals, but the deity had to be fed everyday, so Sri Sanatan would manage to obtain a little flour and he would cook a chapati or two, offer it to the deity and then take the remnants for his own prasada. One day the deity actually spoke to him, asking for some salt to go with the dry chapatis. Sanatana Goswami informed the deity that he was a very old and poor man and that what he was giving was the best he could provide. At that time on the Yamuna a large salt barge owned by a wealthy vaiya named Kapoor got stuck and would not budge near Praskandan ghat. Lord Madan Mohan took the form of a cowherd boy and guided Kapoor to Sanatan Goswami who instructed him to worship the deity. Now Kapoor was a saintly man

and immediately upon seeing the deity he prostrated himself and reaching into his pocket to offer some gold coins he discovered he had left them back on the boat, but he did happen to have a little sack of salt, so he offered this to the deity praying that if by Madan Mohan's mercy his ship was freed, he would after selling his salt come back and build a temple for him. Receiving the blessings of Sanatan Goswami, Kapoor went back to his ship which was already unstuck and when he returned from Agra selling his salt he became the disciple of Sanatan Goswami and under his direction constructed this temple.

Adwaitavat

Here before Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to Vrindavan, Adwaita Acarya stayed and performed tapasya for a long time in preparation for the coming of Lord Caitanya to Vrindavan. Hare Krishna!

Astha Sakhi Mandir

This mandir was built by the King of Berhampur, who was a disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada, here we can see Sri Sri Radha Krishna as Radha Rasabihari along with the 8 sakhis: Lalita, Vishaka, Chitra, Indurekha, Champakalata, Tungavidya, Ranga devi and Su devi. Let us now give our dandavats to these devi's and pray that they grace us with their mercy. Haribol!

Banke Bihari Mandir

The deity of Banke Bihari in this temple has a very interesting history. This deity was discovered by Haridas Kirtania of the Nimbarka sampradaya. One night Haridas had a dream that Krishna was buried in a place called Nidhivan in Vishaka kund, awaking with a start Haridas went to the place of his dream and sure enough he discovered this deity of Krishna called Bank Bihari. Banke means bent in three places and bihari means supreme enjoyer this is the position Krishna enjoys when he play his flute. Now we must hurry if want to receive darshan for it is very short. It is said that once a great devotee of Krishna came to this temple and when he was leaving Banke Bihari was so sad to see him go that the deity actually walked off the altar to follow him. He was quickly intercepted by the temple pujaris and placed back on the altar, but ever since then out of fear that He might try to leave again darshan is extremely quick and short. Gaura Premanandi! Haribol!!

Radha Vallabha Mandir

The Radha Vallabha Vaisnava founded by Hit Hari Vamsa established this temple. As you can see there is no murti of Srimati Radharani but there is a crown there next to the deity of Krishna that represents Her in the worship. Hare Krishna!

Sri Rupa Sanatan Gaudiya Math

Now we have arrived at Sri Rupa Sanatan Gaudiya Math founded during Kartik of 1988 by His Divine Grace Narayana Maharaja in commemoration and dedication to Rupa and Sanatan Goswami, two of the Gaudiya Vaisnava sampradaya's greatest acaryas. The deities we see here are from left to right: Vrinda devi, Lord Caitanya, Krishna as Sri Vinod Bihari, Srimati Radharani and His Divine Grace Parivrajakacarya Bhaktiprajnana Keshava Maharaja. On the left side of the temple is Sri Rupa Goswami and on the right side is Sri Sanatan Goswami.

Gaudiya Vaisnava devotees are aware of the immense contribution and deep and penetrating influence that the two brothers, Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatan have profoundly made in the perpetuation of the Vaisnava tradition and culture throughout the world. Perhaps

many of you have not so much information about some of the lilas, which they enacted, so in a very few minutes His Divine Grace Trivikram Maharaja will relate some very nice pastimes to you

Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatan Goswami used to travel all over Vraja Mandala, sometimes sleeping under a tree, sometimes sleeping under some creeper. They would take merely a little sleep, maybe half an hour or one hour. They would eat just enough to maintain life in their body and nothing more, a couple of chapati's here a few chick peas there, a cup of fresh cow's milk, whatever was offered to them as they were passing through, by the Vrajabhasis. They would never seek anything in regards to the activities of the body. The only thing that they were constantly seeking was more devotional service to the lotus feet of Sri Sri Radha Krishna. Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatan Goswamis were brothers and they resolutely gave up great power, riches and position, when by the mercy of the Supreme Lord they entered into His service. These two brothers were erudite Bengali and Sanskrit scholars and extremely sophisticated. Yet they came to Vrindavan by the order of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and lived very simply. One will not be able to properly perform bhajan to Krishna until one has given up all attachments internally as well as externally. Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatan came to Vrindavan specifically on the order of Caitanya Mahaprabhu to reveal the lost and forgotten places of Krishna's pastimes to the world, to establish temples to Lord Krishna, and to install deities of the Supreme Lord Krishna in them. Now his Divine Grace Janardan Maharaja a disciple of His Divine Grace Om Vishnupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada will relate another pastime I am sure you will certainly relish.

Sri Sanatan Goswami and Sri Rupa Goswami use to reside very close to each other. Pavan Sarovara where Sri Sanatan performed his bhajan was not far away from where Sri Rupa's bhajan kutir was located near Ter Kadamba. They would both meet often and submerge themselves in the nectar of Krishna katha discussing Krishna's pastimes. One such day They met early in the morning and began enjoying the nectarean ecstasy of glorifying Krishna's transcendental pastimes. Morning turned into noon and noon soon became afternoon and still the two brothers were raptly engrossed, so delicious was the taste of expressing Krishna's honey filled lilas, and so delightful was the melodious sound of hearing about them. Suddenly Sri Rupa realized, my elder brother, has not taken any prasada today. How could I be so unconscious? I must find a way to provide for him.

While he was thinking like this a most beautiful girl came up to them and said, Baba! Baba! In those days saintly souls would be referred to as Baba. This beautiful girl said, Baba my mother has seen you both here all day in deep discussion about holy matters. She does not want you to go hungry so she sent me here with a little milk, a little rice and a little sugar. You can cook this up nicely, offer it to Krishna and then take it as prasada. In Vraja nobody goes hungry. This is the place where Radha and Krishna never allow anyone to be hungry. But the two brothers were by then so captivated in talking that they only half heard what the young girl was saying. After all she was only a young girl and they were deeply discussing the wonderfully sweet and delightful transcendental topics of the Lord. Yet in the back of their minds they were very much affected by the sweet, melodious sound of the young girl's voice. There was something very wonderful about it, as if it came from the sphere of the celestial plane. The beautiful young girl seeing them engrossed once again said, oh I can see that you are very busy so I won't interrupt you, just go ahead with your discussions and I will find a way to prepare this sweet rice for you. The two brothers were so absorbed in talking that they were not even conscious of what time it was or where they were or how long they had been like this, naturally they failed to register the words of this beautiful young girl.

Meanwhile within minutes this beautiful girl made a fire, boiled the milk and prepared a delicious khir. Brought it to them saying, Babas as you were very busy I made nice sweet rice for you, but now I have to go because it is late and my mother will be worrying about me.

Please offer this to Krishna and then you may take it as your prasada. After she had left the two brothers remarked we never, ever look at women yet somehow or other we were attracted to this exquisitely beautiful young girl. It is extraordinary but anyway she did her business quickly and efficiently and went on her way. So let us offer it to the Lord while it is still warm, Rupa Goswami took the khir and offered it to Krishna and afterwards served some to his guru, Sanatan Goswami. As soon as Sanatana tasted it ecstatic symptoms of prema began surging through his body in pulsating waves from the ambrosial nectarean taste of the khir. He had never tasted anything so wonderful before and you must remember that Sanatan Goswami had eaten the remnant from Jagannatha, Baladev and Mother Subhadra in Puri and also had eaten the remnants from Lord Caitanya, given to him by Svarupa Damodara.

