

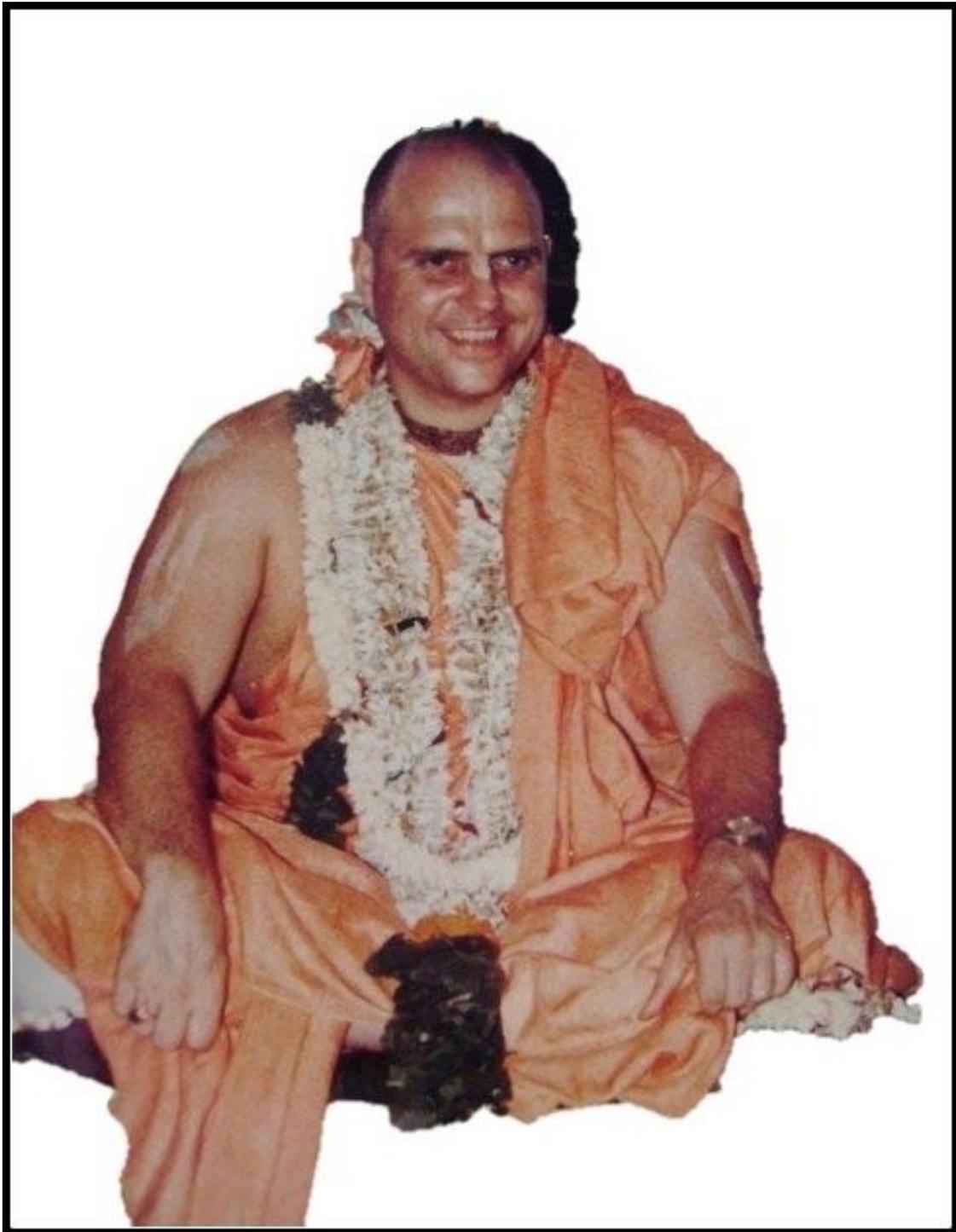
*The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal – Part 3
(An ecstatic ride across ancient spiritual
Bengal): Nadia & Kalna Archives*

*- Diptiman Gaurahari das & Diptimayi
Vishnupriya devi dasi*

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About Us, Dedication & Acknowledgement:



*Nama om vishnu-padaya Krishna-preshthaya bhū-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 bhū-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 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

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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*

*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 !

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Nadia Archives - Navadvipa

**YogPeeth, Mayapur, Navadvipa - The birthplace of Sri Caitanya
Mahaprabhu :**



*"What one attains by travelling to all the holy places is attained just by remembering the
transcendental abode of Navadvipa" -
Navadvipa Dham Mahatmya*

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead ,had mercifully appeared here at Yogpeeth (in Mayapur) about 500 years ago (in the year 1486 AD), to bless us with the most wonderful,deep and ecstatic pastimes of Gaura lila. The word 'Yoga' means `connection' and the term 'Yogpeeth' represents the place where the Supreme Lord connects with or descends into this material world.The identity of Lord Caitanya as the Supreme Personality of Godhead can be verified in a number of Vedic scriptures like Srimad Bhagavatam,Mahabharata, Garuda Purana,Nrsimha Purana, Padma purana,Bhavishya

Purana, Narada Purana etc. We are quoting just two of such references below, for the pleasure of the devotees.

*aham purno bhavisyami yuga sandhyau visesatah
mayapure navadvipe bhavisyami saci sutah
(Garuda Purana)*

Translation - *In the future, in first part of Kali yuga, I shall appear in my complete spiritual form at Mayapura, Navadvipa and become the son of Saci.*

The mission of the Lord, along with a description of His golden complexion and how He descends along with His confidential associates in this age of Kali, to inaugurate the Sankirtana Yajna is revealed in Srimad Bhagavatam (Bhagavata purana) -

*Krishna varnam tvishakrishnam sangopangastra-parsadam
yajnaih sankirtana prayair yajanti hi sumedhasah
(Srimad Bhagavatam 11.5.32)*

External reasons of Lord Caitanya's appearance :

Lord Caitanya though, except for a few rare occasions, had never revealed His identity as the Supreme Lord. He forever remained absorbed in the mood of a devotee. There were several reasons for Lord Caitanya to appear in this world which have been revealed in detail by Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami in his nectarian composition, Sri Caitanya Caritamrta. He writes that Sri Krishna after enacting the sweet pastimes of Vrindavana, pondered over how He had not bestowed the science of unalloyed devotion unto the Supreme, for a long long time. The entire world worships Him in a mood of reverence, strictly following the rules and regulations ordained in the scriptures. However such a worship does not please Him very much, as spontaneous loving attachment, which is the very essence of a relationship, is absent in such a worship.

*Aishwarya jnanete saba jagat misrita
Aishwarya sithila preme nahi mora prita
(Caitanya Caritamrta, adi -3.16)*

The general populace is very much aware of the six absolute opulences of the Supreme Lord (strength, beauty, wealth, knowledge, fame, renunciation) and hence they visualize and worship the Lord reverentially in His opulent form. Though one who worships this opulent form of the Lord achieves liberation and a destination in the Vaikuntha planets (spiritual world), yet such a person, is largely ignorant of the ecstatic sweet mellows as experienced by the elevated devotees of Vrindavana. The devotees of Vrindavana are always immersed in a mood of spontaneous loving relationship with the Supreme. The Lord now wanted to freely bestow this Supreme benediction of unalloyed devotional service, the highest ecstasy of spirituality, the treasure of the residents of Vrajabhumi, to one and all. He wanted to distribute this Supreme science of Krishna consciousness, receiving which nothing else remains to be achieved, to all the fallen souls of this age of Kali, irrespective of their caste, creed or qualification. Encapsulating this deep mood and mission of the Lord, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura sings -

*atyanta durlabha prema karibare dana,
sikhaya sharanagati bhakatera prana*

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To bestow this most rare form of divine love, Sri Caitanya teaches us to surrender, which is the life of all the devotees.

Lord Caitanya is hence also referred to as 'Maha vadanya' or the most munificent ,as He is the most merciful incarnation of the Supreme.

At the same time, the Lord also desired to associate with His devotees who were suffering intensely being bereft of His association. Advaita Acharya, one of His intimate associates, began regularly worshipping the Supreme Lord ,with Tulasi and Ganges water, calling for Him to descend (refer - '*Sri Advaita Acharya's Sripat ,Santipur*'). The sincere pleas of Advaita Acharya was also one of the reasons that caused the descent of the munificent Lord.

