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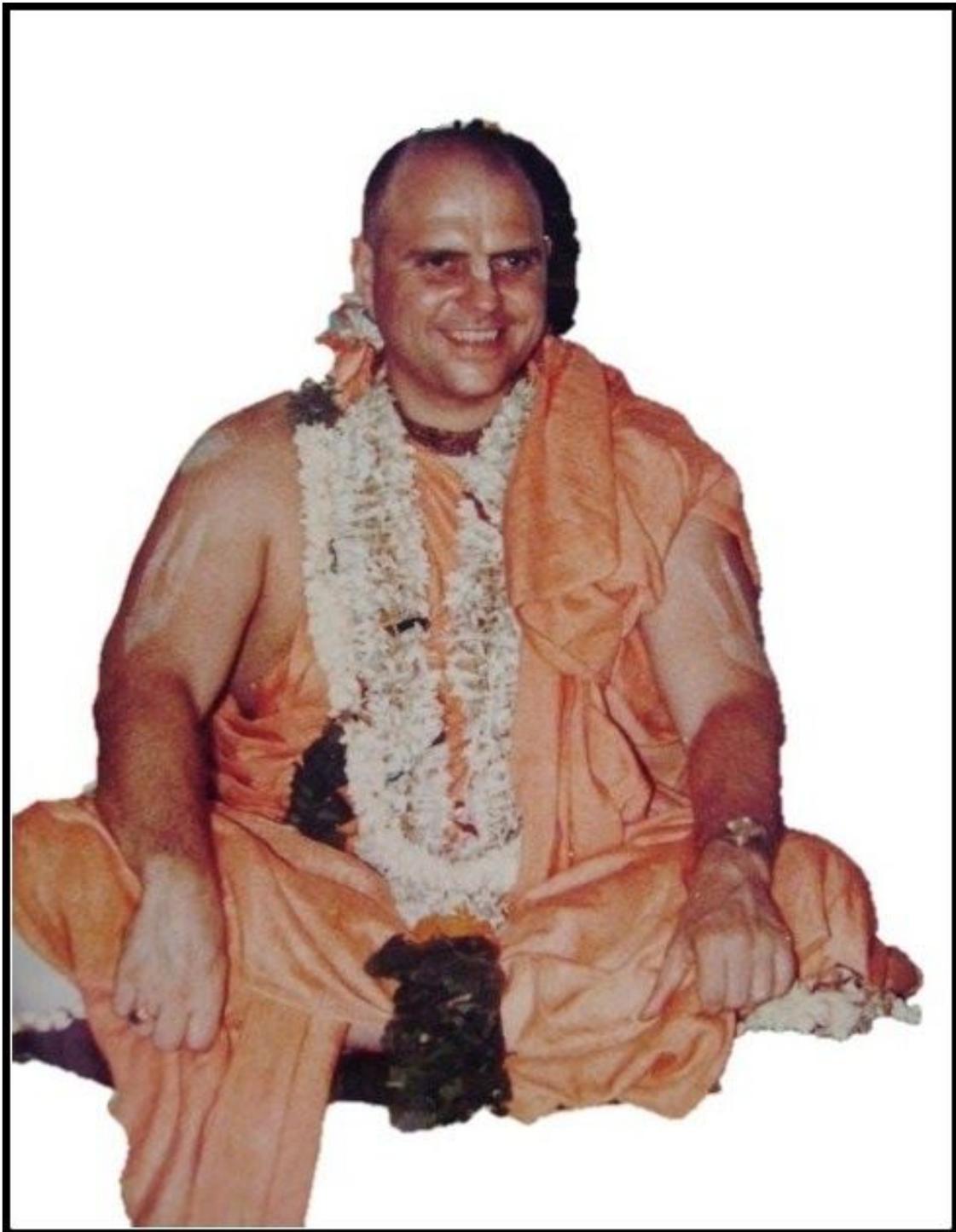
*The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal – Part 1
(An ecstatic ride across ancient spiritual
Bengal): Burdwan, Bankura & Kolkata
archives*

*- Diptiman Gaurahari das & Diptimayi
Vishnupriya devi dasi*

Owners of 'The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal' (www.thegaudiyatreasuresofbengal.com)

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About Us, Dedication & Acknowledgement:



*Nama om vishnu-padaya Krishna-preshthaya bhu-tale
Srimate Jayapataka Svamin iti namine
Nama acharya Padaya, Nitai Kripa Pradayine
Gaur Katha Dhama-udaya, Nagara Grama Tarine*

We dedicate this book and its contents unto our beloved spiritual master, HH Jayapataka Swami Guru Maharaja, whose blessings and empowerment has enabled us ineligible fools to take up this project and serve our acharyas to our heart's content. His Holiness has taught us how to love and engage oneself completely in the service of Sri Gaurasundara. An intimate associate of the Lord, he relentlessly executes his great services, not caring a bit for his advanced age or his difficult physical condition. His exemplary mood and instructions have been instrumental in us sustaining our spiritual lives. Just as the addition of a sugar crystal helps transform sugarcane juice into solid molasses, the causeless mercy of our Guru Maharaja has flooded our desert-like hearts with the ecstatic love of Sri Gaurahari. We hanker for his blessings and hope he accepts the offerings of us insignificant servants.



*nama om vishnu-padaya Krishna-preshthaya bhu-tale
srimate bhaktivedanta-svamin iti namine
namas te saraswate deve gaura-vani-pracharine
Nirvishesha-shunyavadi-pashchatya-desha-tarine*

We also dedicate this book to our dear spiritual grandfather and our beloved siksha Guru, His Divine Grace Abhaya Caranaravinda Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the greatest proponent of Krishna consciousness in this world.