Wondering what could be the reason for such a wonderful ecstatic experience in eating Sanatan Goswami cried out, Rupa Goswami! Rupa Goswami! What have you done? What have you done? Rupa Goswami being quite astounded asked him, what do you mean? Sri Sanatan replied, did you desire anything in your heart? Sri Rupa said, yes, I was thinking that my elder brother, my guru has come here, I have not been able to feed him anything, and you must be hungry. So I desired that you would be able to eat. Sri Sanatan looked at him saying, do you know who that exquisitely beautiful young girl actually was? It was Srimati Radharani and you have used your worshipable object of reverence, the one you meditate upon, the one you do bhajan for, she had to come here and cook for you so I could eat. All this was done by your desire. Never do this again. Never desire again. Never act or think in such way that it forces our beloved object of worship to come and serve us like this. Never!

After saying this to his younger brother both of them started crying and while crying they began eating the khir, feeling the rapture of prema. They would eat some khir, feel ecstasy for a little while and then begin crying all over again, then they would eat a little more khir and experience ecstasy once more and then begin crying once more. This went on over and over and over until the sweet rice was finally finished. Then they saved the earthen pot and everyday they broke off a little piece of it, ate it, and felt the ecstasy afresh after every bite. So these are some of the pastimes of Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatan Goswami and they as well as their pastimes are always worshipable. Now we will hear a very wonderful discourse by my godbrother, His Divine Grace Paramahansa Puri Maharaja, who is the oldest living disciple of His Divine Grace Om Vishnupad 108 Sriman Bhagavan Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada. The discourse will be on a treatise Sri Rupa Goswami composed called Chatu Puspanjali. His Divine Grace Puri Maharaja will now very eloquently, elucidate this honey filled lila for us.

Chatu Puspanjali is a collection of verses composed by Srila Rupa Goswami in praise of Srimati Radharani. Chatu means praise, puspa means flowers and panjali means offering. All together it is about 100 slokas and for anyone who wants to perform raganuga bhakti bhajan, it is a must that they meditate upon these slokas. Then the desired fruit will be gained. So on this day Sanatan Goswami came to visit his brother and asked, Sri Rupa have you written anything today? Rupa Goswami replied yes, I have composed some verses glorifying Srimati Radharani would you like to read them? Sri Sanatan began reading the first sloka which describes the way Srimati Radharani braids Her hair, and how Her hair being very long and luxuriant, when it is coiffured on top of Her head with a precious gem set in the center, resembles a black snake with a jewel on its crown.

After reading the whole collection Sanatan Goswami was overwhelmed by the poetic beauty and delightful similes of the work and he expressed this appreciation to Sri Rupa; but then he told him that he could not understand why Srimati Radharani's hair should have to be compared to a lowly snake. Sri Sanatan further elucidated that how can one compare Srimati Radhika who is the most pure and beautiful embodiment ever created in all of the

three worlds and beyond and who is filled with all super special excellent qualities, how can one compare Her with a poisonous black snake? How could he do this to Her? Sri Rupa Goswami immediately fell down at his elder brother's feet saying yes my gurudev you are absolutely correct. Please change it in the proper way you see fit. I can realize now that I should have made a better choice of similes, please do not hesitate to improve it for me by substituting something more appropriate. Sri Sanatan said, all right let me meditate upon it. He stared thinking and thinking but nothing was coming to him. Then he got up and began pacing to and fro. He thought that he could compare the gem in Srimati Radharani's hair, to the moon reflection on the sea at night, but the ocean's not black and Her jewels are not white. Then he thought he could compare the jewel in Her hair to Venus which sparkles like a diamond at twilight, but at that time the sun though set still fills the sky with blue and purple light and Srimati Radharani's hair is always black as night. Thinking like this he began to roam some distance not being able to compose a single simile that was perfectly applicable to Her and satisfactory for him. Wandering further suddenly he saw close by a little forest grove with a beautiful kadamba tree in it and he noticed that from this tree was hanging a swing and on that swing was a very, very beautiful girl of about 12 years of age. She was being pushed on the swing by many other beautiful young girls of the same age.

