

Short biografies of gurus in the sampradaya of H.H. Swami Gaurangapada

Madhvacarya

He was born in a Sivanni brahmana class family in the Pajakaksetra of Udupi village in the year 1040 Saka. His parents were Sri Madhyageha Bhatta and Srimati Vedavidya. His childhood name was Vasudeva. At the age of twelve he was initiated by Acyutapreksha. His sannyasa name was Purnaprajna.

He obtained the Deity of Udupi Krsna (Nrtya Gopala) from a boat full of gopi-candana. The Deity is holding a curd-making stick in one hand and a string, used for pasting curd, in the other hand. Though the Deity was very heavy, Madhvacarya carried it alone from Vadabhandesvara.

The following are the names of the eight Udupi Mathas and their main heads:

1. Palimara - Sri Hrsikesa Tirtha
2. Adamara - Narahari
3. Krsnapura - Janardana
4. Puttige - Upendra
5. Siruru - Vamana
6. Sode - Visnu
7. Kanuru - Srirama
8. Pejavara - Adhoksaja

The following are the names of the Deities in the above mentioned mathas respectively: Sri Ramacandra, Sri Krsna, Caturbhuj Kaliya-mardana Sri Krsna, Vitthaladeva, Vitthaladeva, Bhuvараha deva, Nrsimha deva, and Vitthala deva. In the Sri Krsna matha there is a Deity of Balakrsna, installed by Madhvacarya.

The following are books written by Madhvacarya:

1. Gitabhasya
2. Brahma Sutrabhasya
3. Anubhasya 4. Pramana-laksana
5. Tattva-viveka 6. Rigbhasya
7. Upanisada bhasya
8. Gita Tatparya Nirnaya
9. Dvadasa Stotryas
10. Sri Krsnamaharnava
11. Srimadbhagavata Tatparya
12. Sri Mahabharata Tatparyanirnaya
13. Sri Krsna Stuti

The major works of Madhvacarya are his commentaries on the Brahmasutras, Upanisads, and the Bhagavad-gita. Most of his thirty-four works are philosophical, although there are a few poems and devotional compositions. Yamaka Bharata is a poem narrating the story of Mahabharata in Yamaka verse. Bharata Tatparya Nirnaya are his learned critiques on the Bhagavata and the Mahabharata. He was also wrote commentaries on some hymns in the Rg Veda. He relied heavily on evidence from the Puranas, rather than on the Vedic texts or logic. (An Encyclopedia of South Indian Culture, pp. 278-279)

Padmanabha Tirtha

He was a native of Uttara-Karnataka which in those days stretched to the area known as Andhra Pradesh. (This is confirmed by Hrsikesa Tirtha in his book Sampradaya Paddhati and Guru-acarya, where he states that Padmanabha Tirtha came from Uttara-Karnataka of the Telegu speaking people around the area where the Godavari River flows.) His previous name was Sobhanabhatta, but his change of name came upon meeting Madhva when Madhva returned to Udupi from his northern tour. He was a renowned and distinguished scholar of the day, but his proficiency in fourteen branches of learning were silenced in

fourteen seconds by Acarya Madhva in 1265 AD. Soon he became one of the most trusted disciples of Madhva. Madhva always praised him, being the senior-most disciple among those outside the Tulu area, and his learning, preaching and seniority enabled Madhva to make him the first to sit on the Pitha after Madhva's disappearance pastime.

Padmanabha Tirtha left this world at Navavrindavan, near Hampi, on the sacred Tungabhadra River in 1324 AD. His samadhi tomb remains there to this day.

Nrhari (Narahari) Tirtha

Narahari was a leading minister in Kalinga, Orissa, and was performing this task for around thirty years. The story follows that during his spell in office, the King of Kalinga died. The King's ministers, from time immemorial, had a tradition that the State send out the "State elephant" to find the Prince Regent. At that time the royal elephant walked out of the palace and through the city to the place where Narahari was. The elephant placed the coronation garland around his neck to the surprise of the accompanying state ministers. By the Lord's arrangement the elephant came across Narahari, and in due course he was placed on the throne. However, when the King's infant son and heir to the throne came of age after twelve years, Narahari gave it up. Out of gratitude, the new King wanted to bestow some gifts on Narahari. Narahari asked for the Deity of Mula Rama that had been kept by the descendants of the Gajapati Kings and Who was originally worshiped by Maharaja Iksvaku, then given to Maharaja Dasaratha, the father of Lord Rama. This Deity of Rama was then passed down to Laksmana and from him to Hanuman, who used to hang Him around his neck. Hanuman gave Him to Bhima during the time of Krsna's advent on this earth, and Bhima gave Him to the Gajapati King. This Deity of Mula Rama was then placed in the Uttaradi Mutt, secured in his day by Kavindra Tirtha, but now resides at the Raghavendra Tirtha Swami Mutt at Mantralayam.

At the time of dividing the Mutts at Kanya Tirtha, Madhvacarya gave Narahari the Deity of Kaliyamardana Krsna with four arms. This Deity of Krsna is dancing on the head of the Kaliya serpent, with one leg lifted up dancing, one hand in a balancing, dancing pose, and the other holding his tail up. Two other hands hold a conch and cakra.

Narahari Tirtha was initiated before 1264 AD. B.N.K. Sharma suggests that he was probably about 22 years of age when Narahari and Madhva first met, Madhva being 19 years of age. There are local inscriptions of the time preserved in the Srikurma and Simhacala areas of Orissa which glorify Narahari for many great feats, statesmanship and swordsmanship, but even whilst performing these kingly tasks, he preached Vaisnavism and made many devotees from the princes and aristocratic nobility in general at the time in the areas of Orissa and Andhra.

Sometimes it is suggested that he was the disciple of Padmanabha Tirtha but this is not supported anywhere in the mutt listings, instead what is pointed out is that due to the seniority of Padmanabha Tirtha, Narahari Tirtha was more than willing to serve him as the representative of his spiritual master Sripada Madhvacarya, and so was considered like a siksa disciple of the Pitha Adi Patya Padmanabha Tirtha Swami.

Once whilst Narahari Tirtha was on a preaching tour, he dreamt that a Deity of Lord Visnu was at the bottom of the town pond (tank). The very next day, by his influence, he made arrangements for the tank to be dredged, and there He was! A Deity was taken out and installed at that place. The town is now called by the name of the pastime, Narayanadevarkere (the tank of Lord Narayana). This is near Hospet Taluk of Bellary District, Karnataka.

Narahari wrote fifteen books, but his Gita Bhasya and Bhavaprakasika are the only two of which any trace is kept.

Madhava Tirtha

Previously known as Visnu Sastri, Madhava Tirtha was the third acarya to reside on the Pitha after Madhvacarya. Madhava Tirtha was quite often confused with, or known as Madhvacarya or Madhva, due to

the similarity in name. He was the son of Mayana and Srimati and the elder brother of Sayana and at one time a minister of King Bukka of Vijayanagar.

There is a story in this connection how Madhava Tirtha founded the city of Vijayanagar after the discovery of a huge amount of hidden treasure. Before this, however, Madhava Tirtha lived an austere life as an ascetic in the mountains of Karnataka, who once found himself being frequented by a shepherd of the name Bukka. This poor shepherd had heard that Madhava Tirtha, the great sannyasi, was there absorbed in thoughts of Lord Narayana, and so he decided to daily bring him some simple foodstuffs. Madhava Tirtha blessed him saying, "One day you shall be the King of all Industan." By this blessing, immediately all the local shepherds made him their head, and he became known as the King of that local country which governed five groups of communities - Canara, Taligas, Canguivaro, Negapatao and Badagas. In this kingdom he became known as Bukka Rao and reigned for thirty seven years by the blessings of the great Madhava Tirtha. Bukka conquered many kingdoms from the time he came to rule in 1343 AD.

Madhava Tirtha was in office at the Vedanta Pitha from 1333 AD until 1350 AD, when he passed away. He made a commentary on the Parasara Smrti called Parasara Madhva-vijaya, and some other books have also been accredited to him, but as little is known of him there is much confusion misidentifying him with others. It is said that his bodily remains were entombed at Hampi, but have since been moved to Manur on the Bhima River of Bijapur District.

Aksobhya Tirtha

Aksobhya Tirtha was the last of Madhva's direct disciples to sit on the Pitha. He did so from 1350 AD - 1365 AD. Previously his name was Govinda Sastri and he came from Uttara-Karnataka. Madhvacarya gave him the Deity of Aja-Vitthal. (Krsna standing with His hands on His hips, accompanied by Sri Devi and Bhudevi, though some say this is Krsna with Rukmini and Satyabhama.)

His main "claim to fame" was the way he refuted the philosophy of "tat tvam asi" - "you are the same as". There is an historic incident which is understood to have taken place at Mulbagal near Kolar. His victim was Vidyaranya, the big, big scholar and guru descendant of the Advaita line of Sankara. Aksobhya Tirtha smashed Vidyaranya so badly that in history this was considered the turning point in the new Madhva faith of Dvaitavada. To this day the philosophy of Dvaita (dualism) has not been defeated; even the Advaita Mayavadis, knowing they are wrong, with stubborn determination they have yearly been coming back to get smashed.

Aksobhya Tirtha moved after this a little north to Pandharapur on the banks of the Bhima-rathi River, which is where he met his future disciple Jayatirtha. In the years to follow Aksobhya spent his time training Jayatirtha in Dvaita philosophy. The relationship was so nice that Aksobhya gave his every breath to make Jayatirtha the most proficient and dynamic preacher since Madhva, hence Jayatirtha was called the Tikacarya. Aksobhya Tirtha taught him how to search out hidden significances in the words of Madhva which others missed, and how to write books on those points called tikas (short commentaries), which further demolished the hostile Advaita monism. He even pointed out the differences in the basic understandings of Advaita philosophy of their own leading Sankarites like Vacaspati, Vivarankara, Amalananda, Citsukha and Vijnanasana, giving further strength to the Vaisnava truths and making the Mayavadis all look foolish.

Jaya Tirtha

Jayatirtha renounced the world and took sannyasa at twenty years of age. By this time no one could philosophically touch him. He was a genius, seeing through the foolishness of Mayavada, and even making commentaries on Ramanuja's works. He wrote about twenty books, eclipsing those of his forerunners like Trivikrama Panditacarya, Padmanabha Tirtha and Narahari Tirtha, but he was always humble, giving all credit to Aksobhya Tirtha, the servant of Madhvacarya.

"Critique of Mithyatva" or "The Falsity Of The World" was one of his main works, where he describes how this world is temporary, not false, and the Mayavadi way as being really false. He points out the differences between real, unreal, temporary and permanent, concluding, "...The co-existing of both their

negations, at the same time and with reference to the same locus is, therefore, most illogical and can never be accepted by sane men." I.e. the positive being this world is temporary though genuinely existing, the elements are real, and the action is real but done in connection with material nature causing reaction, which is also real but not permanent. Thus soundly defeating the Mayavadi philosophy around "brahma satyam jagan mithya", various works on subjects of Vaisnava studies and logic were written by Jayatirtha. Later a descendant in the parampara of the name Vyasatirtha wrote down Jayatirtha's life story, whereby we have found this information.

Jayatirtha's previous name was Dhondo Pantraya Raghunatha (Dhonduraya, Raghunatha was his father's name) of either Visvamitra gotra or Bharadvaja gotra. He was the son of a high ranking military man and had two wives. Dhondo Pant, being like a local prince, was seen often dressed in full armour, breast plate, helmet and all, riding his mighty war horse around the area. He was a great horseman and would ride sometimes on journeys all over the district, accompanied by his men. On one such occasion, a hot summers day at noon, he stopped at a stream for fresh water, but his drinking of water was not an ordinary sight. Unlike most persons taking water, Dhondo Pant would enter into the river fully dressed (with armour, sword, shield, helmet, plume, etc), then, whilst still mounted upon his horse, he would drink water at water level directly into his mouth, being up to his neck in the water as an animal would.

On this day an incredible meeting took place. On the other side of the stream was Aksobhya Tirtha, watching this extraordinary sight. Aksobhya called to the horseman, "Hey, you drink water just like a bullock," and these few words put the horseman into a strange, deep, all-revealing state. Suddenly philosophical questions, which made the young horseman's mind spin into thoughts of his previous births, came to mind. Dhondo Pant could now remember his time spent with Acarya Madhva, but he had been covered for so many years thinking that he was the son of a nobleman. Now he could remember all kinds of incidences that made his hair stand upon end. He gained some intense realizations which enabled him to see quite clearly how previously he was actually the bullock who was used to pull around Acarya Madhva's books as Madhva traveled and preached all over. He could actually remember Madhva, his commanding but sweet voice elaborating upon the various kinds of Vedic literature.

There is an interesting story in this connection. Madhva would quite often glorify this bullock by saying to the assembly that actually this bullock listened better and assimilated the philosophy quicker than any of Madhva's students. Wherever Madhva would preach the bullock would turn up, ears pricked up and forward in an attentive mood; his faithfulness and loyalty knew no bounds. Madhva could sometimes be heard saying that simply by his attentive hearing this bullock was making great advancement. These kind of statements made some of Madhva's sannyasa disciples quite envious, so much so that they cursed the bullock to die from snake bite. Madhva heard about the curse and blessed the bullock that he would not be harmed. As per the curse, the snake came and bit the bullock, and amazingly the snake died! Everyone was awe struck, but could at once appreciate the motive and kindness of Madhva. He was protecting his dear devotee who had surrendered his life to the service of Madhva's preaching mission. After some years the bullock passed away of natural causes - old age.

Tradition has it that in actuality this was no ordinary bullock in the first place. He was reputed to be a partial incarnation and joint expansion of both Indra, the King of the demigods and Lord Ananta Sesa. So again it was no ordinary thing what had happened - the bullock taking his birth in a family of greatly pious ksatriya kings in Karnataka and being further brought up to know the Vedic literature according to the teachings of Madhva. Obviously the Lord deemed it now the right time for his real self realization to again be invoked.

Anyway back to the river, Dhondo Pant, standing in the water, addressed the humble and aged mendicant Aksobhya Tirtha as follows, "My dear sir, who are you, from where did you come, and how do you know me? Simply by the words emanating from your mouth my life has changed. You must be my guru; you have opened my eyes which were blinded for so long. O my guide, you have shed my ignorance of my real self. Please tell me more. Please instruct me so my life can become perfect. O Gurudeva, please save me from the clutches of repeated birth and death." He was so amazed and became so agitated from gratitude by this meeting that he asked to become Aksobhya Tirtha's formal disciple. The other horsemen joined Dhondo Pant in crossing the river and spent some time in discussion with him. Then they returned to the estate of his father without Dhondo. News soon reached the boy's father who personally went to reclaim his son and took him home. To save any further quarrel, Dhondo followed his father without any protest,

but even though the enraged father came to collect him, Dhondo had his plan, on his return home, to start with he had his marriage consumed.

An amusing story is revealed of the night that he returned to his wives. When Dhondo Pant's beautiful young wife entered the bed chamber to be with her husband, to her surprise there was an incredibly magnificent cobra sitting coiled up on the bed. The snake swayed mystically as though one absorbed in transcendental trance. Enchanted by the sight, she out of respect for the wondrous sight paid her prostrated obeisances before the serpent, but soon fear overcame her and she fled the room screaming and fainted on the floor just outside. Raghunatharaya, the father of Dhondo, feared that something would happen and so was close by. After also seeing the captivating sight and seeing the snake revert back to the form of his son, Raghunatharaya reluctantly allowed Dhondo to return to the aged mendicant Aksobhya Tirtha, knowing this not to be an ordinary situation. In due course, Dhondo Pant was initiated and given the order of sannyasa and the new name Jaya Tirtha. This happened in the year 1368 AD.

Some do not agree with this story, saying that it would not have been allowed in the strict Brahmana society of the 14th century. But whether one accepts the story as explained by Srila Vyasatirtha or not, the link was there and soon he came back to Aksobhya Tirtha who accepted him as his sannyasa disciple and gave him the name Jaya Tirtha. He then started to study sastra from Aksobhya Tirtha intensively until Aksobhya Tirtha finally passed away, his mission completed.

Jayatirtha toured several times all over India, destroying the philosophy of the impersonalistic rascals. He was undefeated and became well known as the pure Vaisnava acarya that he was.

He spent his closing years at Malkhed (or Manyakheta), once the capital of the Rastrakuta kings of Karnataka, in the Gulbarga district, Mysore state. This is said by some to be the place where Jayatirtha passed away on the Pancami (fifth day) of the dark fortnight in the month of Asadha (June-July) 1388 AD. However, there is also a samadhi tomb of his in northern Karnataka. On this samadhi tomb at Anagoendi (Hampi) on the Tungabhadra river, next to the samadhi of Padmanabha Tirtha, there are carvings of him as a ksatriya prince, and next to that as a sannyasi mendicant.

Vidyadhiraja (Vidyanidhi) Tirtha

The Guru-acarya listings assign Vidyanidhi Tirtha a period of seven years, nine months and thirteen days as the next pontiff on the Vedanta Pitha. The only written work accredited to him was a commentary on the Bhagavad-gita.

In the Madhva Mutts there is an air of vagueness and uncertainty of dates and even the lineage. Kavikarnapura's Sri Gaura Ganoddesa Dipika, Text 22 mentions "...Aksobhya's disciple was Jayatirtha. Jayatirtha's disciple was Jnanasindhu. Jnanasindhu's disciple was Mahanidhi. Mahanidhi's disciple was Vidyanidhi. Vidyanidhi's disciple was Rajendra..." However, in Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati's "Guru Parampara" he says, "...Madhava Tirtha accepted the great paramahansa Aksobhya Tirtha as his disciple. The principle disciple of Aksobhya Tirtha was known as Jayatirtha. Jayatirtha's service was for his disciple Jnanasindhu. Dayanidhi received the science of devotional service from Jnanasindhu and the servant of Dayanidhi was Vidyanidhi (Vidyadhiraja Tirtha). Rajendra became the disciple of Vidyadhiraja Tirtha."

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura accepts the version of Kavikarnapura's Gaura Ganoddesa Dipika and they both say that Madhava Tirtha has taken Aksobhya Tirtha as his disciple. However, the Madhvas say that Aksobhya Tirtha was the direct disciple of Madhvacarya - this is stated in the Guru-acarya listings. In the Madhva Vijaya this is also recorded, that is, the incident of Madhvacarya calling eight of his sannyasa disciples around him at Kanya Tirtha during the Caturmasya. In Narayana Panditacarya's commentary on his own book, Madhva Vijaya, entitled "Bhava Prakasika," he also says how Madhva called his disciples in pairs and the fourth pair was Rama Tirtha of Kaniyur Mutt and Aksobhya Tirtha of Pejawara Mutt. These incidents are included in the "Sampradaya Paddhati" of Hrsikesa Tirtha, the foremost dear disciple of Madhvacarya.

The descendants of Madhva are more strictly followers of a diksa line, whereas both Kavikarnapura and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati lean more towards siksa lines, though still accepting both on their own

validity. Seeing that Madhava Tirtha (Dvija) was a forerunner of Aksobhya Tirtha to the Vedanta Pitha, certainly he may have given some instruction. In the same way, Jayatirtha certainly had many disciples, and because his direct disciple Vidyadhiraja was the next to accept office at the Pitha, it doesn't necessarily mean other disciples of Jayatirtha, such as Jnanasindhu Tirtha and Daya(Maha)nidhi Tirtha didn't also give their worthy assistance.

Actually, Vaisnavas are always grateful for their many siksa gurus. For myself certainly, as I have collected this information, everyone has stressed Madhvacarya's disciples and this parampara. In the humble attempt to compile this work I have accepted many as my instructing gurus and I am very grateful to them for their advice, otherwise how could the sampradaya be revealed. I do not, of my own accord, know anything about Vaisnavism or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krsna, but by the mercy of the Vaisnavas and of my diksa and siksa gurus, we are making an attempt at shedding some light on this subject.

As we just stated, Vidyadhiraja Tirtha was the immediate disciple of Jayatirtha. Being of seniority in his learning and devotional understandings, he also became the successor on the Pitha. Previously his name was Krsnabhata (though the Guru-acarya gives him the name Nrsimha Sastri). It is understood that he was a brahmachari, but his time on the Vedanta Pitha is not clearly established. The times of office range from three years, nine months and thirteen days, to four years, and lastly sixty four years, but the Mutt itself is silent on this matter.

Rajendra Tirtha

Rajendra was his first disciple and their relationship was always very close. There is one story which tells of how the guru parampara divided at that time. Vidyadhiraja Tirtha was extremely sick so he sent word to Rajendra to come immediately, but he did not arrive in time. The Guru, feeling his life passing, ordained another disciple to guarantee that he would have a successor. This devotee's name was Kavindra Tirtha. Some say he called Kavindra due to a need for the preaching to spread, but one cannot guess the reasons why - a pure Vaisnava acts only to satisfy the Lord, that much we can ascertain. The line coming from Rajendra Tirtha is now represented by Vyasatirtha and Gosale Mutts and that line still continues.

The other line (that from Kavindra Tirtha) continued on to Vagisa and Ramacandra Tirtha, but at the time of Ramacandra there again was some heavy disagreement that apparently nearly stopped the line at that time. Inevitably it caused a split and now those lines come down via his two disciples, Vibudhendra Tirtha of Raghavendra Swami Mutt and Vidyanidhi Tirtha of Uttaradi Mutt.

Vidyadhiraja Tirtha passed away at Ergola near Malked. The old town of Ergola now lies in ruins and this is believed to be where the tombs of both Vidyadhiraja and Rajendra Tirtha are.

Jayadharm (Vijayadhvaja) Tirtha

Between Rajendra and Vyasatirtha we have Vijayadhvaja Tirtha, alias Jayadhvaja, alias Jayadharm. He is listed in the Mutt genealogical tables as being a member of the Pejawara Mutt coming from Aksobhya Tirtha. The Deity of Sri Rama that was worshiped by Vijayadhvaja Tirtha is still in the Pejawara Mutt. Some say that Vijayadhvaja was ostracized by Raghunatha Tirtha of Uttaradi Mutt for the sin of crossing the ocean to visit Dvaraka and thus as a penance to atone for this he was commissioned to write a commentary on Srimad Bhagavatam, which he wrote under a pipal tree at Krsna Mutt, and which he became famous for. However many devotees, including B.N.K. Sharma, the Madhva scholar, says that this story is bogus and malicious, as it is well known that Vijayadhvaja's commentary on the Srimad Bhagavatam was purely out of love and spontaneous devotion. His commentary of Bhagavatam went under the title "Bhakti-ratnavali" and is said to have greatly influenced his disciple, Visnu Puri. In his commentary there are many references to the original compiler, the great Sridhar Swami of the Bhagavat School. Sridhar lived in a very dangerous time to be a Vaisnava, and so kept his meanings covered. Many, even to this day, say that Sridhar Swami was an impersonalist, but actually this is not so. As we have stated, he had to keep the real and personalistic understandings of the Bhagavatam covered for there were many devious Mayavadis ready to corrupt anything that glorified Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Vijayadhvaja (Jayadharm Muni as he is also known) clarified the meanings of Sridhar Swami, bringing out the dualist's point of view from the seemingly hidden meanings of Sripada Sridhar Swami.

Looking at the many and wonderful ways the devotees have struggled, sacrificing their own reputations, even well being, to somehow or other ensure that these priceless gems of pure personalism could find their way down through the ages into our unworthy laps and beyond, we should be grateful to all of these great and devoted personalities.

Srila Vijayadhvaja Tirtha was the sixth in the lineage of the Pejawara Mutt and he passed away on the Aksaya Tritiya day, which falls on the third day of the light fortnight in the month of Madhusudana (Vaisakha - April/May). His samadhi (Vrndavana) is at Kanya Tirtha.

Vijayadhvaja Tirtha and some details concerning the controversy regarding his complete and devotional commentary on the Srimad Bhagavatam:

Practically speaking, the following is only details of Vijayadhvaja's early days, but it is an interesting story that brings out his conviction as a pure surrendered, unmotivated Vaisnava sannyasi.

As with many sannyasis of the line, particularly on this west coast of Karnataka, Vijayadhvaja Tirtha took sannyasa as a very small boy. Constantly traveling, he would have to maintain himself by collecting alms (bhiksha), but alas, sometimes he would have to go without food for three or five days. Out of dire need and hunger, the young sannyasi, on one occasion, began to make some arrangements to cook very simply, using some simple forest spinach, a few rocks and twigs that he had found by the side of the road. One much older and senior sannyasi came by and was horrified seeing Vijayadhvaja Tirtha, a sannyasi, cooking, "making arrangements to enjoy" and by the side of the road. He severely chastised him saying that this kind of action was against sannyasa dharma or character. He then informed the boy that the only way to counter this kind of independent activity was suicide - then and only then would he be free from any reaction. So the humble and pure-hearted young Vijayadhvaja Tirtha Swami prepared to give up the world. At this time another sannyasi happened to come by, and upon seeing the preparations for death, could understand what was on Vijayadhvaja's mind. This second sannyasi then inquired from the boy why he had taken to this decision. Hearing the story, the second sannyasi, who some say was Rajendra Tirtha, instructed the boy to compile an edition of Srimad Bhagavatam and by this everything would be resolved. So doing, this highly devotional piece of literature was entitled "Pada-ratnavali." To this day followers of Madhva hold this devotional work as a standard text for reference.

