

GOVARDHAN



Glories

O Govardhana, O king of mountains, O hill whose nectar name the best of Hari's servants flows from the moonlike mouth of Sri Radha, O hill that the Vedas declare to be the tilaka marking of Vraja, please grant me a residence near to you.

Stavavaii, Ragunatha dasa Gosvami

Govardhana Hill is acknowledged throughout the Vedic scripture's as the most sacred mountain not only in the whole of India, but in all the three worlds. It is therefore no wonder that when Govardhana Hill appeared, all the great mountains of the universe came and worshiped him as their king. They also declared that Govardhana had descended from Goloka Vrndavana in the spiritual world and is the crown jewel of Vraja.

The Vedas also inform us that Govardhana Hill is understood in two different ways. First, as the greatest devotee of Lord Krsna, and second as being non-different from Lord Krsna Himself.

Before the beautiful *gopis* of Vrndavana, Srimati Radharani praised Govardhana Hill as the very best servant (Haridasa-varya) of Lord Krsna in the following words:

Of all the devotees, this Govardhana Hill is the best! O my friends, this hill supplies Krsna and Balarama, along with their calves, cows and cowherd friends, with all kinds of necessities --water for drinking, very soft grass, caves, fruits, flowers and vegetables. In this way the hill offers respects to the Lord. Being touched by the lotus feet of Krsna and Balarama, Govardhana Hill appears very jubilant.

Srimad-Bhagavatam 10.21.18

As the best servant, Govardhana Hill provides Krsna and Balarama and the inhabitants of Vrndavana with all the necessities of life. Cool fragrant drinking water from its many waterfalls, pure honey, mango juice and pilu juice, wonderful varieties of, herbs, roots, fruits, creepers and fresh flowers. Govardhana also provides various minerals and precious gems that the cowherd boys use to decorate Krsna and Balarama and themselves as well.

This sacred hill also provides deep caves where Krsna and Balarama rest and take shelter against the rain and the scorching sun. Krsna also enjoys many intimate loving pastimes with Srimati Radharani in these same caves.

Govardhana Hill also provides a special kind of soft, fragrant grass that makes the cows strong and healthy. This grass also helps increase the cow's milk production, which is used to make pure ghee for the sacrificial fire and cooking. The milk is also turned into butter, yogurt, cheese and an amazing variety of milksweets.



Considering that milk is the economic backbone of the inhabitants of Vrndavana, it is no wonder that Lord Krsna advised the Vrajavasis to stop the sacrifice to Lord Indra and worship Govardhana Hill instead.

Govardhana Hill also provides Lord Krsna with a stage to perform His innumerable transcendental loving pastimes with the beautiful damsels of Vraja and with His many cowherd boyfriends.

The Vedas also say that Govardhana Hill is non-different from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Krsna Himself. When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu visited Vraja in the year 1515, He refused to climb Govardhana Hill because He saw that Govardhana was non-different from Lord Krsna. At the time of the annakuta ceremony, Krsna declared that He was non-different from Govardhana Hill:

Krsna then assumed an unprecedented huge form to instill faith in the cowherd men declaring, 'I am Govardhana Mountain!' He ate the abundant offerings. Together with the people of Vraja, the Lord bowed down to Govardhana Hill, thus in effect offering obeisances to Himself Then He said, " Just see how this hill has appeared in person and bestowed mercy upon us!

Srimad-Bhagavatam 10.24.35-6

Because Govardhana Hill is non-different from Krsna Himself, the rocks from Govardhana are worshipable just like a Deity of Krsna, In fact, the stones known as Govardhana-silas do not even need to be installed as they are already considered to be worshipable. Many great devotees have worshiped these silas from Govardhana Hill. These devotees include Sanatana Gosvami and Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, as well as Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself.

Govardhana Hill should be envisioned to be in the shape of a peacock resting with its head tucked into its side. The peacocks face is considered to be the beautiful Kusuma-sarovara, its neck is Manasi- ganga, its mouth Mukharavinda. In Govinda lilamrita Krishna Dasa Kaviraja Goswami says its two eyes are Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda it's ears Gvala Pokhara, the beginning of its tail is Balarama Sthali, and the end of its tail is Punchari-kunda (Naval-kunda).