Now Sanatan Goswami never looked at women and if one happened to cross his line of vision it was just as if he saw a stone on the road. But somehow or other his vision got attracted to the lovely girl on the swing and as he was looking at her he suddenly saw that a big black snake was poised at the back of her head and it was just about to strike her with its fangs. With a start Sri Sanatan began waving his arms shouting, Lookout! Lookout dear one a snake is about to bite you! But as he approached them, in front of his eyes the whole scene dissappeared. The kadamba tree the swing, the beautiful girl and all her girlfriends had vanished. Sanatan Goswami then realized that to prove that Rupa Goswami was correct in his choice of a snake as a simile, Srimati Radharani had manifested this whole lila for him. Immediately falling into the dust where the Kadamba tree had just stood Srila Sanatan Goswami offered Srimati Radhika his humble obeisances and begged Her to forgive him for his offense of wasting Her valuable time to teach him a lesson.

Afterwards he ran back to his brother and embracing him said Sri Rupa, I will get Srimati Radharani's mercy if you give me your mercy, that is the only way. You are my gurudev now. Whatever you have written you do not have to change, every single word you have written has been accepted by Srimati Radharani, thus it is the absolute truth. I will serve you now. Sri Rupa Goswami then fell down at his elder brother's feet and begged him for his mercy saying that whatever he may have attained he was no aware of but for sure he only could have attained it by the mercy of Sri Sanatan. Then both brothers broke down and began crying begging each other to always bestow his mercy without reservation upon the other. Oh the humility and compassion of a Vaisnava is a wonderous phenomenon.

So let us give our humble obeisances to both Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatan and earnestly pray that they will always bestow their mercy upon us without reservation. Vancha kalpatarubhyas ca, kripa sindhubhya eva ca, patitanam pavanebhyo vaisnavebhyo namo namaha.

Seva Kunja

Now we are standing on the sacred and hallowed grounds of Seva kunja. Here on full moon night of the first day of Kartik, Krishna performs rasa lila with Srimati Radharani and his beloved sakhis, manjaris and gopis. Here every night the rasa dance is eternally being enacted, but unfortunately we are not able to perceive this with these mundane eyes and ears that we have. Would it not be wonderful to be able to walk by and hear the transcendently mystifying sound of flute and vina and drum along with the elegant pattern of thousands of feet all moving elegantly with charm and grace in total harmony. But alas we are not eligible

to hear about any of the super excellent and transcendently esoteric intimate and confidential pastimes that undoubtedly must have occurred here. So without speaking any further let us circumambulate the temple here, called Ranga Mahal, and the kunda here called Lalita kunda which Krishna created with His flute when Lalita devi was thirsty. There is a very ancient tamal tree here where Krishna one time wiped the butter off His hands when a gopi chased him.

Imli Tala

This tamarind tree that you see is called Imli Tala. It is very old, dating back 5,000 years ago to Lord Krishna's time. Krishna use to meet with Srimati Radharani under this very same tree. Once when Krishna came to meet Her, She hid from Him and Krishna's body changed from blackish to golden due to ecstatic feelings of acute separation from Her. Caitanya Mahaprabhu during His manifested pastimes would sit under this tree and chant the holy names of Krishna in total transcendental ecstasy but this time in the mood of Srimati Radharani, Lord Caitanya golden complexion would change to blackish due to feelings of acute separation from Krishna. Haribol!

Radha Damodara Mandir

Here we are now at Radha Damodara. Dama means rope and udara means belly. This refers to the time when Yashodamayi tied Krishna with rope around His belly when He was very young and very naughty. Since then another of Krishna's names has been Damodara. Rupa Goswami installed the original deities in 1542. He then entrusted them to his nephew Jiva Goswami who eventually had this present temple built.

The founder of ISKCON, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami spent five years here before going to America in 1965. It was here that he finished his English commentary on the Srimad Bhagavatam first canto that was so instrumental for the success of his preaching program in the west and beyond.

Shringarvat

During rasa lila at Rasa Sthali, Srimati Radhika ran off in a huff. Here is the place where Krishna caught up with Her, pacified, and consoled Her. Shringar means to decorate and here Krishna with makeup decorated Srimati Radhika and made Her give up the mood of maan. Prabhu Nityananda also stayed here for some time during his sojourn in Vrindavan. Hare Krishna!

