

Sri Krishna Kathamrita



Bindu

Issue 567

parama dayāla nitāi

The Supremely Merciful Nityananda Prabhu



www.gopaljiu.org



Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 567

Śrī Bhaimī Ekādaśī

20 February 2024

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EKACHAKRA, HOME OF NITAI



By His Divine Grace

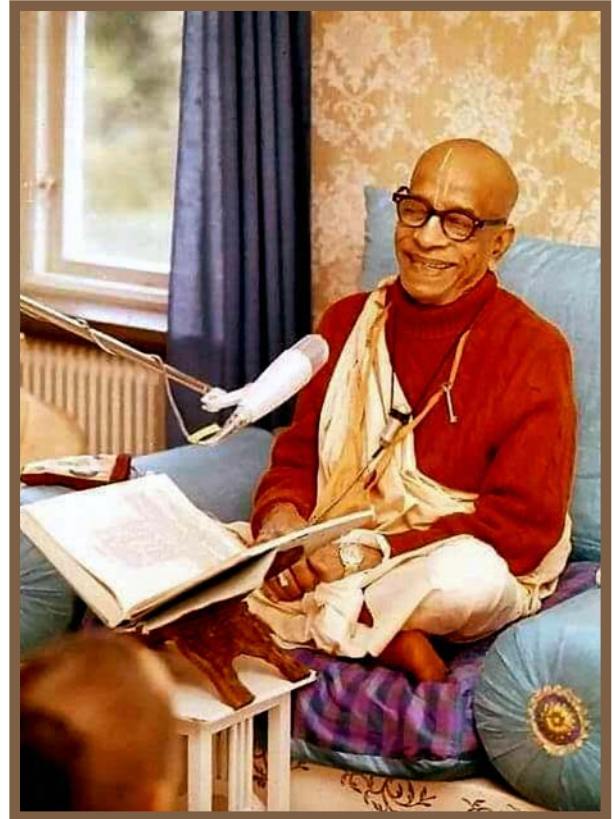
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Purport to Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta ādi-līlā 13.61

rāḍhadeśe janmilā ṭhākura nityānanda
gaṅgādāsa paṇḍita, gupta murāri, mukunda

In Radhadesh, the part of Bengal where the Ganges is not visible, Nityananda Prabhu, Gangadas Pandit, Murari Gupta and Mukunda took birth.

PURPORT: Here rāḍhadeśe refers to the village of the name Ekachakra in the district of Birbhum, next to Burdwan. After the Burdwan railway station there is another branch line, which is called the Loop Line of the Eastern Railway, and there is a railway station of the name Mallarapur. Eight miles east of this railway station Ekachakra Village is still situated. Ekachakra Village extends north and south for an area of about eight miles. Other villages, namely Virachandrapur and Virabhadrapur, are situated within the area of the village of Ekachakra. In honor of the holy name of Virabhadra Goswami, these places are renowned as Virachandrapur and Virabhadrapur.



In the Bengali year 1331, a thunderbolt struck the temple of Ekachakra-gram. Therefore the temple is now in a broken state. Before this, there were no such accidents in that quarter. Within the temple there is

Cover: Nityananda Prabhu Delivers Jagai. Painting by Taralakshi Dasi.

Above: Mrdanga Player by Prabha Sharma.



Unknown photographer

Deity of Banka Ray at Ekachakra



Temple of Banka Ray in Ekachakra

a deity of Sri Krishna established by Sri Nityananda Prabhu. The name of the deity is Banka Ray. On the right side of Banka Ray is a deity of Jahnava and on his left side is Srimati Radharani. The priests of the temple describe that Lord Nityananda Prabhu entered within the body of Banka Ray and that the deity of Jahnava-mata was therefore later placed on the right side of Banka Ray. Afterwards, many other deities were installed within the temple. On another throne are deities of Manomohan, Vrindavan-chandra and Gaura-Nitai. But Banka Ray is the deity originally installed by Nityananda Prabhu.