Srila Prabhupada had established the 'Bhaktivedanta Swami Charity Trust' to unearth the holy pastime places of Gauda Mandala bhumi. In 1977, Srila Prabhupada appointed HH Jayapataka Swami Guru Maharaja as this Trust's chairman for life. From Jharu Thakura's Sripat in Hooghly to Krishnadasa Kaviraja's

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Sripat at Jhamatpura (Burdwan) to Haridas Thakura's residence in Phulia, we have noted how the 'Bhaktivedanta Swami Charity Trust' has played a key role in reviving these ancient spiritual sites. 'The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal' aspires to assist our Guru Maharaja and Srila Prabhupada in furthering their mission. During one of the conversations with his disciples in Mayapur, Prabhupada expressed how millions of Bengalis were by birth the followers of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He even predicted (Let there be a Temple - chapter 6 ; Srila Prabhupada Lilamrta) that a day would arrive when these Bengalis would recognize and take up Krishna consciousness as the pure form of their own culture. He added that once Bengal accepts Krishna consciousness, the whole of India would follow. And when India gets reformed, the whole world would follow in her footsteps. If this project manages to fulfill even a tiny portion of Srila Prabhupada's desires, we would consider ourselves successful and blessed.

Srila Krishnadasa Kaviraja mentions in his Caitanya Caritamrta, how simply by remembering the numerous associates of the Lord, one gets freedom from the entanglement of this material world. Such a person easily achieves the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, which is rare even for the greatest of the transcendentalists. He further explains that simply by remembering the holy names of these great personalities, one can achieve the fulfillment of all his desires.

*ei tina skandhhera kailun sakhara ganana
yan saba smarane bhava-bandha-vimochana
yan saba smarane pai Caitanya charana
yan saba smarane haya vanchita purana
(Caitanya Caritamrta, Adi, 12.91-92)*

'The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal' has been striving to seek shelter of such great personalities throughout its spiritual journey. It is only with this objective of receiving their mercy and sharing it with others, that we have set out from our homes, trying to reveal to the world the mood and esoteric pastimes of these great men. The life and teachings, of these stalwarts inspire us to imbibe the same values and principles in our own lives and we pray that they mercifully bless us, so that we may forever contemplate upon their blissful pastimes.

Without the vast Treasure house of books left behind by Srila Prabhupada, this project would never have seen the light of day. Guru Maharaja and Prabhupada's books and lectures have provided us with the much needed impetus, guidance and details to carry on. We did also go through a few books written by other authors in order to fetch some additional details. In this regard, we would like to especially thank Sri Rupa Vilasa das and Mr Baidyanath Bhowmick, whose books helped us enrich some of our articles.

We are very happy to inform you, that the team from 'The Gaudiya treasures of Bengal' have actually travelled to and visited all the various pastime places mentioned in this book . All the pictures that have been published here, are photographed by us. The content of each and every post has been carefully written and edited by our team members, who have worked tirelessly to make this project successful. In the course of our pilgrimage, we have been really fortunate to receive the association of numerous elevated souls who have dedicated their lives serving the holy Dhams. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to these devotees, without whose support and blessings, 'The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal' would not have been a reality.

We would like to also thank our parents (Mr Milon De & Mrs Priti De, Mr Tilak Biswas & Mrs Gopa Biswas) who have provided us with a good education and a nice upbringing. Their love and support has been pivotal in us trying to engage in the service of Sri Guru and Gauranga. We also thank all our friends and well wishers who have helped us in our endeavour. Last but not the least, we are exceedingly grateful to Google Maps for helping us navigate to remote corners of Bengal, without experiencing much difficulty.

About Us :



'The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal' is owned, managed and operated entirely by us, husband and wife - Diptiman Gaurahari Das (Dwaipayana De) & Diptimayi Vishnupriya Devi Dasi (Debdatta De). We are insignificant servants of our Guru Maharaja hankering for his causeless mercy. Diptiman Gaurahari is employed as a Senior software Engineer in a reputed MNC. Diptimayi Vishnupriya serves as a dutiful homemaker. We leave you with the below excerpt (from 'Kabe habe bolo Sedina Amara') that expresses the burning desires in our heart.

...

