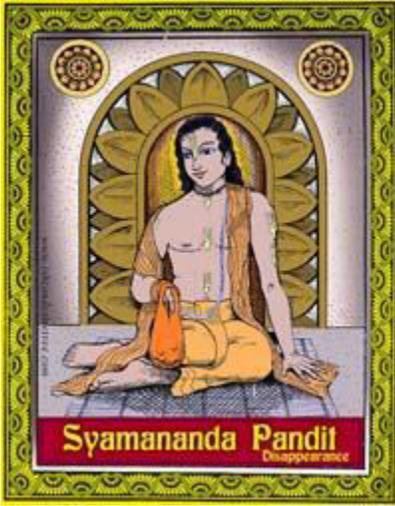


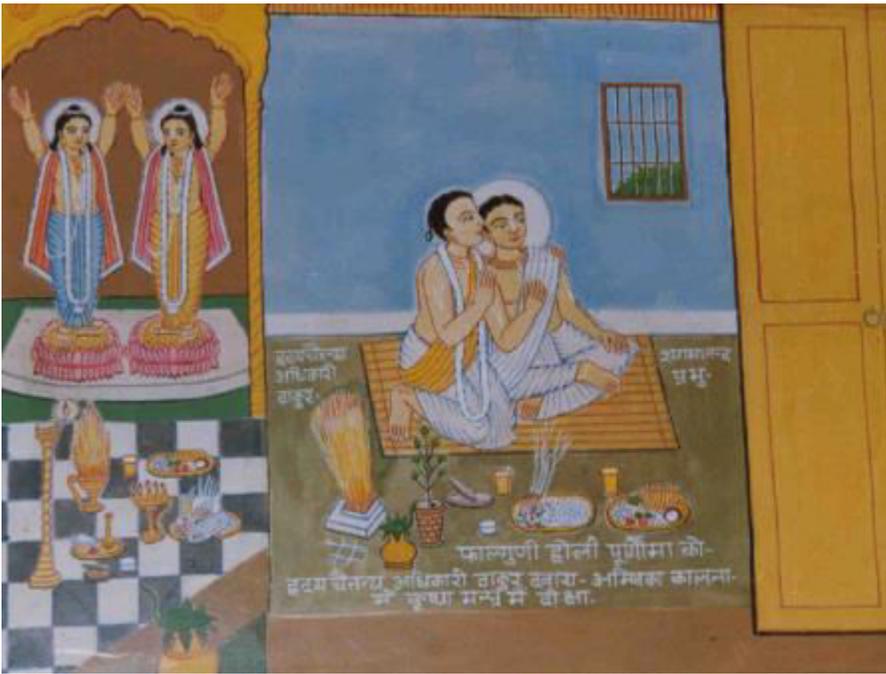
Sri Shyamananda Pandit



Shri Shyamananda Prabhu was born in Utkala, in a place called Dharendra Bhadura Pur (presently known as Kalaikunda in Midnapur) in a family of milkmen. His father's name was Shri Krishna Mandal. His mother's name was Shri Durika. Shri Krishna Mandal, who was in the dynasty of the Six Gopas, had sired many sons and daughters who had passed away before this son took his birth. Because of the great misfortune which had befallen his family, Shri Krishna Mandal named the boy Dukhi. Everyone said that the boy would become a great person, a Mahapurush. On an auspicious moment on the full moon day of the month of Caitra, he appeared within this world by the mercy of Lord Jagannatha. Because he had come to preach the glories of Jagannatha, the Lord Himself protected him as he grew up. The boy was so beautiful he was like cupid himself; all eyes were fixed upon him. Gradually it was time for the child's "grain-eating ceremony" (that time at which a child is first offered solid food.), and soon after that he began going to school. Seeing the amazing brain this child had, the scholars were astonished. In a short time, the boy learned Sanskrit grammar, poetry, and rhetoric. And soon after this he began seriously studying the scriptures. Upon hearing the glories of Sri Caitanya and Nityananda from the mouths of the local devotees, the boy developed a powerful desire to take shelter at his lotus feet. His father, Shri Krishna Mandala, was a great devotee of Krishna. Seeing his son always engrossed in thoughts of Gaura-Nityananda, he told him to take mantra initiation. The boy said, "Hriday Caitanya Prabhu is my guru, he lives in Ambika Kalna. His guru is Gauridas Pandit. Those two great brothers, Shri Gaura and Nityananda always reside in his home. If you give the order, I will go to him and become his disciples. Shri Krishna Mandal said, "My boy! That is a long way away! How will you get there?" Dukhi said, "Father, many people from here will soon go to Gauda-desh to bathe in the Ganges. When they go, I will go with them."



