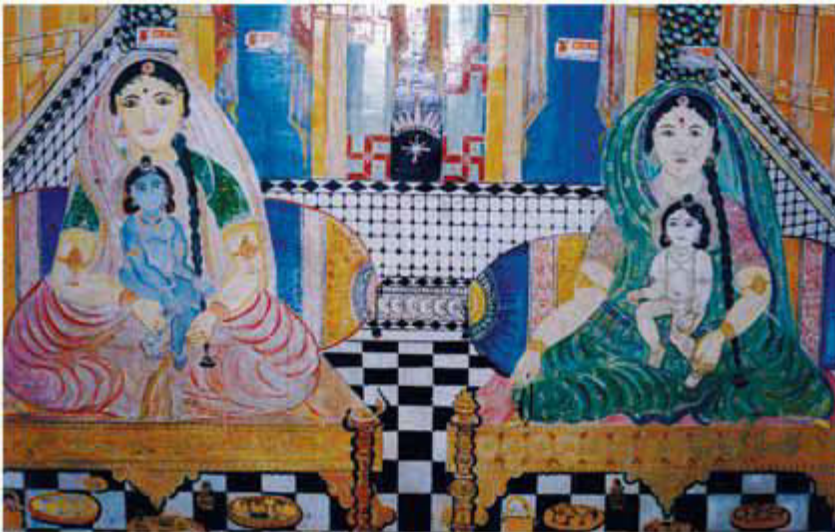
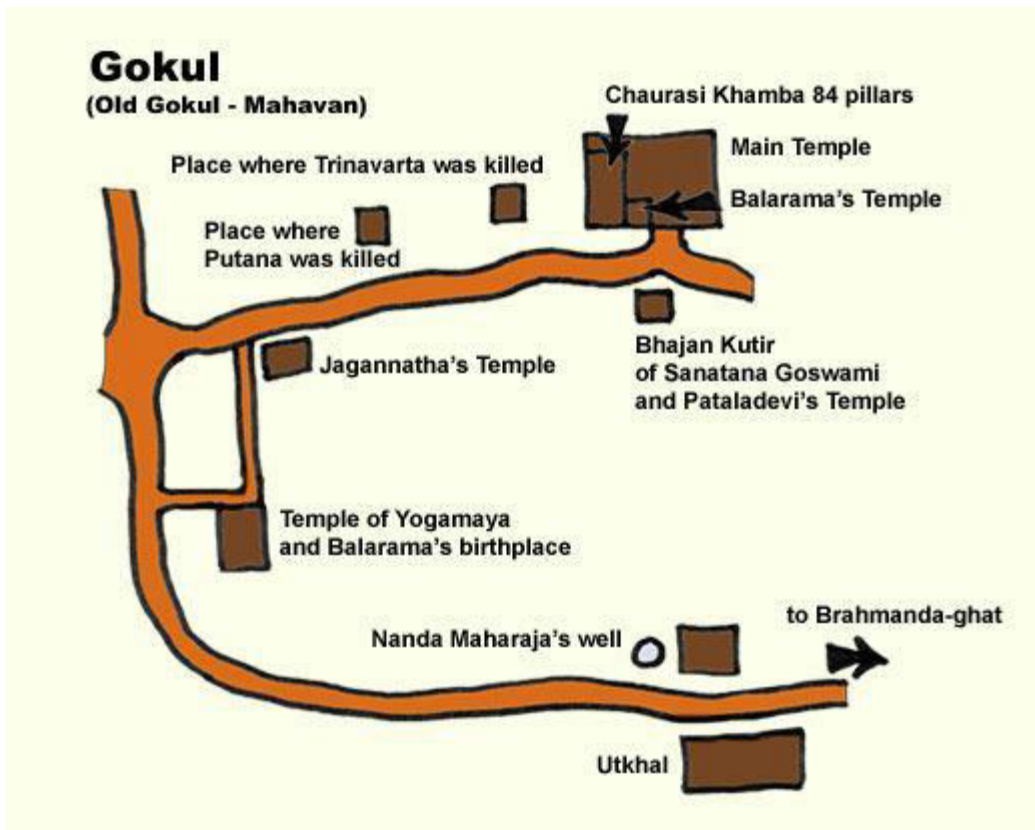