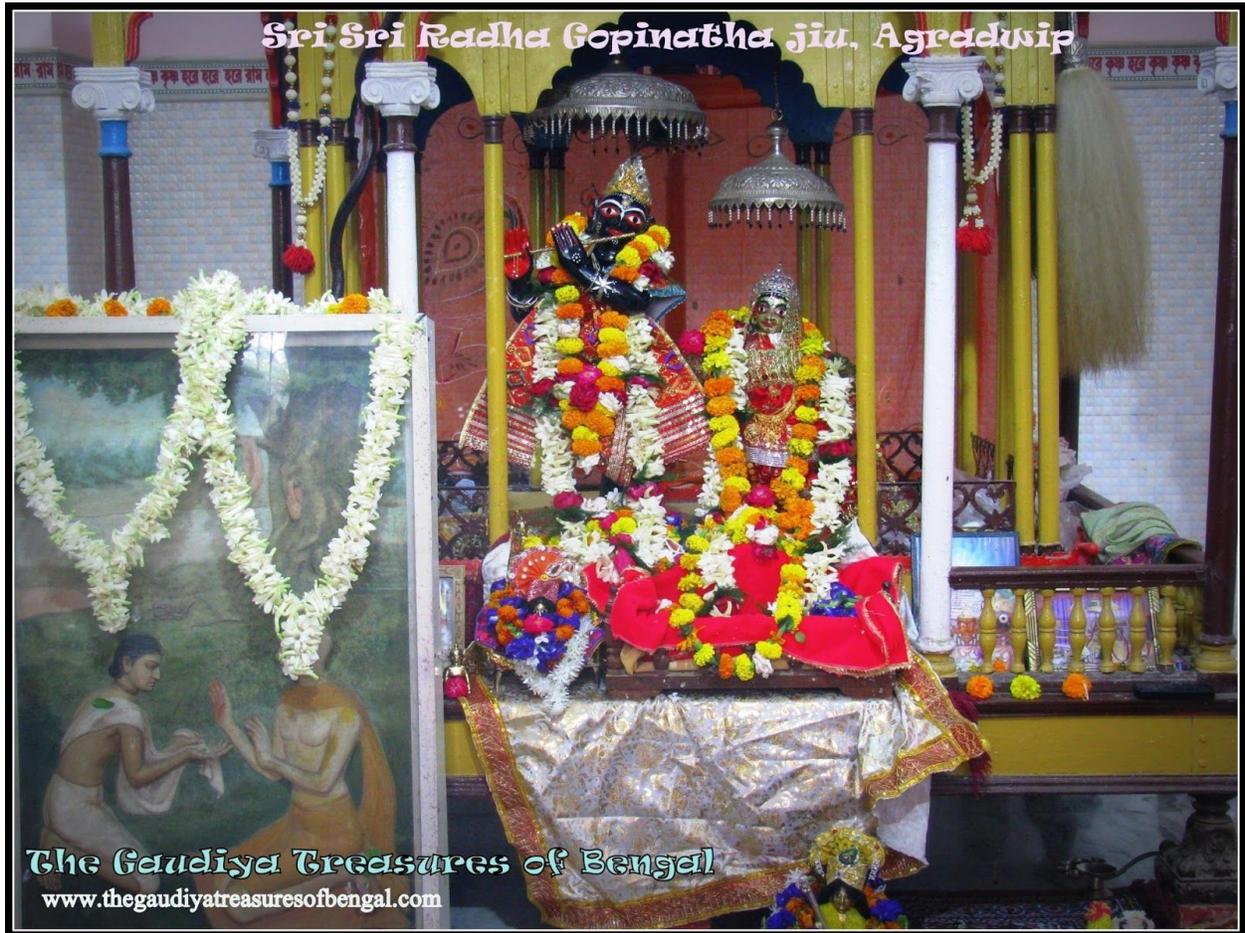
*kabe navadvipe, suradhuni tate,
gaura-nityananda boli' niskapate
naciya gaiya, beraibo chhute,
batulera praya chariya bichara
kabe nityananda, more kori doya,
chharaibe mora visayera maya
diya more nija-caranera chhaya,
namera haat-ete dibe adhikara*

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*kinibo, lutibo, hari-nama-rasa,
nama-rase mati hoibo bibasa
rasera rasika-carana parasa,
koriya mojibo rase anibar
kabe jibe doya, hoibe udaya,
nija-sukha bhuli' sudina-hridoya
bhakativinoda, koriya binoya,
sri-ajna-tahala koribe prachara*
Nitai Gaura Premanande , Hari Haribol !

Burdwan Archives

Sri Sri Radha Gopinatha jiu ,Agradwip



A few miles south of Katwa, on the bank of the holy Ganges, lies the beautiful town of Agradwip. The scenic beauty of this place is an absolute treat to the eyes. Our team from 'The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal', took a boat ride from the 'Agradwip ghat' to cross over to the other side of the river, in order to reach the temple of our beloved Radha Gopinatha jiu. The blissful breeze of the holy river, the heart-rending shelter of the captivating tall trees and the melodious tunes of the chirping birds are a perfect setting for the devotees to surrender themselves to the calls of the divine, and forever escape into the realm of transcendence.

Sri Radha Gopinatha jiu is the worshipable deity of Sri Govinda Ghosh, an eternal associate of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. For those who don't know, Lord Caitanya, is none other than the Supreme personality of Godhead who had descended about 500 years ago, in the city of Navadvipa, to reclaim the fallen souls and inaugurate

the congregational chanting of the holy names of the Lord (Please refer to the article - '*YogPeeth, Mayapur, Navadvipa - The birthplace of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu*'). The three brothers, Sri Govinda Ghosh, Vasu Ghosh and Madhava Ghosh assisted the Lord in performing His heart melting pastimes. Lord Caitanya, or Gauranga, as He is sometimes referred to, is worshipped as 'Maha Vadanyaya', or the most munificent incarnation of the Supreme Lord. This is because He gives freely what no one else, or no other incarnation of the Lord has given before- the pure ecstatic love of Krishna.

*namo maha-vadanyaya
krishna-prema-pradaya te
krishnaya krishna Caitanya
namne gaura-tvishe namah*

O most munificent incarnation! You are Krishna Himself appearing as Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu. You have assumed the golden color of Srimati Radharani, and You are widely distributing pure love of Krishna. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You.

About 20 kms west of Katwa, on the banks of the Ajay river, lies a village named 'Kulai'. It was in this village that the three stalwart vaishnavas, Sri Govinda Ghosh, Sri Madhava Ghosh and Sri Vasu Ghosh had mercifully appeared, and as a result of which this place had become sanctified and renowned all over the three worlds. These three brothers possessed a very melodious voice and their songs provided a lot of delight to Lord Gauranga and Nityananda who danced at their tunes (*Govinda Madhava Vasudeva teen bhai , Ya sabara kirtane nache Caitanya Nitai*).

At their house, in Kulai, stands a tall Neem tree, from whose wood Sri Narahari sarkar Thakura had later carved the three most beautiful deities of Lord Caitanya, depicting His dancing intoxicated form (Rasaraja Mahabhava). The tallest of the three famous deities is presently worshipped at Sri Gauranga bari, in Katwa (please refer to the article - '*Sri Gauranga Bari (katwa) - Where Mahaprabhu accepted Sannyasa*'). The shortest one resides at the house of Sri Narahari Sarkara Thakura at Srikhanda, where it is served with due diligence till this day (Please refer to this article - '*The Great Vaishnavas of Srikhanda*'). The third deity, which is neither the tallest nor the shortest, is presently being served at Ekachakra Dham. Ekachakra is a beautiful village, situated in the Birbhum district of West Bengal, and we have covered our visit to Ekachakra in a separate article entitled - '*Sri Ekachakra Dham - Birthplace of Lord Nityananda*'.