For a long time, his father thought this over, and finally gave his permission. After receiving the blessings of his father and mother he began his journey to Gaudadesh. Gradually he came to Nabadwip and Shantipur, and finally arrived in Ambika Kalna. Upon reaching Ambika Kalna, he began inquiring from the local people where the house of Gauridas Pandit was. He paying his obeisances outside the temple of Sriman Mahaprabhu at the house of Gauridas Pandit. There he found Hridaya Caitanya Prabhu. Hridaya Caitanya, upon seeing the boy, said, “Who are you?”



Dukhi said, “I want to render service at your holy feet. I have come a long way—from Dharendra bahadur Pura. I was born in the dynasty of the Six Gopas. My father’s name is Krishna Mandal. My name is Dukhi.”

Hridaya Caitanya was pleased with the sweet words of this young boy. He said, “From now on your name is Krishna Das.”

From that day on, Shri Krishna Das assiduously served his guru. Shri Hridaya Caitanya waited for an auspicious day and soon initiated him in the mantram. Krishna das soon became fixed in his service. Seeing Krishna Das’s determined service, his bhakti, and his deep intelligence and understanding, Hridaya Caitanya ordered him to go to Vrindavan to seek out Jiva Gosvami. He ordered him to study the scriptures of the Gosvamis and their associates under the guidance of Jiva Gosvami.

Shri Krishnadas bowed his head and accepted his guru’s order to leave for Vrindavan, and on an auspicious day, he began his journey. At that time, Shri Hridaya Caitanya Prabhu gave many messages to Krishna dasa to carry to the residents of Vrindavana. He requested him to communicate his dandavats and respects to the lotus feet of the six Gosvamis. Dukhi Krishna das first went to Nabadwip Dhama. Ther

he he asked the local people where he could find the old house of Jagannatha Mishra, and if he might be allowed to enter that house. Arriving at the house of Sri Gauranga, he found Ishan Thakura and offered full obeisances and respectful prayers to him. Ishan was very old. He asked Krishnadas, “Who are you?” Krishnadas explained who he was. Hearing his story, Ishan bestowed his blessings upon Krishnadas. After spending a few days in Nabadwip, Krishnadas turned his sweet face towards Vrindavan and continued on his journey.

On his way he came to Gayadham to take darshan of the lotus feet of the Vishnu deity there, where Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had taken initiation from Ishvara Puri. Remembering how Ishvara Puri had given the mantra to the Lord, he became overwhelmed by ecstasy. After this,

he went to Benares, Kashidhama. There he took darshan of the holy feet of Tapana Mishra, Chandrashekhara, and many other devotees, offering prayers and obeisances to all of them. They all bestowed innumerable blessings upon Krishnadasa, and he continued on his way to Mathura. After a long time, he finally entered Mathura. There he bathed in Vishrama-ghata, took darshan of the Adikeshava deity, and, upon visiting the place where Shri Krishna appeared within this world became choked up with prema. Thereafter he headed in the direction of Vrindavana.

After finding out the exact location of Shri Jiva Gosvami's bhajan-kutir from the local people, he sought out Jiva Gosvami. Arriving at his bhajan-kutir, he offered his dandavats and respects to Jiva Gosvami.