Radha Shyamasundara Mandir

Now we are at Radha Shyamasundara Mandir founded by Shyamananda Prabhu. Previously he lived in Bengal and was called Duhkhi Krishnadasa, but once he had the good fortune of meeting Jiva Goswami and taking shelter from him, he was instructed to go to Vrindavan and sweep the streets everyday keeping them neat and clean for the devotees of the Lord. Following the order of Sri Jiva, Duhkhi Krishnadas came here to Vrindavan and began rendering service to the Holy Dham by sweeping. He swept for many, many years having firm faith in the instructions of Jiva Goswami who he had accepted as his siksha guru. One day while he was sweeping the streets he found a beautiful golden anklet. He had never seen anything so beautiful before and he was wondering where it had come from. At that time a small girl came up to him and told him the anklet belonged to her sister and he should give it back. Duhkhi sensing something transcendental about the whole affair told her that he would only give it to the person who actually owned it. The girl who was actually Lalita devi returned shortly with Srimati Radharani. Duhkhi Krishnadasa realizing who he was standing

before prostrated himself immediately in the dust rejoicing that he had faithfully followed the order that Sri Jiva had given to him. Upon rising he very humbly, with downcast eyes presented the golden anklet to Srimati Radhika who taking it pressed it against his forehead stamping it with a new style of tilak.

When Duldika Krishnadasa appeared before the other Vaisnavas wearing this new style of tilak he was criticized quite severely by them, but Srimati Radharani appeared to Jiva Goswami in a dream and revealed the story to him. The next day Sri Jiva Goswami had Duhkhi Krishnadasa brought to him and praising him in front of all the Vaisnavas gave him the name Shyamananda Prabhu. Now we shall give our obeisances to Sri Sri Radha Shyamasundara and then we shall go across the street and pay our respects to the samadhi shrine of Sri Shyamananda Prabhu. Afterwards we shall quickly make our way to the Shahji Mandir and take darshan of Chota Radha Ramana. Haribol!

Chir Ghat

Now we have come to a Chir ghat in Vrindavan. You remember we had darshan of another Chir ghat near Tapavan. There Krishna stole the saris of the gopis while they were bathing in preparation for worshipping Katyayani devi. Here in Vrindavan, Krishna stole the saris of the gopis when they were taking their bath preparing for the rasa dance. Gaura Premanandi!

Radha Ramana Mandir

This temple was founded by Gopal Bhatta Goswami. When Lord Caitanya was traveling in south India for chaturmasya He stayed at the home of Gopal Bhatta's father in Rangashetra Gopal Bhatta had the opportunity of serving Lord Caitanya and respect His remnants. Thus he became extremely attached to Krishna and the bhakti cult of loving devotional service. When his parents left this world, Gopal Bhatta came to Vrindavan and took shelter of Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatan. Gopal Bhatta's desire was to worship Krishna. He was already worshipping salagrama silas but in his heart he wanted to worship Krishna as he was in Vrindavan. By the mercy of Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatan one-day his salagrama shila self manifested into Krishna's tribhanga form holding a flute, thus was the appearance of Radha Ramana. As you can see there is no murti of Srimati Radharani here but there is a silver crown on a small asana that is reverentially worshipped symbolically in the same way we worship the Guru's shoes as being the same as worshipping the guru. Now let us give our humble obeisances to Sri Radha Ramanaji and then we shall go and give our dandavats to the samadhi shrine of Gopal Bhatta Goswami which is here also. Haribol!!

Radha Gokulananda Mandir

Now we are at Radha Gokulananda. Lokanath Goswami who worshipped the small Radha Vinod deities you see founded this mandir. The large deities are Radha Vijaya Govinda of Baladeva Vidyabhusana. The small Krishna in front is Visvanatha Cakravarti's Gokulananda and the murti of Lord Caitanya was in the care of Narottama das Thakura. Now let us give our humble obeisances to their Lordships and begging them for their mercy we shall go and pay further dandavats to the samadhi shrines of three great acaryas. Lokanath Goswami, Visvanatha Cakravarti and Narottama das Thakura. They were all fully steeped in the ecstatic mellows of devotional service and were all extremely expert in conveying these mellows poetically showing the most esoteric and sublimest states of realization. Gaura Premanandi! Hari! Haribol!

