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NARAYANI THE MOTHER OF SRILA VRINDAVAN DAS THAKUR

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

In text 43 of the *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*, a book written by Kavi Karnapur that describes all the associates of Sri

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and who they previously were, there is the following statement regarding Narayani:

*ambikāyāḥ svasā yāsīn nāmnā śrīla-kilimbikā
kṛṣṇocchiṣṭaṁ prabhuñjānā seyaṁ nārāyaṇī matā*

When Lord Krishna was a child, he was nursed by a woman named Ambika, who had a younger sister named Kilimbika. During the time of Lord Chaitanya's incarnation, the same Kilimbika used to eat the remnants of food left by Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. That Kilimbika was Narayani, who was a niece of Srivas Thakur's. Later on, when she grew up and married, Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur was born from her womb. A devotee of Lord Sri Krishna is celebrated in terms of devotional service rendered to the Lord; thus we know Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur as the son of Narayani. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur notes in this connection that there is no reference to his paternal ancestry because there is no need to understand it. 🙏

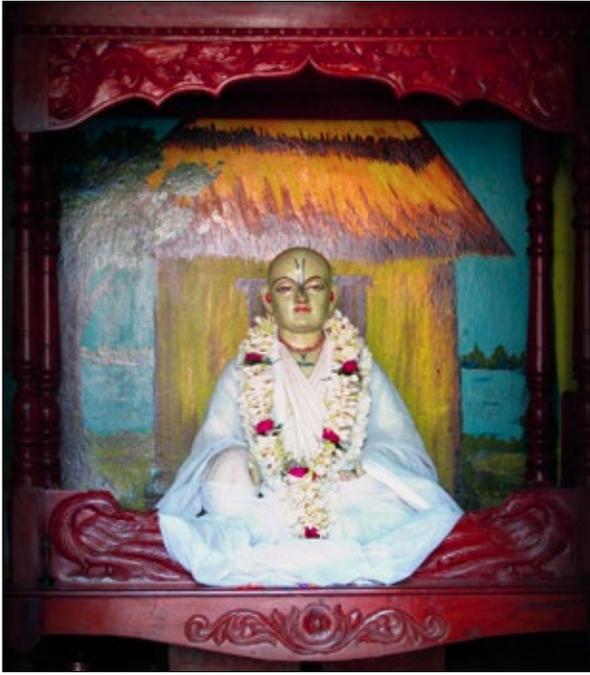
— Purport to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, ādi 8.41. Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Los Angeles. 1975.

THE POSITION OF CAITANYA-BHAGAVATA

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

The original name of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* was *Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala*. As Sri Lochan Das Thakur, the disciple of Narahari Sarakar Thakur, wrote another book named *Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala*, Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur later changed the name of his own book to *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* in order to differentiate the two books.

Unknown photographer



Deity of Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur in Denur

When Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami refers to Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala in his Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, he is referring to this Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata. It is said that Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur changed the name of his book to Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata by the desire of Srimati Narayani Devi. Anyway, as in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam the pastimes of Krishna are described, in this book the pastimes, particularly the Nabadwip pastimes, of Sri Chaitanyadeva, who is nondifferent from the son of Nanda, are described. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta deals more with Sri Chaitanya's pastimes as a sannyāsī in Nilachal and therefore may be accepted as a supplement to Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur's book. This great book is divided into three parts — ādi, madhya, and antya. Ādi-khaṇḍa extends up to the Lord's acceptance of initiation, madhya-khaṇḍa extends up to the Lord's acceptance of sannyāsa, and antya-khaṇḍa describes some of the Lord's pastimes over a period of a few years in Nilachal. The Lord's later pastimes in Nilachal are not described in this book. Such later pastimes were also not described by Sri Murari Gupta in his book Śrī Caitanya-carita. 🌸

— Opening words to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's commentary on Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur's Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata. English translation by Bhumipati Das. Edited and published by Pundarik Vidyanidhi Das. Vrajaraaj Press. Vrindavan. 2001.

A GLIMPSE OF THE LIFE OF SRILA VRINDAVAN DAS THAKUR

Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur appeared on the twelfth day of the dark half of the month of Vaiśākha in 1507. His father was a Brahmin named Vaikunthanath,

whose native place was Sylhet. His mother Narayani Devi was the daughter of Sri Nalina Pandit, the elder brother of Srivas Thakur. Some authorities consider that Vrindavan Das appeared in the village of Mangachi in the Nabadwip area, while others say that he was born in Kumarhatt. Whether his birthplace is Mangachi or Kumarhatt, Thakur Vrindavan Das later lived in Denur village in the Matreshwar area of the district of Burdwan. Because of this, Denur is considered to be his śrīpāṭa or native place.

Vrindavan Das' father passed away while his son was still in the womb of his mother. After the birth of Vrindavan Das, Narayani was given charge of the service of the deity installed by

Nāma-tattva

MAHAPRABHU'S INSTRUCTIONS TO TAPAN MISHRA

*Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur's
Caitanya-bhāgavata ādi 14.145-147*

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

*ei śloka nāma bali' laya mahā-mantra
śola-nāma batriśa-akṣara ei tantra*

“Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.” This verse is called the mahā-mantra. It contains sixteen holy names of the Lord composed of thirty-two syllables.

*sādhite sādHITE yabe premāṅkura habe
sādHYa-sādHana-tattva jānibā se tabe”*

If you continually chant this mahā-mantra, the seed of love of God will sprout in your heart. Then you will understand the goal of life and the process for achieving it.

— Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata with commentary of Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur. English translation by Bhumipati Das. Edited and published by Pundarik Vidyanidhi Das. Vrajaraaj Press. Vrindavan. 2001.





Photo by Gaudiya Treasures of Bengal

Deities worshiped by Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur in Denur

Vasudev Dutt at Mamgachi village. Although he mentions his mother in several places, Vrindavan Das doesn't speak about his father in his writings. Srila Kavi Karnapur has described Narayani Dasi in text forty-three of his *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*:

*ambikāyāḥ svasā yāsīn nāmnā śrīla-kilimbikā
kṛṣṇocchiṣṭaṁ prabhuñjānā seyaṁ nārāyaṇī matā*

The sister of the nurse Ambika, called Kilimbika, who ate Krishna's food remnants, became Mother Narayani.

In text one hundred nine of the same book, Srila Kavi Karnapur describes the ontological position of Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur:

*veda-vyāso ya evāsīd dāso vṛndāvano 'dhunā
sakhā yaḥ kusumāpīḍaḥ kāryatas taṁ samāviśat*

Vedavyasa became Vrindavan Das. The cowherd Kusumapida also entered his body for performing certain actions.

Vrindavan Das is considered to be the last disciple of Lord Nityananda, on whose order he wrote about the pastimes of Gaura and Nitai in *Caitanya-bhāgavata*. He is also the author of a number of songs,

many of which are included in the famous songbook, *Pada-kalpataru*, compiled by Vaishnava Das.

Although there are a few other books that are sometimes ascribed to him, it's generally considered by scholars and devotees that Śrī *Caitanya-bhāgavata* was the only book written by Vrindavan Das. Still, that single work is one of the most greatly revered literatures in *Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavism* due to its excellence in devotion, writing style, and historical accuracy in presenting the life of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. For the vast majority of followers of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Śrī *Caitanya-bhāgavata* is considered second in importance only to Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami's Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Due to his absorption in describing the childhood pastimes of Lord Gauranga, Vrindavan Das Thakur didn't write much about the Lord's later *antya-līlās*. It is said that when the devotees of Vrindavan read *Caitanya-bhāgavata* they were so charmed and fascinated that they ordered Krishna Das Kaviraja to complete what had not been finished by Vrindavan Das.

Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami has described in his *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* ādi 13.48-49:

*cāitanya-līlāra vyāsa,—dāsa vṛndāvana
madhura kariyā līlā karilā racana*

*grantha-vistāra-bhaye chādilā ye ye sthāna
sei sei sthāne kichu kariba vyākhyāna*

Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur, the authorized writer of the pastimes of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, is as good as Srila Vyasadev. He has described the pastimes in such a way as to make them sweeter and sweeter. Being afraid of his book's becoming too voluminous, he left some places without vivid descriptions. I shall try to fill those places as far as possible.

Vrindavan Das Thakur's Gaura Nitai deities are still present today in his place in Mamgachi where they are being worshiped by devotees of the Chaitanya Gaudiya Math. 🍌

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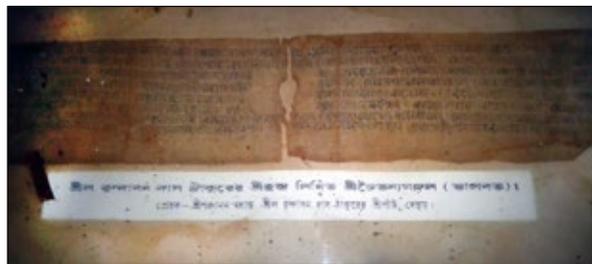
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Handwritten Caitanya-bhāgavata of Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur

GLORIES OF SRILA VRINDAVAN DAS THAKUR

The Medieval Gaudiya Poet Uddhava Das

Kāmoda rāga

*prabhura carvita pāna sneha vaśe kaila dāna
nārāyaṇī ṭhākuraṇī hāte
śaiśava vidhavā dhanī sādhipati śiromaṇi
sevana karila se carvite*

Some unscrupulous persons try to claim that there was some fault when Mahaprabhu affectionately gave his chewed betel leaf in the hands of Narayani Thakurani. Narayani, a wealthy widow who was the crest jewel of chaste ladies serving their husbands, faithfully ate Mahaprabhu's remnants.

*prabhu śakti sañcarila bālikā garbhiṇī hailā
loka mājhe kalaṅka nahila
daśa māsa pūrṇa yabe mātṛ garbha haite tabe
sundara tanaya eka haila*

It was by the power of Mahaprabhu that the girl became pregnant. There is no question of disrepute. Ten months later a beautiful son took birth from the womb of the mother.

*sei vṛndāvana dāsa tribhuvane su prakāśa
caitanya līlāra vyāsa yei
uddhava dāsere dayā kari dībe pada chāyā
prabhura mānasa putra sei*

That child was Vrindavan Das who is famous in all three worlds as the Vyasa of *caitanya-līlā*. The author, Uddhava Das, prays, "Oh mind-born son of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, be merciful and give me the shade of your feet!" 🍌

— Translated by Mani Gopal Das. From Kishori Das Babaji's *Śrī Gaurāṅga Pārsada Vargera Sūcaka Kīrtana*. Vaishnava Research Institute. Halisahar, West Bengal. 2005. Page 47. Bengali.