Jiva Gosvami asked who he was, and Krishnadas told him everything. He explained how he was a disciple of Hridaya Caitanya, and how Hridaya-Caitanya had sent him to Jiva Gosvami for instruction in the scriptures. Jiva Gosvami had previously been told by Hridaya Caitanya, "I have a disciple named Dukhi Krishna Dasa. I am offering him to you. Teach him well in Krishna consciousness. When his mind is fixed in Krishna consciousness, after he has studied the scriptures carefully under guidance for some time, you may send him back to me." Upon knowing that Dukhi Krishnadasa had been sent by Hridaya Caitanya to work under his direction, Shri Jiva Gosvami was very happy. Krishnadasa was under his protection. Shri Krishna Das carefully served Jiva Gosvami and studied the scriptures of the Gosvamis very seriously. At that time Shrinivas Acharya and Narottama das Thakura also came to study the Gosvami scriptures under the authority of Jiva Gosvami. Krishnadas would meet with them and study the scriptures together with Srinivasa Acharya and Narottama das Thakura. Krishnadas prayed for service that would bring him closer to Jiva Gosvami. When Jiva Gosvami saw this, he said with joy, "Every day you must draw some water from the Kanana-Kunja." From that day on, Dukhi Krishna Das with great affection and eagerness would go to that Kunja to fill Jiva Gosvami's waterpot. The opportunity to serve Jiva Gosvami in this way gave Krishnadas's life new meaning. By drawing water for Jiva Gosvami every day, Krishnadas felt a

transformation within himself. He would become joyful, and his eyes would fill with tears of ecstasy. Whenever he would hear the name of Radha and Govinda loudly chanted in kirtan and whenever he would remember Their divine pastimes, he would become dumbstruck with wonder. From time to time he would notice a girl who seemed to be a beautiful princess drawing water from the same Kunja and carrying it on her head. Brahma and Siva would be enchanted by her beauty.

In this way, Dukhi Krishnadas continued his service of visiting the Kunja and drawing water for Jiva Gosvami. His service certainly pleased the prince and princess of Vraja, Sri Sri Radha and Krishna, so much so that they wanted to reveal themselves to Krishnadas. One day Krishnadasa was performing his regular duty of filling the water pot from the Kunja. He was fully absorbed in the samadhi of Krishna prema. At that time he saw in the water beneath his pot a wonderfully shining bangle, an anklet. Up

on seeing it he was astonished by its beauty and overwhelmed by transcendental ecstasy. He reached his hand within the waters of the Kunja and pulled out this unusual bangle. Touching it to his head, he felt a wave of transcendental ecstasy. Then, finding a piece of cloth that appeared to be the border of a woman's scarf attached to the bangle, he thought to seek out the owner of the bangle in order to return it.

In that place, that very morning, seeing that the bangle from the left foot of Shri Radha Thakurani was missing, Her gopi friends were dumbstruck. Shri Radha Thakurani said, "Last night while I was dancing with Krishna by the side of the Kunja, the bangle must have fallen in the Kunja; go there, and after finding it, bring it to me. Vishakha devi went to the banks of the Kunja and began searching and searching for the bangle. As she was searching, she came upon Dukhi Krishna Das, who at that time was filling his water pot at the Kunja.



Vishakha devi asked him, "Have you found a bangle near here?" Dukhi Krishna Das, seeing this beautiful girl who appeared to be a goddess from heaven, was dazzled by her brilliance. Hearing the ambrosial words from this immortal goddess, he was struck dumb with the ecstasy of love of Godhead. Vishakha devi again asked him, "Have you found a bangle near here?" Dukhi Krishna Das humbly offered his respectful obeisances, and meekly said, "Yes, I have it.

Please tell me, who are you?" Vishakha said, "I am the daughter of a gopa."

"Where do you live?"

"I live in this village."

"Is the bangle yours?"

"No, it's not mine. At my house there is a newly married girl...."

"How was it lost here?"