Confidential Reasons for Lord Caitanya's appearance:

Apart from propagating the holy names of the Supreme Lord (Krishna) and the science of unconditional devotional service, there was another confidential reason why Lord Caitanya had descended in this world.The Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Krishna possessed an intense desire to relish the supreme transcendental bliss that Srimati Radharani experienced by serving Him. Krishna is the Supreme Enjoyer, however, Srimati Radhika, the Supreme enjoyed, experiences a higher degree of ecstasy by serving Sri Krishna.This is something that bewildered even the Supreme Lord and He wanted to experience this first hand, in order to properly appreciate Radharani's position. He also wanted to understand the transcendental mellow of Himself and how He was a reservoir of all sweetness that drove His devotees crazy.Hence taking up the mood (bhava) and the golden bodily complexion (kanti) of Srimati Radharani, Sri Krishna descended as Lord Caitanya in this holy land of Navadvipa.Navadvipa was perceived and created by Srimati Radharani Herself to provide pleasure to Her worshipable master. Sri Caitanya's heart was an image of Srimati Radhika's emotions - greatly turbulent with the feelings of union (sambhoga) and separation (vipralambha) with Krishna. Hence, it is stated that there is no difference between Lord Caitanya and the combination of Sri Krishna and Srimati Radharani (*Sri Krishna Caitanya ,Radha Krishna Nahe anya*). Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura exclaims that Sri Caitanya is not simply Krishna or simply Radhika. Instead, He is the intense embrace of Sri Radha and Krishna. Such is the intensity of their embrace that that the divine couple becomes inseparable and merges into one form. Sri Krishna is then ornamented with the deep mood of Radharani and gets completely covered by Her bodily effulgence.Such is the Supreme position of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

One should however not confuse these transcendental emotions with the feelings that we experience in our day to day life in relation to other people or any object.It must be pointed out here, that both union and separation from the Supreme Lord produces different states of ecstasy within a devotee.In fact the ecstasy in the mood of separation from the Supreme, is even higher than that in union.This is exactly opposite to what we experience in relation to the petty things of this material world.These uncontrollable feelings became more and more manifested within Lord Caitanya as His pastimes progressed.During the later stages of His pastime at Gambhira (where Sri Caitanya resided in Puri) , He was so greatly obsessed with the madness of separation from Krishna, that He exhibited the highest symptoms of ecstasy.

pastimes of Sri Gauranga's childhood (balya), early boyhood (Pauganda), later boyhood (Kaishore) and youth (yauvana), the Lord enchanted the pious residents of Navadvipa dham with His heart melting pastimes. It was during these years that the Lord had manifested the blissful pastimes of His marriage (refer - *'The worshipable deity of Srimati Vishnupriya devi-Sri Dhameswar Mahaprabhu Temple, Navadvipa (Koladvipa)'*). The mesmerizing sankirtana pastimes at the house of His eternal associate, Sri Srivasa Pandita, also occurred during this time (refer - *'Srivasa Angan, Mayapur, Navadvipa - Part 1: where Lord Gaurahari eternally performs His ecstatic pastimes'*).

It is only by the causeless mercy of the Supreme Lord that one gets the rare opportunity to gain entrance into this cintamani (spiritual) dham of Navadvipa and associate with its pious residents. This land is mingled with the dust of the Lord's lotus feet, and it is only by the blessings of our spiritual master and the mercy of Sri Gaurasundara, that 'The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal' attempts to write a few lines in its glorification.

The Lord appears at Yogpeeth:



Jagannatha Misra and Saci mata, were the Supremely fortunate parents of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the deliverer of the three worlds. The Lord appeared from the womb of mother Saci, on the full moon night of Phalguna (Feb-March) in the year 1486 AD. Saci mata and Jagannatha Misra were no ordinary souls. Sri Gaura Gannodesha Dipika reveals that Saci mata was the combined incarnation of the potencies of Devaki, Yashoda, Aditi and Kaushalya. While Nanda Maharaj, Vasudeva (the king of yadus), Dasaratha, and Kasyapa

muni combined to incarnate as Jagannatha Misra, Nimai's father. The ancestors of Jagannatha Misra were originally the residents of Sylhet (situated presently in Bangladesh). Srimati Saci devi had conceived eight daughters before but unfortunately all of them died mysteriously just after their birth. Thereafter Saci mata conceived Visvarupa, Nimai's elder brother in her womb, and after His birth, both parents were a bit relieved. Visvarupa, was an expansion of Lord Balaram, and He had prepared the womb to then receive the Supreme Lord. Thereafter Jagannatha Misra, saw a dream in which he could see a radiant light enter into his heart and then go over to the heart of Saci mata before passing onto her womb. He told her about this dream and understood that a great person was about to be born to them. Things changed overnight. The body of Saci mata became very effulgent and people started respecting and offering gifts to Jagannatha Misra wherever he went. Meanwhile the demigods came over to Yogpeeth in order to offer their prayers unto the Supreme Lord, who now rested in the womb of Srimati Saci devi. They prayed for His mercy and hankered to witness His magnanimous pastimes.

Sri Nilambar Chakravarti, Saci devi's father, was a renowned astrologer in his days, and correctly predicted that her daughter, Saci devi, would give birth to the Supreme Lord, in the thirteenth month of her pregnancy, when all the planets had arranged themselves in the most auspicious position. Seeing the astrological chart of the child he proclaimed that the child was no ordinary and would excel even Brihaspati in His scholarship. Noticing the presence of all the divine symptoms, He understood that the Supreme Personality of Godhead was about to enact His appearance pastime in the house of his daughter.

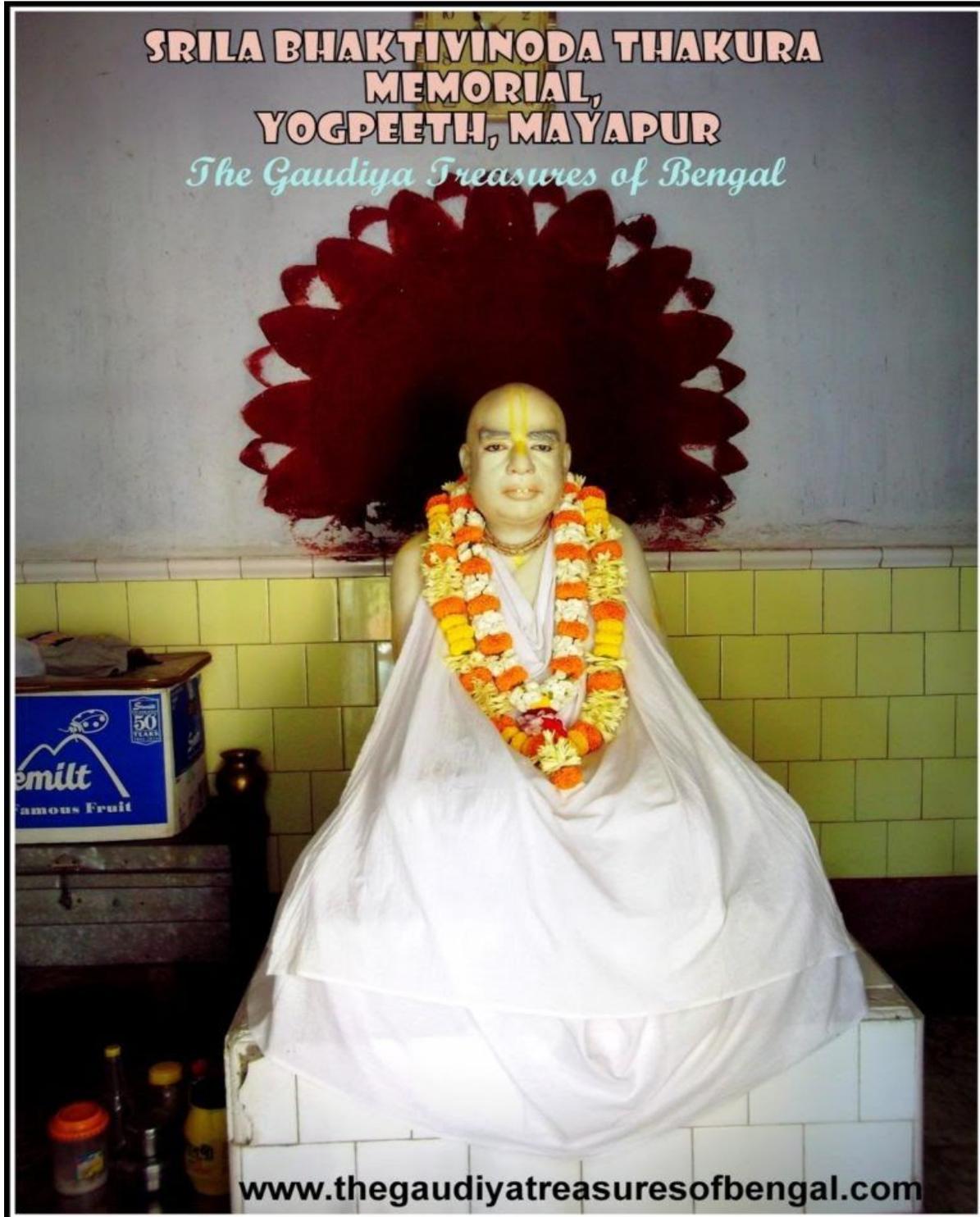
According to Sri Gaura Gannodesha Dipika, Sri Nilambar Chakravarti was the incarnation of Sri Garga Muni, who in Krishna's pastimes was the family priest of the Yadus. 'The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal' has covered its visit to the house of Sri Nilambar Chakravarti in a separate article entitled - 'Sri Nilambar Chakravarti's residence, Belpukur, Navadvipa (Simantadvipa)'.

