

# “SVANANDA SUKHADA KUNJA”

SRILA BHAKTIVINODA THAKURA'S HOUSE  
AT “SRI GODRUMADVIPA’ ISLAND OF NAVADVIPA-MAYAPUR DHAMA



**Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura is an eternal associate of Lord Caitanya and his eternal spiritual form is *Kamala Manjari*. His name was Kedanatha Datta. He later became a District Magistrate (High Court judge) under the British Government. This was the highest position an Indian could hold under British rule. As the District Magistrate in Puri, he was also overseeing the activities of Lord Jagannatha's temple. In that position he raised the standard of worship of Lord Jagannatha and also increased the offerings to sixty-four offerings a day.**

He led a life of incessant labor and activity for Lord Sri Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He effected such immense good in the world that his work is only to be compared with the unbounded works of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself and the *Six Goswamis*. It was the spiritual attempts and divine writings of this individual that turned the scale and led the intelligent and educated community to believe in the noble precepts and teachings of Lord Caitanya.

If one look back a 180 years, one cannot but be astonished to find how degraded was the

condition of the Vaishnava faith that had its pure origin in the deep and majestic spiritual philosophy of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Even vastly learned *panditas* could not fathom the superexcellent precepts of Lord Caitanya's philosophy, yet due to incredulity born of ignorance of uncultured men, the Vaishnava faith had been degraded and was considered a beggar's excuse for living at the expense of society. It was sheer love for Godhead that Thakura Bhaktivinoda expounded the deep philosophy which had remained concealed in the pages of the *Vedas, Upanisads, Puranas and Srimad Bhagavatam*. By his humble action toward divine service, he restored the worship of Lord Sri Krishna to its proper, central place practically single-handedly, and sowed the seeds of its propagation. Also by his words, set in simple language to be easily understood by readers in general, he has given this philosophy to the entire world. It is his writings and divine, unparalleled character that have helped to produce a class of educated and enlightened men who are now proud of Vaishnava faith and of their acquisition of the spiritual knowledge of the pure and sublime philosophy of Krishna, on which the stern teachings of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu are based.

### **THE DISCOVERY OF BIRTHPLACE OF LORD SRI CAITANYA MAHAPRABHU**

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura was so anxious to live in Navadvipa-Mayapur, the land of Lord Caitanya that he applied many times for a transfer to any town nearby. Upon not receiving the desired transfer, he formally submitted resignation from public service. At this, the British government conceded and he obtained transfer to Krishnagara, which is 25km from Navadvipa-Mayapur, as the District Magistrate.

Year 1865 was the most eventful year in the history of the Vaishnava world. It was in this year, one night, while Thakura Bhaktivinoda was chanting *Hare Krishna* mahamantra on the verandah of this house, he saw a dazzling golden effulgence emanating from the other side of the Jalangi River (which flows in front of his house). This also happened the next night, but this time he saw beautiful golden forms of **Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu** and **Lord Nityananda** dancing in *kirtana*. The next day, he went searching in the direction of the effulgent vision and came to an area covered in *tulasi* plants in a Muslim village called Meeyapour. After extensive research and the divine confirmation of Srila Jagannatha dasa Babaji Maharaja, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura officially memorialized the birth site of Lord Caitanya and brought its true identity and importance before the public eye.

Just after retiring, Thakura Bhaktivinoda himself, in a spirit of perfect humility and with a view to giving a firm standing to the discovery, went from door-to-door to raise funds from a temple. In *Amrita Bazar Patrika* newspaper, on Dec 6 1894, following article appeared: "Babu Kedarnatha Datta, the distinguished Deputy Magistrate who has just retired from the service, is one of the most active member deputed to raise subscriptions in Calcutta & elsewhere and is determined to go from house-to-house and beg a rupee from each gentleman to built a at Lord Caitanya's birth site. If he sticks to his resolution of going around with a bag in hand, we hope that not a single gentleman whose house may be honored by the presence of such a devout bhakta as Babu Kedaranatha will send him away without contributing his mite, however humble it may be, to the Gaura-Visnupriya Temple fund." Truly, Thakura Bhaktivinoda honored the houses of many people to whom he would not have gone for any purpose but for this mission of Lord Caitanya, and his efforts were not fruitless, since the sum collected contributed to the construction of a building on the holy site of Lord Caitanya's appearance.



### **"SVANANDA SUKHADA KUNJA" - HOUSE OF SRILA BHAKTIVINODA THAKURA**

**House:** It is on the left side of the property. Bhaktivinoda Thakura's room is the first room at the top of the stairs. It has some of his personal belongings. This is where he wrote many of his newsletters and books. The verandah outside this room is where Bhaktivinoda Thakura saw the visions of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityananda in *kirtana* and the golden city of Mahaprabhu. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvatī Thakura's room is next to his father's.