"...Yesterday when she was picking flowers here at the Kunja, it somehow slipped off her foot and she lost her bangle in the water. I have come here to find her bangle. Wait here and I will bring her to you." A little while later, Shri Radha Thakurani came with Vishakha devi and hid behind a tree. Vishakha devi said, "O devotee! She has come for her bangle." From a distance Dukhi Krishna Das could see the brilliant effulgence of the daughter of King Vrishabhanu, and felt as if his soul had been stolen from his body. In great transcendental bliss he gave the bangle to Vishakhadevi. At that time he had some intuition that a great mystery was being revealed to him. With his eyes filled with the tears of krishna prema, he fell to the ground and offered his prostrated obeisances in full submission. His voice was choked up in ecstasy. At that time Vishkaha devi said, "O best of the devotees, my girlfriend would very much like to show her gratitude by granting you a benediction. You may ask for whatever you want."

Dukhi Krishnadas replied, "There is nothing that I want; I only pray to take the dust of her lotus feet."

Vishakha devi replied, "Take bath in this Kunda." Dukhi Krishna Das went to bathe in the Kunda, he offered his obeisances, and then, when he immersed himself in the water he assumed the form of a beautiful girl. Returning to Vishakha devi, Dukhi Krishna Das offered respects to her. Vishakha devi brought this new gopi to Shri Radha Thakurani. The new gopi offered her obeisances in the dust of the lotus feet of Shri Radha. The sakhis seated the new gopi in their midst. At that time, Shri Radharani applied some kumkum to the bangle and made a tilaka mark on the head of the new gopi, saying "This tilaka must remain on your forehead. From this day on, your name will be Shyamananda. Now go." At this, Radha Thakurani, along with all her gopi friends vanished. Dukhi Krishnadas's samadhi broke. In the water he could see in his reflection the effulgent tilaka mark the bangle had left on his forehead.



His heart was filled with wonder at the sight, and he thought to himself, “What have I seen!” Saying this, he began to weep with joy. Thereafter, offering hundreds and hundreds of prayers in the name of Shri Radha Thakurani, he returned to the lotus feet of Shri Jiva Gosvami. Seeing the new tilaka mark that shined so brilliantly on the forehead of Dukhi Krishna Das, Jiva Gosvami was dumbstruck. He inquired as to its origin. Dukhi Krishna Das bowed before his master and with his eyes filled with tears, he related the entire story to Jiva Gosvami. Hearing this, Jiva Gosvami was supremely happy. He said, “Don’t reveal the story of this miracle to the people in general.” From this day on your name will be Shyamananda. Noticing the change in Dukhi Krishna Das’s name and tilak, the Vaishnava community began to talk about him. Gradually word reached Ambika Kalna in Gauda-desh. Hearing that his disciple had changed his name and tilaka, Hridaya Caitanya became angry. He quickly left for Vrindavana. When he arrived at the place where Krishnadas was staying, Krishnadas fell before his gurudev’s lotus feet, offering his dandavats. Shri Hridaya Caitanya, seeing the new tilaka on his disciple’s forehead, became very angry and said, “Your conduct is abominable; you are disgracing me!” In this way he chastised Dukhi Krishna Das and struck him again and again as the Vaishnavas did their best to pacify Hridaya Chaitanya Prabhu. Dukhi Krishna Das bore all his guru’s chastisement with a cheerful face, for he knew that he had never left the service of his guru maharaja.

That night, Shri Hridaya Chaitanya Prabhu had a dream in which he saw Shri Radha Thakurani. Shrimati Radharani scolded Hridaya Chaitanya, saying: “Because Shri Dukhi Krishna das has pleased me greatly I have given him this new name and tilaka. Why have you instructed him differently?” Hridaya Chaitanya fell at the feet of the princess of Vraja praying for forgiveness, realizing that he had committed a great offense.