Sri Govinda Ghosh:

Few years after their father, Sri Ballava Ghosh, had shifted to Halisahar, in the north 24 parganas, the three brothers moved over to Navadvipa, where they fortunately received the priceless association of Lord Gauranga & Nityananda. All three of them were very dear and intimate associates of their lordships. Sri Gaura Gannodesha Dipika reveals that the three dearest sakhis of Vishakha Vraja Gopi, namely Kalavati, Rasollosa and Gunatunga, whose songs provided immense pleasure to Sri Radha and Krishna, had appeared as Sri Govinda Ghosh, Madhava Ghosh and Sri Vasu Ghosh respectively, in Mahaprabhu's pastimes. This has been confirmed elsewhere in Vaishnava acara darpana as well. We seek blessings of these great vaishnava acharyas that we may purify our existence by contemplating upon their esoteric pastimes.

In Sri Caitanya Caritamrta, Srila Krishnadasa Kaviraja reveals that Sri Govinda Ghosh was the leader of one of the seven groups who sang and danced in ecstasy during the Rathayatra in Puri. Sriman Mahaprabhu used to manifest Himself into seven forms and dance with each group at the same time, so that each of them felt that Mahaprabhu was with them. Junior Haridasa, Sri Vishnudasa, Raghava, and the brothers Madhava and Vasu Ghosh were the responding singers while Sri Vakresvara pandita was the lead dancer of this particular group led by Govinda Ghosh.

*Govinda ghosh - pradhana kaila ara sampradaya
haridasa, vishnudasa, raghava, yahan gaya
madhava, vasudeva ghosh, - dui sahodara
nritya karena tahan pandita vakresvara
(Sri Caitanya Caritamrta, Madhya, 13.42-43)*

Before we move over to the next section of this article, we would like to leave you with a heart melting composition of Sri Govinda Ghosh, which would help us get a glimpse of his intense love and devotion towards Mahaprabhu. This was a song that he had composed after the Lord had accepted His sannyasa initiation and hence it clearly reflects the grief stricken mood that had overcome the devotees as a result -

*Hedere Nadiya Basi, kara mukha chao,
Bahu prasariya Gorachande fero
To sabare ke ara karbe nija kare,
Ke yachiya dibe prema dekhiya katore
Ki shel hiyay, hay ki shel hiyay,*

*Purana putuli Navadvipa Chhari jaya
Ara na jaiba mora Gaurangera Pash,
Ara na kariba mora kirtane vilasa
Kandoye bhakta gana bukh bidariya,
Pashana Govinda Ghosh na jaya miliya*

Translation

O the residents of Nadiya, Whose face are you now staring at ?
Stretch your arms and bring back Sri Gorachand (Lord Gauranga)
Who else shall consider you as His own,
Who else shall mercifully bestow love of Godhead upon the weak and fallen.
Oh ! What a thunderous painful bolt has now struck our unfortunate lives ,
The most magnanimous Supreme Personality of Godhead is now leaving
Navadvipa
No longer shall i get the precious association of my dearest Gauranga,
No longer shall i relish kirtana anymore
All the devotees are crying tearing out their hearts,
Stone hearted Govinda Ghosh yet doesn't put an end to his existence
(Translation by 'The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal')

Sri Govinda Ghosh arrives at Agradwip:



Lord Caitanya ordered a number of devotees including Lord Nityananda to return to Bengal from Puri and take up the charge of preaching over there. Srila Vasudeva Ghosh, along with brother Madhava Ghosh, were also among those who were sent back. On returning, Sri Madhava Ghosh had established His Sripat (bhajana kutira) at Dainhat (near Katwa), while Srila Vasudeva Ghosh had settled down at Tamluk. 'The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal' has covered the pastimes of Sri Vasudeva Ghosh in a separate article entitled - '*Narpota, The Sripat of Sri Vasudeva Ghosh, Tamluk*'. However, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, did not send Sri Govinda Ghosh along with them. Hence Sri Govinda Ghosh continued to reside and enjoy the association of the Lord at Jagannatha Puri. (*ramadasa, madhava, ara vasudeva ghosh, Prabhu sange rahe Govinda paiya santosh*).

Later when Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, desired to travel to Vrindavana, Sri Govinda Ghosh accompanied the Lord in His pilgrimage. Mahaprabhu was residing at Jagannatha Puri during those days. The Lord also wanted to meet His mother and take darsana of the holy Ganges after a long time, and hence He decided to travel through Bengal. After meeting and consoling the devotees at Navadvipa, the lord continued on His journey. Following Him were thousands of people, who completely forgetting their thirst, hunger and personal comfort, participated in this yatra. Raising their arms and dancing in ecstasy, they followed the Lord wherever He

went. When the Lord reached Agradwip, He was greatly pleased to relish the natural beauty of this place. Selecting a serene location, on the bank of the Ganges, He rested with all the devotees and sanctified the surroundings with the chanting of the Lord's holy names. The place, where Lord Caitanya had rested, still exists and is very near to the Sri Radha Gopinatha jiu temple at Agradwip. Agradwip had also impressed the Lord very much as pure devotees resided at each and every home over here.