Appearance

Lord Krishna's father Nanda Maharaja once enquired from his brother Upananda how Govardhana hill had appeared in the sacred land of Vrindavana. Upananda replied that King Pandu, father of the Pandavas, had asked this very question to Grandfather Bhishma, who had narrates the following story from the Garga Samhita:

One day in Goloka Vrindavana Lord Krishna informed Srimati Radharani that She should now appear on earth as it was time for Them to perform Their transcendental pastimes within the material world. Radharani replied that unless Vraja Dhama, the Yamuna and Govardhana Hill were present there, She would not be very happy. Krsna then told Radharani that She need not worry as Vraja Dhama, along with the Yamuna and Govardhana Hill had already appeared on earth.

Many years before this incident, in the land of Shalmali dvipa, the wife of the great mountain Dronacal gave birth to a son named Govardhana. At the time of Govardhana's birth all the demigods appeared in the sky and showered flowers upon him. The great mountains, led by the Himalayas and Sumeru, came there to offer their respects.

They then performed parikrama of Govardhana and accepted him as their king. They offered very nice prayers praising Govardhana for having descended from Goloka Vrindavana, describing him as the "crown jewel of Vraja."

Some years later, at the beginning of Satya-yuga, the great sage Pulastya Muni paid a visit to Shalmali dvipa. Upon seeing the beautiful Govardhana Hill covered with many lovely creepers, flowers, rivers, caves and chirping birds, the sage felt that this hill was capable of giving liberation. He then went to meet Dronacal, who immediately offered his respects and inquired from the sage what service he could render.

Pulastya Muni informed Dronacal that he was from Kashi (Benares) and was on pilgrimage to all the holy places. And he said that even though the sacred river Ganges flows through Kashi, there is no beautiful hill. He then asked Dronacal to give Govardhana to him so that he could perform his austerities sitting on top of the hill.

On hearing the sage's request, Dronacal, who was not willing to part with his son, started to shed tears in thought of separation from his beloved Govardhana. Not wanting to see Pulastya Muni become angry and curse his father, Govardhana asked the sage how he would carry him all the way to Kashi. The sage replied that he would carry him in his right hand. Govardhana then agreed to go with the sage on one condition that if the sage put him down anywhere during the course of the journey, he would not be able to lift him again. Pulastya Muni agreed. Carrying Govardhana in his right hand he left for Kashi.

By the will of providence Pulastya Muni passed through Vraja on his way to Kashi. On arriving in Vraja, Govardhana thought that now he was here he should remain in the holy dhama. By his mystic power he was able to influence Pulastya Muni to attend to the call of nature. Unmindful, the sage put Govardhana down and went off to answer the call. But when he returned he was unable to lift Govardhana again. Trying with all his might, using both hands, he could not lift Govardhana even slightly.

In great anger Pulastya Muni then became angry and cursed Govardhana to sink into the ground by the measurement of one mustard seed every day. When Govardhana first came to Vraja in the beginning of Satya-yuga, it is said that Govardhana at that time was 115 km (64 miles) long, 72 km (40 miles) wide and 29 km (16 miles) high. Now the hill is only 80 feet high at its highest point. It is said that after ten thousand years of the Kali-yuga Govardhana will have completely disappeared. It is said by Acaryas that Govardhana is decreasing in size because of separation from Lord Krishna.

After narrating the wonderful story of Govardhana's appearance, Sunanda informed Nanda Maharaja that as long as Govardhana Hill and the river Yamuna remained manifest, Kali-yuga would not take its full effect. Sunanda also said that anyone who is fortunate enough to hear the description of the appearance of Govardhana Hill would be freed from all sins.