## Mahavan / महावन



Mahavan is situated about six miles east of Mathura. It is also called Brihadvan, because it is the largest of all the forests . In fact this forest has three names: Mahavan, Gokul and Brihadvan. This Gokul is non-different from Goloka. ParjanyaGopa, the father of Goparaja Nanda Baba, initially resided at Nand Gaon where he had five sons – namely Upanand, Abhinand, Nand, Sunand and Nandan – and two daughters named Sanand and Nandini. Also, while staying in Nandgaon he gave all his sons and daughters in marriage. His middle son, Nand, had no offspring, which caused Parjanya Gopa great concern. He worshipped Narayan in the hope that Nand would father a child. By a voice in the sky, he came to know that a very brave son would soon be born to Sri Nand. This son would possess all good qualities and annihilate every demon. Some time after this aerial prophecy, Kesi and other demons began to cause a disturbance in Nandgaon. ParjanyaGopa together with his family and all of his relatives moved here to Mahavan-Brihadvan. The Yamuna flows close by Mahavan. This forest is beautifully decorated with different kinds of trees, creepers and flowers, and there are lush, green meadows for the cows to graze in. Beholding this beauty, the Brajvasi gopas became very pleased and happily began to reside here. Yashoda-maiya gave birth to the twins Krishna Kanhaiya and Yogmaya at midnight, in the delivery room at Nand-bhavan in Mahavan. Krishna killed the demons Putana, Trinavart and Shakatasur here, thus liberating them. Krishna and Baldev's name-giving ceremony also took place at Mahavan, in the nearby cowshed (goshala) of Nand Maharaja. It was here that Rama and Krishna started to crawl on Their knees, that Mother Yashoda tied the naughty baby Krishna to a mortar, and that Krishna delivered the Yamala-Arjuna trees. The childhood pastimes of Krishna and Rama up to the age of two-and-a-half to three years took place here in Mahavan. These pastimes are briefly described further on.

### The Pastime Places of Mahavan



## Danta Dhavan Tila

Nand Maharaja would sit on this small hill tila and clean his teeth (danta-dhavan) with a twig.

## Nand Baba's Residence

Around the base of Danta-dhavan-tila stood the residences of Nand as well as those of his brothers and relatives. The ruins of these houses can still be seen today, even from a distance.

## Nand-bhavan



Nanda-bhavan is the place where Krisna and Balaram lived with Nanda Maharaja and Yasoda. The architect Visvakarma built the House of Nanda Maharaja over 5,000 years ago. It is on a hill at Old Gokul. It has 84 pillars and that is why it is called Chaurasi Khamba. Chaurasi means "84" and the pillars in this temple are said to be the original pillars from the house of Nanda Maharaja.

There are big Deities of Nanda Maharaja on the left, mother Yasoda on the right and Lord Balaram in the Middle. Below them is Deity of baby Krishna swinging in the cradle.



The Supreme Lord Shri Krishna and Yogmaya took birth as twins from the womb of Mother Yashoda in her room in Nand's palace. They were born at midnight on Astami (the eighth day after the full moon) in the month of Bhadra when the star (nakshatra) known as Rohini was visible in the sky. One can take darshan of Yogmaya here. Shrimad-Bhagavata vividly describes how the most fortunate Nand Baba became very joyful upon receiving a son. Nand Baba then called the brahmanas to perform the various purificatory rituals and other rites of childbirth. Shri Raghupati Upadhyay says: "In a world frightened by birth and death, some

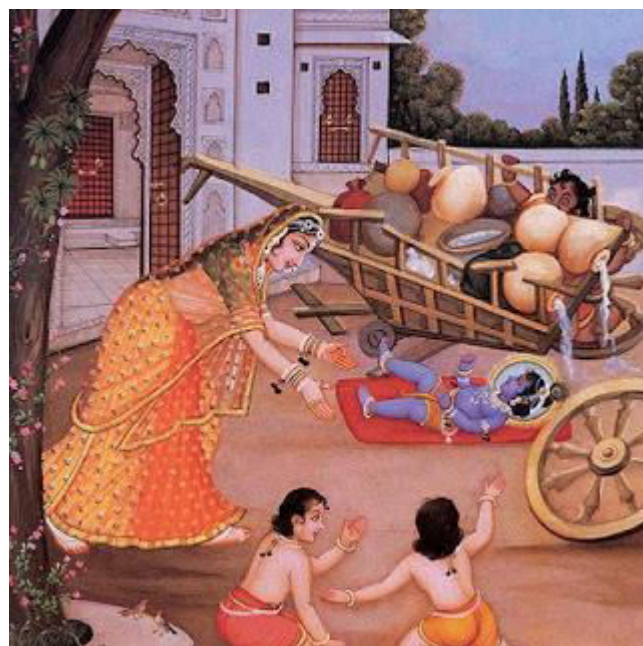
people take shelter of the Srutis, some of the Smritis and some of the Mahabharat. But I pay my homage to Shri Nandrai, in whose courtyard Parabrahma is playing as a child.”