This place is where Banke Bihariji appeared from the earth, the place where he revealed himself to Haridas Kirtania. The deity in the Banke Bihari temple is the exact same murti tha

Haridas discovered here. So let us give our dandavats to thi place and move onwards to Govindaji! Haribol!

Radha Govindaji Mandir

This temple is called Radha Govindaji. The deity of Govinda Dev was discovered by Rupa Goswami after a mysteriously beautiful young boy directed him to a hill called Goma Tila where a cow goes to a hole everyday and from her udders squirts milk into it. Sri Rupa upon going there found Govindaji buried. This temple was built in the exact same spot by a disciple of Raghunath Bhatta Goswami named Raja Man Singh, a general in the court of Akbar. The deity of Srimati Radharani use to be worshipped in Jagannath Puri. The son of King Prataparudra had Her transferred to Vrindavana where She was duly installed next to Govinda Dev.

Previously this temple use to be very high and very opulent with dozens of domes on top but due to the treachery of the mleccha mushir Aurangzeb, the top four floors were dismantled block by block and it remains at this height today. Hare Krishna!

Radha Gopinath Mandir

This is Radha Gopinath. Vajranath, Krishna's great grandson, installed the original deity. 4,500 years later Gopinath was discovered by Paramananda Bhattacharya at Bansivat who entrusted the deity to his disciple Madhu Pandit, he had this mandir built. Now let us give ow humbles obeisances to Sri Sri Radha Gopinath and then we shall go to what is left of the Radha Sakshi Gopal Mandir. Haribol!

Radha Sakshi Gopal

These crumbling remains you see before you are all that is left of the Radha Sakshi Gopal temple. After being worshipped in Vrindavan for a very long time Gopalji walked over 1,000 miles to bear witness for a young brahmana. He never returned. Every true devotee of the Lord knows this story, it is very nicely explained in Sri Caitanya Charitamrta. So now let us give our obeisances to this place and then we shall go to Lala Babu's Mandir and take darshan of Lalita devi, Srimati Radhika with Krishnacandra standing between them. Hari! Haribol!!

Kesi Ghat

Dhir Samir

Here once Srimati Radhika and Krishna were playing and the wind which had been blowing fully became so enchanted by the sweet nectarean sound of Krishna's flute that it could not go on its way but instead slowed down just so it could linger and stay with them. Dhire means slowly and so this place is called Dhir Samir. Hare Krishna!

Banshivat

The tree we are now observing is called Banshivat. As you may have realized by now, there are many Banshivats or tall trees in Vraja where Krishna would play the flute to summon his father's 900,000 milking cows or to summon the gopis for rasa lila. This was the place where Krishna was playing his flute when the wind hearing the wonderful, melodious notes slowed down from a gentle breeze at Dhir Samir to not moving at all at this spot. Haribol!

Gopishwar Mahadev Mandir

This mandir is dedicated to Lord Shiva in his form as a gopi. Shiva being extremely elevated desired to participate in rasa lila at Bansivat; but because he was a male, he had no chance. Shiva then prayed to Yogamaya for the benediction to become a gopi. Yogamaya informed him to bathe in Mana Sarovara. So Shiva took bath at Mana Sarovara and changed his form to a female. After this he was accepted by the gopis, then Krishna blessed him with the benediction that he would eternally guard the entrance to rasa lila and that no one may enter without his blessings. So now let us all pray to Lord Shiva as Gopishwar for his blessings and prostrating ourselves before him give our obeisances. Gaura Premanandi!

Brahma Kunda

Now we are at Brahma kunda. This is the place where Shiva prayed to Yogamaya to become a gopi, the story that we have just related. Also Sri Rupa Goswami discovered the deity of Vrinda devi here. Hare Krishna!

Davanala Kunda

This place called Davanala kunda is where Krishna swallowed the forest fire and saved all the Vrajabhasis from danger. This incident occurred after Krishna had subdued Kaliya and should not be confused with the fire that Krishna swallowed in the Isikatava forest after Balaramji had slain the demon Pralambasura Haribol!

Radha Madhava Mandir

This temple we have just entered is part of the Nimbarka sampradaya coming from the four Kumaras. So let us offer our humble obeisances to Sri Sri Radha Madhava and then we shall go to our math to take maha prasada. Hare Krishna!