At the end of this commentary Vijayadhvaja Tirtha prayed earnestly to Lord Sri Krsna:

*vyakhya bhagavatasya krsna racita
tvat priti kamatmana
pretascet pradadasi tat pratidhim
tat trin varisye varan*

*prana niskincanatam tava pratibhavam padaravindatmana
samsaktim sukhatirtha sastra vijarajarasya param taya*

"Dear Lord Sri Krsna, I have written this commentary of Srimad Bhagavatam just to please You. If You are pleased, as an acknowledgement of the same, please grant me three boons - that I should always remain a poor man in this and any future lives, that I may always have the opportunity to study Bhagavatpadacarya Madhva's devotional works on Krsna consciousness, and lastly by doing so, I may always rest in You and that I may attain You and always remain with You as Your foot servant."

As we will read a little later, the influence of this edition of the Bhagavatam and the subsequent commentary by Visnu Puri, the celebrated compiler of Bhakti-ratnavali and disciple of Sri Vijayadhvaja Tirtha, assisted a great change to take place - not so much a change, but enhanced a natural loving progression to develop. This will be dealt with in connection with the next few acaryas who came. Everything was going on still, but as previously there had been some dissatisfaction with the struggle against the Mayavadis, now there had become struggles of another nature, that of position. Some were neglecting the pure teachings of Vaisnavism and were starting to get a little caught up in other circles, that 'I am a brahmana so I can know God. You are a sudra, therefore you cannot.' Certain sways started to take place and angles that had not been propounded externally were now to be taught. There were

some very radical devotees around who were out to make a wonderful thrust to ensue. This devotee who we have just mentioned, Visnu Puri, is believed to have influenced many prominent personalities, amongst whom are Laksmipati Tirtha and Madhavendra Puri Goswami. This will be brought up again where the reasons for Madhavendra Puri Goswami accepting the title "Puri" instead of the traditional "Tirtha" are discussed in a short while.

Dr. B.N.K. Sharma also mentions (History of Dvaita School of Vedanta, page 540) that there is a tradition which supports all these stories, and gives some detail to that point, saying that in the 15th century Rajendra Tirtha carried the message of Madhva to the far north and also into Bihar and Bengal where many of these great devotees were waiting to take up their particular missions. At this time amazing things were going on, much of which was unseen to the general populace. Various intimate associates of the Lord were taking their births in the families of the Vaisnavas for the purpose of setting back the flow of the Kali-yuga and smashing the illusory philosophies of the impersonalists.

Sambidananda dasa brahmacari (the disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura) has written in his book relating to medieval Vaisnava schools, that even the meeting of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and the Tattvavadi head of the time, Raghuvarya Tirtha, which came a little later, was not an ordinary thing. There he makes a statement very boldly saying that the reason for the difference of opinion over sadhya (spontaneous service - the raga marga performed on the liberated devotional platform) and vaidhi bhakti, devotional service in practice where full love of Godhead is not fully manifest, was due to the fact that at that time those particular Tattvavadis had deviated somewhat from the pure teachings presented by Madhva. However we see that after the visit of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to Krsna Mutt, the purity was again sought out. Primarily this was done by Vadiraja Tirtha who again re-established many of Madhva's principals. It was Vadiraja who reintroduced kirtana (the chanting of the holy names) back into the Mutt. His guru, Vyasatirtha, who was practically a contemporary, did many great works also to re-establish the proper standards that were free from any material bodily conceptions of life.

In "History of the Mutts" booklet it is mentioned that due to some problems around the time of Vagisa Tirtha the pure line was nearly lost, but due to the preaching and management of Vyasatirtha and especially Vadiraja Tirtha the desire of Madhvacarya was again instilled.

Brahmanya Tirtha

He was the third descendant from Rajendra Tirtha in the senior line of disciples coming from Vidyadhiraja Tirtha. I could find very little on his life, save and except where B.N.K. Sharma says that it was due to the blessings of Brahmanya Tirtha that the parents of Vyasatirtha (Brahmanya Tirtha's disciples), owed the birth of their children - notably of Vyasatirtha.

As his permanent residence, Brahmanya Tirtha lived mostly at Cannapatna or Abbur in Karnataka State, as mentioned in the Vy-carita, Page 26. There he had a Mutt of his own which later he was to entrust to his disciple Sridhar Tirtha. His other disciple was the famous Vyasatirtha. It is so unfortunate that these great devotees' lives have slipped into obscurity, whether it was by their choice out of humility or just the influence of time. I guess now we will never really know. The Lord has his plan.

Vyasa Tirtha

Otherwise known as Vyasaraya and Vyasaraja Swami, as we briefly mentioned, he was the disciple of Brahmanya Tirtha. Born around 1460 AD in the village of Bannur in Mysore district, his father's name was Rallanna Sumati and his gotra was Kasyapa. As previously stated, he took his birth by the blessings of Brahmanya Tirtha. Altogether, Vyasatirtha's parents had three children, a girl and two boys. In his childhood Vyasatirtha was known as Yatiraja. At the age of five he underwent the vidyarambha samskara to begin his formal education, starting with writing the alphabet, and at seven took upanayana (the sacred thread.) He stayed at gurukula for only four years after that. At eleven he went to his home and continued his studies of poetry, drama and grammar for about five years. Before Vyasatirtha's birth, his father promised his second son to Brahmanya Tirtha. He gave the boy the name Yatiraja to indicate his future as a renunciate, and in due course he was given to Brahmanya Tirtha as an assistant. After some time, however, Yatiraja, being unsure of Brahmanya Tirtha's intentions, slipped away and ran into the forest and headed for the direction of "home," away from the hermitage. One night whilst sleeping in the forest

under a tree, Lord Visnu came to him and told him what to do. The teenager returned to the asrama hermitage that very same day and shortly after this, upon proving his dedication to his guru, young Yatiraja was formally initiated and given the name Vyasatirtha.

Some time shortly after the two year famine of 1475 and 1476 Brahmanya Tirtha, his guru, left this world. Vyasatirtha came to the Vedanta Pitha about 1478 in his late teens. Due to his young age and little time spent with his guru, he didn't really know the conclusions of the Madhva sastras very well, so he went to Kancipuram to study, where, after a very short time, he became a renowned pandit. Whilst in that area he was entrusted with the worship of Srinivasa (Lord Visnu) at Tirupati. Vyasatirtha's Mutt is still at Tirupati on the hill (Tirumala). Before leaving that place, after about twelve years of being there, he gave the worship over to his disciples.

In local history corresponding to the time, it is mentioned that the King of Bisnaga used to listen daily to a great Madhva Vaisnava sannyasi who had never married or touched a woman in his life. Though his name is not directly mentioned, history infers that this was Vyasatirtha.

From Kancipuram he went to Vijayanagar and became known for his radical statements regarding Brahmanism, Vaisnavism, varnasrama, and who was worthy to worship the Lord. It was at this time and place where he was challenged to a debate by brahmana pandits from all over India. The pandits were led by the learned brahmana Basava Bhatta of Kalinga (Orissa). They all pinned their challenges to the pillars of the palace. After a thirty day discussion, Vyasatirtha emerged triumphant and his reputation earned him the respect of King Krsnadevaraya (1509) who regarded him as guru and gave him all honors. He awarded him the order of the camel on a green flag and a drum on the back of a camel as a mark of respect. This is still kept by the Vyasaraya Mutt at Gosale. Once the flag was taken by King Nrsimha in his attacks against the Muslim sultans who caused threats and violence to devotees and temples in South India, but between Krsnadevaraya, Sivaji and others, the sultans were stopped before getting very far.

There are many nice stories telling of the great King Krsnadevaraya, who ruled the Vijayanagar kingdom on the Tungabhadra River in Karnataka in connection with his guru. Vyasatirtha gave the King formal initiation and then out of gratitude and love for his guru, Krsnadevaraya had made beautiful Deities of Vitthala (Krsna) and Rukmini and established the fine Vitthala Rukmini temple which still stands there today. On the temple wall there are inscriptions giving the date 1513 AD and refers to Vyasatirtha as the guru of Krsnadevaraya. There is also mention of Vyasatirtha ceremonially bathing Krsnadevaraya at his initiation, following in the method of Madhvacarya's puja manual entitled "Tantrasara" (Chapter 2.10-11), in which the Tantrasara points out that the ceremonial bathing (abhiseka) of a disciple by the guru adds to the glory of the disciple. As we can see by the next brief story, this did make him glorious.

Once a Gajapati King of Orissa tried to humiliate Krsnadevaraya by sending Advaita Mayavadi philosophical points to him to try to catch him out, but on the instructions and potency of his guru Vyasatirtha, Krsnadevaraya was, as usual, victorious. Out of gratitude Krsnadevaraya gave the village of Bettakonda to Vyasatirtha in 1526, and a huge lake was dug for the pleasure of guru called Vyasa samudra. The dates vary from 1523, 1524 and 1526 by various records, but all the points are substantiated by the writings of devotees of the time, including Purandara dasa. It is also recorded that Krsnadevaraya literally bathed Vyasatirtha in jewels as well, performing "Ratnabhiseka" (bathing him in jewels). Generally to install a person, an abhiseka is done with ghee, milk, yogurt, gaur, honey, sugar-water and tender coconuts in this part of the country, but this was done with priceless gems. After the death of Krsnadevaraya in 1530, Acyutaraya continued to honor Vyasatirtha for a few years until Vyasaraya's demise. Krsnadevaraya, by the way, is always referred to as probably the most spiritually enlightened of the Vijayanagar dynasty. He established many fine temples and Deities in this area under the guidance of Vyasatirtha. To this day there still stands the Deity of Laksmi Nrsimha standing twenty five feet tall in the banana fields. The Deity was carved from one stone under Krsnadevaraya's instructions. After his demise, the invading Muslims smashed many temples out of their envy of Vaisnava culture. Many Deities like Vitthala Rukmini and Krsnaswami were moved further south, but although the Muslims tried to smash the Deity of Lord Nrsimha, still He stands, though His temple lies in rubble around Him. This old and sacred place is the old Kiskinda mentioned in the Ramayana where Hanuman was born and where Rama killed Vali and put Sugriva on the throne.

There are numerous glories of Srila Vyasatirtha to be sung. It is not unintentional that I have said "sung" in his connection, for the highly controversial and powerful preacher, the third moon of the Madhva line, was always absorbed in harinama sankirtan. Many say this was due to the influence of his teacher, Sripadiraja Swami, who is renowned for his poems and songs glorifying Lord Sri Krsna. Some say he was the instigator of the Hari dasa or Dasakuta Movement. Anyway, during his life Vyasatirtha established 732 temples of Hanuman all over South India and composed poems and songs based on the Srimad Bhagavatam, Mahabharata and Ramayana.

One day after composing his famous work called "Krsna Ni Begane Baro" which, for the last four centuries has become a Bharat Natyam dance repertoire, a strange thing happened.

Vyasatirtha was taking a little rest when Lord Sri Krsna appeared in his dream and proceeded to address him. "You are a sannyasi, you do not have any wife or children. On the other hand, I am very much married and leave a large family - so why is it that you only call Me Krsna?" From that day on in any further compositions, Vyasatirtha always referred to his Lord as Sri Krsna.

Once Vyasatirtha was sitting upon the pitha amongst his many, many disciples, when out of nowhere one low-born farmer happened to come into the assembly requesting mantra diksa initiation from Vyasatirtha. The farmer humbly begged, but in his humility he was persistent. The many other disciples, who were mostly brahmana stock, viewed him as being completely unqualified due to his birth and education, or rather lack of it - not being born in a brahmana family like all the other disciples. Vyasatirtha however, being pure and free from bodily conceptions of birth, etc. was of a different mind and to everyone's amazement Vyasatirtha told the farmer to chant the name of Yamaraja's bull. Going away and coming back after some time after chanting that name, the farmer's voice was again heard. "Swamiji, Swamiji, he is here," the farmer exclaimed. When the devotees peaked outside the Mutt, to their surprise there was Yamaraja's bull Mahisa, big as a mountain, right there outside the door of the Mutt. "Now what shall I do Swamiji?" the farmer inquired from Vyasatirtha. Vyasatirtha instructed him to take the bull to the river where there was one huge boulder that hundreds of men couldn't move. The farmer went to the river and requested the bull to move the boulder out of the main stream of the river to allow the water to flow to reach the crop irrigation areas downstream. That rock, which was in itself like an island amidst the river, the bull submerged beyond sight simply with the lifting of his hoof and resting it upon it. To the delight of everyone the water again began to flow. Soon after this incident the bull returned to Yamaraja, his master. The farmer then asked Vyasatirtha for more service. Vyasatirtha, who was always compassionate, then engaged him in looking after the Mutt's gosala.

Not long after that, an annual festival for the Deity came around on the calendar, and a huge festival was put on for the Lord. The high point was the abhiseka bathing ceremony in which the Deity was to be bathed in many different auspicious by-products of the cow. However, just as the bathing commenced, the Deity of Udupi Krsna suddenly disappeared right in front of everyone's eyes. Everyone was very confused except for Srila Vyasatirtha, who asked all the assembled devotees to conclude as to what had happened. The debating took some time and the disciples came to their conclusion that due to the offense of allowing the low-born farmer to look after the cows and procure the milk, yogurt, ghee, etc. for the puja, the Lord had disappeared.

Indirectly they were blaming their guru, saying that this was his offense, for they were still on the bodily concept of life, thinking themselves as brahmanas and he a mere vaisya farmer.

Vyasatirtha very tolerantly tilted his head and asked everyone to follow him for a moment. Everyone went to the gosala headed by Vyasatirtha. As they looked into the gosala they saw the farmer scrubbing down the cows, brush in one hand and a bucket of water in the other. In his total absorption of serving the Lord's cows, the farmer didn't even notice that the Deity had manifested His Gopal form and was standing beside him holding the bucket for him. Needless to say, all of his disciples were amazed that Udupi Krsna personally served this non-brahmana farmer, but Srila Vyasatirtha explained that, "No, the Lord had come to serve His pure devotee. Previously he came for Acarya Madhva to have him glorified and now he has found another worthy soul." Srila Vyasatirtha later formally initiated the farmer as his disciple.

Vyasatirtha passed away at Vijayanagar on the caturthi (fourth) day in the dark fortnight in the month of Phalguna (Jan-Feb), corresponding to Saturday 8th March, 1539 AD. His tomb remains on the island of Navavrindavanas in the Tungabhadra River, half a mile from Anegondi (Hampi).

Vyasatirtha was, as some say, almost the second founder of the system of Madhvacarya, after the great Madhvacarya. Vyasatirtha influenced many, including the aristocracy, and many of his disciples traveled north preaching his glories to places which included Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Maharastra, and even Rajasthan and Uttara Pradesh.

According to Kavikarnapura in his Gaura Ganoddesa Dipika, Vyasatirtha wrote the famous book, "Sri Visnu Samhita", and had a disciple by the name Laksmipati Tirtha who was originally from North India.

The following is a story in connection with the disciple of Vyasatirtha who was given the name Laksmipati Tirtha, and who became the next to be recognized as the acarya in the line in which we follow.

Laksmipati Tirtha

Once Lord Balarama (Krsna's elder brother) appeared to Laksmipati Tirtha to break the ground for a change in the regular line of the Madhva sampradaya. Big changes were to take place that would eventuate in a revolution in thought and deed. Lord Sri Krsna and His brother Lord Balarama were about to appear in the dress of devotees within the Madhva sampradaya.

*brajendra nandana yei
saci-suta hoilo sei
balarama hoilo nitai*

Narottama dasa Thakura sings in his "Ista Deve Vijnapti" in simple Bengali that "Lord Krsna, the son of Nanda Maharaja, the King of Vraja, became the son of Saci (Lord Caitanya) and Balarama became Nitai (Nityananda). We have discussed in brief some of the situations that arose around this time that warranted these changes. We have also introduced some of the Vaisnavas who performed this task for the Lord. The change itself to many meant seeing heart rendering devotion to the Lord, which was in many cases unable to be contained because of its intensity. Some objected to this as being mere sentimentalism, some even suggested that though the external sentiments were seen, other things were in the heart. This section from here on deals with some of those feelings. Obviously these situations are not to be imitated, as some cheaters do. As you will read shortly, these are insights to the personal relationships between the Lord and his pure devotees. This is not an ordinary thing, but by these personal dealings based on love is specifically how the Madhva sampradaya has come to be known all over the universe by the desire and preaching of it's members.

One story which is quite heart rending is the following story of Laksmipati Tirtha, the best of the sannyasis, who on one occasion was sitting in a solitary place performing his bhajana throughout the night. He was singing the glories of Lord Balarama. His unalloyed devotion was so intense he would sometimes cry or call out, "O Baladeva, kindly show me Your favor. I am so fallen and wicked." Tears would come from his eyes and he lost all patience and composure due to his old age and intense desire to see the Lord. He would sometimes collapse on the floor, stunned. This day, due to the devotional traumas he had undergone, he slept. It is described that Lord Nityananda, in His usual prankish mood, appeared to Laksmipati in His original form as Lord Balarama. Lord Balarama, Krsna's brother, appeared before Laksmipati in a dream, telling him that a wandering brahmana, in the form of an avadhuta madman had arrived in town. "He will come to you. Initiate him into the Vaisnava diksa mantras and accept him as your disciple." Then Lord Balarama spoke the mantra into Laksmipati's right ear and Laksmipati awoke. After a short time Laksmipati saw the avadhuta brahmana and his mind became full with anxious anticipation. When they met, Laksmipati couldn't take his eyes off the beautiful form of the Lord, His aura and His moonlike face and unblinking eyes. Hearing the sweet words of Lord Nityananda, Laksmipati's eyes brimmed over with swelling tears. That very day Laksmipati fulfilled the order of Lord Balarama and Nityananda became the favorite of Laksmipati.

*nityananda prabhu vande
srimad laksmipati priyam
sri madhva-sampradaya
vardhanam bhakta vatsalam*

"Respectful obeisances unto You, Nityananda Prabhu, the dear favorite of Laksmipati Tirtha. He (Nityananda) increases the bliss of the entire Madhva sampradaya and He has the innermost needs of the devotees foremost at hand."

Laksmipati couldn't understand his intense attraction for Nityananda or the bliss he felt just being near Him. On Nityananda's absence from his sight for a moment, intense separation came over him. Laksmipati stayed awake that night pondering over things. He had dozed off slightly, when again in a dream the Lord appeared. He was whitish in complexion, dressed in a blue dhoti. It was Nityananda in his dream, but then Nityananda transformed into Lord Balarama. Laksmipati was amazed and he bathed the Lord's feet with ecstatic tears from his eyes. He prayed to the Lord, "Surely You have made a fool of me and put this fallen wretch into much distress. Please show me Your mercy. You are my Lord. I take shelter at Your lotus feet." That same Sri Nityananda Rama (Balarama) fulfilled all of Laksmipati's cherished longings, though He forbade him from telling a soul of His identity, and then disappeared from sight.

When Laksmipati awoke in lamentation upon the Lord's disappearance, he saw that night had become the morning. Laksmipati changed from this day on. He didn't speak ever again, as his mind was always absorbed elsewhere. He looked terrible and his disciples became full of anxiety. Within a short while, without any warning, Laksmipati left this world. Who can understand properly the character and pastimes of the Lord and His pure devotee Laksmipati Tirtha? Just see the purity of Laksmipati, that the Lord appears directly to play with him.

Usually it is accredited to Madhavendra Puri Goswami, the disciple of Laksmipati, as being the spiritual master of Lord Nityananda Prabhu, but here it is mentioned otherwise.

Let us substantiate this story a little. In the Caitanya Caritamrta, Madhya lila (3.85) Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami writes: "In Khadadaha, sometimes people misunderstood Nityananda Prabhu to belong to the sakta sampradaya whose philosophy is antah saktah bahih saivah sabhayam vaisnavo matah. According to the sakta sampradaya, a person called kaulavadhuta thinks materially while externally appearing to be a great devotee of Lord Siva. When such a person is in an assembly of Vaisnavas, he appears like a Vaisnava. Actually Nityananda Prabhu did not belong to such a community. Nityananda Prabhu was always a brahmacari of a sannyasi of the vaidika (Vedic) order. Actually He was a paramahansa. Sometimes He is accepted to be a disciple of Laksmipati Tirtha. If He is so accepted, Nityananda Prabhu belonged to the Madhva sampradaya. He did not belong to the tantrika sampradaya of Bengal."

In a conversation I had with HH Bhakti Hridoy Mangal Maharaja, Secretary General of the Sri Caitanya Gaudiya Mutt, he remembered hearing personally an instance that was related by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Maharaja Prabhupada (sometime in the late 1920's during a class), wherein Lord Nityananda walked off with a sannyasi who came to beg alms at His parent's house (as mentioned in Caitanya Bhagavata). The sannyasi asked Hadai Pandit, the father of Lord Nityananda, as is traditional, for some alms and so Hadai Pandit as a dutiful householder agreed. But when the sannyasi asked him to give him the boy (Nityananda) as alms, Hadai Pandit nearly died. Considering his life useless and a bad example to the boy if he didn't fulfill the desires of his saintly guest, he gave the boy to the sannyasi as his assistant - this sannyasi was Laksmipati Tirtha. It is interesting to note that the boy Nityananda simply walked off with the sannyasi without even so much as looking back, just as Lord Rama left His father, Dasaratha, to go to the forest. Though different circumstances, both Maharaja Dasaratha and Hadai Pandit died within a very short time due to intense separation.

However in Caitanya Caritamrta, Madhya lila (8.128) purport, Srila Prabhupada says: "Sri Nityananda Prabhu was initiated by Madhavendra Puri, a sannyasi. According to others, however, He was initiated by Laksmipati Tirtha."

Visnu Puri

Around the same time was a great Vaisnava preacher by the name Visnu Puri. We briefly mentioned something about him in relation to his guru, Jayadharmā Tirtha, in that section, so at this point let us look a little closer at his pastimes. Though he was directly one of the noted acaryas in the guru parampara, certainly it appears that he must have been a great devotee to have gained recognition by the great Kavikarnapura, the celebrated compiler of the Gaura Ganoddesa Dipika. If Kavikarnapura thinks his name worthy of mentioning, then who am I to deny him a mention? According to history he was a sannyasi of Tirhit district. One report is that Visnu Puri met Lord Caitanya at Kasi (Benares) while Lord Caitanya was on His way back to Nadia from Vrndavana. They were charmed with each other naturally. The following story is mentioned by B.D. Basu, in his presentation of Visnu Puri's book Bhakti-ratnavali, which says that at their meeting a wonderful interaction took place. By the bhakti and learning of Visnu Puri, Lord Caitanya became inspired, and by the grandeur and personal magnetism of Lord Caitanya, the Personality of Godhead, Visnu Puri was inspired. Later a disciple of Visnu Puri left Benares for Jagannatha Puri to bring greetings to Lord Caitanya from his guru. Lord Caitanya sent him back to Kasi with a message, "Make Me a garland of jewels". Everyone was astounded when they heard the greatest renunciate asking for jewels, but they had not the boldness to ask Him why He asked for this. Actually he was referring to Visnu Puri's Bhakti-ratnavali - the necklace of priceless jewels of the Srimad Bhagavatam.

There is another version of this story recorded, that Lord Jagannatha, in a dream came to Visnu Puri and told him to compose and send these prayers to Him in the form of Lord Caitanya. The date recorded on this book, Bhakti-ratnavali, is 1555 Saka era or 1633 AD, but it is humbly suggested that this is the date Bhakti-ratnavali was transcribed from the original, not the date of the actual composition. This was one year before Lord Caitanya passed from the devotees' physical presence.

Visnu Puri was previously known as Visnu dasa. He was a learned brahmana who belonged to the Vaisnava school of Madhva and was a disciple of Jayadharmā Tirtha. He first led his life as a householder with wife and children, but when the temper of his wife became too much for him, he left home and took the dress of a sannyasi. Everyone tried to pacify him but he would not return. He wandered and settled in Mithila at the shrine of Lord Siva (which is also known as Siva Puri). The Tirtha pandits say that in a dream Lord Siva told him to resume family life, so he returned and took a second wife. In the dream Lord Siva also gave him the Visnu mantra, so at Siva Puri it is suggested that this is when he added Puri to his name, to remember that holy place, as there is no mention of receiving the name from another source.