When the time for the Lord's appearance finally arrived, there was a total lunar eclipse in Mayapur. Some say, that the Lord had actually appeared after the moon had regained its lustre, having been devoured and cleansed by rahu. But Sri Caitanya Caritamrta explains that the real reason for the lunar eclipse, was that there was no need for a contaminated moon with spots all over its body to be visible at a time when the spotless Supreme Lord, had Himself mercifully descended upon this world to give His darsana.

*A-kalanka Gauracandra dila darshana
Sa-kalanka candre ara kon proyojona
(Caitanya caritamrta, Adi - 13.91)*

The Lord was born while the moon was in Leo (simha rashi) and while Leo was in its ascendance (simha lagna). All the other planets were very strongly positioned as well. As there was a lunar eclipse, all the people of Navadvipa, as per the prevalent customs, came over to bathe in the holy Ganges and chanted the Hare Krishna Mahamantra. The non-hindus, jokingly ridiculed them by imitating and chanting the holy names of Lord Krishna as well. The entire earth became very jubilant and the demigods joined in the celebrations by dancing and glorifying the Supreme Lord. Thus Sri Caitanya induced one and all to chant the holy names of Lord Hari, soon after taking His birth, providing a glimpse of His future mission.

Bhaktivinoda Thakura reveals the birthplace of Mahaprabhu:



Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura (1838-1914), who had been one of the revolutionary acharyas of our sampradaya, and who happened to be the deputy district magistrate and deputy Collector during his days, made a sincere effort to re-establish the actual birthplace of Lord

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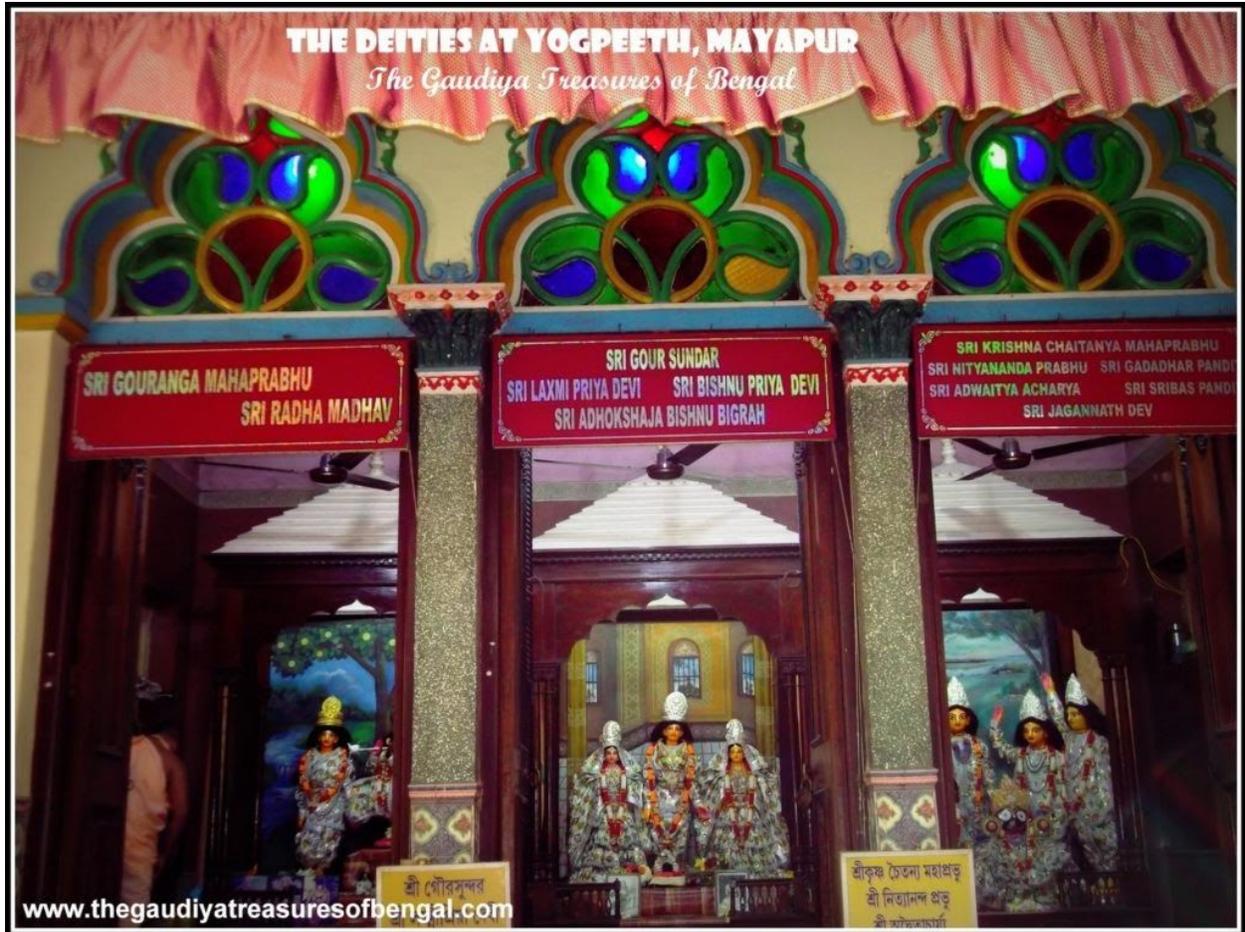
Caitanya. 'The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal' has covered the life and pastimes of Srila Bhaktivinoda in a separate article entitled - '*Remembering Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura at Svananda Sukhada Kunja & Surabhi Kunja, Navadvipa (Godrumadvipa)*'. After the disappearance of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu , gradually the essence of Suddha Bhakti (pure devotion), as preached by the Lord, got lost. Various apa sampradayas (non-bona fide religious groups and pseudo devotees) and sahajiyas (who reduce the conclusions of pure Bhakti to cheap sense gratification) gained prominence and bewildered the general populace with their incorrect preaching and false representation of our movement. No one even correctly knew the identity of Mahaprabhu's birthplace during those days.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, was a renowned and recognised scholar in his days, with vast knowledge in english,bengali,hindi,oriya and sanskrit.He was a member of the royal asiatic society of London. He heralded a painstaking search for Sri Caitanya's birthplace.One day while he was meditating upon the holy name,sitting on a rooftop in Navadvipa, he noticed a tall palm tree in Mayapura emitting remarkable effulgence. Later he intensively searched old manuscripts, authorized scriptures,old maps and held detailed discussions with elderly people of the area.He finally came to the conclusion that the place he had seen emitting effulgence the other day, was actually the long lost birthsite of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

*Navadvipa madhye mayapura name sthan
Yathaya janmilen gauracandra bhagavan
(Bhakti Ratnakara)*

In the center of navadvipa, there is a place called Mayapura. It was here at Mayapura that the Supreme Lord Gaurachandra took His birth.

To confirm his findings, Srila Bhaktivinoda requested his siksa guru, Srila Jagannatha Das babaji Maharaja, who was 142 years old at that time, to come and verify the site of Mahaprabhu's appearance. Srila Jagannatha das Babaji was the most advance rasika devotee of his time (refer - '*The Samadhi and Bhajana Kutira of Srila Jagannatha Das Babaji ,Navadvipa (Koladvipa)*'). Due to his advanced age, he could not see or walk and had to be carried within a basket by his servant from one place to another. When Srila Jagannatha das babaji was brought to Yogpeeth, he however leapt up from his basket, jumping high in the air and began to dance in an ecstasy of Gauranga prema, thus confirming the findings of the thakura.Srila Jagannatha Das Babaji began joyously singing - "*Ei to Nimai Janmabhoomi !*"(This is the Birthplace of Nimai !).Thereafter Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura re-established this ancient site of Yogpeeth in the year 1893 AD and constructed the suitable shrines that continue to adorn the eternal home of the Supreme Lord.