After the Lord had accepted His lunch prasadam, He asked His servant and intimate associate Sri Govinda Ghosh, for some haritaki fruit (a digestive mouth freshener that is commonly taken after meals). On hearing the Lord's orders, Sri Govinda Ghosh immediately took out the haritaki, that he had kept with him and offered it to Sri Caitanya. However Mahaprabhu was quite surprised at how Govinda Ghosh had fetched it so quickly. Sri Govinda Ghosh then clarified that He had kept the haritaki fruit with him since morning, as he knew that the Lord would require it after taking his lunch. Hearing this, the Lord seemed to get angry and chastised Sri Govinda Ghosh for his habit of accumulating and saving things for a later time. Lord Caitanya stressed that a devotee, especially those who are renounced, should completely depend on Krishna's mercy, and hence should not save for the future. Lord Caitanya then ordered Sri Govinda Ghosh to stay back at Agradwip and perform his bhajana over here. Sri Govinda Ghosh fainted on hearing this. On regaining his senses, he cried profusely and expressed how he would rather prefer to die rather than give up the association of the Lord. But we shall soon read below how this so called chastisement was actually the Lord's mercy upon Govinda Ghosh, His eternal associate. The Lord would utilize him as His tool to accomplish some very difficult services that shall forever glorify Sri Govinda in the pages of Gaudiya history.

Unable to bear the miserable plight of His dear devotee, Lord Caitanya consoled Sri Govinda Ghosh. The Lord then expressed how He wished to accomplish a very rare pastime here at Agradwip, the glories of which shall be sung for ages to come. The Lord then conveyed how the general people would get purified and their faith strengthened, just by contemplating and discussing this beautiful pastime. Sri Caitanya then reassured Govinda Ghosh with the following words before leaving him - *'Govinda ! you will never lose Me; For eternity you are Mine and I am yours. Very soon, you shall receive My association again , and once we meet, I shall leave you no more. So just bear a few days in My absence, and in the meanwhile I shall send you all the necessary instructions.'*

Manifestation of Gopinatha jiu:



Taking Mahaprabhu's orders to his heart, Sri Govinda Ghosh settled down at Agradwip. Day and night he meditated upon Sri Caitanya's lotus feet, and completely engaged himself in chanting the holy names of the Lord. The pious residents of Agradwip, now had the good fortune of serving and associating with a pure devotee, whom they lovingly began referring to as 'Ghosh thakura'. The association of Govinda Ghosh and his mercy ,spiritually uplifted the residents of Agradwip and transformed the land into Vaikuntha.

One day, while Sri Ghosh Thakura was taking his daily bath in the Ganges, some floating object touched his body. It appeared to be a burnt wood from the crematory. But when Sri Govinda tried to move it, it seemed to be very heavy; too heavy for a piece of floating wood. Anyways, pushing it aside, and completing his bath, our Ghosh thakura returned to his bhajana kutira (a small hut by the bank of the river). Later that night, Sri Gaurasundara appeared in his dream and revealed to him, that the floating object which Sri Govinda had discarded in the morning, was something very precious. He instructed him to fetch it from the water and keep it with him in his hut. Immediately on waking up, Sri Govinda Ghosh ran towards the Ganges, and to his relief, the object was still floating there. He picked it up and very carefully brought it into his hut. Thinking how the object was dear to Mahaprabhu, Sri Govinda Ghosh became immersed in a wave of ecstasy.

According to hearsay, Sri Mahaprabhu returned to Agradwip ,after a few days, to give His darsana to Sri Govinda Ghosh and fulfill His promise. Sri Govinda Ghosh, fell at the lotus feet of his Lord, and being united with Him,cried tears of joy. Then, by Lord Caitanya's supreme will, the divine architect, Sri Vishwakarma, himself came and carved the Gopinath deity out of the Saligrama sila, which Sri Govinda

Ghosh had initially mistaken to be a log of wood. The beauty of the deity mesmerised all of the three worlds. Whoever took His darsana, was bestowed with unlimited bliss and devotion. Sri Caitanya ,named the deity 'Gopinatha' and installed Him with His own hands at the bhajana kutira of Sri Govinda Ghosh, where the enchanting deity is worshipped till this day.The deity was a manifestation of Sri Govinda Ghosh's intense love for the Supreme. Lord Caitanya then explained to Sri Govinda, how Sri Gopinatha jiu and He are absolutely non-different and hence by serving Sri Gopinatha, he could actually reciprocate with Sri Gauranga.By associating with Sri Gopinatha jiu, Sri Govinda can forever enjoy the association of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. But understanding how Mahaprabhu's departure from Agradwip was imminent, Sri Govinda Ghosh broke down once again.He prayed to the Lord to take him along, but Sri Gauranga reminded him, that He had some amazing pastimes to unfold through him, and hence He desired Govinda Ghosh to stay back.

Sri Gopinatha jiu:

The captivating darsana of Sri Gopinatha has stolen away our hearts and has sowed the seeds of love ,upon the vast deserts of material existence that has infested our consciousness. O Gopinatha ! I long to return to Agradwip, to seek your shelter, to make You my very own, and to never leave You again !

Sri Govinda Ghosh began serving Sri Gopinatha, with his life and soul. In due course of time, following the orders of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Govinda Ghosh got married.His wife assisted him in serving Gopinatha jiu. The name and fame of Sri Gopinatha jiu spread far and wide, and people from distant lands came to Agradwip, to pay Him their obeisances. Within a short span of time, Sri Govinda Ghosh became the father of a beautiful baby boy,whom he named 'Gorachand'. But unfortunately, by the will of the Supreme, little Gorachand passed away in a few years. Unable to bear the loss of her son, Sri Govinda Ghosh's wife ,left the world untimely as well. Losing both wife and son, Sri Govinda Ghosh went into a state of utter grief and moroseness. Unable to bear the pain anymore, he completely abandoned accepting any food or water, and was determined to give up his life fasting. Amidst the chaos, the service of Sri Gopinatha jiu, got completely stopped. No Bhoga offerings were being made anymore. Unable to bear His thirst and hunger, the tearful Gopinatha, spoke to Sri Govinda Ghosh as follows : Addressing Sri Govinda Ghosh as His own father (as Sri Govinda worshipped the lord in vatsalya rasa), Sri Gopinatha jiu reminded him, that He had been fasting for the whole day. He had not even received a single drop of water. Sri Gopinatha jiu expressed that He was unable to bear His hunger anymore. Sri Gopinatha then reminded Sri Govinda, that all relationships of this world are bound to come to an end as life and death were eternal truths.He said that the birth and death of the persons in this world depend entirely on their karmic past. Everyone comes here to

enjoy their karma, and once finished, leave their bodies and move towards their next destination. Hence he should not be too overly grieved at the loss of his wife and son. Sri Gopinatha jiu then reminded Sri Govinda Ghosh, that He was his second son, and hence it was his duty to take care of Him as well.