Another story about Govardhana dill is that the monkey army of Lord Rama was carrying different stones to construct a bridge to Lanka. This happened in Treta Yuga, when Lord Rama was getting ready to attack Lanka. Hanuman was carrying Govardhana from the Himalayas to help built the bridge. This was on the fifth day of construction. As Hanuman was carrying Govardhana over Braja, Nala and Neela, who were in charge of building the bridge declared that it was completed and no more stones were needed. When Hanuman heard this, he was in Braja Mandala and he placed Govardhana there. Govardhana then starting crying that he was lost in two ways. Now he was taken away from being close to Lord Siva, who lives in the Himalayas and he would not be able to be used in the service of Lord Rama and therefore, be able to see Him. Rama

heard about Govardhana crying and said that in Dwapara Yuga he would be born as Sri Krishna and would hold Govardhana up for seven days and nights to save the residents of Braja.



Govardhana Puja Story (Krishna Book, Chap. 24)

During Dwapara Yuga, Lord Krishna convinced the cowherd men to worship Govardhana, instead of doing a sacrifice to please Lord Indra, the king of heaven, who is charge of the rain. Krishna told the cowherd men that Govardhana Hill was supplying so many necessities and should be worshiped instead.



"His reasons for discouraging the sacrifice performed to please Indra were twofold. First, as stated in the *Bhagavad gita* there is no need to worship the demigods for any material advancement; all results derived from worshipping the demigods are simply temporary, and only those who are less intelligent are interested with temporary results. Secondly, whatever temporary result one derives from worshipping the demigods is actually granted by the permission of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.



"Lord Caitanya has recommended that since Krishna is worshipable, so His land, Vrindavana and Govardhana Hill, are also worshipable. To confirm this statement, Lord Krishna said that Govardhana Puja is as good as worship of Him. From that day, Govardhana Puja has been going on, and is known as Annakuta. In all the temples of Vrindavan or outside of Vrindavana, huge quantities of food are prepared in this ceremony and are very sumptuously distributed to the general population.

"The cowherd men headed by Nanda Maharaja performed Govardhana worship and circumambulation of the hill. Nanda Maharaja and the cowherd men called in learned *brahmanas* and began to worship Govardhana Hill by chanting Vedic hymns and offering *prasadam*. The inhabitants of Vrindavana assembled together, decorated their cows and gave them grass. Keeping the cows in front, they began to circumambulate Govardhana Hill. The *gopis* also dressed themselves very luxuriantly and sat in bull-driven carts, chanting the glories of Krishna's pastimes.





IBR-2218692 - (c) - Olaf Krüger/imagebrok

Assembled there to act as priests for Govardhana Puja, the *brahmanas* offered their blessing to the cowherd men and their wives, the *gopis*. When everything was complete, Krishna assumed a great transcendental form and declared to the inhabitants of Vrindavana that He was Himself Govardhana Hill in order to convince the devotees that Govardhana Hill and Krishna Himself are identical. Then Krishna began to eat all the food offered there. The identity of Krishna and Govardhana Hill is still honored, and great devotees take rocks from Govardhana Hill and worship them exactly as they worship the Deity of Krishna in the temples. Devotees therefore collect small rocks or pebbles from Govardhana Hill and worship them at home, because this worship is as good as Deity worship. The form of Krishna who began to eat the offering was separately constituted, and Krishna Himself along, with other inhabitants of Vrindavana began to offer obeisances to the Deity as well as Govardhana Hill."



After the cowherd men worshiped Govardhana Hill, Lord Indra became angry that he was not worshiped. He then sent torrents of rain upon Vrindavana. The residents of Vrindavana then approached Lord Krishna for help. Krishna then lifted Govardhana Hill and held it over the residents of Vrindavana like an umbrella.



"The inhabitants of Vrindavana and their animals remained there for one week without being disturbed by hunger, thirst or any other discomforts. They were simply astonished to see how Krishna was holding up the mountain with the little finger of His left hand. Seeing the extraordinary mystic power of Krishna, Indra, the King of heaven, was thunderstruck and baffled in his determination. He immediately called for all the clouds and asked them to desist."



After this, Indra came along with a Surabhi cow and offered prayers to Lord Krishna and then worshiped Him.

Lord Caitanya at Govardhana Hill (From Caitanya Caritamrita)



When Lord Caitanya saw Govardhana Hill, He immediately offered obeisances, falling down on the ground like a rod. He embraced one piece of rock from Govardhana Hill and became mad.

