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Highlights

• ONE BIG FAMILY

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

• THE LIFE AND GLORIES OF SRILA UDDHARAN DUTT THAKUR

• UDDHARAN DUTT THAKUR'S SUCAKA KIRTANA

The Medieval Gauḍīya poet Vallabha Das

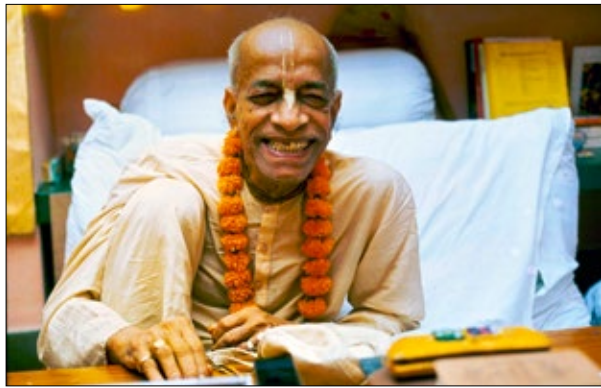
• PRANAMS TO UDDHARAN DUTT

Gopijanavallabha Das' Sri Rasik Mangala



Photo by Bhaktivedanta Book Trust

Samādhi mandir of Srila Uddharan Dutt Thakur



ONE BIG FAMILY

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Now all my disciples must work combinedly and with cooperation to spread this *saṅkīrtana* movement. If you cannot work together, then my work is stopped up. Our Society is like one big family and our relationship should be based on love and trust. We must give up the fighting spirit and use our intelligence to push ahead. You should accept help from your godbrothers. 🙏

— Letter to Upendra, 6 August 1970.

THE LIFE AND GLORIES OF SRILA UDDHARAN DUTT THAKUR

Srila Uddharan Dutt Thakur is one of the principal associates of Lord Nityananda. In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta ādi* 11.41, Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami describes him as the eleventh amongst the *dvādaśa-gopālas*, the twelve principal cowherd boyfriends of Krishna in Vrindavan.

Both Srila Kavi Karnapur in his *Gauraganoddeśa-dīpikā* (129) and Srila Viswanath Chakravarti Thakur in his *Gaura-gaṇa-svarūpa-tattva-dandrikā* (89) describe him as the *vrajavāsī* cowherd boy Subahu who descended with Balaram Nityananda Prabhu.

Uddharan Dutt appeared in 1481 in the town of Saptagram, about fifty kilometers north of Kolkata in what is today the Chinsurah district of West Bengal. His birth name was Dibakara Dutt. His father was Srikar Dutt, while his mother's name was Bhadravati. His wife's name was Mahamaya. They had a son named Srinivas Dutt Thakur. According to Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur in his *Caitanya-bhāgavata* (antya 5.449-461), Nityananda Prabhu visited Saptagram and delivered many persons there. And according to the local tradition in Saptagram it was during that visit that after taking a bath at Triveni, Nitai sat under a tree and, intoxicated with divine love, began to loudly chant the names of Krishna. The sweet sound of that chanting charmed the heart of the son of Srikar Dutt, who came running there. Recognizing Nityananda Prabhu as his eternal master, the young boy fell at his lotus feet and began weeping. Nityananda then embraced the boy, initiated him, and gave him the name Uddharan, meaning "one who delivers", an appropriate name for this great preacher who delivered so many persons.

Born in a family of gold merchants, Uddharan Dutt was wealthy materially. However, he was not a miser but was very merciful and generous with his money. When a terrible famine struck Saptagram, many persons were dying from starvation. At that time Uddharan made a

Unknown artist



Old painting of Srila Uddharan Dutt Thakur

base on ten acres of land, and built large warehouses containing huge amounts of rice, dahl and vegetables. Using this he then began a massive food distribution program to help the suffering poor. He also had a nearby jungle area leveled to make a place for the many homes he built to house the homeless. It is said that the Eastern Railway station at Adi Saptagram is built on the spot where he conducted his food relief program.