To have been a disciple of Jayadharmā who occupied the Pitha from 1448-1460 AD and to have met Lord Caitanya in Kasi, Visnu Puri must have lived for close on one hundred and fifty years. Of course that is presuming that the dates that we have are exactly correct. There is no doubt that his preaching from the Bhakti sastra, Srimad Bhagavatam, inspired many, among them the great Madhavendra Puri, who became the next in the disciplic succession. It is believed by many that Madhavendra Puri Goswami, though taking diksa initiation from Laksmipati, was given siksa (instruction and inspiration) from Visnu Puri, thus this is why the title "Puri" was added to his name instead of Tirtha, as with the previous parampara acaryas.

In Dr. B.N.K. Sharma's "History of Dvaita Vedanta" he makes a point to say that up until this time this was the parampara which came to be known as the Vyasaraja Mutt line of the Madhva Mutts, following down to the disciples of Vyasatirtha, a strict Madhva line.

Filling in the details over the past couple of generations, the Gaura Ganoddesa Dipika (Text 22) of Kavikarnapura says: "Rajendra's disciple was Jayadharmā Muni. Among Jayadharmā's disciples was Sriman Visnu Puri, the famous author of the Bhakti-ratnavali. Another disciple was Brahmanya Purusottama." But in the Kantimala, it states:

*iti sri purusottama-caravaravinda-
krpa makaranda-bindu pronmilita-
viveka-tairabhukta-paramahamsa-
sri visnu-puri grathita-sri
bhagavatamrtabdhi labdha-
sri bhaktiratnavali kantimala samapata*

This indicates that Visnu Puri had some kind of disciple relationship with Purusottama Tirtha (Brahmanya); at least this confirms the time, if not his particular kind of guru-disciple relationship. Substantiating the

facts presented here, B.N.K. Sharma points out that there is a traditional line stating that Rajendra Tirtha carried the message of Madhva north to Bihar and Bengal and that Rajendra Tirtha's disciple was Jayadhva Tirtha, who was the guru of Visnu Puri.

In these days sometimes one would accept a particular mantra or philosophical point from someone and in that way he would become one's guru. So sometimes certain initiations held more importance than others. For example, one's acceptance into a particular philosophical line would stand as more important than one's family initiation into a mantra for charming snakes, or applying medicine from the Ayurveda.

B.N.K. Sharma says that Visnu Puri was a contemporary of Jayadhama who followed the great Sridhar Swami and due to his dedication to the bhakti marga (devotional line) this could have been a great source of influence on Laksmipati Tirtha and Madhavendra Puri Goswami. Another thing is that there is no record of Visnu Puri's activities in South India, save and except that he headed to North India to preach. To conclude, we can say that Laksmipati and Madhavendra Puri were both from North India and were influenced by Visnu Puri to develop the spontaneous mood of bhakti. Later some of Visnu Puri's previously used verses of Sridhar Swami found in his Bhakti-ratnavali turned up in Rupa Goswami's "Padyavali" with reference to Bhakti-ratnavali.

Madhavendra Puri

Srimad Krsnadasa Kaviraja has described Sri Madhavendra Puri as the root of all transcendental joy. When Lord Caitanya was absorbed in his childhood pastimes, Sri Madhavendra Puri was quite an old man. There is no mention of any meeting between Mahaprabhu and Sri Madhavendra Puri in CC or CBh. But in CBh., when Sri Vrndavana dasa Thakura describes the pilgrimage of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, he mentions that Nityananda Prabhu did meet Madhavendra Puri. He also states that Nityananda Prabhu spent a few days serving Sri Madhavendra Puri and accepted him as His spiritual master. Vrndavana dasa has also described Madhavendra Puri's delight upon having the company of Sri Nityananda.

After spending a few days with Madhava Puri, Sri Nityananda returned to Vrndavana, and Madhava Puri left on pilgrimage for South India. Generally Madhavendra Puri was accompanied by Sri Isvara Puri, Sri Ranga Puri, Paramananda Puri and some other sannyasis.

When Sri Madhavendra Puri left this material world, the following sloka was uttered by him (CC 2.17):

*ayi dinadayadaranatha hey mathuranatha kadavalokyase,
hrdayam tvadlokakataram dayita bhramyati kim karomyayam*

The people of Gauda have accepted this stanza as the sum and substance of the mood of separation. Lord Caitanya was overwhelmed with joy upon remembering this sloka.

Outwardly, Madhava Puri was a sannyasi belonging to the Dasanami Sankara sect. But in fact, he was the root of the tree of prema bhakti. Before the Lord appeared in this world he sent His personal associates beforehand, Sri Madhavendra Puri was one of them. Krsnadasa Kaviraja and Sri Vrndavana dasa Thakura have not mentioned anything regarding Madhavendra Puri's caste or creed.

Sri Madhavendra Puri lived for many years, and taught love and devotion throughout the world. He visited many places throughout India, and the exact number of his disciples is not known. Some of his prominent disciples were Sri Advaita Acarya, Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi, Sri Paramananda Puri, Sri Ranga Puri, Sri Brahmananda Puri, Sri Brahmananda Bharati, Sri Kesava Bharati, Sri Krsnananda Puri, Sri Ramacandra Puri, Sri Nrsimha Tirtha, Sri Nityananda Prabhu, Sri Isvara Puri, Sri Raghupati Upadhyaya, Sri Sukhananda Puri etc. (Bhaktiratnakara 5.2272-2274, 5.2330,2332; CBh. 1.9.158-188, 1.9.160, 1.9.175, 1.11.125, 3.3.59, 3.3.172, 3.4.433-507). Five padas composed by Madhavendra Puri have been included in Padyavali (nos. 79,96,164,286,330)

His worshipable Deity, Gopalji, is presently residing at Nathdwar in Rajasthan, and is worshiped by the followers of Vallabhacharya.

Isvara Puri

He was the diksa-guru of Lord Caitanya. He was born in a brahmana caste of the Radha clan in Kumarahatta village, presently known as Halisahar. His father was Syamasundara Acarya. The family name of Isvara Puri is not known. He was instrumental in inspiring Nityananda Prabhu to leave home (Premavilasa 7 and 23). The following are the references showing Isvara Puri in the biographies of Lord Caitanya: CBh. 1.9.161-170, 1.11.70-126, 1.17.46-162; CC 2.10.131-150, 2.8.26-30. Three slokas composed by Isvara Puri have been included in Padyavali (nos. 16, 62 and 75). Also see Bhaktiratnakara 12.2206-2209.

Nityananda Prabhu

See also [Laksmipati Tirtha](#)

He was Halayudha in Krsnalila. According to Premavilasa 24, Nityananda was a disciple of Isvara Puri. Sri Jiva states that Nityananda was a disciple of Sankarsana Puri who was a disciple of Madhavendra Puri. But Bhaktiratnakara states that Nityananda took diksa from Laksmipati who was the guru of Madhavendra Puri. If this were the case then Nityananda would have been the great-guru of Lord Caitanya and a friendly relationship could not have existed between the two. According to CBh. Madhavendra Puri dealt with Nityananda as a friend, while the latter showed guru-like reverence to the former.

After personally carrying out an investigation, Buchanan Hamilton has recorded a brief history of Nityananda's family in the Purnea Report.

Nityananda Prabhu was born on the thirteenth day of the bright fortnight of Magha (Feb.-March) in the village of Ekacakra in the district of Birbhum in 1395 Saka (1473 AD). His father was Hadai Pandita (Hado Ojha) and his mother was Padmavati. His paternal grandfather, Sundaramalla Nakadi Baduri was a brahmana of the Radha clan.

Nityanda's past name was Kuvera and He was an avadhuta. Steven Rosen (Satyaraja das) says in his book Panca-tattva, 3.13:

"Nityananda was considered an avadhuta sannyasi, although it is said that He never formally adopted sannyasa order. Avadhutas (the pure ones, in SB 4.29.11 p. called "most free") are usually associated with the Saivite tradition but there is a little known branch of Vaisnava sannyasis known as turiyatit-avadhuta. They are described in the Narada-parivrajaka-upanisad, Turiyatit-avadhuta-upanisad and the Brhad-avadhuta-upanisad."

In the same book (3.40) he lists twelve gopalas, associates of Sri Nityananda, with their identity in Caitanya-lila:

Sridama (Ramadasa Abhirama of Khanakul-Krsnanagar in Hooghly)
Sudama (Sundarananda Thakura, brahmana ascetic)
Vasudama (Dhananjaya)
Subala (Gauridasa Pandita)
Mahabala (Kamalakara Pipalai)
Subahu (Uddharana Datta)
Mahabahu (Mahesa Pandita)
Stokakrsna (Purusottama)
Arjuna (Paramesvara Dasa)
Dama (Purusottama Nagara)
Labanga (Kala Krsnadasa)
Madhumangala, or Kusumasava (Sridhara)

Sri Nitai is Isa prakasa (CC 1.1.7-11), the cherished goal of Gaudiyas (CC 1.1.18-19), and is depicted as the trunk of the tree of bhakti (CC 1.9.21, 1.10.115)

His childhood sports up to twelve years of age are described in CBh. 1.9.12-99; His pilgrimage tours up to twenty years of ages in CBh. 1.9.100-136; His arrival in Navadvipa at the house of Nandana Acarya and his meeting Lord Caitanya is described in CBh. 2.3.120-2.4.76.

Premavilasa narrates the following information relating to Nityananda Prabhu: marriage of Nityananda; settled life at Khardaha with Vasudha-Jahnava; death of seven sons soon after birth when Abhirama conveyed his humble obeisances to each; birth of Viracandra and Ganga later; both stayed alive and healthy despite Abhirama's offering of obeisances; hymns sung by Abhirama in praise of Ganga devi.

Nityananda tattva: Mahasankarsana, Sesa, etc. (Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika 63-64). Sandhini-sakti; inward descent of Anangamanjari (Anangamanjari Samputika), in the form of Prakrti indirectly and in the form of Purusa directly. See Dharanisesa Sanvad in Brahmanda Purana of Vrndavana dasa Thakura, (2) Aisvaryamrtakavya and (3) Rasakalpasara tattva. Nityananda mantra: see Brahmanda Purana and Dhyanaacandra Gosvami's Paddhati (56-57).

Dhyana and Gayatri dealing with Nityananda: see Paddhati (as above) 50, 72. Nityananda Astaka composed by (1) Sarvabhauma and (2) Vrndavana dasa Thakura; Nama dvadasaka on Nityananda composed by Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya; Astottarasatanama (108 names) of Nityananda (1) in Brahmanda Purana and (2) by Sarvabhauma.

The following are some primary works on Nityananda Prabhu:

Nityanandoprabhoraisvaryamrtakavyam, Baranagar Pathavadi (Calcutta manuscript no. BA. copying date is 1260 BS (1853 AD). This Sanskrit text consisting of 128 slokas is said to have been written by Vrndavana dasa Thakura. The ms. deals with descriptions of various aisvarya and madhurya-lilas of Nityananda Prabhu, as well as a note on His true nature (prakrti-svarupa). Another manuscript with similar contents titled Rasakalpasaratattva is also attributed to Vrndavana dasa and is available at Pathavadi collection ms. no. B 46.

Nityananda Vamsavistar, by Vrndavana dasa Thakura. The contents are as follows: Avatarahood of Viracandra; revelation of Viracandra; genealogy of Viracandra; Jahnava's pilgrimage to Vrndavana, in two parts - a total of six sections.

Nityananda Bhasya written by Ramrayaji, a disciple of Nityananda. It forms a commentary to Siksastaka.

He disappeared by merging with the body of Banka (Bankima) Raya Deity in Ekacakragrama, His appearance place.

Advaita Acarya

He is a disciple of Madhavendra Puri, and constitutes one of the figures amongst the Pancatattva. In an earlier incarnation he was Lord Siva. He was born in a varendra brahmana family on the seventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of Magha, 1355 Saka (1433 AD), in the village named Lauda in Srihatta.

According to Bangabhasa O Sahitya, Advaita Prabhu was born in 1434 AD and met Vidyapati in 1458 AD. Advaita's former name was Kamalaksa (Kamalakanta) Vedapananana. His two wives were Sita Devi and Sri Devi. His son Acyutananda was born of Sita Devi (1425 Saka 1503 AD), followed by Krsnadasa, Gopala, Balarama, Svarupa, and Jagadisa Misra. While Sri Devi gave birth to one son named Syamadasa (Premavilasa 24).

From Lauda, Advaita Prabhu moved to the village of Navahatta and later to Santipura. He also had a house at Navadvipa. In 1480 Saka (1558 AD), at the age of 125 years (i.e. 25 years after the disappearance of Lord Caitanya) Advaita Prabhu passed away. (Advaita Vilasa)

However, according to Premavilasa 24, Advaita Prabhu was born in Santipura. He studied the Vedas and other scriptures under a scholar named Santacarya in Phullavati village near Santipura, where he was awarded the title Acarya. The genealogy of Advaita Prabhu can be found in Premavilasa 24. Also books

such as Valyalilasutra (in Sanskrit), and Advaitavilasa, Advaitamangala, Advaita Prakasa, Sitacarita (in Bengali) present detailed information on Advaita Prabhu.

To verify the meeting of Advaita with Vidyapati, it is known that in 1330 Saka (1408 AD) Vidyapati received the endowment of Bisaphi village from Sivasimha. Vidyapati was born around 1307 Saka (1385 AD), and was a contemporary of Candidasa. Vidyapati mentions their meeting one another in songs he composed in 1325 Saka (1403 AD).

One manuscript of the Bhagavata which was copied by Vidyapati is still available and carries the date of copying as 1379 Saka (1457 AD). Evidence shows that Vidyapati was alive until 1401 Saka (1479 AD). In 1485 AD Advaita Prabhu, at the age of fifty two, arrived at the room where Lord Gauranga was born. Much earlier he undertook a pilgrimage. Hence his meeting with Vidyapati should be taken as a fact.

The foremost of all the Vaisnavas who reside at Navadvipa is Sri Advaita Acarya, whose virtuous presence has made all the worlds blessed. He is the most prominent preceptor in all fields including knowledge, renunciation and devotion. In explaining Krsna-bhakti he is like unto Lord Sankara himself, and whatever scriptures that exist within the three worlds he explains in the light of Krsna-bhakti.

With the intense eagerness he continually worships Sri Krsna with Tulasi manjaris and Ganges water. By the momentum of his spiritual force, his loud shouts pierce the coverings of this universe and, resounding throughout Vaikuntha, reach the ears of Sri Krsna. Hearing this loving summons saturated with devotion, Sri Krsna adverts Himself.

*jaya jaya advaita isvara avatara
krsna avatari kaila jagat-nistara*

"All glories to Advaita Prabhu, the incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He induced Krsna to descend and thus delivered the entire world." [CC Antya 8.4]

"On the seventh day of the bright fortnight of the month of Magh, the great ocean of ecstasy swelled to its limits, being forcibly attracted by the moon of Advaita, Who appeared from the womb of Sri Nabhadevi as the moon appears in the autumn sky. His father, Sri Kuvera Pandit floated in that ocean of joy. In great happiness he gave many gifts in charity to the brahmanas (who voluntarily accept vows of poverty). Very quietly he approached the maternity room to get a glimpse of his newborn son. Then his own face began to shine by the reflected light of that moon-like personage. The residents of Navagram came running to see the child. Everyone remarked that they had never seen such a beautiful baby. What a pious activities his father must have been performed to get such a jewel of a son, and that in his old age? Thus Ghanasyama sings about this occasion." [Bhaktiratnakara 12.1759] The child was named Mongal and his other name was Kamalaksa.

Advaita Acarya is the combined incarnation of Mahavisnu and Sadasiva (who resides in Goloka). His two consorts, Sita and Sri are manifestations of Yoga Maya. Once when Advaita performed worship, whatever gods and demigods He used to meditate upon He saw all gathered at Lord Caitanya's lotus feet, offering prayers. Raising up his two hands, Advaita exclaimed in great ecstasy, "Today all the days of my life have produced a successful result, as all my desires have been fulfilled. My birth and activities have finally born fruit. I have directly perceived Your two lotus feet, which are proclaimed throughout the four Vedas but are unattainable thereby. Now, by Your causeless mercy, You have revealed Yourself to Me."

Mahaprabhu replied, "Acarya, now you should perform My worship." First Advaita Acarya washed the Lord's two lotus feet with water scented by flower petals and then with water scented with sandalwood. Then He placed on His lotus feet Tulasi manjari dipped in sandalwood paste along with arghya - an auspicious offering of rice, durva grass, yogurt etc. His eyes brimming with tears, he offered incense, ghee lamps, flowers, sandalwood paste, and some foodstuffs. After offering various prayers he loudly proclaimed the Lord's glories with auspicious shouts. "All glories to the Lord and maintainer of the universe, the Lord of all that lives. All glories to Gauracandra, the ocean of mercy. All glories to the most munificent incarnation of Sri Krsna Caitanya Mahaprabhu, whose form is all-enchanting. All glories to He who is decorated with the ornaments of Srivatsa and Kaustubha. All glories to He who has revealed the

Hare Krsna Maha-mantra. All glories to He who enjoys the pastimes of accepting devotion unto Himself. All glories to Mahaprabhu who reclines on the bed of Ananta Sesa. All glories to the refuge of all living entities. [CBh. Madhya 6.116]

Hearing Advaita's prayer's Mahaprabhu replied, "My dear Acarya, I am very pleased by your prayers. Now you can ask from me any benediction you like."

Then Advaita requested that, "My only request is that you distribute love of Krsna even to women, laborers and the ignorant fools as well. [CBh. Madhya 6.167]

A Nrsimha-sila and Deities, fashioned after a picture of Sri Sri Madan-Gopal that were worshiped by Advaita Acarya are still residing at Santipur in Madan-Gopal Para. Santipur is a short distance from Krsnanagara.

The place on the banks of the Ganga where Advaita Acarya worshiped salagram and called out to the Lord to please descend to the world is known today as Babla. A temple has been built in memory of Advaita Acarya's pastimes there.

Lord Caitanya

The origin of Lord Caitanya's name is mentioned in CBh. 2.28.179,181: "You aroused everyone's spiritual consciousness (Caitanya) and inspired the entire world to chant the holy name of Krsna, thus You are called Sri Krsnacaitanya."

According to the Tantra tradition, the term 'Krsnavarna' mentioned in Srimad Bhagavatam refers to Krsnacaitanya. Ramabhadra Vaisnavacarya Gosvami has said, "yasya namadyavayave sah krsnacaitanyah"; just as Satya refers to Satyabhama, and Bhima refers to Bhimasena, similarly the term Krsnavarna indicates Krsnacaitanya (In this connection refer to the tika of the sloka 'sriya savarnena...'Bhagavatam 3.3.3).

Some argue that the name Gauranga was uttered by Kesava Bharati at the time of Lord Gauranga's sannyasa initiation, thus the name 'Gaura' (referring to Him as a resident of Navadvipa) should be considered His foremost name. However this is not rationally tenable when considered from a theological viewpoint. Simply by looking at the titles of the major biographies of the Lord's life (i.e. Caitanya Bhagavata, CC, Caitanyamangala, etc.) it is evident that Sri Krsna Caitanya was His foremost name.

Although Locana Thakura, the preacher of Gauraparatomyavada, dealt with the nama-guna-lila etc. of Gaura in his composition Dhamali, nevertheless the biography he wrote was entitled Sri Caitanyamangala.

Prabodhananda Sarasvati writes about the dhyana of Gauranagaravana in his Sri Caitanyacandramrta (132). In one continuous lila numerous names of the Lord have been mentioned, yet the most frequently used name is Caitanya. Thus we can conclude without any doubt that Caitanya was the foremost name.

For details see the following biographies of Lord Caitanya:

1. Caitanya Bhagavata
2. Caitanya Caritamrta
3. Caitanyamangala
4. Caitanyacaritamahakavya
5. Caitanyacandrodaya
6. Murari Gupta's Kadaca
7. Gaurakrsnodaya

The Gauramantra is mentioned in the following works:

1. Urdhvamnayantra 3.14-16 (manuscript from the collection of the Madras Oriental Mss. Library)
2. Isanasamhita

3. Paddhati written by Dhyana-candra Gosvami 54-55
4. Sri Caitanyacandrodaya 9
5. Advaitaprakasa 10 and 12
6. CC. 3.2.31
7. Gaurakrsnodaya-mahakavya of 1680 Saka; sloka 18.22-34.
8. Gaudiya Vaisnava Abhidhana Vol. 1, p.250
9. Caitanya Bhagavata 1.1.3, 12.10.59-60.
10. Tika of Caitanyacandramrta (31) by Anandi

The following are the astakas (eight lined hymns) composed in praise of Lord Caitanya: astaka by Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya; Sacisutastaka by Narahari Sarkara; Caitanyastaka by Rupa Gosvami; Gaurasudhakaracitrastaka by Prabodhananda; Sacisunvastaka by Dasa Gosvami.

Caitanyastakam (1), by Rupa Gosvami;

Caitanyastakam (2), by Rupa Gosvami;

Caitanyastakam (3), by Rupa Gosvami;

Gaurangastakam, by Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya;

Gaura-Gadadhara-yugalastakam, by Acyutananda Gosvami (son of Advaitacarya);

Maha-prabhor-astakam, by Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura;

Sacinandanastakam, by Narahari-sarakara Thakura;

Sacinandana-vijayastakam, by Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura;

Sacisunvastakam, by Raghunatha-dasa Gosvami; (probably same as "Dasa Gosvami")

Sacisutastakam, anonymous;

Sacitanayastakam, anonymous;

Astottarasatanama by Sarvabhauma; Namadvadasaka; Namavimsatistotra by Sarvabhauma.

Sahasraka: one each by Narahari Sarkara, Kavikarnapura, and Rupa Gosvami. Sri-gauranga-sahasra-nama-stotra, from Moksarnava-tantra, Siva to Gauri; Sri-krsna-caitanya-candrasya sahasra-nama-stotra, by Sri-Caitanya-dasa Ciranjivi-sarvadhikari

Stava: Navadvipacandrastavaraja by Raghunandana Thakura; Praty-anaga-varnanakhya-stavaraja by Advaita Prabhu; Gaurangastavakalpataru by Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami.

Sataka: Caitanyasataka by Sarvabhauma; Gaurasataka by Ratikanta Thakura.

Astakaliya sutra: Bhavadhyalila by Rupa Gosvami; Paddhati 72-77 by Dhyana-candra Gosvami; Smaranamangala by Visvanatha Cakravarti; and the Bengali work Gauracaritcintamani by Narahari Cakravarti.

Rupa Gosvami: sriman-maha-prabhor asta-kaliya-lila-smarana-mangala-stotram;

Visvanatha C: sriman-maha-prabhor asta-kaliya-lila-smarana-mangala-stotram;

Sri-Gaura-premollasa-stotram, by Nanda-kisora Gosvami;

Sri-Gauranga-lila-smarana-mangala-stotram, by Bhaktivinoda Thakura;

Gauranga-stotram, by Sri Bhakti-desika Maharaja;

Gauranga-virudavali, by Raghunandana Gosvami;

Gaura-prema-stava-rajya, by Ramaraya Gosvami;

Godruma-candra-bhajanopadesa, by Bhaktivinoda Thakura;

Gauranga-maha-prabhu-dhyanam;

Gauranga-maha-prabhu-pranamah;

Gauranga-maha-prabhu-vijnaptih;

Gaura-Nityananda-pranamah;

Books on Lord Caitanya:

In Bengali:

1. Sri Gaurasundara by Syamalal Gosvami
2. Amiya-Nimai-Carita by Sisir Kumar Ghosh
3. Caitanyadeva by Sundarananda Vidyavinoda

In Oriya:

1. Caitanyabhagavata of Isvara dasa
2. Caitanyavilasa of Madhava

In Vrajbasa:

1. Caitanyacaritamrta of Suvalasyama

In Hindi:

1. Amiya-Nimai-Carita
2. Caitanya Premasagara of Pandita Ramananda
3. Caitanya caritavali of Prabhudatta Brahmachari

In Gurmukhi:

1. Caitanyacarita

In Urdu:

1. Sri Nimaicand of Krsnaprasada Duggul

In Telugu:

1. Sri Caitanyalilamrtasaram
2. Sri Caitanyasiksamrtam
3. Lord Gauranga

In Tamil:

1. Life and Teaching of Gauranga by P.V. Pillai, Madras

In English:

1. Lord Gauranga by Sisirkumar Ghosh
2. Sri Krsna Caitanya by N.K. Sanyal
3. Lord Caitanya by B.P. Tirtha
4. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu B.P. Tirtha
5. Caitanya by G. Tucci
6. Life of Sri Caitanya by C.S. Trilokekar
7. Caitanya and His Companions by D.C. Sen
8. Gauranga and His Gospel by M. Dhar
9. The Universal Religion of Sri Caitanya by N.N. Chatterjee
10. Caitanya's Pilgrimage and Teachings by J. Sarkar

The famous Siksastaka was composed by Lord Caitanya. The commentator Vitthalesvara states that Sri Krsna premamrta stotra was orally propounded by Lord Caitanya. Although a number of other small astakas are considered to have been composed by Lord Caitanya, the Lord Himself did not write any

theological treatises. This task was taken up by Jiva Gosvami, who compiled a number of philosophical works such as Satsandarbha, Kramasandarbha, Sarvasamvadini, etc.