In utter anguish, Sri Govinda Ghosh then asked Sri Gopinatha, as to what was the use of having Him as his son. He argued that it was not possible for Gopinatha to perform all the duties that a son has towards his father. He then asked whether Gopinatha would perform the pind-daan (last rites) after he had passed away. Performing Pind Daan or shraddha ceremony is one of the prime responsibility of a son towards his parents. On hearing this, Gopinatha jiu replied in the affirmative and confirmed that He would be performing all the necessary rituals for Sri Govinda Ghosh after he leaves his body. The Lord added that He would be performing Govinda Ghosh's Pind Daan not only for a few limited years, but instead for eternity. Hearing the soothing words of Gopinatha, Sri Govinda Ghosh calmed down, and he immediately got up to cook bhoga for the Lord. From that day onwards, Sri Govinda Ghosh resumed the services of Sri Gopinatha with renewed vigour and enthusiasm.

Years passed by and when the appropriate time arrived, Sri Govinda Ghosh left his body for the eternal abode of the Lord. He passed away in the month of Caitra (March-April) on the ekadashi tithi after Dol Purnima. Just like a son cries and feels pain when his father passes away, Sri Gopinatha jiu wept bitterly for Sri Govinda Ghosh. Streams of hot tears glided down from His beautiful eyes. The samadhi of Sri Govinda Ghosh is placed just beside the compound of the Gopinatha temple at Agradwip. Lord Gopinatha appeared in the dream of the temple priest that night and gave him appropriate instructions. Accordingly from the next day, Sri Gopinatha jiu was made to wear white clothes, for one continuous month until the pind daan ceremony was completed. On the day, when the pind-daan was to be performed, a huge number of people had gathered to experience the unique pastime of the Lord. Sri Gopinatha jiu, who was wearing kusha grass in His fingers, was brought over there, and He performed the necessary rituals with His own hands, to successfully complete the ceremony. Till this day, the pind-daan ceremony of Sri Govinda Ghosh is performed by Sri Gopinatha jiu, on his tirobhava tithi. A huge festival takes place during this time of the year at Agradwip. The festival is renowned as 'Agradwip mela' or 'Ghosh Thakurer mela', and thousands of devotees gather here from different parts of the world, to participate in this festival. The pious Mallicks (refer - *'The pious Mullicks of Bengal'*) who were the zamindars (landlord) of the area, have legally transferred the authority of the temple compounds and the adjoining lands unto Sri Gopinatha jiu.

A few things worth mentioning over here is that the pind-daan ceremony or performing one's last rites, is a necessity for those engaged in the affairs of this world for the pleasure of their own senses. It is done so that the departed soul receives an exalted destination in his next birth. However, for a pure devotee like Sri Govinda Ghosh, whose only concern is pleasing Krishna, does not require any

such ritualistic formalities. However, this unique pastime that lord Gopinatha manifests at Agradwip, is a lesson for the general populace, to show how far the Lord can go to serve His intimate devotee; how deep and personal a relationship between the lord and His devotee can be. Lord Gopinatha has been dutifully performing till this day, all the things that a son would do for his father.

*Samadhi tomb of Sri Govinda Ghosh,
Agrawip*



What to see:

1. Take Darsana of Sri Radha Gopinatha jiu, who was installed by Sri Caitanya mahaprabhu Himself.
2. Paying respect and obeisances at the samadhi tomb of Sri Govinda Ghosh.
3. The place at Agradwip, where Sri Mahaprabhu took rest, along with all the devotees.

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How to Reach:

You can take a train from Howrah/sealdah station to directly reach the Agradwip station (kolkata-Katwa line). The journey takes around 3.5 hours. This station shall arrive a few stops before you reach the Katwa junction station. From Agradwip, you might have to cross over the Ganges, to finally reach the Radha Gopinatha jiu temple. The glories of Agradwip shall be ever glorified in the pages of Gaudiya history.

Accommodation - One can choose to stay at Hotel Srabani in Katwa which is owned and governed by the local municipality. Agradwip and Katwa are quite near to each other. Or else, Navadvipa is hardly an hour and a half ride from Agradwip. So the devotees can also choose to stay at Navadvipa / Mayapur and then travel to take darsana of Sri Radha Gopinatha jiu in Agradwip.

If one stays in Katwa, one can avail prasadam at the 'Gauranga Bari temple'. Else if one stays in Navadvipa, then he/she can honor prasadam at Iskcon Mayapur or any of the Gaudiya Mathas.