Now by the mercy of our beloved Srimati Radharani our Vraja Mandala Parikrama has been successfully completed. So let us all now give our most humble obeisances to Her and taking the dust from this place upon our heads earnestly pray for mercy. Tomorrow is full moon, the last day of Kartik. We will all celebrate our circumambulation with a big maha feast and then everyone may start returning to their different destinations and taking care of their different duties and services in the world until we meet again next year during the month of Kartik to enjoy and relish the supremely ambrosial and nectarean taste of the Supreme Lord Krishna's pastimes in Sri Vraja Mandala.

Everything has manifested itself wonderfully as you can see; but it is not due to our endeavors or to our hard work. It is just by the causeless mercy of my Guru Maharaja that all this was made possible. Most of you will be leaving Vrindavan soon to return to your different places of residence; but anyway remember if we cannot remain in Vrindavan in our physical bodies we must stay with our mind and heart and soul. With our meditation we must stay in Vrindavan. When I say Vrindavan I mean this as a non-different expansion of Navadvip. Vrindavan Dham and Navadvip Dham are the same. Vrindavan is the essence of all religious principles, which means that although in any other place one can execute religious and spiritual activities, in Vrindavan, the holy dham inspires one to perform the highest form of loving devotional service to the Supreme Lord Krishna. This is Vrindavan Dham natural propensity, to bestow prema bhakti on the sincere devotee. Of all the many different kinds of bhajan, Vrindavan is the essence and what is the meaning of Vrindavan? Wherever Srimati Radharani and Krishna are performing their eternal pastimes, that place is Vrindavan. Prabodhananda Saraswati writes these very wonderful verses in praise of Vrindavan. He says...

"O legs if you have to go anywhere then make your way to Vrindavan; O eyes if you must see anything then see the beauty of Vrindavan; O ears if you want to hear, hear the pastimes of Vrindavan; O tongue if you must say anything, speak the glories of Vrindavan; O nose if you want to smell, smell the sweet flowers in Vrindavan; O Vrindavan I am extremely fallen and wretched. I have no association, I have no direction, in this depraved condition please be my only shelter. Otherwise if you do not give me your mercy who else will? Actually you are the most opulent and the most opulent must be the most compassionate to the fallen conditioned souls. You are the most opulent, even more so than Laksmi devi, nothing is more opulent than you because your riches are the rasa lila pastimes and all the other wonderful pastimes of Srimati Radharani and Krishna. You are more dear to me than my own life and I only want the opportunity to worship you."

"O Vrindavan you are completely transcendental whereas I am completely bound by ignorance and although it is not possible for a transcendental object to be perceived by the mundane senses of a conditioned soul, still you are my only shelter and my only hope."

"O Vrindavan I must come to you by any means without delay if I do not have any money to purchase my ticket I will sell my house and come to you. If nobody wishes to buy my house I will sell all my possessions and come to you. I will immediately sacrifice anything and everything, even my most desired and treasured material objects, to come to you. If people start talking about me saying, what a wretched fellow I am for selling my house and all my possessions let them talk. I have to come to you at last and you are my only shelter and my only destination."

"O Vrindavan, even if I do all this, will this by itself be enough to grant me entrance? Not just the physical entrance; but the transcendental entrance as well? I do not think so, for without sadhana and bhajan under the guidance of Sri Gurudev it is not possible to enter into the transcendently esoteric and sublime mellows of Sri Sri Vraja Mandala."

This is why we must always humbly follow the instructions of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu in His Siksastaka. In order to approach Vrindavan we must always be more humble than a blade of grass, always be more tolerant than a tree, always be ready to offer our respects to all living beings without discrimination and without any sense of false prestige or pride. Just by humbly approaching Vrindavan in this way following in the footsteps of Sri gurudev and our Gaudiya Vaisnava acaryas, assures us eligibility to enter Sri Sri Vraja Mandala and humbly seek the sanctifying shelter and all encompassing, compassionate mercy of Sri Sri Vraja Mandala. Hare Krishna! Jay Jay Sri Radhe! Jay Jay Sri Radhe! Jay Jay Sri Radhe! Shyam!! Hari! Haribol!! Gaura premanandi!!