Just by seeing Govardhana Hill, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu became ecstatic with love of Krishna. While dancing and dancing and dancing, He recited the following verse from the *Srimad Bhagavatam*:

"Of all the devotees, this Govardhana Hill is the best! O My friends, this hill supplies Krishna and Balarama as well as Their calves, cows and cowherd friends with all kinds of necessities water for drinking, very soft grass, fruits, flowers and vegetables. In this way the hill offers respect to the Lord. Being touched by the lotus feet of Krishna and Balarama, Govardhana Hill appears very jubilant."

Lord Caitanya first bathed in Manasi Ganga and then took *darshan of* Harideva before doing Govardhana *parikrama*.

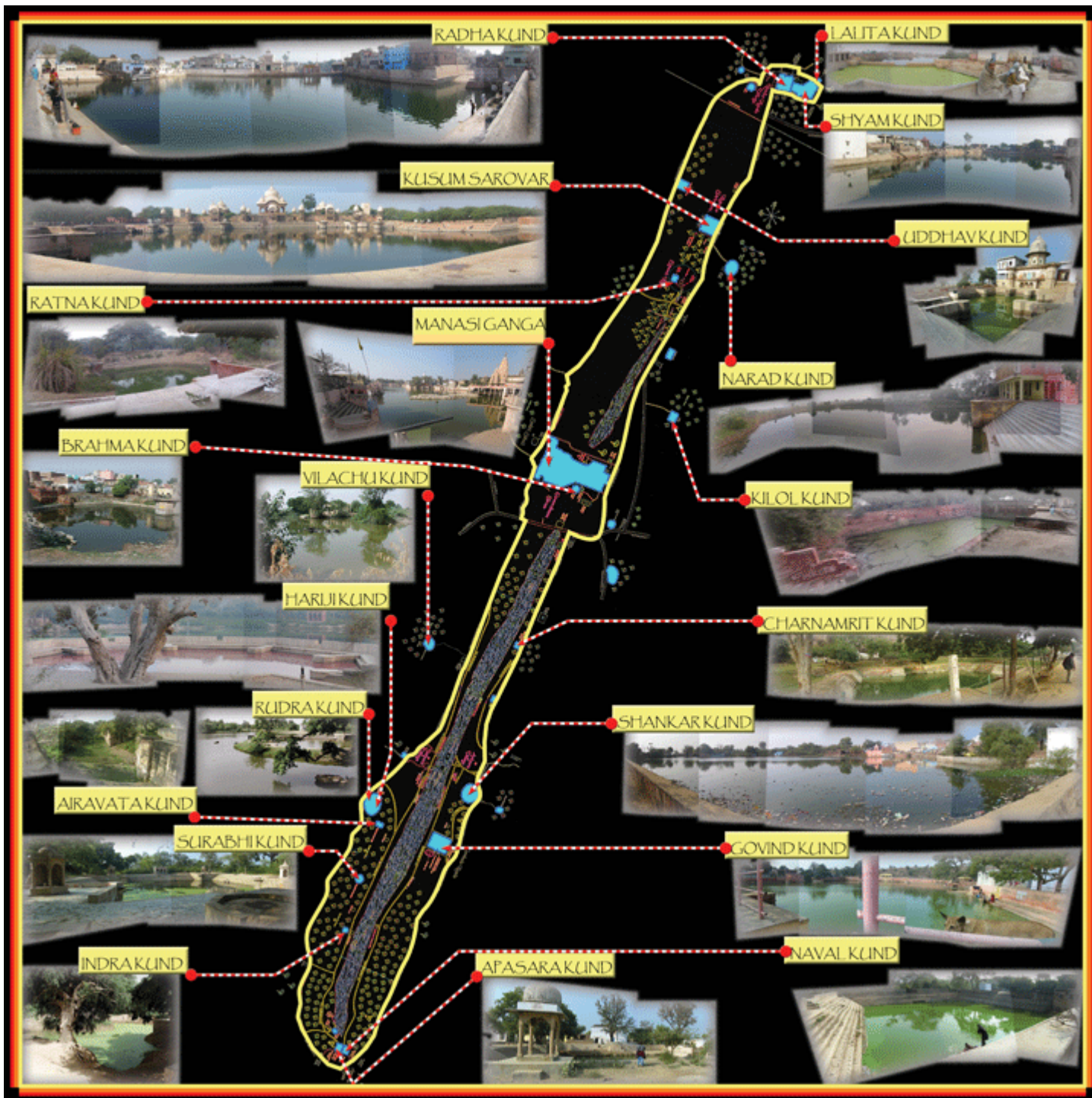
Lord Caitanya instructed: "One should remain in Vrindavana for only a short time and then return here as soon as possible. Also, do not climb Govardhana Hill to see the Gopala Deity."