At this point, it is worthwhile giving a few references from the revealed scriptures, which also confirm Yogpeeth being the birthplace of Sri Gaurahari, as there are a few people in Bengal who refuse to accept this fact.

Sri Vrindavana das Thakura reveals in Caitanya Bhagavata, the exact route traversed by Lord Caitanya and His associates, at Navadvipa, during the massive sankirtana procession that took place intending to teach Chand kazi (local magistrate) a lesson. Lakhs of devotees participated in this sankirtana, in which the residents of Navadvipa attained the same bodily features to those of the residents of Vaikuntha. This pastime is described in detail in another of our articles entitled - 'Srivasa Angan & Samadhi of Chand Kazi, Mayapur - Part 2'. So in order to describe this pastime, Sri Vrindavana das reveals that the procession gradually moved from Mahaprabhu ghat (near His house, where He used to daily bathe) -> Madhai ghat -> barakona Ghat -> Nagariya Ghat -> Simulia -> Kazi's house. Thus the location of Lord Caitanya's house can easily be discerned from the location of Kazi's house and that of other renowned ghats (banks) of the area that still exist. Since we already know that the house of Chand Kazi was in Simulia, where his tomb still stands tall, and is worshipped by devotees till this day, the location of Sri Caitanya's house at Yogpeeth is confirmed herein.

*gangatire path ache nadiya
age sei pathe nachi jay gaura-raye
apanar ghate age bahu nritya kari
tabe madhai-er ghate gela Gaurahari*

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*barokona ghate nagaria ghate giya
ganganagar diya gela simulia
nadiar ekante nagar simulia
nachite nachite prabhu uttarila gia
(Sri Caitanya Bhagavata)*

Also, this whole pastime had occurred in the first place as Chand Kazi had broken the devotees' mridangas (drums) and obstructed them while they were peacefully performing their sankirtana at Srivasa Angan. As a result of this incident, Srivasa Angana is still renowned as *khol bhanga danga* (*khol - mridanga, bhanga - to break, danga - land*) till this day. The massive procession was organized by Mahaprabhu as a protest to the Kazi's actions. Now, the house of Srivasa pandita (which was a stone's throw from the house of Lord Caitanya) as it stands today, is hardly a kilometer away from the house of the Kazi at Kazipara (in Simulia). Hence it is quite possible that the loud kirtanas of the vaishnavs at night, here at Srivasa Angan, disturbed the envious Kazi or his associates, who resided nearby. Hence it is very much likely that Lord Caitanya's house was indeed at Yogpeeth. Instead if the house of Mahaprabhu had been at Kankhara Math in Ramchandrapura, on the other side of the Ganges, as some people claim, then it is quite unlikely for even the loudest kirtana to reach Simulia, as this place is a comfortable 6 Kms away. If Mahaprabhu had indeed stayed at Ramchandrapura, then He would have had to cross the river along with His thousands of associates in order to reach the house of the Kazi at Simulia. But nothing as such is mentioned in the authoritative scriptures.

Also the famous Nidayar ghat (bank), which the Lord had used to cross over the Ganges, to reach Katwa, in order to accept His sannyasa (refer - '*Sri Gauranga Bari (katwa) - Where Mahaprabhu accepted Sannyasa*'), is very far away from Ramchandrapura. Instead the bank of Nidaya is quite near to Yogpeeth, and hence it is only logical that the Lord would use this bank to cross over the river at night. Thus, it is scripturally as well as logically settled, that Yogpeeth is the eternal residence of our beloved Gaurasundara. There are several more evidences that we can put forward in this regard, but 'The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal' does not wish to delve too much into this, as it would make the article unnecessarily lengthier.

We worship the lotus feet of our spiritual master, whose causeless mercy has empowered us ineligible fools, to gain entrance and take up service in this sacred land of Mayapur. We seek shelter of this transcendental abode, and pray that its glories remain forever imprinted in our heart. 'The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal' offers millions of obeisances and humbly prays to Lord Caitanya, mother Saci and Jagannatha Mishra that we advance in our bhakti, develop attachment unto their lotus feet and are able to serve them by our honest and sincere efforts. We seek their blessings and compassion in successfully rendering this humble service of reciting the pastimes and revealing the pastime places of the Lord and His beloved associates. We shall consider ourselves greatly fortunate and our existence meaningful if Lord Gaurahari and our dear spiritual master are kindly pleased with our endeavours.

What to See :

1. The Neem Tree under which Lord Gaurahari had appeared in this world.
2. Deities of Gauranga, Vishnupriya and LakshmiPriya
3. Deities of Jagannatha Misra and Saci mata with little Nimai in her lap

4. While digging the foundation of this temple, an ancient deity of Adhokshaja Vishnu was uncovered, who is worshipped here till this day. It is in all probability the worshipable household deity of Sri Jagannatha Misra.
5. Behind the temple, on the other side, are worshipped the deities of Sri Lakshmi Narasimha and Sri Gaura-Gadadhara
6. The Pushpa samadhi of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, at the entrance of the temple.

How to Reach :

Mayapur lies within Antardvipa, the sacred island at the junction of Jalangi (yamuna) and the Ganges. Mahavana, situated at the very center of Vrindavana, the highest spiritual realm, is non different to Mayapur. Navadvipa is like a beautiful lotus flower with its eight islands assuming the shape of eight petals. Antardvipa, the ninth and the best of the islands, is situated as the central whorl of this lotus like transcendental abode.

One travelling from kolkata is advised to board a Krishnanagar local train from the Sealdah station. On reaching Krishnanagar, one can book a toto (auto) to take him to the Krishnanagar Ghat. From the Krishnanagar Ghat(bank) one can avail a five minutes ferry ride to reach the Mayapur Hulor Ghat. From the mayapur Ghat one can take a toto/auto/rickshaw to directly reach Yogpeeth (sometimes also spelt as Yogpith).

We leave you with a heart melting composition by Srila Vasudeva Ghosh who asks what would have happened if Lord Gaurahari had not been. Well, let us sing this bhajana together in order to find out -

Yadi Gaura Na Hoito

*(yadi) Gaura na hoito, tabe ki hoito,
kemane dharitam de?
Radhara mahima, prema-rasa-shima,
jagate janata ke*

*madhura vrinda-bipina-madhuri
pravesha caturi sara
varaja-yuvati-bhavera bhakati
sakati haita kara*

*gao gao punah ,Gaurangera guna,
sarala haiya mana
e bhava-sagare, emana dayala,
na dekhi ye ek-jana*

*gauranga baliya, na genu galiya,
kemane dharinu de
vasur hiya, pashana diya,
kemane gadiyache*

TRANSLATION

1) If Lord Gaura had not appeared in this age of Kali, then what would have become of us? How could we have tolerated living? Who else in this universe would have taught about the topmost limits of loving mellows that comprise the glory of Sri Radha?

- 2) *Who would have had the power to render ecstatic devotional service that follows in the footsteps of the damsels of Vraja? Indeed, the clever expertise of the Vrajagopis is a prerequisite for entering the supremely sweet forest of Vrnda Devi (Vrindavana).*
- 3) *Oh, Keeping a simple heart, please sing again and again of the glorious qualities of Lord Gauranga! Not even one person within this ocean of nescience has ever seen such a magnanimous personality as He.*
- 4) *Even though I chant the name of Lord Gauranga, somehow I still have not melted in ecstasy - how then have I maintained the burden of this body? How has the Creator fashioned this body with a stone in place of Vasudeva Ghosh's heart?*

Accommodation - One can choose to avail the good facilities of Iskcon Mayapur where one can honour nice prasadam as well.