On the eastern side of the temple is a *ghāṭa* known as Kadamba-khandi on the bank of the Yamuna, and it is said that the deity of Banka Ray was floating in the water and Lord Nityananda Prabhu picked him up and then installed him in the temple. Thereafter in a place known as Bhaddapur in the village of Virachandrapur, about half a mile west, in a place underneath a neem tree, Srimati Radharani was found. For this reason, the Radharani of Banka Ray was known as *bhaḍḍāpurera ṭhākuraṇī*, the mistress

of Bhaddapur. On another throne, on the right side of Banka Ray, is a deity of Yogamaya.

Now the temple and temple corridor rest on a high plinth, and on a concrete structure in front of the temple is a meeting hall. It is also said that on the northern side of the temple there was a deity of Lord Shiva named Bhandiswar and that the father of Nityananda Prabhu, Hadai Pandit, used to worship that deity. At present, however, the Bhandiswar deity is missing, and in his place Jagannath Swami deity has been installed. Lord Nityananda Prabhu did not factually construct any temples. The temple was constructed at the time of Virabhadra Prabhu. In the Bengali year 1298, the temple being in a dilapidated condition, a *brahmacārī* of the name Shivananda Swami repaired it.

In this temple there is an arrangement to offer foodstuffs to the deity on the basis of seventeen seers of rice and necessary vegetables. The present priestly order of the temple belongs to the family Gopi-janavallabhananda, one of the branches of Nityananda Prabhu. There is a land settlement in the name of the temple, and income from this land



Photo by Gouranga UK

Pandava Tala is about 400 meters southeast of Nityananda Prabhu's birthplace. It's said that the Pandavas stayed here when they were in exile in the forest.

finances the expenditures for the temple. There are three parties of priestly Goswamis who take charge of the temple management, one after another. A few steps onward from the temple is a place known as Visramatala where it is said that Nityananda Prabhu in his childhood used to enjoy sporting in various pastimes of Vrindavan and the pastime of *rāsa-līlā* with his boyfriends.

Near the temple is a place named Amalitala, which is so named because of a big tamarind tree there. According to a party named the *neḍādi-sampradāya*, Virabhadra Prabhu, with the assistance of twelve hundred *Neḍās*, dug a great lake of the name Sweta-ganga. Outside of the temple are tombs of the Goswamis, and there is a small river known as the Maudeswar, which is called the water of the Yamuna. Within half a mile from this small river is the birthplace of Sri Nityananda Prabhu. It appears that there was a big meeting hall in front of the temple, but later it became dilapidated, and it is now covered

by banyan trees. Later on, a temple was constructed within which Gaura-Nityananda deities are existing. The temple was constructed by the late Prasanna Kumara Karapharma. A tablet was installed in his memory in the Bengali year 1323 in the month of *Vaiśākha* (April-May). The place where Nityananda Prabhu appeared is called Garbhavas. There is an allotment of about forty-three *bighās* of land to continue the worship in a temple there. The Maharaja of Dinajapur donated twenty *bighās* of land in this connection. It is said that near the place known as Garbhavas, Hadai Pandit conducted a primary school. The priests of this place, listed in a genealogical table, were as follows: (1) Sri Raghavachandra, (2) Jagadananda Das, (3) Krishna Das, (5) Ramadas, (6) Vrajamohan Das, (7) Kanai Das, (8) Gaura Das, (9) Shivananda Das and (10) Haridas. Krishna Das belonged to the Chidiya-kunj at Vrindavan. The date of his disappearance is Krishna *Janmāṣṭamī*. Chidiya-kunj is a place now managed by the Goswamis of



Unknown artist. Vintage painting from West Bengal.

श्रीश्रीनित्यानन्द महाप्रभु

Sri Nityananda Prabhu



Unknown photographer

According to the local tradition in Ekachakra, this old pippala tree, now known as Mala-Tala, was present during the time of Lord Nityananda. Some say that the tree has this name because Hadai Pandit, the father of Nityananda, used to chant japa on his mala there. Another version has it that when Nityananda Prabhu was about to leave home, his father became very disturbed and dropped his japa beads here.