Rupa Gosvami, Sanatana Gosvami

Gaudiya Vaisnava Abhidhana p. 1350-1351: Rupa Gosvami was one of the six Gosvamis associated with Sri Gauranga-lila. According to Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika 180 he was Sri Rupa manjari in Krsna lila. He occupied a responsible post in the service of the Badshah Hussain Shah of Gauda. He later renounced everything and surrendered himself at the feet of Lord Gauranga. His fascinating biography is described in the CC, Bhaktamala, etc. Narottama Thakura has rightly praised him as "Sri Caitanyamanohabhista-stapaka" (the implementor of Lord Caitanya's desires).

Rupa Gosvami was specifically commanded by Lord Caitanya to carry out two tasks: (1) to re-locate and preserve the lost pilgrimage places of Vrndavana, and (2) to write and preach Vaisnava theology.

From Prayaga Rupa Gosvami went to Vrndavana. He then visited his native home where he settled his property concerns. Thereafter he traveled on to Nilacala to meet Lord Caitanya. While staying at Gauda, Rupa Gosvami developed the desire to write the Vidagdhamadhava and Lalitamadhava nataka. Initially he planned to present the Vraja-lila and the Pura-lila together in one drama with the view of calming the intensity of the Vrajaviraha by including the Dvaraka-lila. However, while in Satyabhamapura he was commanded by Satyabhamadevi to write two separate dramas. In Nilacala Lord Caitanya also gave him the same instruction. Only those who appreciate the true Vaisnava spirit will understand the immense pleasure which Lord Caitanya and His associates derived from listening to this drama. After surcharging and empowering Rupa Gosvami with divine energy, Lord Caitanya sent him back to Vrndavana.

The following is a list of the most well-known books of Rupa Gosvami: Bhaktirasamrtasindhu; Ujjvalanilamani; Laghubhagavatamrta; Vidagdhamadhava; Lalitamadhava; Nikunjarahasyastava; Stavamala; Sri Radha-Krsna-ganoddesa- dipika; Mathura-mahatmya; Uddhava Sandesa; Hamsadutam; Danakelikaumudi; Sri Krsnajanmatithividhi; Prayuktakhyatamanjari; Natakacandrika.

Kumara deva, the son of Mukunda, was an extremely religious man. When religious upheaval occurred in Naihati, Kumara deva moved to Bakla Candradvipa (in Jessore). He is said to have settled for some time at Fateyabad - located between Naihati and Bakla. The three most renowned sons of Kumaradeva were Sanatana, Rupa and Anupama (Vallabha). When their father died, these three sons went to their maternal uncle's home in Sakurma near the capital of Gauda where they continued their studies.

Sri Sanatana Gosvami was born in 1488 A.D. (1410 Saka). Sri Rupa Gosvami was born in 1493 A.D. (1415 Saka). In order to complete their education they lived at their uncle's house in a small village named Sakurma near the capital of Gauda.

Having heard the glories of Sri Rupa and Sanatana from many intelligent persons, Badshah Hussain Shah of Gauda appointed the two brothers as ministers in the court. Though reluctant to accept the Bhadshah's offer, out of fear of the Yavana King, they agreed to take the post. Hussain Shah happily offered them enormous amounts of wealth and riches. Sri Rupa and Sanatana thus lived in the village of Ramakeli, the capital of Gauda. Many great brahmana scholars from different parts of the country visited their house regularly, and the two brothers took great pleasure in serving and arranging accommodations for them.

The brother of Sarvabhauma, the famous Vidyavacaspati, was the philosophy teacher of Sri Rupa and Sanatana. As mentioned in the Dasama Tippi of the Bhagavata, their other teachers were Sri Paramananda Bhattacharya and Sri Ramapada Bhadrpada. From their early childhood Rupa, Sanatana and Anupama, were very devotionally inclined.

When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu arrived at the beautiful village of Ramakeli the brothers met the Lord and were overwhelmed with joy. On the eve of the Lord's departure from Ramakeli, He blessed Sri Sanatana and Rupa by saying, "Very soon Krsna will free you from the entanglement of material life."

After the Lord departed from Ramakeli Rupa and Sanatana began to devise means to get out of their government service. Both brothers appointed some brahmanas to perform purascarana ceremonies and chant the holy name of Krsna. Rupa Gosvami deposited ten thousand gold coins with a grocer, and the balance he brought in two boats to a place called Bakla Candradvipa. There he divided this money among the brahmanas, Vaisnavas and his relatives, and a portion he kept for emergency measures and personal needs.

When Rupa Gosvami was informed that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was going to Vrndavana from Jagannatha Puri through the forest of Madhyapradesh, he sent two people to Jagannatha Puri to find out when the Lord would leave for Vrndavana. When Mahaprabhu started for Vrndavana, Rupa left home and sent news to Sanatana that he was leaving with his younger brother (Anupama Mallika) to meet Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Meanwhile, Sanatana Gosvami told the Nawab that he was sick and could not attend to his work. Giving this excuse, he sat home and studied Srimad Bhagavatam with learned brahmana scholars. The Nawab Hussain Shah first sent his personal physician to see what the real facts were; then he personally came to see why Sanatana was not attending to official business. Knowing that he wanted to resign his post, the Nawab had him arrested and imprisoned. The Nawab then went off to attack Orissa.

Rupa Gosvami finally reached Prayaga. While Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was sitting in a solitary place in the home of a Deccan brahmana, Rupa Gosvami and Sri Vallabha (Anupama) came to meet Him.

At the time of Mahaprabhu's visit to Prayaga, Sri Vallabhacarya was living in the village of Araila on the other bank of the Triveni. One day he invited the Lord to his house for lunch and Sri Rupa and Anupama accompanied Him.

Due to the great crowds in Prayaga, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu went to a place called Dasasvamedhaghata. It was there that the Lord instructed Sri Rupa Gosvami for ten successive days and empowered him to understand the philosophy of devotional service.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu taught Rupa Gosvami the ultimate limit of the truth about Lord Krsna, the truth about devotional service and the truth about transcendental mellows, consummating in conjugal love between Radha and Krsna. Finally He told Rupa Gosvami about the ultimate conclusions of Srimad Bhagavatam. By entering the heart of Rupa Gosvami, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu empowered him to ascertain properly the conclusions of all truths. He made him an experienced devotee whose decisions correctly agreed with the verdicts of the disciplic succession. Thus Sri Rupa Gosvami was personally empowered by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. After giving so much instruction, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu advised Sri Rupa to go to Vrndavana. The Lord then departed for Varanasi. With a grievous heart due to separation from the Lord, Sri Rupa and Anupama started for Vrndavana.

In Vrndavana, Rupa Gosvami began to write a drama. In particular, he composed the introductory verses to invoke good fortune. On his way to Gauda-desa, Rupa Gosvami had been thinking of how to write the action of the drama. Thus he had made some notes and begun to write. In this way the two brothers Rupa and Anupama reached Bengal, but when they arrived there Anupama passed away. After performing the funeral rites, Rupa Gosvami traveled on. In the province of Orissa, Rupa Gosvami rested for a night at Satyabhama-pura. That night he dreamed that a celestially beautiful woman had come before him and very mercifully gave him the following order. "Write a separate drama about me. By my mercy it will be extraordinarily beautiful." After having this dream, Rupa Gosvami considered, "It is the order of Satyabhama that I write a separate drama for her."

Thus absorbed in thought, he quickly reached Jagannatha Puri. When he arrived, he approached the hut of Haridasa Thakura. Out of affectionate love and mercy, Haridasa Thakura told Rupa Gosvami, "Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu has already informed me that you would come here." Shortly thereafter the Lord arrived and warmly embraced Rupa. They sat down together and inquired from one another about auspicious news. The Lord asked Rupa about Sanatana. Rupa explained that he had not met Sanatana and informed the Lord of Anupama's disappearance.

On the next day, Caitanya Mahaprabhu again met Rupa Gosvami, and with great mercy the Lord introduced him to all the devotees. Every day the Lord would go to see Rupa Gosvami, and whatever prasada He received from the temple He would deliver to Rupa Gosvami and Haridasa Thakura.

During the Ratha-yatra ceremony Rupa Gosvami heard a verse uttered by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu during the ceremony, and he immediately composed another verse dealing with the same subject. Only Svarupa Damodara Gosvami knew the purpose for which the Lord recited that verse. According to the Lord's attitude, he used to quote other verses to enable the Lord to relish mellows. Rupa Gosvami, however, could understand the intention of the Lord, and thus he composed another verse. After writing this verse on a palm leaf, he put it somewhere in his thatched roof and went to bathe in the sea. At that time, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu went there to meet him, and when He saw the leaf pushed into the roof and saw the verse, He read it and was overwhelmed by ecstatic love. At that time Rupa Gosvami returned and offered his obeisances. The Lord slapped him mildly in love and said, "My heart is very confidential. How did you know My mind in this way?" Svarupa Damodara said, "I can understand that You have already bestowed Your causeless mercy upon him. No one could otherwise understand this meaning."

One day while Rupa Gosvami was writing his book, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to the cottage of Haridasa Thakura. The Lord inquired, "What kind of book are you writing?" He held up a palm leaf that was a page of the manuscript, and when He saw the fine handwriting, His mind was very pleased. "The handwriting of Rupa Gosvami is just like rows of pearls," He said. When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu ordered Rupa Gosvami to read from his book, Rupa Gosvami, because of great shyness, did not read it but instead remained silent. When the Lord persisted, Sri Rupa read, much to everyone's pleasure. After hearing from him, both Ramananda Raya and Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya said to the Lord, "Without Your special mercy, how could this Rupa Gosvami have understood Your mind?" Ramananda remarked to Sri Rupa, "This drama of yours is a mine of conclusive statements."

After four months had passed and the Dola-yatra festival ended, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu bade farewell to Rupa Gosvami. The Lord empowered him and bestowed upon him all kinds of mercy. "Now go to Vrndavana and stay there," the Lord said. "You may send here your elder brother, Sanatana. When you go to Vrndavana, stay there, preach transcendental literature and excavate the lost holy places. Establish the service of Lord Krsna and preach the mellows of Lord Krsna's devotional service. I shall also go to Vrndavana once more." Having thus spoken, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu embraced Rupa Gosvami, who then placed the lotus feet of the Lord upon his head.

When Sri Sanatana Gosvami and Sri Rupa Gosvami lived in Vraja, they won the heartfelt affection of all the residents there, who regularly brought the two brothers gifts of curd and milk. The Gosvamis also regarded the inhabitants of Vraja as the dear associates of Lord Krsna. They respected them in that way and were always concerned about their well being. When they visited different areas of Vraja, the inhabitants there did not want them to leave their village. If many days passed without a visit from the Gosvamis, the Vrajavasis would anxiously seek them out. Thus the Vrajavasis were the life of Sri Rupa and Sanatana, and Sri Rupa and Sanatana were the life of the Vrajavasis.

The Books of Sri Rupa Gosvami:

1. Hamsaduta
2. Uddhava Sandesa
3. Sri Krsnajanmatithividhi
4. Sri Radha-Krsna-ganoddesa-dipika (Brhad and Laghu)
5. Sri Stavamala
6. Sri Vidagdha Madhava (drama)
7. Sri Lalita Madhava (drama)
8. Danakeli Kaumudi
9. Sri Bhaktirasamrtasindhu
10. Ujjvala Nilamani
11. Prayuktakhyatacandrika
12. Sri Mathura-mahatmya
13. Padyavali
14. Natakacandrika

15. Samkhepa Bhagavatamrta
16. Samanya Virudavali Laksmana
17. Upadesamrta

Rupa Gosvami left this world in 1486 Saka era, 1564 A.D., on the day of Sukla Dvadasi in the month of Sravana (July-August). According to another view, he disappeared in 1490 Saka era, 1568 A.D.

Svarupa Damodara

Sri Svarupa Damodara is the eternal associate of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. His previous name was Sri Purusottama Acarya and he was born at Bhitadia to Padmagarbha Acarya. He lived at Navadvipa.

He was always present with Mahaprabhu. When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu accepted sannyasa, Svarupa Damodara became like a madman and, journeying to Varanasi he also accepted sannyasa from one sannyasi named Caitanyananda. His sannyasa guru ordered him that, "You should yourself study the Vedanta and also teach it to others." Sri Purusottama Acarya didn't accept the garments of sannyasa, but simply gave up his sikha and brahmana thread. Therefore his name became Svarupa (a brahmacari name). Thereafter, by the order of his guru, he came to Nilacala, where he again met Mahaprabhu.

Though his scholarship was practically unlimited, he spoke very little with others and preferred to remain alone. Thus very few were aware of his actual position. He was completely conversant with the understanding of the mellows of devotion to Sri Krsna and his body was fully imbued with love for Him. He was as though a second Mahaprabhu. Whenever anyone wanted to present to Mahaprabhu some book, verse or song that they had composed, Svarupa Damodara would first hear what they had written before it could be presented to Mahaprabhu. If these compositions contained any points which were in contradiction to the superior position of bhakti, as concluded in scriptures, then hearing these writings would not be a source of transcendental pleasure for Mahaprabhu. Therefore Svarupa Gosai would first examine what had been composed and if it was untainted then it could be presented to Mahaprabhu.

Usually he would recite Sri Gita Govinda, and the writings of Candidasa and Vidyapati, for the transcendental happiness of Mahaprabhu. In music and singing he was like a Gandharva and in knowledge of the sastras he was like Brhaspati. There was no one to compare with him in talent and intelligence. He was extremely dear to Sri Advaita and Nityananda Prabhu and was the life and soul of devotees like Srivasa and others.

When Sri Svarupa Damodara arrived in Puri from Kasi (Varanasi) he recited this sloka in praise of Mahaprabhu: "Oh You, who are the personification of mercy - Sri Caitanya. That which very easily causes grief to retreat far away, and which is spotlessly pure; which causes the appearance of the highest happiness, and by whose appearance disputation over the intricacies of scriptural statements ceases; that which causes the spirit to become extremely agitated in ecstatic love, by a shower of grace and beauty; may that extremely expansive and auspicious mercy by its sweetness and dignity shine its rays upon me." (Sri Caitanya Candrodaya Nataka.)

Seeing that Svarupa Damodara was offering his dandavats to Him, Mahaprabhu picked him up and as He embraced him he said, "I saw in a dream this morning that you had come. Just as a blind man finds unlimited happiness by regaining his eyesight, so I am feeling by regaining your association."

Svarupa Damodara replied: "Prabhu, please forgive me. By leaving You and running off to Varanasi, I made a great mistake. I don't have even a hint of attachment to your lotus feet, and I have actually become a great sinner by leaving you and going to a distant country. I gave up your association, but You didn't give me up. Binding the rope of mercy around my neck You brought me again to Your lotus feet." [CC Madhya 10]

Hearing these words spoken in such humility, Mahaprabhu again embraced him and said: "Krsna is very kind. He has very mercifully brought us together again."

Mahaprabhu kept Svarupa Damodara close to Him. Whenever Mahaprabhu became immersed in a particular ecstatic emotion, Svarupa Damodara would perform a kirtan in that particular mood. During this period Raya Ramananda also arrived from Vidyanagara in South India. Thus the two of them, Svarupa Damodara and Ramananda Raya, would enhance the ecstatic moods of Mahaprabhu by singing different songs and reciting various poetic verses.

During the day, Mahaprabhu would engage in his pastimes of sankirtan with His devotees, and at night He would taste the mellows of the ecstatic love of Sri Sri Radha-Krsna in the company of these two. As Lalita and Visakha were very intimate with Srimati Radharani, Raya Ramananda and Svarupa Damodara were similarly intimate with Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu entrusted him to look after and instruct Raghunatha dasa Gosvami.

Svarupa Damodara's place of residence in Puri was the "Satasan Math". This is located near Bhaktivinoda Thakura's Bhakti kutir, near the ocean at Svarga Dwar. Svarupa Damodara Gosvami disappeared on the second day of the bright fortnight in the month of Asar.

Raghunatha dasa Gosvami

Sri Raghunatha dasa took his birth in the village of Sri Krsnapura in the district of Hooghly. His father's name was Sri Govardhana, whose elder brother was Sri Hiranya dasa. Both of them were respectable wealthy land-holders belonging to the Kayastha caste. Their title, which was given by the King, was "Majumdar".

In his childhood Sri Raghunatha dasa studied at the house of the priest, Acarya Sri Balarama dasa. Haridasa Thakura was very merciful to Balarama dasa and occasionally visited his house. At these times Raghunatha dasa had the good fortune of relishing Thakura Haridasa's association and listened to philosophical discourses from him.

Sri Raghunatha dasa was the only son in the family of Hiranya and Govardhana and there was no limit to the care and affection which was showered upon him. Though he was brought up just like the son of a king, by the powerful influence of saintly devotees, he realized at a very young age that material existence is temporary and a mood of detachment towards wealth, parents and relatives began to grow within him.

Upon hearing the glories of Sri Gauranga and Nityananda, he became extremely eager to have darsana of Their lotus feet. When he heard that Sri Gaurasundara had taken sannyasa and was leaving Nadia forever, he rushed madly to the home of Advaita Acarya in Santipura to meet the Lord. Seeing Raghunatha fall at His feet, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu could understand that this was His dearest eternal associate, and He embraced Raghunatha firmly. Crying, Sri Raghunatha appealed to the Lord, "I will also go with you." But the Lord replied that He would not take him along at that time, yet upon His return from Vrndavana, Raghunatha should, under any pretext, come to Nilacala to see Him.

In CC Antya lila, Sixth Chapter, there is a narration of how Sri Raghunatha dasa was arrested by the Nawab's men and his subsequent release from the bondage of family life. In that chapter there is also a description of the Panihati festival, as well as Raghunatha's pastimes in Jagannatha Puri with Sri Gaurasundara.

Sri Raghunatha dasa Gosvami passed his days in the highest happiness, continually bathing in the shower of Mahaprabhu's mercy. But upon the disappearance of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Raghunatha's world grew dark. In separation from their Lord, the devotees' hearts burned with anguish. Raghunatha dasa also burned in that fire of separation, but taking the order of Mahaprabhu on his head, he went to Sri Vrndavana. Previously Sri Sanatana, Sri Rupa, Sri Gopala Bhatta, Sri Raghunatha Bhatta, Sri Lokanatha, Sri Kasisvara, and Sri Bhugarbha Gosvami had already gone to Vrndavana and were living there by the order of the Lord. Though they all burned in the fire of separation, they pacified themselves by gathering together and discussing and writing the conclusions of the teaching of Mahaprabhu. It was the dawn of a golden age in Vraja. Sri Vallabha Acarya also visited Vrndavana at that time.

Sri Raghunatha used to reside at Sri Radhakunda. At that time Radhakunda had not yet been excavated, though Raghunatha often meditated upon how to beautify the kunda. Once a wealthy merchant walked the long, difficult road to Sri Badarikasrama. With great devotion he worshiped Sri Badarinarayana and offered a large portion of his wealth in charity. That night Sri Badarinarayana appeared to him in a dream and said, "You should go to the village near Vraja named Arit-grama where you will find my devotee, Sri Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. To him you should deliver all your wealth. If he refuses to accept it, tell him I sent you and remind him about restoring Radhakunda." The merchant happily returned to his home and then went on to Vraja where he met Sri Raghunatha and explained everything to him. Astonished, Raghunatha gave him permission to restore both Radhakunda and Syamakunda.

On the banks of the kunda grew five trees, which were actually the five Pandavas. Once there was some talk of cutting the trees down, but that night the Pandavas appeared to Raghunatha and forbade the trees to be cut. To this day the trees still grow there. The devotees were overwhelmed with happiness to see the restoration of Sri Radhakunda and Sri Syamakunda. On the outskirts of these two ponds, groves of the Asta-sakhis were planted.

Raghunatha did not have a fixed residence, but stayed either on the banks of Sri Radhakunda or on the banks of the Manasa Ganga. At that time both places were surrounded by a fearful jungle inhabited by ferocious tigers and other wild beasts. One day Sri Sanatana Gosvami arrived at the bhajan kutir of Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami on the banks of the Manasa Ganga where he would take his midday meal. When going for a bath at Pavan Ghat he saw a tiger very nearby who had just drunk water in the ghat. Just a little further on, Raghunatha dasa sat at the base of a tree deeply absorbed in his bhajan. Sanatana Gosvami was alarmed and requested Raghunatha to practice bhajan in a cottage or hut. From that day on Raghunatha performed his bhajan in his hut.

Raghunatha dasa Gosvami was always engaged in worshipping Sri Radha-Govinda within his mind. One day, in his meditation he prepared and offered sweet-rice to Sri Radha and Krsna. In great happiness They and the gopis ate the sweet rice, and he accepted Their remnants. While he was honoring their Lordship's prasada, he was filled with intense love and ate slightly more than what he was accustomed to. The next day, from morning until late afternoon his door remained closed, causing the devotees some concern. After they knocked repeatedly on his door, it finally opened and they saw him lying down. "My health is not good," he explained to Sridasa. The devotees were unhappy and immediately sent word to Sanatana Gosvami in Mathura. At that time Sri Sanatana was staying at the house of Vallabha Acarya. Upon hearing the news, Vallabhacarya's son, Sri Vitthal, sent two doctors to see Raghunatha dasa at Radha-kunda.

Seeing his condition the physicians insisted that Raghunatha's illness was the result of eating too much sweet rice. The devotees were dumbfounded by such a suggestion, but eventually understood the mystery. The worship of Raghunatha dasa Gosvami was very wonderful.

Kavi Karnapura has written in Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika (186) that Sri Raghunatha was Rasamanjari in Krsna lila. According to some other persons he was Ratimanjari or Bhanumati.

Raghunatha dasa wrote many books such as: Stavavali, Danacarita, Muktararita, etc. He also composed many padas. He was born in the Saka era of 1428 and left the world in the Saka era of 1504, on the twelfth day of the bright fortnight in the month of Asvina. (CC 1.10.91-102, 3.6.35-154, Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika 186, Premavilasa 16.127)

His name has been mentioned in the following texts: Vaisnava Vandana of Jiva Gosvami (149-150), of Devakinandana (55), and of Vrndavanadasa (49); Krsnacaitanyacaritam of Murari Gupta 4.17.21; Karnapura's Caitanya Candrodya Nataka 10.3.; CC (R.G. Nath ed.) 2.1.269.

Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami

Sri Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami was born in a Nadiya family of physicians at the village of Jhamatpur, within the district of Bardhaman, near Naihati, in 1496 A.D. His father was Sri Bhagiratha, and his mother was Sri Sunanda. He had a younger brother named Syama das. The deity of Gaura-Nityananda

installed by Sri Kaviraja Gosvami is still being worshiped there. It appears that his family line is no more. More information about the early life of Sri Kaviraja is available in a book called Ananda-ratnavali.

In Caitanya-caritamrta, Adi-lila chapter five, Sri Kaviraja relates the cause of his leaving family life. Lord Nityananda appeared in his dream and ordered him to go to Vrndavana.

He accepted the Gosvamis Sri Rupa, Sri Sanatana, Sri Jiva, Sri Raghunatha, Sri Raghunatha Bhatta and Sri Gopala Bhatta as his instructing spiritual masters. From Sri Lokanatha Gosvami and Sri Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami he begged permission to write Sri Caitanya-caritamrta. Lokanatha directed Sri Kaviraja that he desired to be unmentioned in his book; that is why, in Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, hardly a reference about Lokanatha Gosvami is to be found.

Sri Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami compiled the following books still extant: Sri Govinda-lilamrta, Krsna-karnamrta commentary (Saranga-rangada-tika) and of course, Sri Caitanya-caritamrta.

His disappearance is on 12th day of bright fortnight in month of Asvin (the year is not known).

Narottama dasa Thakura

Kayastha by caste, Narottama was the son of King Krsnananda Datta. Krsnananda was the Zamindar of Gopalpur Pargana in the Rajsahi district of Bangladesh. His capital was located at Kheturi, about a mile northeast of Prematali on the bank of the river Padma, about a distance of twelve miles northwest of Rampur Boalia. Narayani devi was Narottama's mother.

Narottama was born about the middle of the fifteenth Saka century (Bhaktiratnakara 1.466-468). From his childhood he was extremely attracted to Lord Caitanya. According to some, after the disappearance of his father, Narottama entrusted his elder paternal uncle's son, Santosa Datta, with the responsibility of the royal duties and left for Vrndavana.

Premavilasa 8 narrates as follows: One day while dancing in kirtana at Kanair Natsala village, Lord Caitanya suddenly began calling out the name, "Narottama, Narottama." Tears streamed from the Lord's eyes and He appeared to be restless. After speaking with Nityananda Prabhu the Lord expressed His desire to visit Gaderhat on the bank of the Padma. Mahaprabhu explained to Nityananda that he wanted to deposit the treasure of love of Godhead on the bank of the Padma for Narottama to pick up later. The river Padma then asked the Lord how she would be able to identify Narottama, and the Lord explained that the person whose touch would make her surge up would be none other than Narottama.