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

Nearest major Railway station - Navadvipa / Krishnanagar

(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)

Remembering Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura at Svananda Sukhada Kunja & Surabhi Kunja, Navadvipa (Godrumadvipa)



*"What one attains by travelling to all the holy places is attained just by remembering the transcendental abode of Navadvipa" -
Navadvipa Dham Mahatmya*

Sri Saccidananda Bhaktivinoda Thakura, who is sometimes also referred to as the seventh Goswami, is an eternal associate of the Supreme Lord. His contribution to the Brahma-Madhva Gaudiya Sampradaya is invaluable. At a time when the science of pure devotional service (Bhakti) had almost become lost due to the cultural and religious chauvinism of the ruling British, and the essence of Vaishnavism largely discredited due to the perverted actions and lifestyles of a few non bonafide Vaishnava sects, Srila Bhaktivinoda was largely responsible for rescuing and unearthing the timeless teachings of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. In Fact it was he who, after conducting a painstaking research, had rediscovered the long lost birthsite of Sri Gaurasundara (refer - 'YogPeeth, Mayapur, Navadvipa - The birthplace of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu'). Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, was

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not only a magistrate, but also a renowned and recognised scholar in his days, with vast knowledge in english,bengali,hindi,oriya and sanskrit.He was also a member of the royal asiatic society of London. Such was the degraded state of affairs during those days, that Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura could not find a bonafide copy of Sri Caitanya Caritamrta, the most important literature for understanding Lord Caitanya's life and teachings, anywhere. It was only after several enquiries and a long wait, that he received a copy of this book. He subsequently published it along with his commentaries (Amrta-pravaha-bhasya). Likewise, he was instrumental in unearthing several ancient manuscripts like Caitanyopanishad (portion of Atharva Veda) ,Sri Krishna Vijaya, etc. 'The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal' considers itself an insignificant servant of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, whose causeless mercy has enabled us fools to get a glimpse of his elevated stature and pen a few lines in his glorification.

Glories of Godrumadvipa:

Svananda Sukhada Kunja & Surabhi Kunja are the eternal residences of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura. Both of these houses are located upon the bank of the Ganges,at Godrumadvipa (one of the nine islands of Navadvipa). Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura had stayed here for many years, serving and performing his bhajana. He initially set up his residence at Surabhi Kunja before moving further down the road to Svananda Sukhada Kunja. Most of his important works have been composed and published while he resided at Godruma. Sri Harinama Cintamani, Navadvipa Dham Mahatmya, Bhagavatarka marichi mala (Sri Svarupa Damodara, an intimate associate of Mahaprabhu instructed the thakura in his trance to compose this book) ,Bhajana Rahasya, Vedarka Didhiti (a sanskrit commentary on Isopanisad), Sva niyama dasakam(twelve verses of self imposed regulative principles) ,Jaiva Dharma,Saranagati, Sri Navadvipa Bhava Taranga, Amrta Pravaha Bhasya,translations of Sankalpa Kalpadruma, sat-kriya-sara-dipika (purificatory rites, originally written in sanskrit by Gopal Bhatta Goswami),Prema-Vivarta (a work by Jagadananda Pandita),commentary on Sri Krishna Karnamrita, etc to mention a few.



The other renowned works of the Thakura include Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu - His life and Precepts, Sri Bhajanamrita, Hari Bhakti Kalpa Latika, etc. It is a mystery how Srila Bhaktivinoda could balance his heavy official duties, spend time with family and yet write so much. Of course nothing is impossible for an empowered incarnation of the Lord. It was also while residing here at Svananda Sukhada Kunja that the Thakura had a vision of the long lost birthplace of Lord Caitanya at Mayapur. We have discussed this pastime in detail later in this article.

While supervising the construction of the temple at Yogpeeth (Mahaprabhu's birthplace), the Thakura used to beg for charity from door to door. This was not because he could not raise funds by other means, but it was because he wanted the people of Navadvipa to contribute a hand and help revive this ancient site and renew the proper worship of their eternal Lord. The Thakura lived at Surabhi Kunja during this time. Srila Bhaktivinoda established his namahatta (marketplace of holy name) preaching center here at Godrumadvipa. Interestingly this was the very place where Sri Nityananda Prabhu had also earlier set up His Preaching center, flooding one and all in ecstasy of the holy name. Continuing the same mission, Srila Bhaktivinoda travelled and preached extensively, delivering countless souls.

In Saranagati, his immortal composition, Srila Bhaktivinoda sings -

*Godruma dhame bhajana anukule
Mathura-sri-nandishvara-samatule
tahi maha surabhi-kunja-kutire
baithobun hama sura-tatini-tire*

Translation - *In the island of Godruma dvipa, which is very much conducive for performing one's devotional service unto the supreme Lord and which is non-different to the sacred land of Nandgaon situated in Vrindavana, i shall settle down in my small cottage, within the groves of Surabhi Kunja , on the bank of the celestial Ganges.*

He further writes -

*vaishnava-jana-saha gaubun naam
jaya godruma jaya Gaura ki dham*

Translation - *There i would commence singing the holy names of the lord in association of the Vaishnavas. We would all sing - All glories to the island of Godruma, the divine abode of Sri Gaurasundara !!!*

Further, in Gitamala, the Thakura reveals -

*svananda-sukhada, kunja manohara,
tahate kutira sobhe
basiya tathay, gabo krishna nama,
kabe krishna dasya lobhe*

Translation - *Amidst the enchanting groves of Svananda Sukhada, shines my beautiful small cottage. Sitting there i shall sing the glories of Krishna ,hankering for the day when i shall receive the personal service of Him and His associates.*

By now ,we clearly understand that Godrumadvipa is the eternal residence of our dear acharya. The place where Surabhi Kunja now stands is the same pious place where demigod Indra, Markandeya Rishi and Surabhi, the celestial cow, had once performed their Gaura bhajana (sang glories of Lord Gauranga). Indra had come to this place in Dvapara, after he had offended Lord Krishna by flooding His beloved Vrindavana. Indra repented for his actions and wanted to please the Lord by taking shelter of His holy name. Surabhi remained here underneath a banyan tree constantly meditating upon Sri Gaurasundara's lotus feet. In fact the very name 'Godruma' had come into being as a result of this ancient pastime (Go - cow, Druma - Banyan Tree) of Surabhi praying under this tree.



At Svananda Sukhada Kunja the Mahabhagavatas Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Jagannatha Das Babaji, Gaura Kishor das Babaji, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura used to regularly meet and discuss the pastimes of Lord Caitanya. Lord Nityananda had previously established His Namahatta center here ,thus glorifying this place all over the three worlds. It was while residing here at Godrumadvipa, that the Thakura had a vision that in future a beautiful spiritual city shall be constructed at mayapura where devotees from all over the world would congregate to sing the glories of Gaurachandra. His son Srila Bhaktisiddhanta saraswati Thakura (founder of Gaudiya Math) and his son's dear disciple A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (founder acharya of Iskcon) have ensured that his prediction comes true. Here at Svananda Sukhada Kunja, the worshipable Gaur-Gadadhara deities of the Thakura are duly worshipped till this day.

Svananda Sukhada kunja is the private grove of Lalita Sakhi, and the Thakura's residence at Godruma is non-different from this Lila sthali (pastime place) situated on the banks of Radha Kunda, in Vrindavana. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura reveals his eternal identity as Kamala Manjari, in one of his Gitamala bhajans.

*sri-rupa-manjari-pada, sire dhoru su-sampada,
kamala-manjari kore asa
Sri Godruma-braja-bane, dunhu leela-sandarsane,
purna hao raser pipasa*

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Translation - *This kamala Manjari holds upon her head the treasured possession of the lotus feet of Sri Rupa Manjari. She only prays that her intense thirst for relishing the ecstatic mellows be quenched by beholding the eternal pastimes of the divine couple, Radha and Krishna, within the divine groves of Vraja (Vrindavana) at Godrumadvipa.*

Birth and Early childhood :

Sri Kedarnath Datta, who came to be subsequently known as Bhaktivinoda Thakura, was born on 2nd of september, 1838 in the ancient village of Birnagar, situated in Ula (Nadiya District). Kedarnath was born of rich and illustrious parents, Sri Ananda Chandra Datta and Jagat Mohini Devi. In his book Datta-vamsa-mala, Srila Bhaktivinoda explains that he was born into a family who had descended from Purushottama Datta, foremost of the five renowned kayasthas who had come to the Gauda region on invitation of the king Adisura. His family lineage has also been graced by the birth of the great vaishnava acharya Sri Narottama Das Thakura, whose devotional compositions are glorified all over the three worlds. Sri Govinda-sarana Datta, one of the cousins of Narottama Das Thakura, was once granted a huge piece of land on the bank of the Ganges, by the sultan of Delhi. This piece of land was named after him and came to be known as Govindapur. It was this land of Govindapur that was later merged with Sutanuti and Kolikata, to form the modern city of Calcutta (Kolkata) as we know today. Such is the great lineage of our dear Thakura. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura attended his first school on the lawn of his maternal grandfather's opulent residence. The teacher Kartika Sarkar was very strict and used to beat the students with his cane. The place where all the students used to gather for education was otherwise utilised for performing different religious ceremonies all throughout the year. Srila Bhaktivinoda here mentions that his maternal relatives were mainly shaktas and hence they mostly worshipped Durga Devi or her other manifestations like goddess Jagaddhatri, Sitala, etc. (refer - 'Ula Birnagar - The Birthplace of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura'). Srila Bhaktivinoda recounts in his biography, that during festivals, there even used to be sacrifices of goats and buffaloes that took place here, at his maternal grandfather's house.