Govardhana Shilas

Devotees take rocks from Govardhana Hill and worship them exactly as they worship the Deity of Krishna in the temple. This worship is as good as Deity worship. Lord Krishna has appeared as Govardhana-shila (a stone from the hill), so that His devotees may render service to Him. It is important that not just anyone takes a rock from Govardhana Hill. The right to worship a Govardhana-shila should be given only by the *guru* (spiritual master). So his permission should be taken before beginning worship.

Getting To Govardhana Hill

Govardhana Hill is 26 km (14 miles) west of Mathura. By car it takes about forty-five minutes to get to Govardhana Hill from Vrindavana. As Govardhana Hill and Radha Kunda are right next to each other, both can easily be visited on the same trip.



Parikrama

It is the form of worship to walk around Govardhana hill.

To the West of Mathura, at a distance of two yojanas, is Govardhana, the topmost holy place. Anyone who performs its parikrama will never have to take birth in this world again.

- Varaha Purana

Rupa Goswami stated in his Mathura mahatmya that one should first bathe in Manasi Ganga and then take darshan of Harideva before starting parikrama.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PERFORMING PARIKRAMA

In Vraja-bhakti-via the following instructions are found concerning parikrama of Govardhana Hill

1. One should offer proper respect to all the Deities, cows, brahmanas, trees, creepers, rocks and kundas one sees.
2. One should not offend any living entity, moving or non-moving otherwise one will lose the benefits of his parikrama.
3. While performing parikrama one should not wear shoes or leather items and one's cloth should be freshly washed.
4. One must observe brahmacarya and take bath as well as clean teeth before starting parikrama.
5. One should not perform parikrama at night.
6. While performing parikrama one should move carefully so as not to kill any living entities on the path.
7. If one becomes sick during parikrama one should stop and take rest, parikrama should be continued after health is regained.
8. One should not leave his parikrama uncompleted.
9. Women should not perform parikrama during their menstrual period.
10. One should not strain himself while performing parikrama.

The parikrama route around Govardhana hill is 25km. There is also a 40 km outer parikrama path. Sanatana Gosvami would do the outer parikrama while he was staying at Govardhana hill.

The average person goes around Govardhana hill in six or seven hours.

1. MANASI-GANGA

Mana means "mind" and Ganga is another name for the Ganges. Manasi Ganga Kunda is traditionally the starting and ending point of the circumambulation of Govardhana Hill.



Manasi-ganga intensely enjoys the pleasurable taste of the boating pastimes of Gandharvika and Mura-vimardana. With her plentiful waves, she pushes about piles of effulgent rocks from Govardhana Hill. May this lake give me protection.

Vraja-vitas-stava 64 by Raghunatha dasa Gosvami

The beautiful celestial lake known as Manasi-ganga is the largest of all the sacred *kundas* found in the Vraja area. Situated right in the heart of Govardhana town, this lake was formerly much larger than it is today. Just as Govardhana Hill is shrinking in size every day, so is Manasi- ganga.

Manasi-ganga is considered to be nondifferent from the river Ganges. In fact, it is considered to be even better. One who bathes in the river Ganges is purified of all his sins, but one who bathes in Manasi-ganga is not only purified of his sins but will also achieve prema- *bhakti*, the highest platform of loving devotion to Sri Krsna.