At the age of twelve Narottama had a dream in which Nityananda Prabhu appeared to him and commanded that he collect the prema which was left in the custody of the river Padma. Early in the morning Narottama went alone to the river Padma to take his bath. As soon as his feet touched her, the river surged forth. Remembering the words of Lord Caitanya the Padma now transferred the treasure to Narottama.

Upon receiving this divine love Narottama's bodily complexion changed. His parents tried every means by which keep him with them, but Narottama was drunk with the nectar of Lord Caitanya and Nityananda and could not be kept in check. Leaving behind all worldly bondage Narottama rushed for Vrndavana. Premavilasa 11 explains how Narottama was comforted by the divine touch of Rupa and Sanatana Gosvami, and how he received the grace of his spiritual master Lokanatha Gosvami.

After Narottama was initiated by Lokanatha Gosvami, he received all instructions regarding the practice of spiritual life. Narottama was spiritually named Campakamanjari.

With the approval of the local Vaisnavas, Jiva Gosvami deputed Srinivasa, Narottama and Syamananda to carry the Gosvamis books to the devotees in Gauda. Although they were properly escorted by protected vehicles and guards, the books were stolen near Vanavisnupur. Srinivasa then sent Narottama to Kheturi and Syamananda to Utkala.

Narottama is widely believed to be the incarnation of Nityananda Prabhu. Narottama established his asrama, named Bhajantuli, about two miles away from the capital of Kheturi. Sometime after his return from Vrndavana, Narottama installed six Deities; Lord Gauranga, Vallabhikanta, Lord Krsna, Lord Vrajamohan, Lord Radhamohan and Lord Radhakanta. On the occasion of this installation ceremony Narottama held a grand festival at Kheturi, which is famous amongst all Vaisnavas.

Narottama was the first exponent of the Garanhati tradition of kirtana. He arranged this musical tradition in a way as to accommodate all parsada (associates) of both prakata and aprakata lila of Lord Gauranga, which gave immense pleasure to the audience.

Narottama Thakura was always engaged in the singing the glories of Sri Gaura and Nityananda. Through his preaching many fallen souls were purified.

Ramacandra Kaviraja was a very close companion of Narottama throughout his life (see Bhaktiratnakara and Narottamavilasa for details on Narottama's biography).

Among the writings of Narottama, Prarthana and Premabhakticandrika are the most well-known. The brief write-up titled 'Hatapaltana' is also attributed to Narottama but the contents do not seem to be in harmony with historical events and thus some believe that it is a fake work. From evidence in older manuscripts Haridasa dasa has concluded that the real author was one Ramesvara dasa. Some argue that Narottama wrote Siddhabhakticandrika, Sadhyapremabhakti, Camatkara candrika, etc., but these are not published works and the few mss. which are available do not seem to be in Narottama's writing style. Narottama did translate Smaranamangala into Bengali verse. In eleven slokas this work describes the pastimes of Radha Krsna in eight parts of the day (astakaliya).

See the following Bengali books for further information on Narottama:

1. Narottama dasa O Tahar Racamavali by Niradprasad Nath, Calcutta University, Calcutta.
2. Narottama Dasa by Rammohan Mallik
3. Narottama Thakura Kheturir Nitai by Narendranath Cattopadhyay
4. Narottama-lila va Sri Gaura Premavatara by Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami

The following is a narration describing the disappearance of Thakura Mahasaya:

After taking permission from Narottama, Sri Ramacandra Kaviraja went to Sri Vrndavana, a few months thereafter he breathed his last. When Srinivasa Acarya heard this he could not bear the shock and after a few days he too disappeared. When this news reached Srila Thakura, he was overwhelmed with grief and began singing in a choked voice. He gathered all the devotees around him in the temple of Sri Mahaprabhu and started sankirtana. Slowly the sankirtana party proceeded to the bank of the Ganga. With eyes full of tears, Narottama fell prostrate on the ground and entered into the Ganga to take bath. Sitting knee deep in the water he continued singing loudly, along with Sri Ramakrsna Acarya and Sri Ganganarayana Cakravarti. Narottama requested that they massage his body as he continued singing. As they massaged him, Thakura Mahasaya's body simply merged with the sacred water of the Ganga. Thus on the fifth day of the dark fortnight in the month of Karttika (Oct.-Nov.) he entered into the eternal pastimes of the Lord.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura

The biography of Visvanatha has been translated from the following Bengali publications: Mihir Caudhuri Kamilya, Narahari Cakravarti: Jivani O Racanavali (Life and works of Narahari Cakravarti) Vol. 1: Biography and collected works. Burdwan, University of Burdwan, 1981, pp. 1-15

Narahari Cakravarti writes as follows in Bhaktiratnakara (Pathavadi ms. no. 2341-24, p. 154 ka, "My father, Vipra Jagannatha, was a disciple of the famous Visvanatha Cakravarti." Visvanatha stands as a remarkable example of Bengali intellect. His place in the Vaisnava world remains unsurpassed as far as erudition, theological knowledge, poetic talent and appreciation of rasa. He was worshiped by his contemporaries as an example of unblemished ascetic life and an ideal follower of Ragamarga.

Scholars differ in their views regarding Visvanatha's period. According to Syamalala Gosvami it was 1626-1708 A.D. (quoted in the book Caitanyottara Yugera Gaudiya Vaisnava p. 98). Murarilal Adhikari writes in Vaisnava Digdarsani that the period was 1646-1754. Madhusudana Tattvavacaspati guesses that Visvanatha was born around 1633-1638 A.D. (1555-60 Saka) and disappeared around Saka 1625-30 (Sri Krsna Bhavanamrta, introduction p. 4, published in Bhaktiprabha 1335). Both Nikhilnath Roy and Bimanbihari Majumdar hold that Visvanatha was born toward the early part of the 17th century Saka (see Mursidavadera Itihasa p. 308). In Gaurapadatarangini 1st ed. 1310, p. 183, Jagadbandhu Bhadra argues that in 1664 A.D. (Saka 1586) Visvanatha was born. However proper evidence in support of the above arguments is lacking.

Visvanatha completed Sararthadarsini in 1704 A.D. (1626 Saka), which he himself states at the conclusion of the book. Thus he must have been alive around 1704 A.D. According to Sukumar Sen, Visvanatha disappeared shortly after 1704 A.D. (see Vangala Sahityera Itihasa Vol. 1, Part 2, 2nd ed., 1965, p. 393)

Visvanatha was born at Devagrama (see ms. of Narottamavilasa at Pathavadi no. 2336 (21), p. 31 kha). Some believe that this village belongs to Kasiganj police station of the Nadia district (Gaurapadatarangini, introduction p. 183; Vaisnava Digdarsani p. 120; Jivanikosa by Sasibhusana Vidyalankar, Vol. 5, p. 1773; Nadia: Svadhinata Rajatajayanti Smarakagrantha, Krsnagore 1973, p. 25). Others argue that Devagrama falls under Sagaradihi police station of the Mursidabad district (see 'Padakarta Harivallabha' by Harekrsna Mukhopadhyay in Ananda Bajara Patrika special Puja no. 1369, p. 276).

None of the old mss. record the names of Visvanatha's parents. Pathavadi mss. of 'Narottamavilasa' state that Visvanatha's father's name was Ramanarayana Cakravarti. Visvanatha was the youngest child in the family. His eldest brother was Ramabhadra and the next oldest was Raghunatha. Ramabhadra was an accomplished theologian and a disciple of Gopikanta. This Gopikanta was the son of Hariramacarya, the disciple of Ramacandra Kaviraja who belonged to the spiritual lineage of Srinivasa. The second brother, Raghunatha, was also a great scholar (mss. of 'Narottamavilasa' of Pathavadi no. 2336.21, p. 31 kha).

Visvanatha's family was brahmana by caste from the Radha clan, Sandilya gotra, and lineage drawn from Bhattanarayana (see Vaisnavacarya Visvanatha by Nanigopala Gosvami in Bharatavarsa 1351).

In the said mss. of 'Narottamavilasa' p. 31 kha, an account is given relating to Visvanatha's birth. It is said that as soon as Visvanatha was delivered a strange halo of light appeared around his body. That light illuminated the entire delivery-room and then disappeared. This account seems to be an interpolation at a later date. Once a highly renowned scholar visited Devagrama and the local pandita's became unnerved upon meeting him. But Visvanatha, a mere adolescent, defeated this scholar in argument.

As a child Visvanatha completed his studies at Devagrama and thereafter went to Saidavad. Some say that Visvanatha was educated under Ganganarayana Cakravarti of Saidavad (Premavilasa J.N. Talukdar ed. pp. 206-7), while others argue that Ganganarayana's adopted son Krsnacarana actually taught Visvanatha (H.K. Mukhopadhyaya 'Padakarta Harivallabha'). No evidence in support of these views has yet been found.

Radharamana was the name of Visvanatha's diksa guru. Visvanatha himself writes about his spiritual lineage in one sloka of Sararthadarini. In chapters 2-7 of Stavamrtalahari Narahari also gives details on the spiritual lineage or guru-pranali of Visvanatha as follows:

Lord Gauranga
|
Lokanatha
|
Narottama
|
Ganganarayana
|
Krsnacarana
|
Radharamana (alias Sri Rama)

(son & disciple)

|

Visvanatha

Visvanatha's guru and parama-guru belonged to the spiritual lineage of Narottama Thakura.

From his childhood Visvanatha was of a detached temperament. At the command of his father, Visvanatha's brother Ramabhadra arranged for Visvanatha's marriage at an early age. However, through studying Srimad Bhagavatam Visvanatha developed a deep spirit of renunciation. After completing his studies he took spiritual initiation and gradually developed an intense love for Krsna. Finally, one day, he renounced home, took the vow of a renunciate and went to Vrndavana. After visiting several holy places Visvanatha finally sought the shelter of Mukundadasa, a disciple of Krsnadasa Kaviraja on the bank of the Radhakunda. The devotees present there urged this young renunciate to return home, which Visvanatha had to abide by (mss. Narottamavilasa pp. 31-32 ka).

Possibly this was the time when Visvanatha went to Patadanja where he is said to have realized his spiritual goal. Visvanatha installed the deity of Gopala (Harekrsna Mukhopadhyaya p. 276)

At the command of his guru, Visvanatha went home for one night to meet his wife. His wife, however, heard nothing other than Krsna katha from her husband throughout the night (see mss. Narottamavilasa p. 32 ka). Early the next morning Visvanatha left home and took shelter of his guru. As directed by his guru, Visvanatha began copying Srimad Bhagavatam.

Visvanatha settled on the bank of the Radhakunda in Vrndavana. Regarding his spiritual practices Narahari writes as follows, "Being deeply immersed in singing kirtana of the Lord, Visvanatha narrated the pastimes of the Lord in a most fascinating manner. No one is competent enough to speak of his spiritual practices. Anyone who had the good fortune to set his eyes upon Visvanatha felt immediately soothed from the pangs of material existence. Visvanatha served the deity of Sri Gokulananda with great pleasure and devotion."

When Visvanatha arrived in Vrndavana he noticed that with the disappearance of the six Gosvamis the beauty of that holy place was no longer visible. A large number of Mathas had been destroyed by the Muslims. Priests migrated from Vrndavana taking away the deities which were in their charge. A number of deities were left standing alone and received no service. And the devotees were in a state of constant fear. People in general were in no mood to devote attention to the study of the scriptures (see Madhurya Kadambini introduction, p. 4, by Satyendranatha Vasu).

During his stay in Vrndavana many loyal workers and scholars such as Baladeva Vidyabhusana were deeply impressed upon seeing Visvanatha's devotion, strength of mind and hard working nature. Visvanatha became determined to bring back the lost glory of Vrndavana. The following are some of his achievements.

1. Visvanatha himself installed the Deity of Gokulananda and took charge of serving Govardhana sila. He reinstated different priests to begin the service of the Deities in various places.

2. It was through his initiative that the Sri Vardhana Matha of Kongala and some new Mathas at several other places were set up (Visvakosa V. 19, p. 42). Visvanatha also arranged to renovate a large number of temples.

3. At that time there was little access by the common people to the works of the Gosvamis. This was due to the fact that there were no proper analysis and interpretation of these theological treatises. What Visvanatha did was to prepare simple and lucid commentaries for these works, as well as presenting abridged forms of the original works. This enabled devotees of all types to understand and appreciate the essence of the Gosvamis' works. Visvanatha also arranged for the wide distribution of books which Vaisnavas needed for daily study and spiritual practices. He also organized classes to be held on them to impart instructions.

Visvanatha was one of the most accomplished preachers of madhurya-bhava in ragamarga. Regarding sadhana (spiritual achievements), Visvanatha's name is placed after Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, Krsnadasa Kaviraja and Narottama Thakura (CC Sukumar Sen ed. 1.4. p.13).

Visvanatha was an out and out parakiya-vadi. Both in prakata and aprakata lila Visvanatha considered Sri Radha and the gopis as the parakiya heroines of Lord Krsna. Visvanatha had deep faith in the astakaliya nitya-lila described by Kavi Karnapura and Krsnadasa Kaviraja (Padavaliparicaya 2nd ed. pp. 86-87). Apart from practicing smarana (remembrance), manana (contemplation) and sankirtana, Visvanatha remained deeply absorbed in the service of Radha Krsna with loyalty to the Vrajavasis. Due to his own success in practice and realization, Visvanatha was able to write beautifully describing the proper method for astakaliya nitya-lila, a unique analysis of ragamarga sadhana, detailed descriptions of Radha Krsna lila, details on the sadhana practiced by sakhi-manjari or kinkari, the mystic significance of bhajan and the method of bhajan.

Another remarkable achievement of Visvanatha's was to establish Gaudiya Vaisnavism and its theology through Baladeva Vidyabhusana, Visvanatha's close follower, at the meeting of Vaisnavas held at Galta, Jaipur in 1718 A.D. (Saka 1640) (see CC introduction 4th ed. p. 396, also Baladeva Siddhantaratra, Gopinatha Kaviraja ed., introduction).

As a youth in Saidavad Visvanatha set up a Sanskrit school and accepted a teaching career. In order to help the students to learn easily Visvanatha wrote a simplified commentary titled 'Suvodhini' on Kavi Karnapura's Alamkara Kaustubha. This is said to be Visvanatha's first literary work. Upon his arrival in Vrndavana, Visvanatha sought the refuge of Mukundadasa. This Mukunda dasa was a poet and disciple of Krsnadasa Kaviraja. Mukunda dasa had some books to be completed. Noting Visvanatha's devotion and erudition, he thus requested Visvanatha to complete those books. Pathavadi mss. Narottamavilasa p. 32 ka, refers to this but does not give the names of the works.

In Vrndavana Visvanatha's literary talent blossomed and beautiful compositions began to flow like many streams of nectar. His complete works can be classified under four groups:

1) Commentary works (Tika Grantha):

At that time most of the manuals and other books which Vaisnavas needed to consult daily were full of difficult theological concepts mostly written in Sanskrit. This made it difficult for the lay-devotee to study and understand the proper conclusions. To remove these obstacles Visvanatha wrote simple Sanskrit commentaries on many of the Gosvamis' works. Titles of such commentaries are as follows:

- 1) Sararthadarsini (1704 A.D.) - tika on Srimad Bhagavatam
- 2) Sararthavarsini - tika on Bhagavad-gita
- 3) Sri Caitanya-caritamrtera tika (the first commentary in Sanskrit on a Bengali book)
- 4) Brahmasamhitara tika
- 5) Anandacandrika - tika on Ujjvala-nilamani of Rupa Gosvami
- 6) Bhakti-sara-pradarsani - tika on Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu of Rupa Gosvami
- 7) Prema-bhakti-candrika-kirana - a Sanskrit tika on Narottama's Prema-bhakti-candrika
- 8) Sukhavartini - a tika on Kavi Karnapura's Ananda-vrndavana-campu
- 9) Mahati - tika on Danakeli Kaumudi of Rupa Gosvami
- 10) Bhakta-harsini - tika on Gopalatapani
- 11) Hamsaduta tika - tika on Rupa Gosvami's Hamsadutam
- 12) Tika on Rupa Gosvami's Vidagdha-madhava
- 13) Lalita-madhavera tika

Some scholars argue that the tika on Lalita-madhava and Vidagdha-madhava were not works of Visvanatha. They say that Krsnadeva Sarvabhauma, a disciple of Visvanatha, was the writer of the Vidagdha-madhava tika, while Radhakrsna dasa, a disciple of Jiva Gosvami wrote the tika of Lalita-madhava (see Haridasa dasa Gaudiya Vaisnava Abhidhana, p. 1751-52, 1745)

2) Abridged Works:

Visvanatha felt that many of the Vaisnava works were difficult for the lay-devotee to grasp. He therefore extracted the most relevant information and presented an abridged form of various selected books. Three of these are works of Rupa Gosvami as shown below:

- 1) Kirana i.e Ujjvala-nilamani-kirana on Ujjvala-nilamani
- 2) Vindu i.e Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu-vindu on Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu
- 3) Kana i.e. Bhagavatamrta-kana on Laghu-bhagavatamrta

3) Original Works:

Visvanatha's thoughts had originality and depth. He was gifted with the talent of communicating deep philosophical concepts in a simple way, while keeping the unique characteristics of Radha Krsna lila in tact. Most of his original works relate to sadhana-bhajan as follows:

- 1) Sri Krsna-bhavanamrta (1679 A.D.): describes astakaliya nitya-lila of Radha Krsna
- 2) Ragavartmacandrika: a guide to and an account of raganuga bhakti and its methods
- 3) Madhurya-kadambini: reveals the subtle concepts on rupa and madhurya of Lord Krsna
- 4) Aisvarya Kadambini: a scriptural account of Lord Krsna's aisvarya (opulence)
- 5) Camatkara-candraka: mystic sports of Radha Krsna
- 6) Gopipremamrta: reveals the love of the gopis and concepts regarding svakiya and parakiya
- 7) Mantrartha-dipika: explanation of kamabija and kamagayatri mantras
- 8) Vraja-riti-cintamani: describes the sites of Lord Krsna's Vraja-lila
- 9) Prema-samputa (1684 A.D.): describes madhurya of Radha
- 10) Sankalpa-kalpadruma (1678 A.D.): describes prayers to Sri Radha to grant sevavrtti
- 11) Nikunja-keli-virudavali (1678 A.D.): describes the sports of Radha Krsna in the kunja
- 12) Surata-kathamrta (1678 A.D.): description of the pastimes of Radha Krsna in the quiet of midnight.

Some other works by Visvanatha are written like hymns. These reveal Visvanatha's genuine devotion and reverence for his superiors, cherished Deities, and the holy places of Lord Krsna's pastimes. The following is a list of these works:

- 1) Sriman Mahaprabhorastakaliya Smaranamangalastotram: A guide book describing Lord Gauranga's astakaliya lila.
- 2) Sri Gauranganoddesa-candrika: A brief account on the close associates of Lord Gauranga (a similar manuscript of Visvanatha's dealing with the associates of Lord Gauranga is available in the collection of Barahanagar--Sri Gauranga Granthamandir-- the title of the said mss. is Gauraganasvarupa-tattvacandrika, no. 230 B 17)
- 3) Stavamrta-lahari: This is one of the best works of hymns. It consists of a total of 28 hymns which deal with the guru, the poet's own guru, paramaguru, paratparaguru, Narottama, Lokanatha, Sri Caitanya, Vaisnava acaryas, etc. Then invocation of the mercy of the famous Deities Gopaladeva, Madanagopala, Govindadeva, Gopinatha, Gokulananda and Lord Krsna; invocation of the grace of Radha and Vrnda devi; hymns in praise of various lila sites such as Vrndavana, Nandisvara, Krsnakunda, etc.
- 4) Padavali Samkalam (compilation of Vaisnava poems)
- 5) Ksanada-gita-cintamani (known briefly as 'Ksanada' or 'Gitacintamani').
[Ksanada-gita-cintamani mss. Pathavadi no. 2615 (24 ga), 2613 (24 ka), oldest edition 1282 (1875 A.D.). See Vangala Sahityera Itihasa V. 1, Pt. 1, p. 393]

2nd edition 1315 Vrndavana Kesighat (Krsnapada dasa Babaji)

3rd edition (?) Nitaipada Dasa

4th edition (1332) Nityasvarupa Brahmacari, Calcutta

5th edition (1369) Bimanabihari Majumdar, General Library

While compiling this Ksanada-gita-cintamani containing selected Vaisnava poems Visvanatha had in mind that devotees of raganuga marga may every night perform or listen to nama-guna etc. of their cherished Deities.

Earlier some attempts were made to prepare compilations of Vaisnava poems to some extent by Ramagopala dasa of Srikhanda in his 'Sri Sri Radhakrsnarasa-kalpavalli', by his son Pitamvaradasa in 'Rasamanjari' and Mukundadasa, a disciple of Krsnadasa Kaviraja in 'Siddhantacandrodaya'. However it was Visvanatha who first prepared this first compilation. In fact Ksanada is considered "the first perfect Padavali compilation" (Vangala Sahityera Itihasa V. 1, Pt. 2, 2nd ed., p. 102 b 393). The first part of Ksanada is available, but it is thought that Visvanatha disappeared before the later part was completed. Dr. Sukumar Sen argues that this compilation was done before 1704 A.D. (see Gaudiya Vaisnava Sadhana by Harekrsna Mukhopadhyay, 1st ed. p. 136). In this book Visvanatha used the bhanita of 'Harivallabha' or 'Vallabha' on those poems composed by him.

Recently the second part of Ksanada, compiled by Manohara dasa, was found and published (Ksanada-gita-cintamani: Manoharadasa, published by Radhakrsna dasa, Kusumsarovar, P.O. Radhakunda, Mathura). This mss. contains the first to the seventeenth section of Ksanada. It was available from Advaitacarana Gosvami, the priest of Radharamana of Vrndavana. Haridasa dasa gives information in Gaudiya Vaisnava Abhidhana Vol. 3, p. 1484 that a similar manuscript is available in the collection of Nimbarka sampradaya.

Bimanbihari Majumdar argues as follows: "Since Visvanatha compiled Vaisnava poems for the Bengalis to enjoy he titled them 'Purva Vibhaga' (eastern section) and his contemporary, Manohara dasa, the writer of Anuragavalli, compiled for the readers of western India and hence titled it 'Pascima Vibhaga' (western section)."

In the second compilation there are twenty one poems of Manohara dasa, along with those of Haridasa Svami etc. Several of Manoharadasa's poems deal with Lord Gauranga. This compilation consists of Hindi poems. In the 'Pascima Vibhaga' there are six Hindi poems written by Visvanatha, who gave the bhanitas of Harivallabha or Vallabha.

The Purva Vibhaga of Visvanatha consists of a total of thirty Ksanada or themes. These themes are fitted each for thirty nights from the first night of the dark fortnight of one lunar month till the day of the new moon and from the first day of the bright fortnight till the night of the full moon. Varying in size, eight have small and sixteen have big padas. A total of 308 pada are found in Purva Vibhaga containing the bhanita of 48 known and unknown poets (of these the compiler has 53 padas - 40 with the bhanita of Harivallabha and 13 with the bhanita of Vallabha). Some hold that Harivallabha was the name of Visvanatha's guru. Some argue that Harivallabha was the sannyasa name of Visvanatha. However neither of these ideas is supported by evidence. In 'Gitavali' part of the book Stavamrta-lahari of Visvanatha, out of eleven Sanskrit padas two have bhanita of Harivallabha and four have the bhanita of Vallabha.

In 'Mantrartha-dipika' Sri Radha addresses Visvanatha in a state of dream as Harivallabha. Narahari, the son of Visvanatha's disciple, clearly writes that Harivallabha was the name of Visvanatha.

Each Ksanada or section is arranged in such a manner as it could be sung for one night. First there is Gaura Vandana, then follows Nityananda Vandana and concludes with poems of milana (comedy) or sambhaga. In between there are poems/lyrics dealing with abhisara, or aksepanuraga and rasa. All these compositions relate to madhurya rasa. None of these deal with sakhya, vatsalya or even themes relating to Mathura.

This compilation was made with a view to serving aspirants with manjari-bhava eager to enjoy Vrajarasa. Though Visvanatha was a highly imaginative poet he was a perfect erudite too. He never liked to compose poems in a simple, unadorned manner. Sanskrit expression, rhetorically rich language, chiming words and waves of rhythm enriched his poems which were equally rich with fascinating themes and deep rasa.

Visvanatha had an extraordinary command of Vrajvuli, Hindi and Sanskrit. In all three languages Visvanatha composed a total of seventy padas of which the ones in Sanskrit are the best.

It seems that Visvanatha's poems were not appreciated by his contemporaries. Hence in later compilation not many of Visvanatha's poems are found. In Padamrtasamudra of Radhamohana Thakura, almost a contemporary of Visvanatha, there was not any pada of Visvanatha's. The reason for this was that

Radhamohana compiled the poems in Bengal while Visvanatha was in Vrndavana. Neither can any pada of Visvanatha's be found in Sankirtanamrta, a compilation by Dinabandhu dasa belonging to a bit later period.