Then he joined a Bengali medium school where he studied upto class six. Srila Bhaktivinoda recounts that the teacher was just as strict and cruel as Yamaraja and the other senior students of the school just like Yamadutas. Thereafter he joined an English medium school which had opened again at his maternal grandfather's home, where a Frenchman named Dijor Baret imparted English lessons unto his students. At the age of seven Srila Bhaktivinoda, along with his brother, was admitted into the school run by the king of Krishnanagar, wherein the sons of all the prominent people from the neighbouring areas were invited to study. The classes were held at Krishnanagar, where they both stayed, and palanquins were arranged to carry them back to Ula on the weekends. Srila Bhaktivinoda excelled in his studies and received a class promotion and scholarship. But after the sudden demise of Kaliprasanna, his elder brother due to cholera, he left this school and joined another one at Ula itself. The Thakura didn't mind this and was actually very happy to study from home.

The Thakura was very inquisitive since his very childhood. He liked to spend his time talking to the gatekeepers, who used to recite to him stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata. The Thakura's maternal grandfather, Mustaphi Mahasaya, was very rich. His grand residence housed a beautiful temple of Sri Radha Krishna, a huge temple of Maa Durga (with 9 peaks), a temple of Maa Kali (with 5 peaks) and 10 separate temples of Lord Shiva.

Mustaphi Mahasaya had employed 56 gatekeepers to guard the village. On certain festivals, buffalo-elephant fights were organised. The buffaloes had their horns tipped with iron. Similarly the elephants also had their tusks tipped. The elephants would win at times, and sometimes the buffaloes would win. The village was a very happy place and no one lacked anything. If anybody was in need, he would simply seek for help from Mustaphi Mahasaya. A few years down the line, the opulences of his family gradually declined. His maternal grandfather lost all of his wealth and similar was the fate of his paternal grandfather as well. They slowly lost all their properties, money and grandeur. When he was just 11 years old, his father left his body and Bhaktivinoda was now all alone in this world with his mother. Since his very childhood Bhaktivinoda thakura was very inquisitive regarding the creation and the world around. He questioned who he was, and what was the purpose of life. He was deeply inclined to understand the philosophical conclusions of learned men, who tried to convince him as per their own realizations.



Prominent Details of the Thakura's life:

'The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal' would now just touch upon the prominent events of the Thakura's life till he found his eternal residence at Godrumadvipa. Though we would have loved to write and relish all the minor details of his life in depth, we are constrained considering the length of this article.

After his father had passed away, and the fortunes of his family had drastically declined, life was not very easy for the Thakura. At the age of 12 his mother arranged his marriage with a

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five year old girl named Sayamani who was a resident of Ranaghat. In those days child marriage was a common norm. It didn't necessarily mean that the little girl had to move into the house of the in-laws immediately after her marriage. She could actually wait until she had grown up and matured enough to take up the responsibilities. In this way the child felt that she was secured, her future was arranged and her protection guaranteed. The marriage of the Thakura was performed with great pomp and show.

On the suggestion of Kashi Prasad Ghosh, the famous Bengali poet and his maternal uncle, Srila Bhaktivinoda then left Ula and came over to Calcutta for his studies. He lived with his uncle and aunt here at North Kolkata. The house was situated adjacent to the swimming pool Heduya. He was then enrolled into the Hindu Charitable school where he studied for four years. The Thakura excelled in his studies. During his stay in Calcutta, Srila Bhaktivinoda became close to eminent personalities like Dwijendranath Tagore, Satyendranath Tagore, Krishna Das Pal, Tarak Nath Palit, etc. who went on to become famous in different spheres of life. Though many of these intellectuals during those days were practitioners of the Brahmo Samaj (the spiritual faith heralded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy), the Thakura never bought into it. From the very beginning he viewed the Supreme Lord as a person with whom he could exchange loving reciprocations.

Subsequently he got admitted into the Calcutta university where his philosophical knowledge, oratory and debating skills amazed one and all. The great Iswara chandra Vidyasagar was one of his teachers during these days. Just to provide a glimpse of the Thakura's intellectualism, it is worthwhile mentioning the subject upon which he once chose to speak while in college - *'The evolution of matter through the material mode of Goodness'*.

Meanwhile, an epidemic struck the town of Ula killing people in hundreds. The whole town of Ula became almost deserted owing to this epidemic and the Thakura's sister also passed away during this time. Srila Bhaktivinoda rescued his mother and grandmother and brought them over to stay with him in Calcutta. The Thakura went through a very bad phase of financial crisis during this time. His maternal grandmother and his paternal grandfather, soon passed away. The Thakura's mother had to frequently sell off her Gold ornaments to manage the expenses. Not much help came in from the relatives during these harsh times. Srila Bhaktivinoda receiving an offer of employment, then shifted to Orissa. There he taught in a school receiving a monthly salary of Rs 45 per month. His son Annada was born in the year 1860. A few months after the child was born, Sayamani devi passed away entrusting the young child in the care of his father. The Thakura then shifted to Midnapur becoming a school teacher. However he didn't find the atmosphere in Midnapur too conducive to spirituality as here there was much strife between the Hindus and the members of the Brahmo Samaj.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura remarried, and his bride was Srimati Bhagavati Devi, the daughter of Ganya Manya Ray from Jakpur. Thereafter the Thakura accepted a job as a tax collector and a clerk in the collectorate. A few years down the line, he became the clerk at the Judge's court in Chuadanga. His salary was then 150 rs per month. At the age of 27, the Thakura was appointed Deputy Registrar at Chapra, where he also had the powers of Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector. Things were showing up. He then passed a government examination, as a result of which he got promoted to the position of Sub Registrar of Assurances in the districts of Purnia and Kishanganj (districts of Bihar).

Preaching days Begin:

Inspite of going through such utter crisis, the Thakura remained steadfast and fearlessly went about his mission. His life is an inspiration and example for all of us to follow. While the Thakura was employed as the Deputy Magistrate of Dinajpur, he enjoyed the priceless association of elevated Vaishnavas. The zamindar of Dinajpur was a descendent of Ramananda Vasu, an associate of Lord Caitanya, and Vaishnavism flourished under the King's patronage. During this time, Srila Bhaktivinoda deeply studied the prominent scriptures - Srimad Bhagavatam, Sri Caitanya Caritamrta and other books revealing Krishna Tattva. He now understood without doubt that Lord Caitanya was none other than the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Actually it was not necessary for Srila Bhaktivinoda to read Sri Caitanya Caritamrta to understand the identity of his eternal lord, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He is an eternal servant of the Lord and the Lord had sent him to revive His movement. The liberated souls sometimes perform such actions so that common men like us can relate with their examples. Srila Bhaktivinoda mentions in his autobiography, that from the very beginning of his contact with Mahaprabhu's teachings, he felt a spontaneous devotion towards Him.