### **The place where Putana was liberated (Putana-uddhara-sthal)**

Pütanā disguised herself as a mother, smeared her breasts with deadly poison, and came to this place in Nanda-bhavana. Directly in front of Yashoda and Rohini, she was able to very easily pick up sleeping baby Krishna from the cradle, put Him on her lap and begin to breast-feed Him. Krishna sucked out the deadly poison together with her life, thus liberating her from the body of a rakshasi. He then gave her the position of a dhatri, a nurse or foster-mother, in Goloka. In a previous life, Pütanā was Ratnamälā, the daughter of Bali Mahārāja. When, in the palace of her father, she beheld the beauty of Lord Vāmanadeva, she desired to have a son just like Him. But when Vāmanadeva took away everything from Bali Mahārāja and bound him with a rope of snakes (nāgapāsha), she began to cry. She thought, “I would kill such a cruel son by feeding him breast milk mixed with poison.” Knowing her desire, Lord Vāmanadeva gave her this boon, saying, “Evam astu – so be it.” Krishna therefore killed her in that form and gave Pütanā her proper identity as a nurse.



### **The place where the cart was broken (Sakat bhanjan-sthan)**



Once, Krishna was sleeping in a cradle under a cart while Mother Yashoda busied herself with His birthday ceremony. Just then, an invisible demon who was sent by Kamsa entered that cart and began to press it

down with the intention of crushing and killing Krishna. The naughty baby Krishna, however, made a joyous cry and, with a kick of His foot, easily killed that demon. The cart collapsed and the pots that were filled with milk, yoghurt, butter and other ingredients shattered to pieces. Hearing the baby's cry, Mother Yashoda rushed to the scene and became struck with wonder. When she saw that her Krishna was safe, she called for the brāhmanas and donated many cows to them in charity. The brāhmanas bathed Krishna using the urine and dung of a black cow and recited Vedic mantras for His protection. To this day, the memories of this pastime remain present at this place. In his previous life, Sakatāsura was the son of the demon Hiranyāksha. His name in that life was Utkaca and he was also a demon. Once, he trampled on and destroyed the lush, green trees and creepers in the sage Lomasha's hermitage. The sage, filled with anger, cursed him, saying, "Villain, may you become bodiless!" Hearing this, Utkaca fell at the lotus feet of the sage begging forgiveness. The sage said, "You will be liberated by the touch of Krishna's lotus feet during the reign of Vaivasvata Manu." That same demon was concealed within the cart and tried to crush Krishna, but by the touch of Bhagavān Sri Krishna's lotus feet, he became liberated. This pastime is described in Çrémad-Bhāgavatam (Tenth Canto, Chapter Seven).

### **The place where Trinavarta was killed (Trinavarta-badha-sthal)**

Once, Kamsa sent a demon named Trinavarta to Gokula to kill Krishna. Kamsa had advised Trinavarta to assume the form of a whirlwind and thus he entered Gokula. The demon seized Krishna, who was sitting beside Mother Yashodā, and flew into the sky. Baby Krishna caught his neck as any baby might, but His doing so choked the demon. Trinavarta's eyes popped out from their sockets, and he fell to the earth and died.



### **The place where Yoghurt was churned (Dadhi-manthana-sthal) or Ukhal bandhan sthan**



Yashodā would churn yoghurt here. Once, during the last part of the night, baby Krishna was sleeping on His bed. The previous day, Yashodā-maiyā had sent all of her servants and maidservants to their respective homes for the occasion of Dipāvali. In the morning, she churned the yoghurt herself, so she would be able to feed fresh butter to Krishna. As she was churning, she absorbed herself in singing about Krishna’s pastimes in a high and melodious voice. Krishna awoke and, feeling hungry, climbed out of His bed and began to search for His mother. Crying and stumbling along with great difficulty, He somehow managed to reach Mother Yashodā, who affectionately placed Him on her lap and began to breast-feed Him. When she was only midway through feeding Him, the milk on the fire nearby began to boil over. Mother Yashodā forcefully put Krishna on the floor and went to take care of the milk. Baby Krishna had not yet drunk to His satisfaction and He began to quiver in uncontrollable anger. Taking up a stone pestle, He punched a hole in the churning pot and liquid yoghurt flowed all over the floor. Krishna trampled through the stream of yoghurt before walking into the house and climbing upon an upside-down mortar. Taking butter from a hanging pot, He ate some Himself and then began to feed some to the monkeys and crows. Upon returning from the nearby stove, Yashodā-maiyā saw signs of her child’s activities and began to smile. She crept up behind Kāñēa, but just as she went to catch Him He caught sight of her, jumped off the mortar and fled. But Mother Yashodā ran faster than Krishna and caught hold of Him from behind. To punish Him, she tied Him to the mortar and then busied herself with her household duties.