Nearest major airport - Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport (Kolkata)

Nearest major Railway station - Agradwip

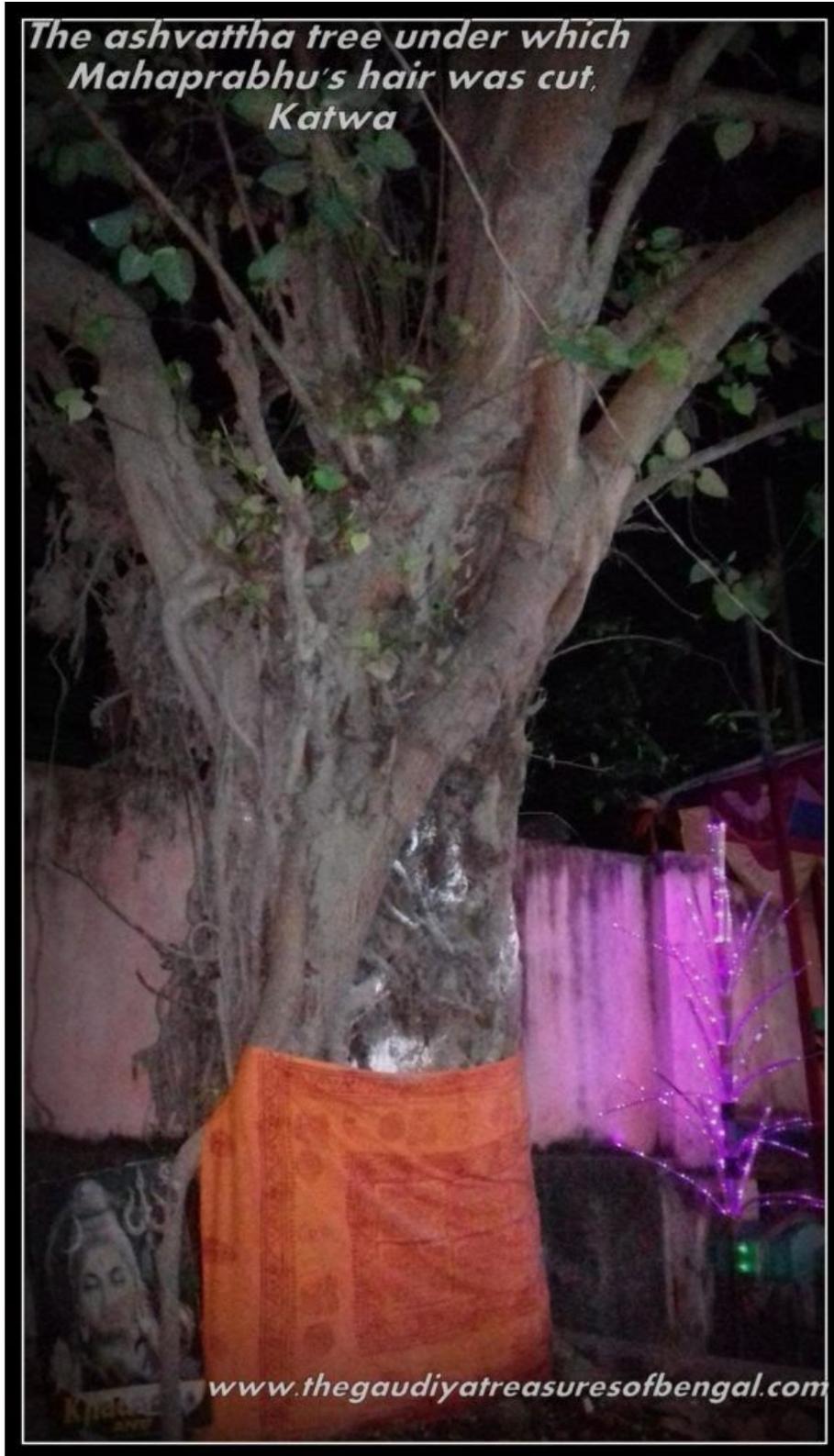
(Please note that we neither necessarily recommend these hotels/accommodation centers mentioned above nor do we guarantee that they will provide the required facilities/services to the visiting pilgrims. We are not in any way related to the governance of these hotels/accommodation centers. The visiting pilgrim is advised to choose an accommodation as per his own discretion)

Sri Gauranga Bari (katwa) - Where Mahaprabhu
accepted Sannyasa



It was here at Sri Gauranga Bari, that the supreme personality of Godhead, Sri Nimai pandita, was awarded with the sannyasa order of life by the eminent sannyasi ,Sri Keshava Bharati ,about 500 years ago, and was conferred with the new name ,Sri Krishna Caitanya. This is the same place where the beautiful hairs of Sri Nimai pandita were shaved off forever, by the barber named Madhu, who wept bitterly as did all the other devotees, who couldn't tolerate the Lord of their lives relinquishing His beautiful curly hair .That hair ,decorated with malati flowers , which previously in Dvapara, had enchanted the gopis and forced them to abandon their homes,families and everything in their possession; that same hair which Lord Brahma, Shiva and Narada used to greatly glorify ,was now abandoned. The team from 'The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal' considers itself supremely fortunate to have been able to arrive and take darsana here at Sri Gauranga bari, on the auspicious occasion of Sri Gaura purnima and participate wholeheartedly in the celebrations. We have covered the appearance pastime of Sri Gaurahari in a separate article entitled - '*YogPeeth, Mayapur, Navadvipa - The birthplace of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu*').

Lord Gaurasundara's head shaving and sannyasa ceremony took place during the auspicious constellation of Makara Sankranti,in the month of Magh, here at Gauranga Bari,in Katwa. Instead of picking up his razor, the barber Madhu, sat hanging his head between his hands and cried profusely.Madhu could realize that Sri Nimai pandita was the Supreme Lord and he requested Him again and again to reconsider His decision of accepting the sannyasa order. We have covered in detail the pastimes of Madhu, the barber ,in a separate article entitled- '*Sakhi Akhra and Madhai Tala ,Katwa*'.



Even Sri Keshava Bharati urged Mahaprabhu to rethink about His decision. But Mahaprabhu was determined. Sri Nityananda Prabhu and all the other devotees

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who were present, as if gave up their lives in grief. The demigods, who also witnessed the events incognito, shed their tears. Even the bricks and stones, melted from within.