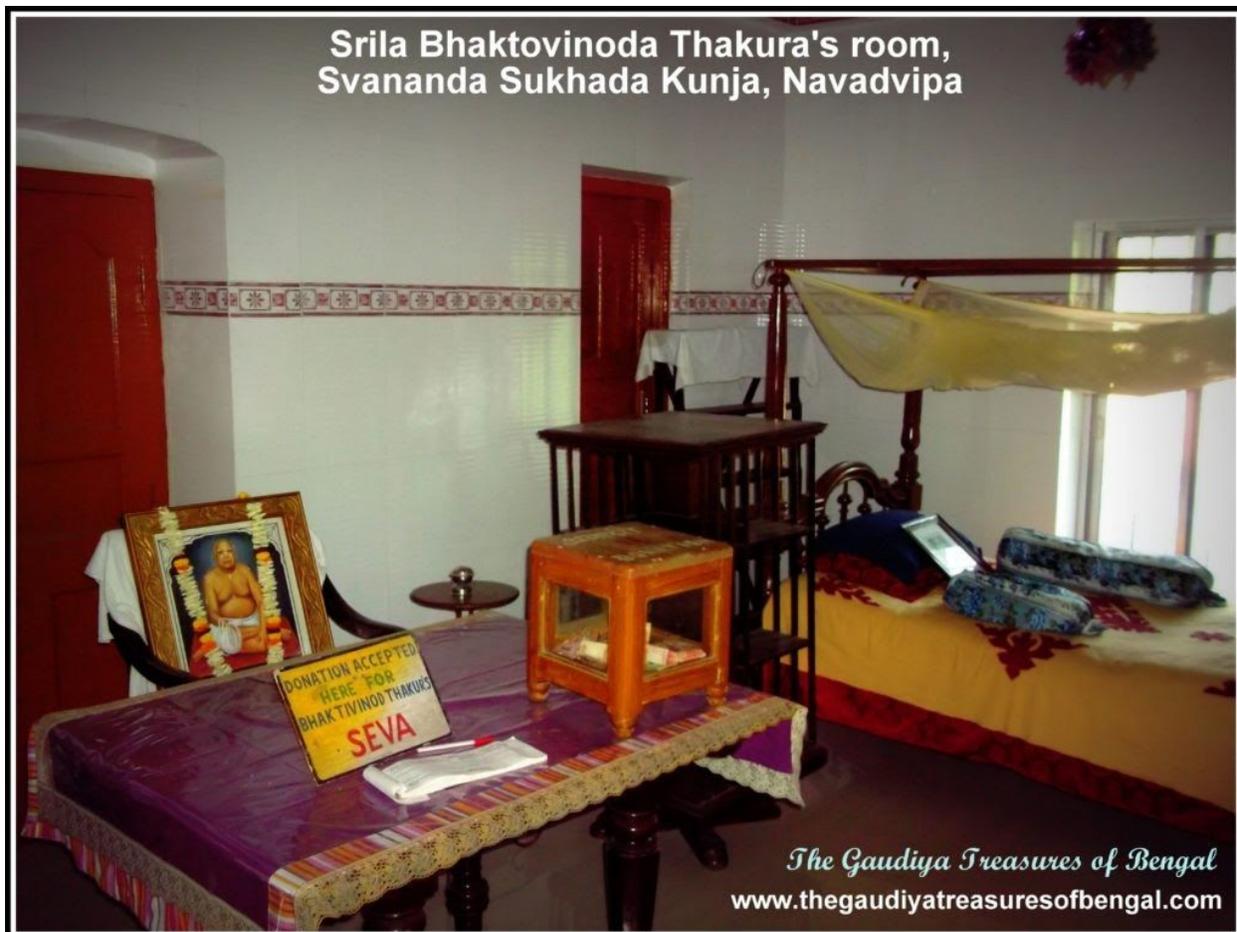
While in Dinajpur, Srila Bhaktivinoda, out of his ecstatic love for Mahaprabhu composed a beautiful poem known as Sac-Cid-ananda-premalankara. From this time on, the thakura became renowned as Saci-cid-ananda Bhaktivinoda. It was during his days at Dinajpur, while the tensions between the Hindus and the members of Brahmo Samaj soared high, that he gave a mesmerizing speech on science of Krishna consciousness. Here he stressed how true spirituality was above the petty sectarian strifes of the masses. He glorified Srimad Bhagavatam and the deep essence of Lord Caitanya's movement. The speech later took the form of a famous book - The Bhagavat: Its Philosophy, Its Ethics and Its Theology. Thereafter the Thakura got transferred to Puri and he utilised this opportunity to visit all the holy places, where Lord Caitanya and His associates had performed their pastimes. It was in Orissa that the Thakura got association of paramhansas such as Gaur Kishor Das babaji and Svarupa Das babaji. Srila Gaura Kishor Das Babaji considered Bhaktivinoda thakura his siksa Guru. Here in Puri, the thakura resumed learning Sanskrit and attained mastery over it. Srimad Bhagavatam, Sat sandarbha, Govinda Bhasya, Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu, Hari Bhakti Kalpa Latika, were some of the books he went through during his time here. Srila Bhaktivinoda would sit beside the temple of Lord Jagannatha everyday and recite Srimad Bhagavatam at length. The Thakura also spent long hours discussing the pastimes of Krishna at the prominent holy sites of Tota Gopinatha temple, the samadhi of Haridasa Thakura, Gambhira, etc

While in Puri the Thakura faced many challenges. There was an imposter, named Bisak sen, belonging to the Ati-bari sect (a non bonafide religious group of pseudo devotees) who claimed himself to be an incarnation of Mahavishnu (the Lord lying in the causal ocean). He possessed some mystic powers that he had obtained by performing some austerities, and he used them to fool the local people. He could cure some incurable diseases, could emit fire from his matted hair, read others' minds, etc. Now the scriptures clearly state that there are eight yogic siddhis, which can be achieved by one's performance of suitable yogic processes. But it does not imply that anyone possessing these siddhis becomes God. The imposter had actually organised a Rasa Lila and sexually exploited the wives of others.

When the local people complained, the British Government handed over the case to Srila Bhaktivinoda. The Thakura first tried to explain the fool his insignificant position and his relationship with the Supreme Lord. Bisak Sen laughed at the Thakura's words and even passed derogatory remarks about Lord Jagannatha, whom he claimed to be just a piece of wood. The Thakura had enough, and he brought a huge police force and arrested the imposter the next day. Eighteen days of rigorous trial ensued. While in jail, Bisak Sen sustained himself by means of his powers. He neither ate nor drank anything. By dint of his powers, several ominous events took place all over the city. A school caught fire, the Thakura's daughter fell ill. On the eighteenth day of the trial, Srila Bhaktivinoda felt a sharp pain in his chest and was so severely ill that he had to be carried to the court in a palanquin. Yet the Thakura remained steadfast. Bisak Sen was sentenced to 18 months of rigorous imprisonment. While he was being carried to the jail, Doctor Walters, the district medical officer, suddenly jumped upon the yogi and cut off his matted hair. This was because he came to know from somewhere that the yogis store all their powers within their hairs. As soon as the hairs were cut off, the fool fell upon ground devoid of all his powers. He was even unable to walk. When people saw his predicament they were convinced that he was not God after all.

On another occasion, the king of Orissa, secretly performed a huge tantric havana inside his palace, to kill Srila Bhaktivinoda. He was angry because the Thakura had caught the king misappropriating the funds of the Jagannatha temple and forced him to compensate for it, by offering food to the Lord 52 times a day. Srila Bhaktivinoda was under the protection of Lord Jagannatha Himself and who dared harm him? After thirty days of sacrifice, when the last oblation was made, instead of the Thakura, the King's only son died. The King was thus taught a very good lesson.

Discovering the birthplace of Lord Caitanya :



At 49 years of age, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, considered retiring from his active services and shifting to Vrindavana, in order to perform his bhajana. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu appeared in his dream and told him that he could definitely go to Vrindavana but first he had some unfinished service to perform at Navadvipa. After receiving the Lord's orders, the Thakura tried his best to secure a transfer to Navadvipa Dhama. He even declined prestigious offers of becoming the personal assistant of the Chief Commissioner of Assam and the office of the minister of the Tripura state, to abide by the Lord's instructions. Finally somehow, he worked out a way as a result of which he became the deputy magistrate of Krishnanagar. While in Krishnanagar, he travelled to Navadvipa in the weekends and surveyed the lands extensively. He tried very hard to establish the authentic birthplace of Lord Caitanya. One day while he was meditating on the holy name, sitting upon a rooftop at Navadvipa, he noticed a tall palm tree in the Mayapura area that emitted remarkable effulgence. Later he intensively searched old manuscripts, authorized scriptures, old maps and held detailed discussions with elderly people of the area. He finally came to the conclusion that the place he had seen emitting effulgence the other day, was actually the long lost birthsite of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

*Navadvipa madhye mayapura name sthan
Yathaya janmilen gauracandra bhagavan
(Bhakti Ratnakara)*

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In the center of navadvipa, there is a place called Mayapura. It was here at Mayapura that the Supreme Lord Gaurachandra took His birth.

To confirm his findings, Srila Bhaktivinoda requested his siksa guru, Srila Jagannatha Das babaji Maharaja, who was 142 years old at that time, to come and verify the site of Mahaprabhu's appearance. It is worthwhile mentioning here that Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura was closer to his siksa Guru ,Srila Jagannath Das babaji as compared to his diksha Guru ,Sri Vipin Vihari Prabhu, with whom he had a disagreement regarding the position of Raghunatha Das Goswami. Nevertheless he respected his diksha Guru a lot as well. Srila Jagannatha das Babaji was the most advance rasika devotee during his times. Due to his advanced age, he could not see or walk and had to be carried within a basket by his servant from one place to another. When Srila Jagannatha das babaji was brought to Yogpeeth, he however leapt up from his basket, jumping high in the air and began to dance in an ecstasy of Gauranga prema, thereby confirming the findings of the Thakura. Srila Jagannatha Das Babaji began joyously singing - "*Ei to Nimai Janmabhoomi !*" (This is the Birthplace of Nimai !). Thereafter Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura re-established this ancient site of Yogpeeth in the year 1893 AD and constructed the suitable shrines that adorn the eternal home of the Supreme Lord. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura used to refer Srila Jagannatha das Babaji Maharaja as Vaishnava Sarvabhauma, the "Commander-in-chief" of the Vaishnavas.