### **LALITA SAKHI'S GROVE**

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura named his house *Svananda Sukhada Kunja*. It is non-different from Svananda Sukhada Kunja, the private grove of Lalita sakhi located on the bank of Radha-kunda in Vrindavana. Bhaktivinoda Thakura's songs reveal how he is eternally living in this kunja serving the divine couple, Sri Sri Radha and Krishna.

"My small cottage is shining beautifully within that most enchanting garden called Svananda Sukhada Kunja. Living there I will sing Lord Krishna's holy name and I will greedily hanker for that time when I will get the service of Him and His associates." (*Gita-mala*)

"On the banks of the celestial Ganges, I will dwell in a cottage at Surabhi Kunja in Godruma Dhama. This land of Godruma is very conducive for performing devotional worship of the Supreme Lord and is non-different from the sacred place called Nandagram, located in the holy district of Mathura (*Saranagati*)."



**BEAUTIFUL "SRI SRI GAURANGA MAHAPRABHU & SRI SRI GADADHARA  
PANDITA",  
THE PERSONAL DEITIES WORSHIPED BY SRILA BHAKTIVINODA THAKURA AT HIS  
HOUSE**



**Samadhi of HIS DIVINE GRACE SRILA BHAKTIVINODA THAKURA at Svananda Sukhada Kunja. On right-side is the *murti* of Sri Krishna Das the dedicated servant of His Divine Grace.**



**Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Sri Krishna Das (right-side *murti*) and picture of another great Vaishnava Acarya Srila Jagannatha Dasa Babaji**



**Devotees offering humble obeisances at the Samadhi of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura**



### **SRILA GAURA KISORA DAS BABAJI MAHARAJ'S BHAJAN KUTIR**

Right-side of the main altar is the place where Gaura-kisora dasa Babaji had a *bhajana kutira*. He spent many hours chanting Holy Names

**"HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE | HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE"**

here while visiting Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura. Previously the doorway to this hut was facing the back wall, reflecting Gaura-kisora dasa Babaji's *humble* mood, but now it has been changed to face the main courtyard for the convenience of visitors.

*It is said that at times the four great Vaishnava ācāryas, Srila Jagannatha Dasa Babaji Maharaja, Srila Gaura-Kisora Babaji Maharaja, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, would meet here and discuss the pastimes of Gaurahari.*





**"Srila Prabhupada Samadhi" - view of ISKCON Sri Mayapur Chandrodyā temple from the verandah of Svananda Sukhada Kunja across Jalangi River**

*From the verandah of Thakura Bhaktivinoda's house, one day while chanting Hare Krishna he saw the horizon of Mayapur light up under the effulgence of, "One exceedingly wonderful temple which will broadcast the eternal service of Lord Gauranga throughout the world." The site for this vision was across the Jalangi River on the land where ISKCON has begun plans to build a magnificent temple and city.*



**On the left side of the main altar is a small place honoring Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's dedicated servant, Sri Krishna das. Sri Krishna das was an expert *mrdinga* player. Srila Bhaktivinoda always took him for regular Nama-hatta (Market of Holy Names) programs in his attempt to revive Nama-hatta programs all over Bengal & rest of India, which were originally inaugurated by Lord Nityananda.**



**#Narrow gauge local train that used to run just in front of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's house.**

**##British government had so much regards for Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur that they especially built the railway tracks for him and also arranged a special carriage for His Divine Grace so that he could smoothly commute for his daily duties at nearby Krishnanagar district.**

**###Since January 2010 this narrow gauge train has been stopped after completing more than 110 years of its daily runs and will be replaced by broad gauge in future.**



**Transcendentalists discussing pastimes of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura at his house during Navadvipa-Mandala Parikrama**



### **CHASTISEMENT OF THE MYSTIC BISAKISEN**

In the 1st year of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's stay as Deputy Magistrate in *Sri Jagannatha Puri Dhama*, he was given task of quelling the disturbance caused by a mystic *yogi* Bisakisen who claimed to be the incarnation of Maha-Visnu. The *yogi* established a temple in the jungle near the village of Sharadaipur, and by mystic power he performed many powerful supernatural feats. He used to sit erect in front of a burning fire and rock back and forth, leaning himself into the fire and then again sitting erect. He would also manifest fire from his head. He had two companions named Brahma and Siva, and he declared that he was God himself who had come down to earth in his form of Maha-Visnu. To those who lacked knowledge of the various yogic practices, by which *siddhis* (powers) are acquired, these events seemed extraordinary, even Godly. However to a serious student of the doctrines of yoga, like Bhaktivinoda Thakura, such powers were simply an insignificant display of material power acquired by austerity, with no real spirituality.