Among other compilations of padas there are five padas of Visvanatha's in the total 1169 pada in Gitacandrodaya compiled by Narahari Cakravarti, one pada of Visvanatha's out of a total of 1119 pada compiled in Kirtanananda of Gaurasundara dasa, and three pada of Visvanatha's out of 3101 total pada compiled in Vaisnava dasa's Padakalpataru.

When critically evaluated as poetry Visvanatha's works do not rank in the first category although critics have praised most of his padas (see introduction by Bimanbihari Majumdar ed. Ksanadagitacintamani).

Judged from the standpoint of the preceding Vaisnava acaryas and the quality of rasa, Visvanatha undoubtedly contributed immensely in leading Gaudiya Vaisnavism and sadhana bhakti forward. Most of the difficult treatises of Rupa Gosvami were presented by Visvanatha to devotees sometimes by adding simple commentaries and sometimes by preparing abridged editions. Devotees hailed Visvanatha as 'the second svarupa of Rupa' or as 'avatara of Rupa'.

Among the devotees of Visvanatha nothing much is known about others except Krsnadasa (see mss. N. Vilasa p. 33 kha), Kanudasa, Nandakisora (see Rasakalika ed. Haridasa dasa, p. 82, p. 154). Some think that Krsnadeva Sarvabhauma was a disciple of Visvanatha. Baladeva Vidyabhusana, a disciple of Radhadamodara, revered Visvanatha deeply as his guru.

Visvanatha stands as a remarkable outcome of Bengali intellect in 17th-18th century as poet, musician, thinker, theologian, scholar and above all a devotee and preacher.

Baladeva Vidyabhusana

Baladeva Vidyabhusana was a highly renounced, pure devotee, who had not even a fraction of desire for name or fame. He compiled many books in order to benefit mankind. However he never mentioned his birth place or anything about his family background and therefore the details are not known for sure.

Historians have estimated that he was born sometime in the eighteenth century, most probably in Orissa (possibly near Remuna). At a very early age he finished his studies of grammar, poetry, rhetoric and logic and then went on pilgrimage. During this time he spent some time with the Tattvavadis in South India and thus became conversant with the teachings of Sri Madhvacharya. He became a powerful exponent of this philosophy throughout India.

During his travels he again came to Utkaladesa (Orissa) and met with a grand-disciple of Sri Rasikananda Deva, Sri Radha-Damodara Deva by name, with whom he discussed philosophy. Sri Radha-Damodara Deva explained the conclusions of Gaudiya Vaisnava philosophy as expounded by Sri Gaurasundara and requested him to consider the unlimited mercy of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. These talks penetrated his heart and awakened divine love within. Thus, after a few days he was initiated with Radha-Krsna mantra and began to study the Sat-sandarbhya of Sri Jiva Gosvami.

In a very short time he became very expert in Gaudiya Vaisnava philosophy. With the permission and blessings of his guru, he moved to Sri Vrndavana dhama to further study these teachings under Sri Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura.

Sri Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura was extremely pleased to see the humble and gentle nature and the renunciation and profound mastery of the Vedas that characterized Baladeva. He carefully instructed him in acintya-bhedabheda-tattva. Baladeva fully accepted the Gaudiya Vaisnava philosophy and began to preach it with great vigor.

Around this time, the members of the Sri sampradaya began to raise some arguments in the court of the king at Jaipur. They complained that as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas had no commentary on the Vedanta-sutra, they were not qualified to worship the Deity and therefore the worship should be turned over to the Sri

sampradaya. They also objected to the worship of Srimati Radharani along with Sri Sri Govinda-Gopinatha as not being authorized anywhere in the sastras.

The king, Sadacari Raja, was initiated within the Gaudiya sampradaya. Thus he quietly sent word to Vrndavana, informing the devotees there of what had happened. But at the same time the king was obliged to remove Radharani from the Deity room as well as suspend the Bengali Gaudiya Vaisnava pujaris from partaking in the Deity worship.

At that time Visvanatha Cakravartipada was very aged, so it was not possible for him to make the journey to Jaipur. In his place he sent his student, Sri Baladeva, who was fully conversant with the sastras and thus able to competently face the challenge. In a great assembly he posed such forceful arguments to the followers of Ramanuja that they could not reply to them. He further explained to them, "The originator of the Gaudiya Vaisnava sampradaya, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, has accepted Srimad Bhagavatam as the natural commentary on the Vedanta-sutra, as composed by Srila Vyasadeva Himself. This is proven in the Sat-sandarbha."

The scholars in the assembly, however, refused to accept anything other than a direct commentary on the sutra. Having no other recourse, Baladeva promised to present them with one.

Feeling very aggrieved, Sri Baladeva came to Sri Govindaji's mandira and after offering his prostrated obeisances, informed Sri Govinda of everything that had happened. That night the Lord appeared to him in a dream and instructed him to write a commentary on the Vedanta-sutra. "I will dictate to you what to write and therefore no one will be able to refuse to accept it."

Having seen such a wonderful dream, Baladeva was totally enlivened and felt renewed strength flow into his heart. Thus he began to write, and within a few days completed the commentary which was titled 'Sri Govinda Bhasya'.

Bringing the commentary with him, Sri Baladeva again came to the assembly of the Ramanandi scholars. After reading the commentary they were simply speechless. Thus the victory of the Gaudiya sampradaya was announced far and wide and the king, as well as the other devotees, began to float in the ocean of bliss. The scholars then bestowed upon Sri Baladeva the title 'Vidyabhusana'.

vidya rupam bhusanam me pradaya kyatim nitya tena yo mamudarah sri govinda svapna nirdista bhaso radha bandhubandhurangah sa jiyat

"May He Who so mercifully and munificently was kind towards me, and bestowed His favour by ordering me in a dream to write down His own commentary, which He would compose, and which attained such renown amongst the learned circles that they bestowed upon me the title 'Vidyabhusana'; may that dear friend of Srimati Radharani, who holds Him dearer than Her own life, be glorified. May that Sri Govinda be glorified."

This assembly took place in the year 1640 Sakabda (1718 A.D.), at Galta near the present city of Jaipur. Baladeva Vidyabhusana installed the Deity of Vijaya Gopala there at Galta Mandira, but the whereabouts of this Deity are at present not known. From this day the Maharaja of Jaipur announced that Sri Govinda's arati would be performed first and then the other temples could perform their aratis.

After accepting defeat, the Ramanandi scholars expressed their desire to accept initiation from Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana. However, he declined their request by stating that amongst the four authorized sampradayas, the Sri sampradaya was highly respectable and the foremost adherent of dasya-bhakti (devotion in servitorship). If there was any cause of loss of respect to the sampradaya this might be considered an offense.

Returning from Jaipur to Vrndavana, Sri Baladeva presented the certificate of victory to Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura and narrated all of the events that had transpired. All of the devotees were in great ecstasy to receive this news and Cakravartipada bestowed his full blessings on Sri Baladeva. At this time, Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana began to write a commentary on Jiva Gosvami's Sat-sandarbha.

Sri Jaya and Sri Vijaya Govinda, residing at Gokulananda Mandira in Vrndavana, were worshiped by Baladeva Vidyabhusana personally. According to the opinion of some devotees, the Deities of Syamananda Prabhu, Sri Sri Radha-Syamasundara, were installed by Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana.

After Sri Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura finished his pastimes in this world, Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana became the next acarya of the Gaudiya Vaisnava sampradaya.

At the end of Vedanta-syamantaka, Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana acknowledges his spiritual master thusly: "I have been sent here to Vrndavana by one brahmana guru, Sri Radha-Damodara Deva, to present a composition named Vedanta-syamantaka, composed by his mercy for the pleasure of Srimati Radharani."

Baladeva Vidyabhusana became known later as Sri Govinda dasa. He had two well-known disciples: Sri Vidya dasa and Sri Nandan Misra.

He is the compiler of the following books: Sri Govinda-bhasya, Siddhanta-ratna, Sahitya-kaumudi, Vedanta-syamantaka, Prameya-ratnavali, Siddhanta-darpana, Kavya-kaustubha, Vyakarana-kaumudi, Pada-kaustubha, Isadi-upanisad bhasya, Gitabhusana-bhasya, Sri Visnunamasahasra-bhasya, Sanksepa-bhagavatamrta-tippani-saranga-rangada, Tattva-sandarbh-tika, Stava-mala-vibhusana-bhasya, Nataka-candrika-tika, Candraloka-tika, Sahitya-kaumudi-tika, Krsna-nandini, Srimad-Bhagavata-tika, Vaisnavanandini, Govinda-bhasya-suksma-tika, Siddhanta-ratna-tika, Stava-mala-tika, Bhasya-pithaka, commentaries on Gopala Campu, Krsna-bhavanamrta, Samsaya-satini, etc.

Jagannatha dasa Babaji

Jagannatha dasa Babaji was born in the Mayamanasimha district of West Bengal. Gaudiya Vedanta-acarya Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana had a disciple named Uddhava dasa. His disciple was Sri Madhusudana dasa Babaji who lived in Suryakunda. Madhusudana dasa Babaji's disciple was Jagannatha dasa Babaji.

Jagannatha dasa Babaji was very austere; he never hesitated to fast without taking any water for three days at a stretch. He used to sit up the entire night chanting the holy name and at early dawn finish his ablutions. In the morning he took prasada of curd and flat rice.

The following is a list of disciples of Siddha Jagannatha dasa Babaji:

1. Biharidasa Babaji
2. Bhagavata dasa Babaji
3. Gaurahari dasa Babaji
4. Ramahari dasa Babaji
5. Ramadasa Babaji
6. Nityananda dasa Babaji, a resident of Varsana
7. Harekrsna dasa Babaji, a resident of Kadamakhandi

Jagannatha dasa Babaji lived in Vrndavana and performed his bhajan there for quite some time. Once he asked his servant Biharidasa to locate a Deity to install there. Biharidasa personally approached a weaver-caste Zamindar to help him in this regard. The Zamindar thus arranged to bring Deities of Gaura-Nitai from Dainhata and gave them to Biharidasa. Nitai-Gaura looked so beautiful when They were installed that it appeared as if They were made of gold. On the occasion of the installation ceremony a sum of Rs. 3,000 was spent to feed the Vaisnavas of Suryakunda and Radhakunda.

One day a band of dacoits approached him with the motive of stealing the Deities which they thought were made of gold. He told them that he possessed nothing and they might look into the temple for booty. The dacoits broke open the temple door and quickly gathered up everything they could find, including the Deities. However, in rushing to make their escape they stumbled on the door step and dropped the Deities. Seeing that the sun had risen outside the dacoits left the Deities and rushed off with the rest of the booty. After this incident he asked Biharidasa to arrange for the Deities to be cared for by someone else. Biharidasa carried the Deities to Vrndavana where he handed Them over, along with Rs. 2,000, to

Mother-Gosvami, a resident of Gayespur in the district of Maldaha. At present these Deities are residing at Dhopapada in Gopalbag and are known as "Sonara Gaura".

Sometime later he again asked Biharidasa to locate another Deity for him. Biharidasa found a Deity of the six-armed Lord Caitanya which had been kept hidden in a bag of cattle-feed. This Deity belonged to Dinu Babaji, a Manipuri Vaisnava residing in Mathura near Radhakunda. Biharidasa brought the Deity to Vrndavana where he cleansed and decorated Him, then carried the Deity, along with all items for worship, to Suryakunda.

For ten years thereafter Babaji Maharaja worshiped this Deity until one day he said, "Bihari, please put this Deity in the care of someone else in Vrndavana. I would like to go to Navadvipa. Let my body be offered at the lotus feet of Lord Gauranga." Biharidasa brought the Deity to Vrndavana and after receiving a donation of Rs. 25 from Mother-Gosvami of Gayespur handed over the Deity as well as the money to Narottama dasaji, the head of the Gopalaguru Matha. At present this Deity is being served at the lane of Nidhuvana.

In 1880 Bhaktivinoda Thakura went to Vrndavana and saw him for the first time. While there, he received many instructions on Hari-bhakti from Jagannatha dasa. Some time later, Babaji Maharaja visited the Bardhaman district during the month of Phalgun. He stayed at a town called Amalajora. At that time, Bhaktivinoda Thakura again had the good fortune to take his darsana.

Seeing Bhaktivinoda Thakura's enthusiasm for preaching the holy name of Krsna, Babaji Maharaja was very happy. He stayed in Amalajora during ekadasi, and that night there was kirtan and Hari-katha. Later, at Amalajora, Bhaktivinoda Thakura established his Prappana-asrama.

In 1893 Babaji Maharaja went from Koladvipa to Surabhi-kunja in Godrumadvipa. There he took his seat. His arrival in Surabhi-kunja was a wonderful event. Jagannatha dasa Babaji revealed many lost holy places in Mayapura, including the Yogapitha, Srivasa Angana, and others. It is said that when he came upon the holy place of Mahaprabhu's birth he danced, although he was very old and walked with difficulty. For some time he remained in Nadia and performed his bhajan on the banks of the Ganges. His bhajan kutir and samadhi mandir are still there at present. He ordered Bhaktivinoda Thakura to build a hut so devotees could stay near his bhajan kutir, and Bhaktivinoda did so.

When Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura was twelve years old, he was an expert in the Jyoti-sastras explaining Vedic astrology. Hearing this, Babaji Maharaja one day called upon him to prepare the Vaisnava calendar in accordance with the proper siddhanta. He did so and Babaji Maharaja was very pleased. With this, the Navadvipa Panjika, the Vaisnava calendar recording the dates of the appearance and disappearance of important Vaisnava saints and the celebration of important festivals, began.

Babaji Maharaja always had great enthusiasm for kirtan and Vaisnava seva. Even when he was nearly 135 years old, he went on preaching the message of Sri Caitanya throughout the world for the benefit of the fallen masses. In his old age, although he was almost paralyzed by infirmity, whenever it was time for kirtana he would still raise his arms in ecstasy.

Jagannatha dasa Babaji was the vesa, or Babaji, guru of Bhagavata dasa Babaji Maharaja. Bhagavata dasa in turn gave the dress of a babaji to Gaurakisora dasa Babaji. Jagannatha dasa Babaji's servant's name was Biharidasa. He was extremely strong and powerful. In his old age, Babaji Maharaja could not walk and Biharidasa used to carry him in a basket on his shoulders. When he went to Calcutta, Babaji Maharaja would stay at the house of Bhaktivinoda Thakura on Manikatala Street. Bhaktivinoda was always very eager to invite him to his house for prasada, but Babaji Maharaja was very renounced and would come only occasionally.

When he was in his old age, Babaji Maharaja was nearly blind. Many people would come to see him and to offer him donations for the service of Sri Krsna. His servant Biharidasa would keep all these donations in a bag. One day, Babaji Maharaja said, "Bihari! How many rupees have I got?" Biharidasa had put some rupees aside for some service he had planned to render Babaji Maharaja. When asked about how many rupees were on hand, Bihari placed some rupees in his hand and kept twelve rupees aside. Even though

his eyesight was failing, however, Babaji Maharaja detected the discrepancy. "Bihari!," he said, "Why have you kept twelve rupees aside? Give me all the rupees!" Smiling at this fun, Bihari surrendered the remaining coins to his guru. At that time, Babaji Maharaja made his wishes known as to how the money should be spent. The total came to two hundred rupees. Babaji Maharaja ordered Biharidasa to take the money at once and buy sweetballs, rasagulas, and feed all the cows in Navadvipa dhama.

Once Babaji Maharaja was on the banks of the Ganges, living under a makeshift canvas tent. Nearby that place there lived a dog with five puppies. Whenever Babaji Maharaja would take prasada, the dogs would come around and lick the food from his plate. When Biharidasa caught hold of one of the dogs to drive it off, Babaji Maharaja told him: "Bihari! If you wish to drive these dogs off, you may take my plate away as well. I shall not eat today." When Bihari complained, "But guru maharaja, these dogs are unclean!" Babaji Maharaja remarked, "No. These dogs are residents of the holy dhama. You may not abuse them."

Many people used to come and beg alms from Jagannatha dasa Babaji. He did not want to give them alms, but told them to do service. One day a man named Sri Gaura Hari dasa came and asked Jagannatha dasa Babaji for alms, but Babaji Maharaja would give him nothing. When the man persisted for three days, fasting outside Babaji Maharaja's tent, Babaji Maharaja finally relented. He tore off a piece of his kaupina (undergarment) and gave it to Biharidasa, his servant, with the instruction to present it to the beggar as alms, thereby informing the beggar that he must first learn to control his senses before taking up the profession of a saint.

One day Babaji Maharaja remarked about the professional readers of Srimad-Bhagavatam, "This kind of professional Bhagavata kirtana is simply prostitution. Those who make their living by reading Srimad-Bhagavatam are offenders to the holy name of Krsna. No one should listen to the kirtana and Bhagavatam readings that they produce. And one who listens to such offensive readings and thus commits offenses against the holy name of Krsna certainly goes to hell. Those who are involved in this professional reading should immediately give it up. Such a person should worship the residents of Vrndavana with great care and attention, considering himself most fallen, and thus pray for forgiveness."

In Navadvipa Jagannatha dasa Babaji preferred to live beneath a tree where now the bhajan kutir of Biharidasa stands. Later Biharidasa bought ten cottahs of land from Madhava Datta for Rs. 40. That plot had a huge ditch in it which Bihari filled up by carrying earth from the Ganges at night after Jagannatha dasa went to bed. Sometime later Kedaranatha Datta Bhaktivinoda arrived there and both he and Biharidasa sought bhiksha from Nafar Pal Chowdhury of Mahesaganj and raised two shades. Awhile later, with the approval of Jagannatha dasa, Rajarsi Banamali Raya Bahadur built three small rooms and fenced them in with a surrounding wall. The aged Manamohini dasi, a resident of Kaigram, arranged to dig a well. He lived here for 32 years until his disappearance at the age of 147 years.

Srimad Bhaktivinoda Thakura remarked of Jagannatha dasa Babaji Maharaja that he was the topmost general among Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

Bhaktivinoda Thakura

Bhaktivinoda Thakura was born on Sunday, Sept. 2, 1838 in Biranagara (Ulagrama) in the Nadia district of Bengal. He was the seventh son of Raja Krsnananda Datta, a great devotee of Lord Nityananda. He was also known as the great grandson of Madana Mohana and the third son of his Godfather Anandacandra. He would be known as daitya-kulera prahlada (Prahlada in the family of demons). This was because Vaisnavism was not very much respected in his family; on his mother's side, there was no respect for Vaisnavism at all. He was named Kedaranatha Datta by his Godfather. His childhood was spent at the mansion of his maternal grandfather Mustauphi Mahasaya, in Biranagara. His environment at this time was very opulent. He got his elementary education at the primary school started by his grandmother. Later he attended an English school in Krsnanagara, started by the King of Nadia; he left that school when his older brother died unexpectedly of cholera. When he was 11 years old, his father passed away. Subsequently, the grant of land that had been conferred upon his grandmother changed owners; at this time the family fell into a condition of poverty - their great wealth proved to be illusory. Still, Kedaranatha Datta passed over these difficulties with great endurance. His mother arranged a marriage for him when he was 12 (in the year 1850) to the 5 year old daughter of Madhusudana Mitra Mahasaya, a resident of Rana Ghata. Around this time Kedaranatha's uncle Kasiprasada Ghosh Mahasaya Thakura, who had

mastered British education, came to Ulagrama after the death of his maternal grandfather. He schooled young Kedaranatha at his home in Calcutta; this was at first resisted by the boy's mother, but by the time he was 13 he was allowed to go to the big city.

His uncle's house was situated in the Heduya district of central Calcutta. Kasiprasada was the central figure of the literary circle of his time, being the editor of the Hindu Intelligencer newspaper; many writers came to him to learn the art of writing in correct English. Kedaranatha assisted Kasiprasada by judging manuscripts submitted to the newspaper. Kedaranatha studied Kasiprasada's books and also frequented the public library. He attended Calcutta's Hindu Charitable Institution high school and became an expert English reader, speaker, and writer. Kedaranatha became ill from the salty water of Calcutta. He returned to Ulagrama and was treated by a Muslim soothsayer who predicted that the village of Biranagara would soon become pestilence-ridden and deserted. The Muslim also predicted Kedaranatha would become recognized as a great devotee of Lord Krsna. In the year 1856, when he was 18, Kedaranatha entered college in Calcutta. He started writing extensively in both English and Bengali; these essays were published in local journals. He also lectured in both languages. He studied English literature at this time extensively, and taught speechmaking to a person who later became a well-known orator in the British Parliament. Between the years 1857-1858 he composed a two part English epic entitled "The Poriade", which he planned to complete in 12 books. These two books described the life of Porus, who met Alexander the Great. Dvijendranatha Thakur, the eldest son of Maharsi Devendranatha Tagore and brother of the Nobel Prize winning poet Rabindranatha Tagore, was Kedaranatha's best friend during these years. He assisted Kedaranatha in his studies of Western religious books. Kedaranatha used to call Dvijendranatha "baro dada", or big brother. He was very taken by Christian theology, and found it more interesting than Hindu monism. He would spend many hours comparing the writings of Channing, Theodore Parker, Emerson and Newman.

At the end of 1858 Kedaranatha returned to Biranagara and found that the Muslim soothsayer's prediction about that place had come true: it was ruined and deserted. Kedaranatha brought his mother and paternal grandmother with him to Calcutta. Soon after he went to Orissa to visit his paternal grandfather, Rajavallabha Datta, formerly an important Calcutta gentleman who was now living as an ascetic in the Orissan countryside. His days were coming to a close, and he wanted Kedaranatha to be with him when he departed this world. After receiving his grandfather's last instructions, he traveled to all the monasteries and temples in the state of Orissa.

Kedaranatha began to consider the question of the means of his livelihood. He was not interested in business, as he'd seen how the "necessary dishonesty" of the trade world had morally weakened the merchant class. He decided to become a school teacher. He established a school for English education in the village of Kendrapara near Chutigram, in Orissa, thus becoming a pioneer in English teaching in that state. He also could see the oppressive power wielded by the landowners of Chutigram. After some time he went to Puri and passed a teacher's examination; he got a teacher's post in a Cuttack school and later became headmaster of a school in Bhadraka and then in Madinipura. His work was noted by the schoolboard authorities. In Bhadraka, his first son Annada Prasada (Acyutananda) was born, in 1860. He published a book that year in English that described all the asramas and temples in the state; this book received favorable mention in the work called "Orissa" by British historian Sir William Hunter. Hunter praised Kedaranatha's moral and religious character. As the headmaster of the Madinipura high school, Kedaranatha studied many popular Bengali religious sects, particularly their philosophies and practices. He concluded they were all cheap. He came to understand that the only real religion that had ever been established in Bengal was that of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu; unfortunately, His movement was not well-represented. Kedaranatha could not even get a copy of the 16th century Bengali biography of Lord Caitanya's activities on earth called Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, despite searching in bookshops, libraries and monasteries all over Bengal. Kedaranatha's first wife passed away, so in the town of Jakapura he married Bhagyavati De. In 1861 Kedaranatha accepted the post of Deputy Magistrate in the Government of Bengal. Then he became Collectorate Officer after seeing the corruption of the government workers. He established an organization called the "Bhratr Samaja". He wrote an English book in 1863 called "Our Wants." At this time he also constructed a home in Rana Ghata. Later in 1863 he stayed at Burdwan, where he composed two novel poems in Bengali: "Vijnagrama" (deserted village) and "Sannyasi." Volume 39 of the 1863 Calcutta Review praised these poems, saying, "We hope the author will continue to give his countrymen the benefit of his elegant and unassuming pen, which is quite free from those objectionable licenses of thought and expression which abound in many dramas recently published. The want of the day

is the creation of a literature for Hindu ladies, and we trust that many more educated natives will have the good sense to devote their time and abilities to the attainment of this most desirable aim." The rhyme and style of these two poems were original; they gave birth to a new way of writing poetry in the Bengali language. In the year 1866 Kedaranatha took the position of Deputy Registrar with the power of a Deputy Collector and Deputy Magistrate in the district of Chapara. He also became quite fluent in Persian and Urdu. In a place called Saran in Chapara, a clique of tea planters made unjust demands of him; he successfully opposed them. And while at Saran he visited the Gautama Asrama at Godana. Desiring to establish a school for teaching nyaya-sastra, he delivered a speech there (in 1866) which was well-received. The school was successfully established, the foundation-stone being laid in 1883 by Sir Rivers Thomson, after whom the school was named. Though Kedaranatha had no further part in the project after his speech, the talk he gave was instrumental in securing public aid for the school. Also in 1866 he translated the Balide Registry Manual into Urdu, which was circulated by the government throughout the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh; this manual was used by the registration departments of those areas. Kedaranatha was transferred to Purniya from Chapara where he took charge of the government and judicial departments; he was then transferred to Dinajapura (West Bengal) in 1868, becoming the Deputy Magistrate. At this time he received copies of the Srimad Bhagavatam and Sri Caitanya-caritamrta from Calcutta. He read Caitanya-caritamrta repeatedly; his faith in Krsna developed until he was absorbed in Krsna consciousness day and night. He incessantly submitted heartfelt prayers for the Lord's mercy. He came to understand the supreme majesty and power of the one and only Absolute Personality of Godhead Sri Krsna. He published a song about Lord Caitanya entitled Saccidananda- premalankara. In 1869, while serving as deputy magistrate under the government of Bengal in Dinajapura, he delivered a speech in the form of a treatise he had written on the Srimad-Bhagavatam to a big congregation of many prominent men of letters from many parts of India and England. He was transferred to Camparana, during which time his second son, Radhika Prasada, was born. In Camparana people used to worship a ghost in a banyan tree which had the power to influence the mind of the local judge to decide in the favor of the worshiper. Kedaranatha engaged the father of Pandita Ramabhai, a famous girl scholar, to read Srimad-Bhagavatam under the tree; after one month, the tree crashed to the ground, and many people found faith in the Srimad-Bhagavatam. From Camparana he went to Puri which englandened his heart because the holy city of Puri, the site of the famous Krsna temple of Jagannatha, was where Caitanya Mahaprabhu had resided for 18 years as a sannyasi.