In his last days :

Accepting the renounced order of life, Srila Bhaktivinoda accepted some disciples. One of them was Krishna das babaji who served him till his last day. He prepared his son Bimala Prasad Datta (Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura) by giving him appropriate teachings and suitable instructions. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati (refer - '*Sri Gaudiya Math, Baghbazar, Kolkata*') went onto become a revolutionary acharya and the founder of the worldwide Gaudiya math. Towards the later years of his life, the thakura gradually shut himself up behind the closed doors constantly meditating upon the eternal pastimes of the Lord. Feigning paralysis before the eyes of the commoners, he entered into a state of samadhi (trance). On 23rd of June, 1914, he wrapped up his earthly pastimes, entering into the Nitya lila of the Lord. This was the same day on which Srila Gadadhara pandita had disappeared from this world 400 years ago. Bhaktivinoda Thakura passed away at Bhakti Bhavan, his residence in kolkata (refer - '*Bhakti Bhavan : Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's house in Kolkata*'). The remains of his spiritual body were subsequently placed into samadhi at Svananda sukhada Kunja, where he continues to rest till this day.

*Suddha-bhakata-carana-renu ,
bhajana-anukula
bhakata-seva, parama siddhi,
prema-latikara mula*

The dust of the lotus feet of pure devotees, enthusiastic favorable devotional service, and service to the pure devotees of the lord are the roots of the creeper of devotion We worship the lotus feet of our spiritual master ,whose causeless mercy has empowered us inelible fools ,to gain entrance and take up service in this transcendental abode of Godrumadvipa. We seek shelter of this holy land, and pray that its glories remain forever imprinted in our heart. 'The Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal' offers millions of obeisances and

humbly prays to Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura that we advance in our Krishna consciousness, develop attachment unto the lotus feet of Lord Gauranga and are able to serve Sri Guru & Vaishnavas, by our honest and sincere efforts. We seek his blessings and compassion , in successfully rendering this humble service of reciting the pastimes and revealing the pastime places of the Supreme Lord and His beloved associates.We shall consider ourselves greatly fortunate and our existence meaningful if Lord Gaurahari and our dear spiritual master are kindly pleased with our endeavours.



What to See:

Svananda Sukhada Kunja -

1. The deities of Bhaktivinoda Thakura and his worshipable Gaura Gadadhara.
2. Just on entering the gates, one would find the deities of Kshetra-pala Siva and his bull-carrier which he used to worship.
3. Inside the compounds is the Bhajana kutira of Srila Gaura Kishor Das Babaji. It was here that he used to sit and relish the lectures of the Thakura
4. On the first floor is nicely maintained the rooms of Bhaktivinoda Thakura and his son , Srila Bhaktisiddhanta saraswati Thakura.It was here in his room that the Thakura

composed many of his books. Personal belongings of both father and son are carefully preserved here.

Surabhi Kunja -

1. The banyan tree under which mother Surabhi meditated upon the lotus feet of Gauranga
2. Mesmerizing deities of Sri Gauranga, Sri Nityananda, Sri Sri Radha and Krishna
3. A beautiful deity of Bhaktivinoda Thakura
4. The place has been nicely reconstructed and a nice temple has been established at the site.

How to Reach:

One travelling from kolkata is advised to board a Krishnanagar local train from the Sealdah station. On reaching Krishnanagar, one can book an autorickshaw to directly reach these ancient sites at Godrumadvipa. The residences of Bhaktivinoda Thakura are hardly 5 minutes apart from each other. The area is locally known as Fakir Tala, and one can provide the directions to his cab driver accordingly.

Accommodation - One can opt to stay in any of the prominent hotels of Krishnanagar like hotel Haveli, etc. One can also choose to avail the accommodation and prasadam facilities at Iskcon Mayapur which is hardly a 30 minutes ride from this place.

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

Nearest major Railway station - Krishnanagar

(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)

**This is where Sri Jagannatha Das Babaji,
Srla Bhaktivinoda and Sri Gaura Kishora Das
Babaji discussed Hari Katha,
Svananda Sukhada Kunja,
Navadvipa**



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Remembering Sri Gadadhara Pandita at the Gaur Gadadhara Gaudiya Math, Champahati, Navadvipa :



*"What one attains by travelling to all the holy places is attained just by remembering the transcendental abode of Navadvipa" -
Navadvipa Dham Mahatmya*

*Panca tattvatmakam krsnam bhakta-rupa-svarupakam
bhaktavataram bhaktakhyam namami bhakta saktikam*

I offer my obeisances unto the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna, who is non-different from His features as a devotee (Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu), devotional manifestation (Sri Nityananda Prabhu), devotional incarnation (Sri Advaita Acarya), devotional energy (Sri Gadadhara Pandita) and pure devotee (Sri Srivasa Pandita).

Kavi Karnapura has mentioned in his Gaura Ganoddesha Dipika, that Radharani, the daughter of King Vrishabhanu, had appeared as Sri Gadadhara Pandita in Gaura Lila. Kavi Karnapura further adds that Lalita devi, who is also known as anuradha (as she always follows Srimati Radharani) had also entered the body of Gadadhara pandita. Thus Gadadhara Pandita was the combined incarnation of both Radharani and Lalita sakhi. Gadadhara Pandita was born of Sri Madhava Mishra and Srimati Ratnavati Devi who lived very close to the house of Jagannatha Mishra in Mayapur. According to Gaura Gannodesha dipika, Maharaja Vrishabhanu incarnated as Sri Madhava Mishra in the pastimes of Lord Caitanya. Sri

Gadadhara Pandita was a year younger to Lord Gaurahari and they were very intimate friends since their childhood.

From His very childhood, Srila Gadadhara Pandita manifested the qualities of patience, serenity and renunciation. He and Nimai pandita, when they were very young, used to play together here at Champahati, where this Gaur Gadadhara Temple is situated today. Both of them studied in the same tola (school). Dvija Vaninatha, the younger brother of Gadadhara Pandita, had later established the worship of Gaura Gadadhara deities over here. These are the first Gaura Gadadhara deities to be ever worshipped and this place is at least 500 years old. At the time when these deities were installed, Sri Gauranga and Gadadhara Pandita were still manifesting their pastimes in this world. Later Sri Paramananda Brahmachari (a disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura), in the year 1921 AD, had renovated and revived the service of the Deity and established the Gaura Gadadhara Gaudiya Math here at Champahati.

Dvija Vaninatha

Sri Dvija Vaninatha was the eighty-first branch of Lord Caitanya's tree of devotional service. Previously, in satya yuga, he was a brahmana who used to live at Champahati and worship Radha and Krishna with champaka flowers. Being very pleased with him, Lord Krishna gave this brahmana His blissful darsana as Lord Gauranga. The brahmana was astonished to behold the effulgent form of the munificent Lord. Sri Gaurahari informed the old brahmana that in the coming age of Kali, He would be appearing in this land of Navadvipa, and performing His magnanimous sankirtana pastimes, whereby He would be widely bestowing Krishna naam (Name) and Krishna Prema (love of Krishna) to one and all. The Supreme Lord also added that this brahmana would also get an opportunity to take his birth during this time and witness the pastimes of the Lord. Accordingly this brahmana was born during Lord Caitanya's pastimes as the brother of Gadadhara Pandita and came to be known as Dvija Vaninatha. It was Dvija Vaninatha who had originally installed and began the worship of these Gaura Gadadhara deities 500 years back. Sri Vaninatha serves as Kamalekha sakhi in Krishna's Vrindavana pastimes.



Sri Gadadhara Pandita - Navadvipa Pastimes

Srila Vasudeva Ghosh sings :

*agam agochara gora akhil brahma par,
veda upar, najane pasandi mati bhora
Nitya Nityananda Caitanya Govinda
pandit gadadhar Radhe Caitanya yugala rupa*

.....

Translation -

Lord Gaurasundara, who is beyond the purview of the scriptures, beyond the entire Brahman, and above even the Vedas, can never be known by the atheists whose intelligence is dull.

Lord Nityananda is His eternal self. Lord Caitanya is Lord Govinda Himself and Pandita Gadadhara is none other than Sri Radhika. The divine couple, who are present within Sri Caitanya, are a well of loving mellows.

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END OF PREVIEW