All the small kings of Orissa bowed down before him and would regularly send him money to build himself a temple. They would also send him women for his *rasa-lila* dances. Bisakisen declared, "I will drive away the British administration from India and sit on the throne as King of Orissa myself." He sent a circular to all places in Orissa and to Minapura. When he actually had illicit relations with the wives of leading citizens of an Orissan town of Bringarpur, it created an outcry, and citizens took their case to the government officials. The Orissa division then was under the charge of Mr. Ravenshaw, a District Commissioner

from England. After hearing from the leaders of Bringarpur he entrusted the case to Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura. He especially requested and gave him charge of the prosecution of this bogus Maha-Visnu. On the other hand, Bhaktivinoda could not get a single man to go and touch him. They were all terrified of his mystic powers. Finally Thakura went with four police constables. Bhaktivinoda Thakura wanted to find out what the nature of his power was. He knew that it was the power of the mundane world, so he was not in the least afraid.

When Bhaktivinoda approached the *yogi* to arrest him, Bisakisen showed some of his supernatural power and said to Bhaktivinoda, "Ah, you are Kedaranatha Datta and you have come here to inquire about my activities, but I warn you not to disturb my activities for I am Maha-Visnu. Arising from the ocean of milk, I have come to this place, and very soon I will destroy all the Europeans, including the King of England. I have proclaimed this everywhere."

Bhaktivinoda then replied, "My dear sir, you are a great *yogi*. Why are you living here in the jungle, you should come with me to Jagannatha Puri where you can have the darshana of Lord Jagannatha." To this Bisakisen replied haughtily, "Why should I come to see Jagannatha? He is only a hunk of painted wood, whereas I am the Supreme Lord personally. Sri Caitanya was my beloved devotee."

*Unable to tolerate blasphemy of the Supreme Lord*, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura became extremely furious like burning fire. Replying gravely, "The tiny living entity can never become God. Ravana, Hiranyakasipu, Sisupala and others who came under the influence of this arrogant mentality, were all destroyed", he immediately physically arrested the rogue who had to submit to the mighty godly power of a pure devotee of Lord Krishna, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

The *yogi* shouted, "I am the Supreme Godhead and master of all universes. I bow down before no one." Becoming enraged, the *yogi* shook his head violently, whereupon hundreds of fiery flames like burning snakes began to fly out of his matted locks. The *yogi's* eyes then became bright red and sparks of fire shot out of them. Seeing this, police constables was terrified and fell back apace.

"Bisakisen!" declared the Thakura Bhaktivinoda, "You may show us as much magic as you like, and we certainly will not forget it. However, *you are an offender at the feet of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna*. Although you are an insignificant living being, you are proclaiming yourself to be God, but actually you despise God. Furthermore, you are a rebel. You must go to Jagannatha Puri, where you will be judged." Thakura ordered four police constables to bring a bullock cart from nearby village.

As they waited for the cart Thakura preached to the irate *yogi*: "*You must give up your deluded mentality and admit your imperfection. Your mystic powers are very insignificant in comparison to the opulence's of the Supreme Godhead Lord Sri Krishna and the greatness of Lord's devotees. I request you to correctly understand this just once.*"

The *yogi* reacted like a trampled snake, "You obviously do not know who I am. If I, just once, ignite the fire of my anger, the three worlds will burn into ashes, but because I am very kind to the universe I am not doing it."

Upon arriving in Jagannatha Puri the *yogi* was placed in the jail. Srila Bhaktivinoda put three dozen Muslim constables and seventy-two police from Cuttack in charge of guarding

his cell day and night. Bhaktivinoda then went to find the assumed Brahma and Siva, but these two rascals denied their positions and said it was only done in agreement with the orders of Bisakisen. Later on they were also prosecuted by one Mr. Taylor who was the Sub-Division Officer at Kodar.

Trail lasted 18 days and daily thousands of *yogi's* followers and sympathizers gathered outside the courthouse, shouting loud demands for the release of Bisakisen. On the 6<sup>th</sup> day's hearing, Bisakisen ominously threatened Thakura, "Babu Kedarnath, you must immediately desist from prosecuting me or everything you have will be destroyed. Go to your home now and see what disaster is taking place there." When he arrived at his home, he found his second daughter, 7 year old Kadambini, afflicted with some deadly disease and high fever, repeatedly losing consciousness. Loud shouts of lamentation filled the house, but Thakura did not fail in his determination, for he knew that Lord Sri Krishna will protect him from the insignificant powers of the yogi. Many doctors came to attend, and by 8am in the morning she was well, playing in the courtyard.