Sringara Ghat in Vrindavan. They are also known as belonging to the Nityananda family, most probably on the basis of their relationship with Krishna Das.

Near Garbhavas is a place called Bakullatala where Sri Nityananda Prabhu and his boyfriends used to take part in sporting activities known as *jhāla-jhapaṭā*. There is a bakula tree there that is wonderful because all its branches and sub-branches look like the hoods of serpents. It has been suggested that by the desire of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, Anantadev manifested himself in that way. The tree is very old. It is said that formerly it had two branches, but later on, when the playmates of Nityananda Prabhu felt inconvenience in jumping from one branch to another, Nityananda Prabhu, by his mercy, merged the two branches into one.

Another place nearby is named Hantugada. It is said that Lord Nityananda Prabhu brought all the holy places there. Therefore the people in the surrounding villages go there instead of to the Ganges to take bath. It is named Hantugada because Srila Nityananda Prabhu used to perform the *dadhi-ciḍā* festival of distributing chipped rice with yogurt *prasāda* there,

and he took the *prasāda* kneeling down. A sanctified lake in this place is always full of water throughout the year. A great fair is held there during *Goṣṭhāṣṭamī*, and there is another big fair on the birthday of Sri Nityananda Prabhu. In the *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* it is described that Halayudha, Baladeva, Viswarup and Sankarshan appeared as Nityananda Avadhuta. 🍌

— Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. English translation and commentary by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Los Angeles. 1975.

THE MEANING OF AVADHUTA



Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

Nityananda Prabhu is often addressed as “avadhūta”. In the following purport, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta explains the meaning of the word.

Sri Vallabhacharya defines an *avadhūta* as “a person who is completely devoid of bodily urges and who appears like inert matter”. According to the *Siddhānta-pradīpa*, an *avadhūta* is “one who is



The place known as Naripota, or Amara Pith, in Ekachakra. It is said that the parents of Nityananda Prabhu buried his umbilical cord here.

fully detached from the pride of identifying with his belly and genitals”. The *Śabda-sāra* states, “A yogi who follows the principles of strict celibacy, who is aloof from the principles of *varṇa*, and who is always engaged in contemplating the Supersoul is called an *avadhūta*.” The syllable “*a*” means *akṣara*, or “inexhaustible”; the syllable “*va*” means *vareṇya*, or “respectable”; the syllable “*dhū*” means, “free from material bondage”; and the syllable “*ta*” refers to a knower of the famous Vedic statement *tat tvam asi* — “You are that.” Therefore, he who possesses these qualities is an *avadhūta*. 🍌