The next morning Shri Hridaya Chaitanya called Shyamananda Prabhu to his side and affectionately embraced him again and again. With tears of ecstasy in his eyes he told his disciple: “You are most fortunate.” A few days later Shri Hridaya Chaitanya left Vrajadhama. A few days later, Jiva Gosvami ordered Shyamananda Prabhu to return to Gauda Desh. Shyamanda Prabhu, Shrinivasa Acharya, and Narottama das Thakura in great happiness had

spent many days studying the Gosvami scriptures under the tutelage of Shri Jiva Gosvami and moving through Vrindavana as humble beggars, practicing Madhukari. These three devotees practiced their madhukari and performed their bhajan as one. In this way, they were very fixed and determined in their devotional service.



In this way, having been invited to do so by the Gosvamis the three of them went to preach the message of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu especially as found in scriptures of the Gosvamis. One day, Jiva Gosvami called the three of them together and let them know how to fulfill the will of the Gosvamis. The three of them bowed their heads and receiving the orders of Jiva Gosvami with great respect. After this, on an auspicious day, after seeing Jiva Gosvami and having been entrusted by him with the scriptures of the Gosvamis, the three of them started for Gauda-desh. On the way, the King of Vanavishnupura, Birhambir had their scriptures stolen by some of his men. For the purpose of recovering the stolen scriptures, Srinivas Acharya stayed behind. Shri Narottam Thakura went on to Kheturigram and Shyamananda Prabhu returned to Ambika Kalna. Upon arriving in Ambika Kalna, Shyamananda Prabhu offered his respects at the lotus feet of Hridaya Chaitanya. The two of them embraced each other with great joy and affection, and Hridaya Chaitanya inquired after the welfare of the great devotees and Gosvamis in Vrindavan. Upon hearing of the theft of the Gosvamis' scriptures, Hridaya Chaitanya was deeply shocked and disappointed. Soon Shyamananda was once again serving the lotus feet of his gurudeva Hridaya Chaitanya Prabhu. After a few days, Shyamananda Prabhu became completely absorbed in guru-seva and his happiness grew day by day. Almost all of the personal associates of Shri Caitanya in Utkala desh had by that time one by one disappeared and entered into the unmanifest pastimes of the Lord. The preaching of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's message had almost disappeared. Shri Hridaya Chaitanya, upon hearing all this became especially concerned. At that time he ordered Shri Shyamananda Prabhu to go to Utkala desh and preach the message of the Gosvamis and the teachings of Shri Chaitanya. As he was leaving his gurudeva behind, Shyamananda felt great pain within his heart. Understanding his heart, Hridaya Chaitanya called Shyamananda to him and made him understand his concern. Having no other course open to him, Shyamananda Prabhu left for Utkala taking his guru's

orders on his head. On his way to Utkala, he passed his old village of Dharendra Bahadurpur. Seeing their own dear Dukhi returning home after having been gone for so long, the townspeople were extremely happy. For a few days he stayed there and preached the holy gospel of Shri Chaitanya. Many people heard him and were enchanted by him and took shelter at his lotus feet. Thereafter he came to a town called Dandeshwar. There Shri Krishna Mandala had formerly lived. Shyamananda Prabhu blessed the town of Dandeshwar and the devotees who lived there by his holy association, to the extreme happiness of all of them. For many days he preached

On the banks of the Suvarna-rekha river lived was a pious zamindar by the name of Shri Achyutadeva. Rasikananda was the name of his only son. From the time he was a little boy, he was a paragon of Krishna-bhakti. For the sake of his education his father had engaged some learned scholars to teach him. Rasikananda would study at the place of the Pandits. But he had no interest in worldly knowledge. In everything he would study he would find Hari-bhakti to be the ultimate conclusion. He grew anxious to take shelter of the lotus feet of a Vaishnava guru. One day he was sitting alone, thinking. At that time he heard a divine voice say, "Rasikananda! Don't sit there brooding. Very soon a great devotee, a maha-bhagavat named Shyamananda Prabhu will arrive here; go to him and take shelter of his lotus feet." Hearing that divine voice, he became somewhat encouraged. From that time on, he became very eager to see Shyamananda Prabhu and was always looking down the road for his arrival.