Near Puri, in the town of Kamanala, there lived a yogi named Bisakisena, who became popular by exercising mystic powers. He had two companions going by the names Brahma and Siva; Bisakisena himself claimed to be Mahavisnu. Some wealthy landowners of Orissa came under his sway and were providing funds for the construction of a temple. They also sent him women with whom he engaged in "rasa-lila" enjoyments. Bisakisena declared he'd drive the British rulers out of Orissa and make himself king. Such inflammatory statements were circulated all around Orissa. The British thought him a revolutionary, so the District Governor of the National Government of Bengal drew up arrest orders; but nobody in Orissa dared to act upon these orders, as they all feared the yogi's power.

Mr. Ravenshaw, district commissioner for Orissa, requested Kedaranatha to bring Bisakisena to justice. Kedaranatha went personally to Bisakisena, who showed some powers and informed Kedaranatha that he knew well who he was and his mission. He warned Kedaranatha that since he (Bisakisena) was the Lord, he'd better not interfere with him. Kedaranatha replied by acknowledging Bisakisena's accomplishments in yoga and invited him to come to Puri where he could see the Jagannatha temple. Bisakisena haughtily said, "Why should I come to see Jagannatha? He's only a hunk of wood; I am the Supreme in person." Instantly furious, Kedaranatha arrested the rogue, brought him to Puri and threw him in jail, where he was guarded by 3 dozen Muslim constables and 72 policemen from Cuttack day and night. "Brahma" and "Siva" avoided arrest by claiming they'd been forced by Bisakisena to do as they'd done; but Mr. Taylor, subdivision officer at Kodar, later prosecuted them. Kedaranatha tried Bisakisena in Puri. The trial lasted 18 days, during which time thousands of people gathered outside the courtroom demanding Bisakisena's release. On 6th day of the trial Kedaranatha's second daughter Kadambini (age 7) became seriously ill and nearly died; but within a day she had recovered. Kedaranatha knew it was the power of the yogi at work. He remarked, "Yes, let us all die, but this rascal must be punished." The very next day in court the yogi announced he'd shown his power and would show much more; he suggested that Kedaranatha should release him at once or face worse miseries. On the last day of the trial Kedaranatha himself became ill from high fever and suffered exactly as his daughter had done for one whole day. But Kedaranatha pronounced the man guilty and sentenced him to 18 months for political conspiracy. When Bisakisena was

being readied for jailing, one Dr. Walter, the District Medical Officer, cut off all the yogi's long hair. The yogi kept his mystic power in his hair and hadn't eaten or drunk during the whole trial, so when his hair was shorn he fell to the floor like a dead man and had to be taken by stretcher to jail. After 3 months he was moved to the central jail at Midnapura where he took poison and died in the year 1873. In Puri, Kedaranatha studied the Srimad-Bhagavatam with the commentary of Sridhara Svami, copied out the Sat-sandarbhās of Jiva Gosvami and made a special study of Rupa Gosvami's Bhakti-rasamṛta-sindhu. Between the years 1874 and 1893, Kedaranatha spent much time in seclusion chanting the holy name (though he still executed his worldly duties perseveringly). He wrote several books in Sanskrit such as Tattva-sutra, Datta-kaustubha and Tattva-viveka and many other books in Bengali such as the Kalyana-kalpataru. While in Puri he established a Vaisnava discussion society known as the Bhagavat-samsad in the Jagannatha-vallabha gardens, where the famous saint Sri Ramananda Raya stayed in meditation hundreds of years before. All the prominent Vaisnavas joined this group except for Raghunatha dasa Babaji, known as Siddha Purusa. He thought that Kedaranatha was unauthorized, as he did not wear kanthi-mala (neckbeads) or tilaka (clay markings on 12 places of the body). Moreover, he advised other Vaisnavas to avoid Kedaranatha's association. But soon thereafter Raghunatha dasa Babaji contracted a deathly illness. Lord Jagannatha appeared to him in a dream and told him to pray for the mercy of Kedaranatha if he at all wanted release from the illness and death. He did so; Kedaranatha gave him special medicines and cured him. Raghunatha dasa Babaji was blessed with a true awareness of Kedaranatha's spiritual position. A well-known saint named Svarupa dasa Babaji did his worship at Satasana near the ocean in Puri. Svarupa showed much affection for Kedaranatha and gave him many profound instructions on the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. A popular upstart holy man named Caran dasa Babaji preached and printed books advising a perverted style of kirtana (congregational chanting of the holy names of God), advising that one should chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa Mantra in japa and Nitai Gaura Radhe Syama Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Rama in kirtana. Kedaranatha preached long and hard to him; after a long time Caran dasa Babaji came to his senses and begged forgiveness from Kedaranatha, admitting his fault in spreading this nonsense fashion of chanting all over Bengal. Six months later Caran dasa went mad and died in great distress. Kedaranatha became manager of the Jagannatha temple. He used his government powers to establish strict regularity in the worship of the Deity. In the Jagannatha temple courtyard he set up a Bhakti Mandapa, where daily discourses of Srimad Bhagavatam were held. Kedaranatha would spend long hours discussing Kṛṣṇa and chanting the holy name, especially at the important sites of Sri Caitanya's pastimes like the Tota Gopinatha temple, the tomb of Haridasa Thakura, the Siddha Bakula tree and the Gambhira room. He made notes on the Vedanta-sutra which were used by Sri Syamalala Gosvami in the edition of the Govinda Bhasya by Baladeva Vidyabhusana that he published.

Near the Jagannatha-vallabha gardens, in a large house adjacent to the Narayana Chata Matha, on the 5th day of the dark fortnight of Magha in the year 1874, the fourth son of Kedaranatha took birth. He was named Bimala Prasada (and would later be known as Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Prabhupada, the spiritual master of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, founder-acarya of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness). Two years earlier, Kamala Prasada, his third son, had taken birth.

In 1874 Kedaranatha discovered the Raja (king) of Puri had misappropriated 80 thousand rupees for his own sense pleasures. This money belonged to the temple, so Kedaranatha forced the Raja to pay for the offerings of food to Lord Jagannatha. The raja was angry at Kedaranatha and therefore, with the help of 50 brahmin priests, began a yajna (fire sacrifice) meant for killing Kedaranatha which went on for 30 days; when the last oblations were offered into the fire, the king's own son and not Kedaranatha died. Kedaranatha left Puri on special business, returning to Bengal where he visited the holy towns of Navadvipa, Santipura and Kalana. He was put in charge of the subdivision Mahisarekha in Haora. After that he was transferred to Bhadraka. In August 1878 he was made head of the subdivision Naraila in the Yashohan district. While in Naraila he published two books on Kṛṣṇa that became famous around the world: Sri Kṛṣṇa-samhita and Kalyana-kalpataru. In a letter dated April 16, 1880, Dr. Reinhold Rost wrote to Kedaranatha: "By representing Kṛṣṇa's character and his worship in a more sublime and transcendental light than has hitherto been the custom to regard him, you have rendered an essential service to your co-religionists, and no one would have taken more delight in your work than my departed friend Goldstuecker, the sincerest and most zealous advocate the Hindus ever had in Europe." In 1877 Varada Prasada was born, his fifth son, and in 1878, Viraja Prasada, the sixth son, both at Rana Ghata.

Kedaranatha took formal Vaisnava initiation from Bipin Bihari Gosvami, who was descended from the Jahnava family of Baghnapura. At the same time, his seventh son, Lalita Prasada, appeared at Rana Ghata.

Within a few years after his initiation, Kedaranatha was awarded by the Vaisnavas the title "Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura" in appreciation for his tireless propagation of the philosophy of devotion (bhakti) to Sri Krsna. In Naraila, many people had formally adopted Vaisnavism, but they were not trained in scriptural conclusions and thus were easily misled by upstarts who exploited their devotional sentiments. Bhaktivinoda Thakura gave these simple devotees of Krsna shelter and instructed them in Vaisnava-siddhanta (the essential truths of Vaisnavism) most exactingly. In 1881 Bhaktivinoda began publishing the Sajjanatosani, his Vaisnava journal. Bhaktivinoda Thakura had previously pilgrimaged to the holy cities of Benares, Prayaga, Mathura and Vrndavana in 1866. At the close of his stay in Naraila he desired to again see Vrndavana, the land of Krsna. He took three months for this purpose. He met Jagannatha dasa Babaji there, who moved every 6 months between Navadvipa (in Bengal) and Vrndavana. Bhaktivinoda Thakura accepted Jagannatha dasa Babaji as his eternally worshipable siksa guru (instructing spiritual master). During his pilgrimage at this time he dealt with a gang of dacoits (highway robbers) known as the Kanjharas who robbed and killed many pilgrims; he gave evidence to the government and a commission was formed to wipe out this scourge.

From Vrndavana he came to Calcutta and bought a house at 181 Manikatala Street, now called Ramasha Datta Street, near Bidana Park. He called the house Bhakti-bhavan (place of devotion) and started daily worship of Sri Giridhara.

He was appointed head of the subdivision of Barasat where the well-known novelist Bankim Candra met him. Bankim Candra showed him a book he'd written about Krsna to Bhaktivinoda, who preached to Bankim Candra for four days, taking little food and hardly any sleep; the result was Bankim Candra changed his ideas (which were mundane speculations about Krsna) and his book to conform with the teachings of Sri Caitanya. Bhaktivinoda Thakura used to say that knowledge is power. During the last year of his stay at Barasat (1886), Bhaktivinoda Thakura published an edition of the Bhagavad-gita with the Sanskrit commentary of Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, which he translated into Bengali (the "Rasikaranjana" translation). He had undertaken this task at the request of Babu Sarada Carana Mitra, ex-judge of the Calcutta High Commission. Bankim Candra wrote the preface, acknowledging his own indebtedness to Bhaktivinoda Thakura; he noted that all Bengali readers would be indebted to Bhaktivinoda for his saintly work. From Barasat, Bhaktivinoda Thakura was transferred to Srirampur. At nearby Saptagram he visited the residence of the great Vaisnava saint Uddharana Datta Thakura, a great associate of Lord Nityananda, and the places of another great Vaisnavas of that time, Abhirama Thakura, at Khanakula, and Vasu Ramananda, at Kulinagrama. At Srirampur he composed and published his masterly writing, Sri Caitanya Siksamrta, Vaisnava-siddhanta-mala, Prema-pradipa and Manah-siksa. He was also publishing Sajjanatosani magazine on a regular basis. In Calcutta he set up the Sri Caitanya Yantra, a printing press at the Bhakti Bhavana, upon which he printed Maladhara's Sri Krsna-vijaya, his own Amnaya-sutra and the Caitanyopanisad of the Atharva Veda.

Finding the Caitanyopanisad was a difficult task. Hardly anyone in Bengal had heard of it. Bhaktivinoda Thakura traveled to many places in Bengal looking for it; finally, one devoted Vaisnava pandita named Madhusudana dasa sent him an old copy he'd been keeping with him at Sambalapura. Bhaktivinoda Thakura wrote a Sanskrit commentary on the book and called it Sri Caitanya-caranamrta. Madhusudana dasa Mahasaya translated the verses into Bengali; this translation was called Amrta-bindu. It was a sellout when published. In Calcutta Bhaktivinoda Thakura started the Sri Visva-Vaisnava Sabha, dedicated to the preaching of pure bhakti as taught by Lord Caitanya. To publicize the work of the society, Bhaktivinoda Thakura published a small booklet entitled Visva-Vaisnava-kalpavi. Also he published his own edition of the Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, with his Amrta-prabhava Bhasya commentary. And he introduced the Caitanyabda or Caitanya-era calendar, and gave assistance to the propagation of the Caitanya Panjika, which established the feast day of Gaura Purnima, the day of Lord Caitanya's appearance in the material world. He lectured and gave readings on Vaisnava books in various religious societies. In the Hindu Herald, an English periodical, he published a detailed account of Sri Caitanya's life.

In the year 1887 Bhaktivinoda Thakura resolved to quit government service and go to Vrndavana with Bhaktibhringa Mahasaya for the rest of his life. One night in Tarakesvara, he had a dream in which Sri

Caitanya appeared to him and spoke, "You will certainly go to Vrndavana, but first there is some service you must perform in Navadvipa. When will you do that?" When the Lord disappeared, Bhaktivinoda awoke. On the advice of Bhaktibhringa Mahasaya he thereupon applied for a transfer to Krsnanagara, where the government headquarters for the Navadvip district is situated. He turned down offers of big posts in Assam and Tripura. He even tried to retire at this time, but his application was not accepted. Finally, in December of 1887 he managed to trade posts with Babu Radha Madhava Vasu, Deputy Magistrate of Krsnanagara. During his stay at Krsnanagara, Bhaktivinoda Thakura used to go to Navadvipa and search for the birthsite of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the exact location of which had been lost in time. One night he was sitting on the roof of the Rani Dharmasala in Navadvipa chanting on his beads, when he spotted in the distance a very tall tala tree; near the tree was a small building that gave off a remarkable effulgence. Soon afterwards, he went to the Krsnanagara Collectory where he began to study some very old manuscripts of Caitanya Bhagavata, Navadvipa Dhama Parikrama by Narahari Sarkara, and some old maps of the Navadvipa area. He went to the village of Ballaladibhi and spoke with many elderly people there, and uncovered facts about the modern-day Navadvipa. In the year 1887 he discovered that the place he'd seen from the dharmasala rooftop was in fact the birthplace of Mahaprabhu. This was confirmed by Jagannatha dasa Babaji, the head of the Gaudiya Vaisnava community in Navadvipa. A great festival was held there. Bhaktivinoda published the Navadvipa Dhama Mahatmya, which elaborated the glories of the birthsite of Sri Caitanya. Also in 1887, Bhaktivinoda renovated the house of Jagannatha dasa Babaji at Ravasghata. He took leave from office for two years and acquired a plot of land at Sri Godadrumadvipa, or Svarupa Ganga. He built a retirement house there called Surabhi Kunj.

In 1890 he established the "Nama Hatta" there. Sometimes Jagannatha dasa Babaji would come there and have kirtana. Lord Nityananda had established His Nama Hatta at the same place and Bhaktivinoda considered himself the street sweeper of the Nama Hatta of Nitai.

When the birthplace was uncovered, Bhaktivinoda and Jagannatha dasa Babaji would worship Lord Caitanya there. Once one of Bhaktivinoda's sons contracted a skin disease and Jagannatha dasa Babaji told the boy to lie down at the birthsite of Lord Caitanya for the night. He did so, and the next morning he was cured.

In 1888 Bhaktivinoda took charge of the village of Netrakona in the district of Mayamanasimha, because he could not keep good health in Krsnanagara and had requested transfer to a more healthful region. From Netrakona he came to Tangaila and from there he was transferred to the district of Vardhamana. There he would hold kirtana with the devotees from a place called Amalajora, headed by Ksetra Babu and Vipina Babu; they would sing poems like Soka-satana written by him.

He was put in charge of the Kalara subdivision in 1890, and from there would often visit such holy places as Godadrumadvipa, Navadvipa, Campahati, Samudragana, Cupi, Kasthasali, Idrakapura, Baghnapura, Pyariganga (the place of Nakula Brahmachari) and the place of Vrndavana dasa Thakura at Denura. Soon Bhaktivinoda Thakura was transferred for a few days to Ranighata, from where he came to Dinajapura again. Sailaja Prasada was born there, his youngest son. In Dinajapura Bhaktivinoda wrote his Vidvaranjana commentary and translation of the Bhagavad-gita; it was published in 1891 with the commentary of Baladeva. 1891 was the year Bhaktivinoda Thakura took leave from the government service for two years. He desired to preach the chanting of the Hare Krsna mahamantra. From his base at Svarupa Ganga he used to visit such places as Ghatala and Ramajivana to lecture in clubs, societies and organizations. This he'd also often do in Krsnanagara. In March of 1892 he traveled and preached with a party of Vaisnavas in the Basirahata District. All the while he was writing also. He opened many centers of Krsna worship (Nama Hatta) in different districts of Bengal. The Nama Hatta became a self-sustaining success which continued to spread even after his return to government service. From Basirahata he set out on his third trip to Vrndavana; he stopped off at Amalajora to celebrate the Ekadasi day with Jagannatha dasa Babaji. In Vrndavana, he visited all the forests and places of pastimes and he continued to give lectures and readings on Hari Nama in various places in Bengal when he returned to Calcutta. In February 1891 he gave a lecture on his investigation into the whereabouts of the exact birthsite of Sri Caitanya; his audience included highly learned men from all over Bengal, who became very enthusiastic at the news. Out of this gathering the Sri Navadvipa Dhama Pracarini Sabha was formed for spreading the glories of the Yogapitha (the birthsite). That year, on Gaura Purnima, a big festival was held that witnessed the installation of Gaura- Visnupriya Deities at the Yogapitha. All the learned pandits, having deliberated fully on Bhaktivinoda Thakura's evidence, agreed that the Yogapitha was the true birthsite of Mahaprabhu.

In 1892, Bhaktivinoda Thakura published the book Vaisnava-siddhanta-mala from his headquarters in Bengal. Later he printed its individual chapters as separate booklets for public distribution. In 1900 he published Hari-nama-cintamani in Bengali poetic form.

In October 1894, at age 56, he retired from his post as Deputy Magistrate, though this move was opposed by his family and the government authorities. He stayed at Svarupa Ganga to worship, lecture and revise his old writings. Sometimes he went to Calcutta; there he begged door to door for funds to construct a Yogapitha temple. In July 1896 Bhaktivinoda Thakura went to Tripura at the request of the the king, who was a Vaisnava. He stayed in the capital for 4 days and preached the chanting of the holy name of Krsna. His lecture on the first day amazed all the local panditas; on the next two days the royal family and general public thrilled to his talks on the pastimes of Mahaprabhu. Back in Svarupa Ganga, Bhaktivinoda Thakura printed a small booklet written in Sanskrit under the title Sri Gauranga-lila-smarana-mangalastotram, with a commentary by Sitikantha Vacaspati of Nadia. The introduction in English was called "Caitanya Mahaprabhu, His life and Precepts". This book found its way into the library of the Royal Asiatic Society in London, the library of McGill University in Canada and other respectable institutions. It was reviewed in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society by Mr. F.W. Fraser, an erudite British scholar.

In the rainy season of 1896, requested by the Maharaja of Tripura, he went to Darjilim and Karsiyam. In 1897 he went to many villages such as Medinipura and Sauri to preach.

Sisir Kumar Ghosh was the founder of the Amrta Bazar Patrika and the author of the Sri Amiya Nimai-carita. He had great respect for Bhaktivinoda Thakura; he also took up the preaching of the holy name throughout Calcutta and in many villages in Bengal. He published the Sri Visnu Priya O Ananda Bazar Patrika under the editorship of Bhaktivinoda. In one of his letters to Bhaktivinoda he wrote, "I have not seen the six Gosvamis of Vrndavana but I consider you to be the seventh Gosvami."

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati had been residing at Puri as a strict renunciate and was engaged in worship at the Gandharvika Giridhari Matha, one of seven Mathas near the samadhi tomb of Haridasa Thakura. Bhaktivinoda Thakura, desiring to help his son, had the monastery cleaned and repaired when he came to Puri himself at the beginning of the 20th century. After Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati left Puri for Sri Navadvipa Mayapura, Bhaktivinoda Thakura constructed his own place of bhajana on the beach, calling it Bhakti Kutir; Krsnadasa Babaji, Bhaktivinoda Thakura's devoted assistant and disciple, joined him there at this time. He was his constant attendant up to the end of Bhaktivinoda Thakura's life. He began solitary worship (bhajan) at this time; he had many visitors at this place. Some of them simply wanted to disturb him, whereas others were sincere and benefited greatly from his spiritual inspiration. In 1908, 3 months before Bhaktivinoda Thakura renounced the world, one of his sons who was working in a Calcutta government office came home to inform his father that Sir William Duke, chief secretary to the government, was in Calcutta. Bhaktivinoda Thakura had served under him as a magistrate. Bhaktivinoda Thakura made an appointment to meet him the next day at the government building. Sir William Duke greeted Bhaktivinoda Thakura on the street outside the building and personally escorted him into his office. With folded hands, he asked forgiveness for having once planned to remove Bhaktivinoda Thakura from his post of district magistrate; this was because he thought that if such qualified Indians held such important posts, the British would not last much longer in India. Formerly Sir William Duke used to visit to Bhaktivinoda's house and would even take his meals there. Such familiarity between British nobility and the native people of India was uncommon. Now that Sir William was getting old, he wished to clear his conscience of guilty feelings from the past, and so confessed to Bhaktivinoda Thakura that he'd thought ill of him despite their close relationship. Bhaktivinoda Thakura answered, "I considered you to be a good friend and a well-wisher all along." Pleased with Sir William, he gave him his blessings. Later Bhaktivinod Thakura admitted he was astonished that Duke wanted to harm him in some way.

In 1908 Bhaktivinoda Thakura took vesa (the dress of babaji) at Satasana in Puri. Until 1910 he would move between Calcutta and Puri, and continued to write; but after that he stopped all activity and remained in Puri, absorbed in the holy name of Krsna. He shut himself up and entered samadhi, claiming paralysis. On June 23, 1914, just before noon at Puri, Bhaktivinoda Thakura left his body. This day was also the disappearance day of Sri Gadadhara Pandita. Amidst sankirtana his remains were interred in Godruma after the next solstice; the summer solstice had just begun when he had left his body. About Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Sarada Carana Mitra, Calcutta High Court Judge, wrote: "I knew Thakura Bhaktivinoda intimately as a friend and a relation. Even under the pressure of official work as a magistrate

in charge of a heavy district he could always find time for devotional contemplation and service, and whenever I met him, our talk would turn in a few moments to the subject of devotion, dvaitadvaita-vada philosophy and the saintly work that lay before him. Service of God is the only thing he longed for and service under the government, however honorable, was to him a clog." In executing his government service, Bhaktivinoda Thakura would wear coat and pants to court, with double-size tulasi neckbeads and tilaka. He would shave his head monthly. Very strong in his decisions, he would decide immediately. He did not allow any humbug in his court; no upstart could stand before him.

He was always charitable to brahmanas, and equally befriended other castes. He never showed pride, and his amiable disposition was a characteristic feature of his life. He never accepted gifts from anyone; he even declined all honors and titles offered by the government to him on the grounds that they might stand against his holy mission of life. He was very strict in moral principles, and avoided the luxurious life; he would not even chew betel. He never allowed harmonium and he never had any debts. He disliked theaters because they were frequented by public women. He spoke Bengali, Sanskrit, English, Latin, Urdu, Persian and Oriya. He started writing books at age 12, and continued turning out a profuse number of volumes up until his departure from this world.

He always consulted a pocket watch, and kept time very punctually.

His schedule:

7:30-8:00 PM - take rest
10:00 PM - rise, light oil lamp, write
4:00 AM - take rest
4:30 - rise, wash hands and face, chant japa
7:00 - write letters
7:30 - read
8:30 - receive guests, or continue to read
9:30-9:45 - take rest
9:45 - morning bath, breakfast of half-quart milk, couple capatis, fruit
9:55 - go to court in carriage
10:00 - court began.
1:00 PM - court finished. He'd come home and bathe and refresh.
2:00 PM - return to office.
5:00 PM - translate works from Sanskrit to Bengali
Then take evening bath and meal of rice, couple of capatis, half-quart of milk.

Gaurakisora dasa Babaji

He was the guru of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami, the founder of the Caitanya Mathas and Gaudiya Mathas. This Vaisnava saint's life was an example of utter humility and poverty, the true attributes of a Vaisnava. Gaurakisora never accepted any material object from anyone. For his clothing he used the discarded loin cloths from corpses left on the bank of the Ganges. For food, he would collect rice by begging, soak it in river water, and garnish it with salt and chilly. He never asked favors from anyone and lived a fully detached life, devoid of all possessions.