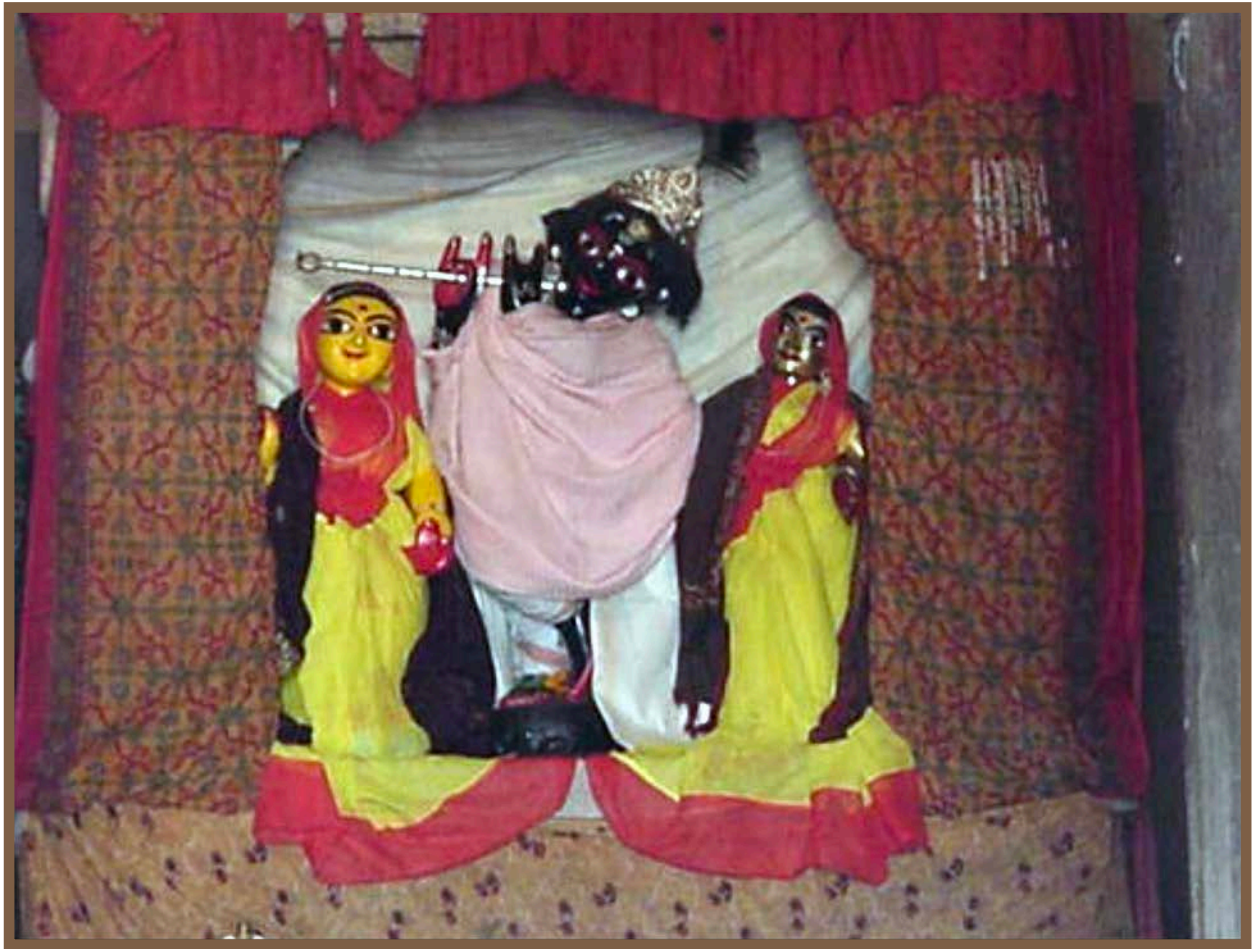
— Purport to *Caitanya-bhāgavata madhya* 8.10. English translation by Bhumiapati Das. Edited and published by Pundarik Vidyanidhi Das. Vrajaraj Press. Vrindavan. 2001.

NITAI AND BANKA RAY



Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Another *līlā* associated with the boyhood of Nityananda Prabhu is the pastime of his younger brother Banka Ray. Banka Ray was taking care of the cultivation of the land. One day, Hadai Pandit, the boys’ father, had engaged many laborers in clearing all the weeds from a big patch of land. It was midday and still the laborers had not finished



Unknown photographer

Left to right: Deities of Jahnava Devi, Banka Ray, and Srimati Radharani in Ekachakra

the work. Banka Ray said to them, “It is noon and you must be hungry. All of you go to your homes, take your meal, and come back in the afternoon.” After they left, Banka Ray uprooted all the weeds and cleared the whole plot of land by himself. He was collecting the weeds and putting them in a big mound when the laborers returned. When they saw that this small boy had done so much work by himself, they went to his father and said, “Pandit, your son Banka Ray has alone uprooted all the weeds of that huge plot of land. Now he’s putting them in a big pile. Hadai Pandit and many villagers came to see. When Banka Ray saw everyone coming, he hid himself behind the mound of weeds and disappeared. Everyone looked, but they couldn’t find him. When mother Padmavati heard that her son had vanished, she came running, crying. Upon hearing that Banka Ray was gone, all the villagers, as well as Hadai Pandit and mother Padmavati, were crying.