Meanwhile ,as the news of Mahaprabhu's sannyasa spread far and wide, the people of Nadia felt as if they had been struck with a bolt of lightning.Saci Mata and Vishnupriya devi fell onto the ground and began crying piteously. Being bereft of full consciousness , they repeatedly cursed their lives.Holding onto a garland of Sri Vishwambhar,Srimati Vishnupriya wanted to enter into a fire and burn herself to death.Banging her hands onto her heart,Saci Mata repeatedly called out "Nimai, Nimai ! ". A faint sound of "Nai, Nai !" ('Nai' means not present) as if echoed back from the "Nidayar Ghat" (the merciless bank from which Nimai had crossed over the Ganges to leave for Katwa) .Beloved Nimai Pandita was no more in Nadia. Poet Premdas curses this merciless Nidayar Ghat as follows -

*ore devi nirdaya haiya jeman, nimai-ye karili par sannyasa karana
tai tor e ghat er nam aji hotey, nirdaya ghat haila janiha nischite
"Oh goddess (Ganga)! Being heartless, as you have allowed Nimai to cross
over forever for sannyasa, you know for certain that this ghat of yours
shall remain defamed from this day as Nirdaya Ghat" (nidaya or
nirdaya- heartless, merciless; ghat - bank of river).*

Finally, at the end of the day ,Sri Gaurasundara's captivating hairs were shaved. The tearful Madhu threw off his razors in the Ganges and vowed never to use it again.He cursed the profession, which induced him to perform such a ghastly offense. From that day onwards, Madhu Napit (barber) became Madhu Moira (sweet maker) and spent his days meditating upon the blissful form of Sri Gaurasundara.



Lord Vishwambhar then bathed in the Ganges. Upon returning, He seated Himself at the designated place so that the initiation ceremony could begin. The Lord informed Keshava Bharati that a great personality had appeared in His dream and had uttered a sannyasa mantra to Him. He then whispered the mantra in the ears of Keshava Bharati, and in this way, the Lord, very cleverly initiated Keshava Bharati before he could initiate Sri Gauranga. Sri Keshava Bharati then uttered the same mantra in the ears of the Lord thereby awarding Him sannyasa. The Lord then accepted the ekadanda sannyasa stick and kamandulu. Upon seeing this the assembly exploded with loud chanting of the Lord's holy names. The beauty of the Lord, dressed in saffron, decorated with the marks of tilaka adorning His body, surpassed that of millions of cupids.



Only five devotees accompanied the Lord to witness His sannyasa initiation - Nityananda prabhu, Mukunda Datta, Chandrasekhara Acharya, Brahmananda and Gadadhara Pandita. Under the influence of Devi Saraswati, Sri Keshava Bharati, awarded Nimai with the name- 'Krishna Caitanya'. This name was befitting the most magnanimous Lord, as He induced one and all to chant the holy names of Sri Krishna thereby awakened their dormant consciousness (Caitanya). Lord Caitanya was inundated with Krishna prema and began roaring very loudly. Tears of love flowed without cessation from His reddish eyes. He sang and danced in ecstasy. Sri Caitanya embraced His spiritual master, Sri Keshava Bharati, who then also joined in the sankirtana and danced with Him all night.

*Paiya prabhura anugraha alingana
Bharati-r prema-bhakti haila takshan
(Sri Caitanya bhagavata)*

The devotees cried, laughed and rolled over the ground being completely devoid of external consciousness. Those fortunate souls who could witness the sannyasa initiation ceremony of the Lord became intoxicated with the love of Godhead. One

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such person was Gangadhara Bhattacharya, a brahmin, who being overwhelmed kept constantly crying "Ha Caitanya! Ha Caitanya ! Krishna Caitanya!" . Such was his intoxication in divine love for Mahaprabhu, that people nicknamed him as 'Caitanya Das'. He and his wife lakshmi priya devi were blessed by Lord Caitanya, and as a result these fortunate souls could subsequently become the proud parents of Sri Srinivasa Acharya, the manifestation of Mahaprabhu's ecstasy. 'The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal' has covered the birth and pastimes of Srinivasa Acharya in a separate article entitled - 'Sri Srinivasa Acharya's Sripat, Jajigram (Near Srikhanda, Katwa)'

The Deities :

Sri Narahari Sarkar Thakura, who was a resident of the nearby Srikhanda village, had carved three very beautiful deities of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, in order to reinject life into the devotees who were greatly saddened hearing the news of Mahaprabhu's sannyasa. All these three deities depicted Sri Mahaprabhu ,in His previous ashrama,before He had accepted the sannyasa order. These deities depicted the Lord in His intoxicated enchanting dancing form (Rasaraja Mahabhava). All the three deities were carved out of Neem wood. (We have covered the life and pastimes of Sri Narahari Sarkar in a separate article entitled - 'The Great Vaishnavas of Srikhanda').

Out of these three deities, the one that was the tallest was sent to Sri Gadadhara Das, so that he could serve Him here at Sri Gauranga Bari. Sri Gadadhara Das constructed this Gauranga Bari temple ,at this sacred place, and began the daily worship of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. This captivating deity ,being worshipped here, is also known as Bara Gauranga or Bara Thakura ("Bara" means "Big" in Bengali).

*Barathakura Bara rupa Kaha nahi jai,
Jara akarshane e tina bhuvana bhulaye*

The great beauty of Sri Bara Thakura cannot be expressed in mere words.

His attraction intoxicates all of the three worlds.

(Translated by "The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal")

Just beside the deity of Lord Caitanya, is a mesmerizing deity of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, who here manifests His threefold bending form, and plays His flute in the mood of Sri Balarama. Along with Sri Gaur Nitai, a small beautiful deity of Sri Jagannatha jiu is also worshipped in the altar.

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End of preview