Very little information is available about the past life of Gaurakisora except that he was born in a Vaisya family in the village of Bagjana near Tepakhola on the bank of the Padma. As a householder, Gaurakisora was known by the name Vansidas. At that time he was engaged in some agricultural trade and from the income took care of his wife and family honestly. After the passing away of his wife, Gaurakisora renounced his home and went to Vrndavana, where he was initiated into Vairagi Vesa by Bhagavata dasa Babaji, one of the foremost disciples of Jagannatha dasa Babaji.

Gaurakisora lived on madhukari and slept beneath a tree. He would lie prostrate, offering his humble obeisances to the residents of Vraja, considering them as embodiments of Lord Krsna. He even offered his obeisances to the flowers, trees, and land around him. He spent about thirty years at Vrajamandala serving the deities there. Afterwards he left for Navadvipa.

During his stay at Navadvipa, Gaurakisora underwent various transformations of spiritual moods. Sometimes he danced on the bank of the Ganges chanting, "Gaura, Gaura", while at other times he would lie on the ground in an unconscious state. He joyfully moved throughout the groves located on the bank of the Ganges, considering them sites of the divine sports of Radha-Govinda. His only clothing was a strip of cloth around his waist and often went totally naked. He chanted japa on beads or sometimes knotted a cloth and used that as a substitute for japa beads. Occasionally, he went to Godruma to listen to Bhaktivinoda Thakura recite Srimad Bhagavatam.

Every virtuous person looked forward to rendering service to Gaurakisora. However, he rarely allowed anyone the chance to serve him. Once Manindracandra Nandi, the Maharaja of Kasimbazar, sent a distinguished messenger to escort Gaurakisora to the former's palace. Gaurakisora, however, did not accept the Maharaja's invitation saying that if he visited the palace he may feel tempted by the wealth of the Maharaja which may result in a strained relation between the two. Hence, Gaurakisora suggested that instead of him visiting the palace, let the Maharaja free himself completely from the shackles of wealth by donating everything he owned to his relatives and then come to live with Gaurakisora in a specially prepared shed where both of them could practice Hari Bhajan in peace.

Gaurakisora was very selective about accepting invitations for food knowing it could adversely affect the spiritual life. Once a devotee name Harenbabu partook of prasada offered at the festival held at bhajan kutir at Navadvipa. For this Gaurakisora stopped communicating with Haren for three days. On the fourth day Gaurakisora explained that the prasada of the above festival had been financed by a woman of questionable profession.

Once, on the eve of Sanatana Gosvami's disappearance day, Gaurakisora decided to celebrate the occasion. The devotee attending him asked who would provide them with the materials for the celebration. Gaurakisora replied: "Remember not to speak to anyone about it. We shall miss a meal and continue around the clock chanting the holy name. This could be the typical festival for those of us who have taken the vow of poverty."

Narendra Kumar Sen, a resident of Agartala (Tripura), once approached Gaurakisora to learn about guru-pranali or siddha pranali. Gaurakisora told him, "The Supreme Lord cannot be realized through worldly knowledge. Only through the chanting of the holy name can the true nature of the Lord be revealed. As the Lord is revealed from the letters comprising the Nama, the devotee gradually begins to understand his own nature and becomes acquainted with seva.

Once a physician told Gaurakisora that he intended to move to Navadvipa and take up charitable practices. Gaurakisora advised the physician that if he truly desired to live in Navadvipa then he should give up the plan for a charitable practice because it would only encourage materially minded people to save money. Those who sincerely practiced Hari bhajan should never get distracted by the chains of welfare activities.

A young seeker wearing a kaupina once stayed with Gaurakisora for some days. Later he arranged, through the agency of an employee of a female estate owner, to obtain five kathas of land as a donation from the woman. When Gaurakisora heard about this he was extremely annoyed: "Navadvipa dhama is beyond this material world. How can a worldly land-owner dare to hold land here and even think he can donate five kathas out of it? A mere grain of sand of the transcendental Navadvipa is more valuable than all the precious gems in this world put together. Moreover, how advanced could this young kaupina-clad devotee be if he dares to collect so much land in lieu of his bhajan merit?"

Once a devotee offered some sweets to Lord Gauranga and then took the offering to Gaurakisora, urging him to partake of it. Gaurakisora told the devotee, "Those who are non-vegetarian, those who commit adultery, or offer food to Lord Gauranga with a particular motive, their offerings never reach Lord Gauranga and are never sanctified as prasada."

Gaurakisora regularly begged for rice, after which he would cook the rice, offer it, and partake of the prasada. He never touched any foodstuff offered by someone else. Once during monsoon, Gaurakisora stayed in the rest-house at Phulia Navadvipa. Some prasada was left in a vessel for him to respect later. Meanwhile a snake passed by the vessel and a woman there happened to notice it. When Gaurakisora sat

down to take prasada the woman appeared there and informed him about the snake. Gaurakisora, however, firmly stated that he would not touch the prasada until the woman left. After the woman left, Gaurakisora said, "Look how maya works! Taking the form of compassion, maya attempts to hit deep into her target slowly. Maya can assume countless forms. She always prevents a mortal being from practicing Hari bhajan."

Giribabu and his wife once ardently requested Gaurakisora to stay in their house at Navadvipa. Gaurakisora was moved by their sincere devotion and finally agreed to oblige them on the condition that he would live only in their toilet room where he would perform Hari bhajan. Giribabu tried to persuade him to change his mind but Gaurakisora remained firm. Giribabu reluctantly arranged to have the toilet thoroughly cleaned and Gaurakisora used it for Hari Bhajan. A realized soul can practice Hari bhajan anywhere in an unconcerned manner, and wherever he resides, that place becomes Vaikuntha.

Gaurakisora was a highly spiritually advanced soul. He never allowed deceitful practices or any discussion which was not within the purview of the holy books. One day when a devotee questioned Gaurakisora about a well-known reciter of Srimad Bhagavatam who was in the habit of chanting "Gaura, Gaura", Gaurakisora remarked, "He doesn't say "Gaura, Gaura". Rather what he means to say is, 'Money, Money.' Those who recite Srimad Bhagavatam for payment are not entitled to chant the name of the Supreme Lord."

Gaurakisora never delivered discourses openly, yet his spotless character drew everyone to him. Upon meeting Gaurakisora, even a staunch materialist would become inclined take up Hari bhajan.

In November 1915 AD on Ekadasi day, Gaurakisora dasa Babaji breathed his last. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati himself arranged to bury the mortal remains of his revered guru.

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati was one of ten children born to Bhaktivinoda Thakura, a great Vaisnava teacher in the disciple-line from Lord Caitanya Himself. While living in a house named Narayana Chata, just near the temple of Lord Jagannatha in Puri, Bhaktivinoda Thakura was engaged as a prominent Deputy Magistrate and also served as the superintendent of the temple of Lord Jagannatha. Yet in spite of these responsibilities, he served the cause of Krsna with prodigious energy. While working to reform Gaudiya Vaisnavism in India, he prayed to Lord Caitanya, "Your teachings have been greatly depreciated and it is not in my power to restore them." Thus he prayed for a son to help him in his preaching mission. When, on February 6, 1874, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati was born to Bhaktivinoda and Bhagavati Devi in Jagannatha Puri, the Vaisnavas considered him the answer to his father's prayers. He was born with the umbilical cord wrapped around his neck and draped across his chest like the sacred thread worn by brahmanas.

Six months after the child was born, Bhaktivinoda arranged for his son to undergo the annaprasana ceremony with the prasada of Vimala Devi, and thereafter named the boy Bimala prasada. Around the same time the carts of the Jagannatha festival stopped at the gate of Bhaktivinoda's residence and for three days could not be moved. Bhaktivinoda Thakura's wife brought the infant onto the cart and approached the Deity of Lord Jagannatha. Spontaneously, the infant extended his arms and touched the feet of Lord Jagannatha and was immediately blessed with a garland that fell from the body of the Lord. Seeing this the priests chanted the name of Hari and told the child's mother that the boy would certainly become a great devotee one day. When Bhaktivinoda Thakura learned that the Lord's garland had fallen on his son, he realized that this was the son for whom he had prayed.

Bimala Prasada stayed in Puri for ten months after his birth and then went to Bengal by palanquin on his mother's lap. His infancy was spent at Nadia District's Ranaghat hearing topics of Sri Hari from his mother.

Bhaktivinoda and his wife were orthodox and virtuous; they never allowed their children to eat anything other than prasada, nor to associate with bad company. One day, when Bimala Prasada was still a child of no more than four years, his father mildly rebuked him for eating a mango not yet duly offered to Lord Krsna. Bimala Prasada, although only a child, considered himself an offender to the Lord and vowed never to eat mangoes again. (This was a vow that he would follow throughout this life.) By the time Bimala Prasada was seven years old, he had memorized the entire Bhagavad-gita and could even explain its verses. His father then began training him in proofreading and printing, in conjunction with the publishing of the Vaisnava magazine Sajjana-tosani.

In 1881, in the course of excavating for the construction of the Bhakti bhavana at Rambagan in Calcutta, a Deity of Kurmadeva was unearthed. After initiating his seven year old son, Bhaktivinoda entrusted Bimala with the service of the deity of Kurmadeva.

On April 1, 1884, Bhaktivinoda was appointed the senior Deputy Magistrate of Serampore, where he admitted Bimala in the Serampore High School. When Bimala was a mere student in class five, he invented a new method of writing named Bicanto. During this period he took lessons in mathematics and astrology from Pandita Mahesacandra Cudamoni. However, he preferred to read devotional books rather than the school texts.

In 1892, after passing his entrance examination, Bimala was admitted into the Sanskrit College of Calcutta. There he spent considerable time in the library studying various books on philosophy. He also studied the Vedas under the guidance of Prthvidhara Sarma. As a student he contributed many thoughtful articles to various religious journals. However he did not continue with his college studies for long.

In 1897 he started an autonomous Catuspathi (Sanskrit school) wherefrom monthly journals entitled "Jyotirvid", "Brihaspati", and many old treatises on astrology were published. In 1898, while teaching at Sarasvata Catuspathi, he studied Siddhanta Kaumudi under Prthvidhara Sarma, at Bhakti bhavana. By the time he was twenty-five he had become well versed in Sanskrit, mathematics, and astronomy, and he had established himself as the author and publisher of many magazine articles and one ancient book, Surya-siddhanta, for which he received the epithet Siddhanta Sarasvati in recognition of his erudition.

In 1895 Sarasvati Gosvami accepted service under the Tripura Royal Government as an editor for the biography entitled Rajaratnakara, the life histories of the royal line of the independent Tripura Kingdom. Later he was entrusted with the responsibility of educating the Yuvaraja Bahadur and Rajkumar Vrajendra Kisore, in Bengali and Sanskrit.

After a short period of time, Siddhanta Sarasvati took up the responsibilities for inspecting various ongoing activities in the royal palace for the state of Tripura. However, after finding envy, malice and corruption surfacing in every corner of his inspection, Siddhanta Sarasvati very quickly developed an aversion to state affairs and gave notice of his intention to retire to Maharaja Radhakisore Manikya Bahadur. The Maharaja approved of Siddhanta Sarasvati's plans for renunciation and awarded him full-pay pension. However, after three years Siddhanta Sarasvati also renounced his pension. With his father, he visited many tirthas and heard discourses from the learned panditas. In October 1898 Siddhanta Sarasvati accompanied Bhaktivinoda on a pilgrimage of Kasi, Prayaga, Gaya and other holy places. At Kasi a discussion was held with Ramamisra Sastri regarding the Ramanuja sampradaya. After this talk Siddhanta Sarasvati's life seemed to take a turn, his inclination towards renunciation increased, and he quietly continued to search for a guru.

When Siddhanta Sarasvati was twenty-six his father, understanding the mind of his son, guided him to take initiation from a renounced Vaisnava saint, Gaurakisora dasa Babaji. Gaurakisora dasa Babaji was the embodiment of vairagya and was very selective about giving diksa. He lived beneath a tree near the bank of the Ganga and wore the abandoned clothes of dead bodies as a waist band (kaupina). Generally he ate plain rice soaked in Ganga water garnished with chili and salt. Sometimes he utilized discarded earthen pots, after properly washing them he would cook rice in them, offer it to Krsna, and then take prasada.

Following the advice of his father, Siddhanta Sarasvati went to Gaurakisora dasa and begged to be accepted as his disciple. Gaurakisora replied that he would not be able to give diksa unless he received the approval of Lord Caitanya. However, when Siddhanta Sarasvati returned again, Gaurakisora said that he

had forgotten to ask Lord Caitanya. On the third visit, Gaurakisora stated that Lord Caitanya had said that erudition is extremely insignificant in comparison to devotion to the Supreme Lord.

Hearing this Siddhanta replied that since Gaurakisora was the servant of Kapatacudamani (the Supreme deceiver) hence he must be testing Sarasvati by withholding his consent. However Siddhanta Sarasvati remained firmly determined and remarked that Ramanuja Acarya had been sent back eighteen times before he finally received the grace of Gosthipurna, thus he too would wait patiently until the day that Gaurakisora would bestow his benedictions upon him. Seeing the commitment of Sarasvati, Gaurakisora was impressed and gave him diksa in the blissful grove of Godruma and told him, "to preach the Absolute Truth and keep aside all other works."

In March 1900 Sarasvati accompanied Bhaktivinoda on a pilgrimage of Balasore, Remuna, Bhuvaneshvara, and Puri. As instructed by Bhaktivinoda, Sarasvati gave lectures from CC with profound purports. Through the initiative of Bhaktivinoda Thakura the flow of pure bhakti again began to inundate the world. After Lord Caitanya's disappearance a period of darkness ensued in which the river of bhakti had been choked and practically dried up. The end of the period was brought about by the undaunted preaching of Bhaktivinoda Thakura. He wrote a number of books on suddha-bhakti siddhanta and published numerous religious periodicals. He inspired many to take up the service of Lord Gauranga and instituted various Nama Hata and Prapanna-asrama (Gaudiya matha centers).

In 1905 Siddhanta Sarasvati took a vow to chant the Hare Krsna mantra a billion times. Residing in Mayapur in a grass hut near the birthplace of Lord Caitanya, he chanted the mantra day and night. He cooked rice once a day in an earthen pot and ate nothing more; he slept on the ground, and when the rainwater leaked through the grass ceiling, he sat beneath an umbrella, chanting.

In 1912 Manindra Nandi, the Maharaja of Kasimbazar, arranged to hold a large Vaisnava Sammilani at his palace. At the specific request of the Maharaja, Sarasvati Gosvami attended the Sammilani and delivered four very brief speeches on suddha-bhakti on four consecutive days. However, he did not take any food during the Sammilani because of the presence of various groups of sahajiyas. After fasting for four days Sarasvati Gosvami came to Mayapura and took the prasada of Lord Caitanya. Later when Maharaja Manindra Nandi realized what had happened he was deeply aggrieved and came to Mayapura to apologize to Siddhanta Sarasvati.

During that time Bengal was full of sahajiya sects, such as Aul, Baul, Kartabhaja, Neda-nedi, Daravesa, Sain etc., who followed worldly practices in the name of spiritualism. Siddhanta Sarasvati launched a severe attack against those irreligious sects and did not spare anyone who deviated from the teachings of Lord Caitanya. Even some well-known persons bearing the surname of Gosvamis patronized these sahajiya sects during that period.

Siddhanta Sarasvati was deeply grieved to see these groups of prakrita sahajiyas, in the garb of paramahansa Gosvami gurus, misleading the people. Thus he completely dissociated himself and resorted to performing bhajana in solitude. During this period of solitude, one day Lord Caitanya, along with the six Gosvamis, suddenly manifested before Siddhanta Sarasvati's vision and said: "Do not be disheartened, take up the task of re-establishing Varnasrama with new vigour and preach the message of love for Sri Krsna everywhere." After receiving this message, Sarasvati Gosvami was filled with inspiration to preach the glories of Lord Caitanya enthusiastically.

In 1911, while his aging father was lying ill, Siddhanta Sarasvati took up a challenge against pseudo Vaisnavas who claimed that birth in their caste was the prerequisite for preaching Krsna consciousness. The caste-conscious brahmana community had become incensed by Bhaktivinoda Thakura's presentation of many scriptural proofs that anyone, regardless of birth, could become a brahmana-Vaisnava. These smarta brahmanas, out to prove the inferiority of the Vaisnavas, arranged a discussion. On behalf of his indisposed father, young Siddhanta Sarasvati wrote an essay, "The Conclusive Difference Between the Brahmana and the Vaisnava," and submitted it before his father. Despite his poor health, Bhaktivinoda Thakura was elated to hear the arguments that would soundly defeat the challenge of the smartas.

On the request of Madhusudana dasa Gosvami of Vrndavana and Visvambharananda deva Gosvami of Gopiballabhapur, Siddhanta Sarasvati traveled to Midnapur, where panditas from all over India had

gathered for a three-day discussion. Some of the smarta panditas who spoke first claimed that anyone born in a sudra family, even though initiated by a spiritual master, could never become purified and perform the brahminical duties of worshiping the deity or initiating disciples. Finally, Siddhanta Sarasvati delivered his speech. He began quoting Vedic references glorifying the brahmanas, and at this the smarta scholars became very much pleased. But when he began discussing the actual qualifications for becoming a brahmana, the qualities of the Vaisnavas, the relationship between the two, and who, according to the Vedic literature, is qualified to become a spiritual master and initiate disciples, the joy of the Vaisnavahaters disappeared. Siddhanta Sarasvati conclusively proved from the scriptures that if one is born as a sudra but exhibits the qualities of a brahmana then he should be honored as a brahmana, despite his birth. And if one is born in a brahmana family but acts like a sudra, then he is not a brahmana. After his speech, Siddhanta Sarasvati was congratulated by the president of the conference, and thousands thronged around him. It was a victory for Vaisnavism.

Bhaktivinoda Thakura passed away in 1914 on the day of Gadadhara Pandita's disappearance. On the eve of his disappearance Bhaktivinoda instructed his son to preach the teachings of the six Gosvamis and Lord Caitanya far and wide. He also requested that Siddhanta Sarasvati develop the birthsite of Lord Gauranga. Mother Bhagavati Devi disappeared a few years later. Before her passing away, she held the hands of Sarasvati Gosvami imploring him to preach the glories of Lord Gauranga and His dhama. Accepting the instructions of his parents as his foremost duty, Sarasvati Gosvami took up this task of preaching with intense enthusiasm and vigour.

With the passing away of his father, and his spiritual master a year later, Siddhanta Sarasvati continued the mission of Lord Caitanya. He assumed editorship of Sajjana-tosani and established the Bhagwat Press in Krsnanagar. Then in 1918, in Mayapur, he sat down before a picture of Gaurakisora dasa Babaji and initiated himself into the sannyasa order. At this time he assumed the sannyasa title Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Maharaja.

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati was dedicated to using the printing press as the best medium for large-scale distribution of Krsna consciousness. He thought of the printing press as a brhat mrdanga, a big mrdanga. The mrdanga drum played during kirtana could be heard for a block or two, whereas with the brhat mrdanga, the printing press, the message of Lord Caitanya could be spread all over the world.

Rohinikumar Ghosh, a nephew of Justice Candramadhava Ghosh of Calcutta High Court and originally a resident of Bhola in Barisal (now in Bangladesh), decided to renounce the world and engage himself in Hari bhajana. With this purpose in mind he came to Kulia in Navadvipa where he led the life of a Baul. However, he despised the practices of the sevadasis prevalent amongst the Baul sect. One day Rohini Ghosh happen to come to the Yogapitha when Sarasvati Gosvami was lecturing there. Rohini was delighted to see the luminous appearance of Sarasvati Gosvami and fascinated by his words. Late that night, after spending the whole day listening to Sarasvati Gosvami's teachings, Rohini returned to his Baul guru's asrama at Kulia. Without taking any prasada, Rohini took rest contemplating the lessons on suddha-bhakti which he had heard that day. In his dream Rohini saw a Baul and his consort appear before him in the form of a tiger and tigress which were about to devour him. Trembling in fear Rohini desperately called out to Lord Caitanya. Suddenly Rohini found himself being rescued from the clutches of the tigers by Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati. From that day Rohini left the Baul guru forever and took shelter at the feet of Sarasvati Gosvami.

Annadaprasad Datta, the elder brother of Sarasvati Gosvami, suffered with severe headaches shortly before his disappearance. On the day of Annada's disappearance Sarasvati Gosvami remained by his side all through the night, chanting Harinama. Before Annada passed a way he briefly regained consciousness and began apologizing to Sarasvati Gosvami, who simply encouraged him to remember the holy name of the Lord. Suddenly the tilak mark of the Ramanuja sampradaya became clearly visible on Annada's forehead. Annada explained that in his past birth he had been a Vaisnava belonging to the Ramanuja sect. But due to committing an offense at the feet of Sarasvati Thakura, Annada had to be reborn. However, as a result of his past merit he was fortunate enough to be born into Bhaktivinoda's family. After finishing his account Annada breathed his last.

Once on the day preceding Janmastami in the Bengali month of Bhadra, Sarasvati Gosvami was engaged in bhajana at Mayapura but was feeling disturbed as he was unable to arrange for milk to be offered to the

deity. As soon as he began to think in this way he chastised himself: "Have I thought like this for my own sake? That is wrong." Because it was the monsoon season, Lord Caitanya's birth site was covered with water and was totally inaccessible except by boat. However, that afternoon, one milkman turned up there wading through water and slush carrying a large quantity of milk, ksira, butter, cottage-cheese etc. Apparently a zamindar named Harinarayana Cakravarti, guided by Lord Caitanya, had sent the milkman with all the items.

After offering everything to the deity the devotees partook of the prasada joyfully. Sarasvati Thakura was surprised to see so much prasada and the devotees explained what had happened. After taking prasada Siddhanta Sarasvati humbly appealed to the Lord: "I am very sorry to have caused You so much trouble. Why did I have such an uncalled for thought? To fulfill my desire You have inspired another person and arranged to send these things."

The world was amazed to see the supernatural power of Sarasvati Gosvami. Many educated persons from highly respectable families were attracted to him and thus dedicated themselves to the service of Lord Gauranga. Between 1918 and 1937 Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati founded sixty-four suddha bhakti Mathas at the following places: Navadvipa, Mayapura, Calcutta, Chaka, Mymensingh, Naryanaganj, Chittagong, Midnapore, Remuna, Balasore, Puri, Alalanatha, Madras, Covoora, Delhi, Patna, Gaya, Lucknow, Varanasi, Hardwar, Allahabad, Mathura, Vrindavana, Assam, Kuruksetra, and outside India in London, and Rangoon. Sarasvati Gosvami instituted Gaurapadapitha at Nrsimhacala on the top of the Mandara hill, and at several places in South India. He initiated twenty five highly educated persons into Bhagavata Tridandi sannyasa.

He published the following periodicals on Suddha Bhakti in different languages:

1. Sajjanatosani (a fortnightly Bengali)
2. The Harmonist (an English fortnightly)
3. Gaudiya (a Bengali weekly)
4. Bhagavata (a Hindi fortnightly)
5. Nadiya Prakasa (a Bengali daily)
6. Kirtana (an Assamese monthly)
7. Paramartha (in Oriya)

In addition he published a large number of Vaisnava books. In fact, he heralded a new era in the spiritual world. He deputed well-disciplined tridandi sannyasi's to preach the message of Lord Gauranga all over the world. For six years he continued to supervise this preaching work and when he found that his mission had attained its goal, to a reasonable extent, he decided to pass into the eternal service of Lord Gauranga.

He recommended to all Vaisnavas to read these books: Caitanya Bhagavata (by Vrindavana dasa Thakura), Dasamula Siksa (by Bhaktivinoda Thakura), Sri Krsna Bhajanamrta (by Narahari Sarkara) and Prema Bhakti Candrika (by Narottama dasa Thakura). According to others, they were Prema Bhakti Candrika, Prarthana (by Narottama dasa Thakura) and Upadesamrta (by Rupa Gosvami)

A few days before his disappearance Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati called his foremost disciples and showered his blessings upon all his devotees. He gave them the following instructions: "With the utmost enthusiasm preach the message of Rupa Raghunatha. Our ultimate goal is to become a speck of dust touching the lotus feet of the followers of Rupa Gosvami. All of you remain united in allegiance to the spiritual master (asraya-vigraha) in order to satisfy the senses of the Transcendental Entity of Non-Dual Knowledge. Do not give up the worship of Hari even amidst hundreds of dangers, hundreds of insults or hundreds of persecutions. Do not become unenthusiastic upon seeing that the majority of people in this world are not accepting the message of Krsna's sincere worship. Never give up the glorification of the topics of Krsna, they are your own personal bhajana and your very all and all. Being humble like a blade of grass and tolerant like a tree, constantly glorify Hari."

In the early hours of the day on January 1, 1937 Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami passed away.