Srimad-Bhāgavatam (10.9.18) states:

“When Krishna saw the condition of His mother – her body covered with perspiration and the flowers falling from her hair due to her hard labour – He could understand that she was fatigued. Krishna became merciful to her and agreed to be bound.” Krishna and His sakhās began to drag the grinding mortar, and by so doing, touched and delivered Kuvera’s sons, who had been cursed in a previous life to become trees. This pastime is described in detail in Srimad-Bhāgavatam (Tenth Canto, Chapters Nine and Ten). Mother Yashodā had tied Krishna to the mortar right here in Nanda-bhavana, and the place where Nalakuvera and Manigriva were delivered lies just outside.



On the road between Utkhal and Nanda Bhavan is the ancient **Yogamaya temple**. Some say that this is the birthplace of Balaram, others say that Yogamaya was born here. There are Deities of Vasudev and Rohini and apparently baby Balaram. There is also a Deity of Yogamaya in the middle.

### **Nanda Baba's cowshed, or goshala**

Gargäcärya performed Krishna's and Baladeva's name-giving ceremony in this solitary cowshed. During the ceremony, Gargäcärya predicted that Sri Balaräma and Sri Krishna would possess astonishing prowess, annihilate demons, and perform other divine pastimes. Nanda Mahäräja performed the name giving ceremony without any festivities because he feared Kamsa's atrocities



### **MallaTirth**

Here, the naked babies Krishna and Balram wrestled with each other. The gopis encouraged Them to wrestle by offering to give the winner a laddu. At this, the two boys, each desiring to defeat the other, began to wrestle. Today, GopeshwarMahadev is here.

### **Nand Kup**

This well is also known as Sapta-Samudrika-kup. Maharaja Nand used to draw water from it. It is said that the demigods created it for the service of the Supreme Lord Shri Krishna. Its water stays warm in the winter and cool in the summer, and liberates one who bathes in it from all sins.

### **Shri Sanatan Goswami's place of Bhajan**



Below the temple of [Chaurasi Khamba](#), near Samudrika-kup, is [Sanatan Goswami](#)'s bhajan-kutir situated inside a cave. Sanatan Goswami would come to Gokul occasionally. He would perform bhajan at this place, and daily take darshan of ShriMadan-Gopal.

Once, Sanatan Goswami was amazed by an extraordinary child he saw playing in the soft sand on the bank of the Yamuna. When the child had finished his game, Sanatan Goswami followed him into the temple of Shri Madan-Gopal. Upon entering the temple, however, Sanatan Goswami could only see the deity. Some time later in Mathura, Sanatan Goswami saw that same Shri Madan-Gopal playing in the house of a Chaubain with her son. Shri Madan-Gopal requested Sanatan to take Him with him to Vrindavan. SanatanGoswami brought Him to his bhajan-kutir in Vrindavan, and later had a magnificent temple constructed for Him, where he arranged for His service and worship.

## **Brahmanda-ghat**



This place lies approximately one mile east of Nanda-bhavana, the birthplace of Krishna. Here, the small boy Krishna ate earth while playing with the cowherd boys. The boys saw this and told Mother Yashodā, who asked Balarāma about it. Balarāma verified the fact. She went to Krishna and asked Him herself, “Have You eaten clay?” He replied, “No, Mother, I did not eat clay.” “All right, Kanhaiyā, open Your mouth and show me.”

“You can see, Mother,” He said as He opened His mouth.





Looking into Kanhaiyā's mouth, yashoda became dumbstruck. There, she saw innumerable universes, countless Brahmās, Vishnus and Maheshas (Shivas), and all moving and non-moving entities. She closed her eyes in fear and thought, "What is this that I am seeing?"



Is it an illusion or someone's magical powers?" Upon opening her eyes, Mother Yashodā saw that Kanhaiyā was sitting on her lap. She returned to the house and called the brāhmanas, who recited blessings to pacify the wrath of the demigods. She also donated cows and other valuables to the brāhmanas. Although Yashodā-maiyā had directly witnessed Krishna's quality of being Bhagavān (bhagavattā) in the form of seeing countless universes and all animate and inanimate objects situated within His mouth, she never accepted Krishna as the Supreme Lord. Her vātsalya-prema, or motherly love, for Him blossomed rather than weakened. By contrast, when Devaki and Vasudeva beheld Krishna's four-armed form, their vātsalya-prema weakened. Similarly, Arjuna's sakhya-bhāva (mood of friendship) also weakened when he saw Krishna's universal form. Devaki, Vasudeva and Arjuna folded their hands and began to glorify Krishna and pray to Him. In Vraja, however, the prema of the Vrajavāsīs does not weaken even when Krishna manifests Himself as the Supreme Lord. Their sweet mood towards Sri Krishna never diminishes because they never accept Him as Bhagavān.