According to the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Abhidhāna* (the encyclopedia of *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism*) and the local tradition in Saptagram, an amazing event took place during the visit of Lord Nityananda Prabhu. Nityananda was taking part in daily ecstatic *kīrtanas* in which all of the residents of Saptagram, regardless of caste or creed, joyfully took part. However, there was a group of envious Bhattacharya Brahmins who could not tolerate the loud *kīrtanas*. With a desire to defeat and humiliate Lord Nityananda, they came to the home of Uddharan Datt, where Nitai was staying. There they challenged Nityananda by saying that the path of *jñāna* was superior to the path of *bhakti*. Nityananda Prabhu refused to debate with them and instead invited the angry Brahmins to take lunch with him. However, when the Brahmins heard that the cooking was being done by Uddharan Dutt they refused to accept the *prasādam* as they considered it unfit, being cooked by Uddharan, who externally belonged to an inferior merchant caste.

Lord Nityananda cited to them various evidences from *śāstra* supporting the fact that the *prasādam* of Krishna was always pure and can be accepted regardless of by whom it is cooked. The Brahmins finally became pacified and sat down. However, when they saw Uddharan Dutt serving out the *prasādam* it was too much for them. Again, they refused to accept what they considered to be food that was contaminated by the touch of a low-class person.

Desiring to purify the Brahmins and glorify his dear devotee Uddharan Dutt, Nityananda Prabhu requested Uddharan to give him the wooden spoon that he had cooked with. Nitai then pushed the stick into the ground and the stick miraculously grew into a fragrant Madhavi bush.

Seeing this amazing event, everyone was stunned. The Brahmins just sat speechless, staring at the bush. Finally, as a group they got up and ran over to the Madhavi creeper, offering prostrated obeisances to the plant. They then began weeping and rolling on the ground while loudly calling out, “Haribol! Haribol! Haribol!”

Next, they turned to Uddharan Dutt and Lord Nityananda. After falling at their feet, they begged forgiveness from them and asked Uddharan Dutt to bless them by giving them *prasādam*.

When he was twenty-six years old, Uddharan Datt’s wife passed away. At that time, he gave up his wealth and family and began to wander and preach everywhere as a servant of Lord Nityananda.

In his purport to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (ādi 11.41), Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada has described that the family of his birth comes in the line of the *suvarṇa-vaṇik* mercantile community of Saptagram. In that same purport he also describes some of the deities and places connected with Srila Uddharan Dutt Thakur:

In Saptagram there is still a temple with a six-armed deity of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu that was personally worshiped by Srila Uddharan Dutt Thakur. On the right side of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is a deity of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, and on the left side is Gadadhar Prabhu. There are also a Radha-Govinda *mūrti* and a *śālagrāma-śilā*, and below the throne is a picture of Sri Uddharan Dutt Thakur. In front of the temple there is now a big hall, and in front of the hall is a *mādhavi-latā* plant. The temple is in a very shady, cool, and nicely situated location. When we returned from America in 1967, the executive committee members of this temple invited us to visit it, and thus we had the opportunity to visit this temple with some American students.



Unknown photographer. Courtesy of Wikipedia.

The Madhavi creeper planted by Nityananda Prabhu from the wooden spoon of Srila Uddharan Dutt Thakur

Formerly, in our childhood, we visited this temple with our parents because all the members of the *suvarṇa-vaṇik* community enthusiastically take interest in this temple of Uddharan Dutt Thakur.

The Madhavi creeper planted directly by the hand of Lord Nityananda from the wooden spoon of Uddharan Dutt still stands today at Saptagram in front of the *samādhi* of Sri Uddharan Dutt. As one writer comments, “The tree bends down and showers its beautiful flowers as an offering to this great *vaiṣṇava* saint.” — MD 🍃

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UDDHARAN DUTT THAKUR'S SUCAKA KIRTANA

The Medieval Gauḍīya poet Vallabha Das

In Bengali the word *sūcaka* means, “to indicate” or “make known”. In Gauḍīya tradition, *sūcaka* kīrtanas are songs which describe the glories of a great

personality. They are sung on the appearance and disappearance days of the Lord and his dear devotees.