Thakura's wife, Srimati Bhagavati Devi, became very anxious for the safety of their children. She pleaded her husband to let Bisakisen go before he destroyed their whole family. Thakura Bhaktivinoda was undaunted and said, "Yes, let us all die, but this rascal must be punished!" Thakura recalls in his autobiography: "All over Jagannatha Puri there were disturbances. At that time the Puri school had fire, and all people suspected him." On 17<sup>th</sup> day of trail, Bisakisen stood up and screamed violently at Thakura, "Did you see what great calamity occurred at your house the other day? still you are not coming to your senses. When will you be able to recognize me as the Supreme Lord? The final day of my judgement will be your death! What is the punishment for one who disrespects an *avatara*? How Death sits on the seat of judgement and gives out his commands, I will see!"

When Thakura Bhaktivinoda returned home, all of a sudden he felt sharp pain on his chest and got high fever. As the night went on, the pain and fever increased. Thakura was unshaken in his determination, but it was unclear how he would be able to enter court in such a condition. Finally, by about 10am, he felt slight subsiding of pain. He was unable to walk and had to be carried. Thakura declared his final judgment: 'Bisakisen is hoax and culprit, and found guilty of political conspiracy and is sentenced to 18 months of strict imprisonment and hard labour'. While Bisakisen was being removed from the court, Doctor Walter, the District Medical Officer jumped on Bisakisen from behind and with a large pair of scissors cut off all his long hair upon which Bisakisen's power depended. Bisakisen had not taken food or a drop of water during the 18 days of the trial so as soon as his hair was removed he fell to the ground like a dead man without any power in his body, not even enough to walk. When his followers saw that the *yogi* had been overcome by having his hair removed, they deserted him calling him a cheater. After three months he was moved to the central jail at Medinipur where he took poison and died in the year 1873.

***By this pastime Thakura Bhaktivinoda and the energy of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu proved that any earthly aggrandizement or power cannot stand before the godly divine power of a pure devotee of Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Sri Krishna. Just as Durvasa Muni had attempted to punish the pure devotee Ambarisa Maharaj but was himself punished, a similar attempt was made on His Divine Grace Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, but by the grace of Lord Sri Krishna he was fully protected and victorious.***

Daily Schedule of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura:

Always anxious to use every moment in loving service of Lord Sri Krishna, he followed a strict austere daily schedule:

8P.M. to 10 P.M.	Rest (two hours)
10P.M. to 4A.M.	Write Krishna consciousness books & literatures
4A.M. to 4:30 A.M.	Rest
4:30A.M. to 7A.M.	Japa time -chant Hare Krishna Mahamantra on japa beads: "Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare   "
7A.M. to 7:30A.M.	Correspondence
7:30A.M. to 9:30A.M.	Study <i>sastras</i>
9:30A.M. to 10A.M.	Bath, honouring <i>Krishna prasadam</i> (half-litre milk, fruit, 2 chapattis)
10A.M. to 1P.M.	Court Duties
1P.M. to 2P.M.	Refresh at home
2P.M. to 5P.M.	Court Duties

### **Directions to reach Svananda Sukhada Kunj:**

To get to this place one can take boat across Jalangi river from Hoolar Ghat. Hoolar ghat is near where you get the boat to Navadvipa town. After getting across the river at Swarupa Ganj one can either have a pleasant walk for 20mins or one can take a rickshaw. One can also visit Svananda Sukhada Kunj by attending Navadvipa-Mandala Parikrama which is organized each year by ISKCON Mayapur about 10 days before *Gaura-Purnima*.

### **"Ulagram"- The Birthplace of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura:**

<http://old.mayapur.com/node/858>

### **Parikrama at Bhaktivinoda Thakura house, Godrumadvipa:**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1XSDUYIHfQ&feature=player\\_embedded#](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1XSDUYIHfQ&feature=player_embedded#)

### **Online collection of Vaishnava songs by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura:**

<http://www.vaishnavsongs.com/category/bhajans-by-bhaktivinoda-thakur/>

### **Online collection of Books by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura:**

<http://gaudiyahistory.com/bhaktivinoda-thakura-ebooks/>

### **"Amara Jivana (My Life)" by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura:**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICYfVx75ke8>

/ [http://video.iskcondesiretree.info/04 - More/ISKCON\\_Desire\\_Tree/Amar%20Jivan.flv](http://video.iskcondesiretree.info/04 - More/ISKCON_Desire_Tree/Amar%20Jivan.flv) (downloadable)

**MAYAPUR TV:** <http://Mayapur.tv> / **Vrindavana TV:** <http://vrindavan.tv>

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