Another time, the small boy Krishna was playing here with His companions, the cowherd boys, when the boys unexpectedly began to tease Him and laugh and clap. At first, Kanhaiyā could not understand why, but quite soon He did. Dama, Sridāma, Madhumangala and the other cowherd boys were saying, “Nanda Bābā is fair-complexioned and Yashodā-maiyā is fair-complexioned, but You are black. Why? The fact is that You were not born from Yashodā-maiyā’s womb. Someone else gave birth to You, but being unable to bring You up, they put You in the hollow of a banyan tree. The supremely merciful Nanda Bābā found You there crying helplessly. He picked You up and placed You in the lap of Mother Yashodā, but, in reality, You are not the son of Nanda and Yashodā.” Kanhaiyā stopped playing and went home weeping. He began to roll around the courtyard, crying. Mother Yashodā affectionately picked Him up in her arms and tried to find out why He was crying. But today Kanhaiyā refused to sit in her lap. She forcibly took Him in her arms, brushed the dust from His limbs, and asked Him what had happened. After Kanhaiyā calmed down a little, He said, “Dāma, Sridāma and the other cowherd boys are saying, ‘You were not born from Maiyā’s womb. Bābā is fair-complexioned and Maiyā is fair-complexioned, so where did You, who are black, come from?’ ”



Hearing this, Maiyā started laughing and said, “O my lālā, who else is saying this?”

“Dauji Bhaiyā.”

Maiyā, put her hand on Krishna’s forehead and said, “I take an oath before Sri Nārāyana that You are my son born from my womb. I will chastise those children.” She then began to breastfeed Krishna.

In reality, Nanda Bābā was of a fair complexion, but Mother Yashodā, who was a very beautiful gopé, was slightly dark in hue. How else could Krishna have been so beautiful if He had not been born from Mother Yashodā’s womb? But because Kanhaiyā was somewhat darker than His mother, the boys teased Him about it. This place, which treasures this pastime, can still be seen today.

## **Cintaharana-ghat**

This ghāta lies on the bank of Sri Yamunā near Brahmāndāghāta to its east. Cintāharana Mahādeva, who is worshipped by the Vrajavāsīs, is present here. When Mother Yashodā saw the universes in Kanhaiyā’s mouth, she became extremely anxious for His welfare and prayed to Cintāharana Mahādeva for Krishna’s safety. Cintāharana means “removing anxieties”.

## **Kole-ghat**

Kole-ghāt is situated across the Yamunā from Brahmāndāghāt, towards Mathurā. Sri Vasudeva, along with the newborn baby Krishna, crossed the Yamunā here on his way to Nanda-bhavana in Gokula. When he was half way across, the Yamunā rose up so that she could touch Sri Krishna’s feet. Vasudeva held Krishna higher. When the water reached Vasudeva’s neck, he became perplexed and anxious for the child’s protection.



He cried out, “Ko leve? – Who will save Him?” Vajranābha therefore named this ghāt Kōle-ghāt, which is derived from the phrase ko leve. Seeing the level of the Yamunā rise, baby Krishna touched Yamunā-devi’s lap (kola) with His lotus feet, and at once the Yamunā’s waters began to recede. The Yamunā’s shifting waters created an island, which became the location of Kolegaon. Uthaleshvara and Pāndeshvara Mahādevas are situated on the bank of Kōle-ghāt.

## Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in Mahavan

Before Shri [Rup](#) and Shri Sanatan's arrival in [Braj](#), Shri [Chaitanya Mahaprabhu](#) came to Braj and wandered throughout its forests. At the place of Krishna's birth in Mahavan, Mahaprabhu took darshan of Shri Madan-mohan and, overwhelmed with prem, began to dance as streams of tears flowed from His eyes. Shriman Mahaprabhu's darshan of Krishna's birthplace has been described in Bhakti-Ratnakar:

Ahe Shrinivasa! Krishna chaitanyaethaya  
janmotsavasthan dekhiullasahiyaya  
bhavaveseprahunrtya, gite magna haila  
kripakarisarvachittaakarshankaila

"O Shrinivas, seeing the place of Krishna's birth festival Shri Chaitanya became overwhelmed with ecstatic joy. He became absorbed in dancing and singing. By His mercy He attracted the hearts of everyone."