Rasika Murari

A few days later Shri Shyamananda Prabhu along with his disciples made his auspicious arrival at the house of Rasikananda dev in the village called Rohini on the banks of the Suvarna-rekha. Shri Rasikananda Deva's bliss knew no bounds. He offered his full obeisances in a mood of great humility and took Shri Shyamananda Prabhu within his house, where he offered him the traditional puja, and made all his friends, relatives, and children surrender at Shyamananda's lotus feet. It was arranged that on an auspicious day, Shyamananda Prabhu

would initiate Rasikananda Deva Prabhu into the Radha-Krishna mantra. They began the chanting of Hare Krishna in sankirtan in the home of Deva with all the other devotees, inviting all the friends and relatives to take part. Everyone in the village engaged in Sankirtan-yajna, and took darshan of Shyamananda Prabhu. Amazed by his wonderful explanations of the message of Gaura-Nityananda, they all took shelter of his lotus feet. In this way, the town of Rohini had many disciples of Shri Shyamananda Prabhu. In the town of Rohini was a big yogi named Damodara. One day he went to take darshan of Shri Shyamananda Prabhu. From a long way off he saw a divine effulgence as bright as the sun emanated from Shyamananda Prabhu blinding his vision. Thereafter, as he approached that great acarya, he fell at his lotus feet and took shelter there, offering many prayers in submission. Returning the respect shown to him by the yogi Shyamananda Prabhu with tears in his eyes, said, "If your holiness wishes to develop divine purity, please just always chant the holy names of Gaura and Nityananda. The Lord is supremely merciful. If you only do this, He will bestow Krishna-prema upon you." Hearing what Shyamananda Prabhu had said, Yogi Damodara's heart melted. He replied, "If you will kindly give me your mercy, I shall worship the lotus feet of Gaura-Nityananda from now on." Shyamananda Prabhu gave the yogi his blessings, and bestowed his transcendental mercy upon him. Yogi Damodara became a great devotee of Shri Shri Gaura Nitai. He used to constantly chant the holy name of Gaura and Nityananda with tears of joy pouring from his eyes. In Balaram Pura lived many rich people. Hearing the glories of Shyamananda Prabhu the people there became very anxious to see him. The pious, faithful, and saintly people there began to pray with great earnestness for Shyamananda Prabhu to come and visit Balaram Pura. Soon Shyamananda Prabhu gave them his mercy. He promised to respond to the invitation. Not long after this, Shyamananda Prabhu arrived in Balaram Pura with Deva and Yogi Damodara, as well as many of his other disciples and devotees. The ecstasy of the saintly persons in Balaram Pura was boundless. They offered puja to the lotus feet of Shyamananda Prabhu, and conducted their bhajan in a very beautiful way, observing all the proper rules and regulations of the shastras. A few days later they held a big kirtan and hari-katha festival in Balaram Pura. Many people came and surrendered at the lotus feet of Shri Shyamananda Prabhu. After this Shyamananda Prabhu went to Nrishinga Pura. In Nrishinga Pura there was quite a large faction of atheists, agnostics, and blasphemers. After a few days, Shyamananda Prabhu held a sankirtan festival. The agnostics and atheistic pandits went to see Shyamananda Prabhu and listened to his sweet and nectarine explanations of Hari-katha. By hearing his words, their hearts were moved. They accepted the shelter of Shyamananda Prabhu's lotus feet. Day after day the news of Shyamananda's glories reached Utkala. From Nrishinga Pura, Shyamananda Prabhu went to Shri Gopi Vallabha Pura. There many wealthy people lived. After taking darshan of his lotus feet, they were astonished. Almost all of them accepted shelter at the lotus feet of Shri Shyamananda Prabhu. They prayed at his feet that he might install some deities, that they may engage in deity worship. They begged him with great earnestness to do this. Soon thereafter, the devotees had established a temple of the Lord with a kirtan hall, a