*nityānanda līlā dhāma ei sukamaya sapta-grāma
mahātīrtha trivenīra tīre
śrī yamunā śrī bhāgīrathī śrotasvatī śrī sarasvatī
bahe yānhā milita tridhāre*

The blissful village Saptagram is the place of Nityananda’s pastimes. This great holy place is situated on the bank of the Triveni, where three flowing rivers, the Yamuna, the Bhagirathi Ganga, and the weaving Saraswati meet.

*yānhā sapta ṛṣivara kari tapa suduścara
ārādhiyā govinda caraṇa
basi trivenīra taṭe hari smari akapaṭe
siddhi pāilā prema mahādhana*

It is the place where the Sapta Rishis, the seven principle sages, did their meditation. Worshiping the lotus feet of Govinda on the bank of the Triveni and constantly remembering Sri Hari they attained the great wealth of prema.

*sei sapta-grāma pure suvarṇa vanika ghare
vrajera sei subāhu gopāla
uddhārite tribhuvana nāma dhari uddhārana
prakāṭila bhakata bhupāla*



Uddharan Dutt's deities: Nitai, Sadbhuj Gauranga, and Gadadhar Pandit

There in Saptagram, in the family of a *suvarṇa vanik* merchant, the *Vrajavāsī* cowherd boy named Subahu appeared to deliver the three worlds. Known as Uddharan Dutt he was revealed as the king of devotees.

pitā yānra sadāśaya śrīkara datta mahāśaya
mātā bhadrāvati sarvottamā
vrajera gopāla yānra putra rūpe paracāra
ke kahibe tānra bhāgya simā

His father was the noble Srikara Dutt and his mother was the great Bhadravati. Her son was famous as a cowherd boy of Vraja. Who can describe the limit of her glory?

19

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āśaiśava sarva kāle hari bali ānkhī jale
bhāse niśī diśī uddhāraṇa
kothā kṛṣṇa rāma bali kānde sadā phuli phuli
adarśane mana ucāṭana

From his childhood, Uddharan Dutt was constantly chanting the name of Krishna and crying, “Where is Krishna? Where is Balaram?” In his way he was always crying and restless from not seeing Krishna.

vrajera balāi śrī govinda ha-ila nitāi gaurāṅga
kali-jīve kṛtārtha kāraṇa
navadvīpe avatari premā dilā viśvabhari
saṅge saba nija vraja jana

To deliver the *jīvas* of Kali-yuga, Balai and Govinda of Vraja became Nitai Gauranga. They incarnated in Nabadwip along with their companions of Vraja to distribute *prema* to everyone in the universe.

yata gopa gopīgaṇa tāñhā ebe mahāntera-gana
prema vitarana līlā kāle
ye dvādaśa gopāla sakhya preme mā toyāla
janamilā śrī gaṇḍa maṇḍala

All the cowherd boys and gopis are now mahāntas distributing *prema*. Mad with ecstatic love, the *dvādaśa gopālas*, the twelve principal cowherd boys, have taken birth in Sri Gauda Mandala. 🙏

— Translated from Kishori Das Babaji's *Śrī Gaurāṅga Pārśada Vargera Sūcaka Kīrtana*. Vaishnava Research Institute. Halisahar, West Bengal. 2005. Pages 30-31. Bengali.

Ślokāmṛta

PRANAMS TO UDDHARAN DUTT

Gopijanavallabha Das's Rasika-maṅgala

uddhāraṇa datta vando kariyā adara
premeśvara vando caitanyera anucara

I offer my prayers and worship to Uddharan Dutt. I offer my prayers to he who is one of the favorite companions of the Lord of *prema*, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

— Translation by Arindam Sarkar. From Gopijanavallabha Das' *Rasika-maṅgala*, 1.1.39. Published by Vaishnava Research Institute. Halisahar, Bengal. 1992.