Then they heard Banka Ray’s voice from the sky, “You will not see me again in the same form. On the coming *Ekādaśī* day you’ll find me floating in the river Yamuna in the form of a wooden deity. [There is a small river in Ekachakra named Yamuna.] On that *Ekādaśī* day, people went there and at the proper time they saw a deity floating on the river. Nityananda Prabhu himself picked him up and installed him. That deity is known as Bankadev or Banka Ray, and is still there today in the village of Ekachakra. It is said that when Nityananda Prabhu disappeared, he entered into this deity. In that village they have a very big festival on Nityananda Prabhu’s appearance day. 🍊

— Excerpted from the article, “The Amazing Childhood Pastimes of Lord Nityananda”, published in *Sri Krishna Kathamrita* magazine, issue number 3. Gopal Jiu Publications. Bhubaneswar, Orissa.





Unknown artist

Sri Nityananda Prabhu

**MAHAPRABHU'S
ORDER TO NITAI
TO PREACH**



The Medieval Gaudiya Poet Balaram Das

virale nitāi pāñā, hāte dhari vasāiyā,
madhura kathā kana dhīre dhīre
jīvere sadaya haiyā, harināma laoyāo
giyāyātra nitāi surudhunī tīre

Once, upon meeting Nitai in a lonely place, Chaitanya held his hand, and, after they were seated, slowly uttered the following sweet words to him, “Nitai! Take this *harināma* and travel along the banks of the Surudhuni, the river of the gods, the Ganga, to manifest your compassion for the *jīvas*.

nāma-prema vitarite, advaitera huñkārete
avatīrṇa ha-inu dharāya
tārite kalira jīva, karite tādera śiva
tumi mora pradhāna sahāya

“In response to Adwaita’s roaring, I appeared on earth to distribute *nāma-prema*. Know that you are my *pradhāna sahāya*, my principal assistant, in this quest to deliver the *jīvas* from Kali and thereby make them auspicious.

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nilācala udhāriyā, govindere sañge la-iyā
daksiṇa deśete yāba āmi
śrī gauḍa-mandala bhāra, laiyyā kara nāma pracāra
tvarā nitāi yāo tathā tumi

“After delivering Nilachal, I will venture south in Govinda’s company. Go quickly, O Nitai, as the responsibility of *nāma-pracāra*, the distribution of the holy name in Sri Gauda Mandala, is yours.

mo haite nā habe yāhā, tumi ta pāribe tāhā,
premadātā parama dayāla
balarāma kahe pahuñ, doñhāra samāna duhu,
tāra more āmi ta kāngāla

“Because you are the *premadātā*, the giver of *prema*, and *parama dayāla*, the most merciful, you can surely accomplish that which I cannot achieve.” Balaram Das declares, “You two, Nitai and Gaura, are one and the same. O lord! Please deliver me, who is wretched and possesses nothing in this world.” 🍊

— *Balarām Dāsera Padāvali*. Song 44. Edited by Manu Jana. Published by University of Calcutta. 1988. Translated by Jagannath Mishra Das

MEDITATING ON NITAI

Nityānanda-dhyāna

**Gaura-govindārcana-smaraṇa-paddhati (50)
of Dhyana-chandra Goswami**

kañjārendra-vinindi-sundara-gatiṁ śrī-pādam indīvara
śreṇī-śyāma-sad-ambaraṁ tanu-rucā sāndhyendu-
sahmardakam
premodghūrṇa-sukañja-khañjana-madā-jin-netra-
hāsyānanam
nityānandam ahaṁ smarāmi satataṁ bhūñojjvalānga-
śriyam

I meditate on Nityananda, always beautiful with decorated limbs, endowed with a smiling face whose lotus eyes roll in *prema* and surpass intoxicating *khañjana* birds, who defeats the evening moon with his effulgence, whose pure cloth is the color of a group of blue lotuses, and whose feet move beautifully, surpassing the gait of the king of elephants.

— Dhyana-chandra Goswami. *Śrī Gaura-Govindārcana-Smaraṇa-Paddhati*. English translation by Bhanu Swami. ISKCON Chennai. 2018.