shelter for bhoga to be kept, and a special kitchen where the Lord's meals could be prepared, as well as an ashram where the deities' servants could live, and a guest house for visiting Vaishnavas. Near the temple they also constructed a small pond and beautiful gardens. Soon thereafter a great festival was held, and at that time Shri Shyamananda Prabhu installed the deities of Radha Govinda. When the installation ceremonies and festival were concluded, Shyamananda Prabhu left for his home town of Utkala. Seeing the charming beauty of the Radha-Govinda deities, everyone felt peace in their hearts. After Shyamananda Prabhu had left for Utkala, the residents of Gopi Vallabha Pura entrusted the responsibility of service to the Deities to Rasikananda Prabhu.



kirtan master

Arriving in Utkala Pura, Shri Shyamananda Prabhu preached the message of Gaura Nityananda, and finally, returning to Ambika-Kalna, he paid his respects at the lotus feet of Shri Hridaya Chaitanya. Having offered his respects and prayers to Hridaya Chaitanya Prabhu, he told him all about his successful preaching of the message of Gaura Nityananda throughout Utkala, Dandeshwar, Rohini, Balaram Pura, Nrishinga Pura, and Gopi Vallabha Pura. Hearing of the victories of his disciple, Shri Hridaya Chaitanya affectionately embraced Shyamananda Prabhu. After some time Shri Shyamananda Prabhu was invited to the famous festival in Kheturigram, the birthplace of Narottam das Thakura. After getting this invitation, Shyamananda Prabhu, along with his disciples, set off in the direction of Kheturigram. After arriving in Kheturigram, he found his old lifelong friends, Narottam Thakura and Shrinivas Acharya. Heartily embracing one another they floated in the waves of happiness. At that festival, Jahnava Mata, Shri Raghunandan Thakura, Shri Achyutananda, and Shri Vrindavana Das Thakura, other eternal associates of Shri Gaurachandra, as well as many great souls and important devotees graced everyone there by their auspicious presence. When the festival had come to an end, Shri Shyamananda Prabhu bade farewell to all the assembled devotees and again turned his face in the direction of Utkala in order to make his return journey.

On his way back to Gauda Desh, he stopped off in the town of Kanthak Nagara at the house of Gadadhara Das Thakur, in Yajigrama at the house of Shrinivas Acharya, and in Shri Khanda at the house of Raghunandana Thakura. After this time, many of the eternal associates of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu passed away from this earth and entered into the eternal unmanifest pastimes of the Lord.

After some time, Shyamananda reached Utkala. Moving from one devotee's house to the next, he went from one town to the next, and graced many devotees with his blessings. Soon he arrived in Shri Gopi Vallabha Pura. At this time he heard news of the passing away of his guru, Shri Hridaya Chaitanya. Hearing this tragic news, Shri Shyamananda Prabhu fainted. After regaining consciousness he wept and wept for a long time. He fell into a state of complete anxiety, disappointment and bewilderment. That night, however, he had a dream of Hridaya Chaitanya, and was encouraged by him to preach.

From Utkala desh, the glories of Shyamananda Prabhu were preached to the four directions. As a result of his influence the constant worship and service of Gaura and Nityananda was established far and wide. Rasikananda,. Shri Murari, Radhananda, Purushottama, Manohara, Cintamani, Balabhadra, Shri Jagadvara, Gadadhara, Anandananda and Shri Radha Mohan and others were the dearmost confidential disciples of Shyamananda Prabhu.

Shrila Shyamananda Prabhu, having been successful in his many preaching campaigns returned to Gopi Vallabha Pura, and there, after some days a big festival took place. After that, in the month of Asarh, on the day of Krishnapratipada the great acharya, Shyamananda Prabhu entered into the eternal lila of the Lord. His samadhi may be found in Gopi Vallabha Pura, where the service of his deity goes on to this day.