THE APPEARANCE OF MANASI-GANGA

One day Krsna and Balarama, along with Their cowherd boyfriends, were tending the cows in the pasture grounds near Govardhana Hill. A demon of the name Vatsasura came there in the disguised form of a calf and with the evil intention of killing Krsna, mingled with the other calves. Krsna however, was aware that this demon was hiding amongst the calves, and He warned Balarama. The transcendental brothers then sneaked up behind the demon calf and Krsna grabbed him by his back legs, whipped him around with great force and threw him up into a nearby tree. The demon immediately gave up his life air and his dead body fell to the ground.

On seeing this cowherd boys enthusiastically congratulated Krsna. Because Krsna had killed a demon in the shape of a calf, the cowherd boys asked Him to take His bath in the river Ganges in order to purify Himself. Not wanting to leave Vraja, Krsna informed the cowherd boys that He would call the river Ganges to appear in Vraja. Krsna then meditated and from within His mind the river Ganges manifested before Him in the form of Manasi-ganga. In other words, the Ganga manifested from the mind of Krsna. Krsna then took his bath to the great delight of all the cowherd boys.



On another occasion Nanda Maharaja, mother Yasoda and the residents of Vrndavana heard a wonderful story about the glories of the river Ganges. They heard that Garuda, the carrier of Lord Visnu, had once captured a large snake near the banks of the Ganges. While he was flying away with the snake in his claws, the tail of the snake accidentally touched the water of the Ganges. Immediately the snake changed into a four-armed form like the residents of Vaikuntha. Amazed, Garuda placed the four-armed personality on his back and carried him all the way to Vaikuntha. Hearing about this wonderful story and the potency of bathing in the Ganges, all the residents of Vraja decided that they would make a pilgrimage to the river Ganges and take bath.

Seeing the arrangements being made for the journey, Krsna informed Nanda and Yasoda that there was no need to go out of Vraja to take bath in the Ganges, as the Ganges was present *in Vraja itself*. However, Nanda Maharaja and the other Vrajavasis thought that as Krsna was just a small child and did not fully understand the matter. But Krsna kept insisting and finally Nanda Baba relented. Accompanied by all the inhabitants of Vrndavana, he followed Krsna to the middle of Govardhana Hill. When Krsna arrived at the shore of Manasi-ganga, Ganga Mata, the river Ganga personified, suddenly appeared from the water and offered prayers to the Lord. When all the inhabitants of Vrndavana saw Ganga Mata they offered their obeisances to her. Then, led by Nanda Maharaja, they all took their holy bath in the Manasi-ganga.

PASTIMES IN MANASI GANGA

Boat Pastime at Manasi Ganga-Srimati Radharani and the *gopis* came to the bank of Manasi Ganga and wanted to take a boat across. Manasi Ganga used to be a large lake, but has gotten much smaller over the years. They were carrying their yogurt pots and other milk preparations. Unfortunately only one very old boat was available and the boatman was just a young boy dressed in a large cloak, with a peacock feather on his head. He agreed and they then bargained for a while over the price. They settled that the price would be some sweets and butter.



He rowed for a while and then just stopped. Srimati Radharani and the *gopis* asked Him why he had stopped. He told them that He was tired and hungry and He could not go any further, if they did not feed Him. In an angry mood the *gopis* refused, but when they saw he was not going to move, they relented and fed him milk-sweets. He ate everything. He then told them that he would take a nap and that they should massage His arms and legs. They told Him if He did not keep rowing they would throw Him overboard. He then started rowing again. He then stopped again and the *gopis* asked Him why He had stopped. Pointing to the floor of the boat he told the *gopis* that his old boat was filling up with water and slowly sinking due to the heavy weight. The boatman also said that unless they threw all their heavy pots overboard, the boat would surely sink. Shocked to hear the words of the boatman, the *gopis* immediately threw their pots of yogurt and butter into the water. Then the boatman told them that the boat was still too heavy and that they should now throw all their jewelry into the water. Reluctantly, the *gopis* took off their beautiful jewelry and threw it into the water. The boatmen then told them that the boat was still too heavy and that they should take off all their clothing and throw that into the water as well. Infuriated at this latest suggestion, the *gopis* angrily informed the boatman that they would throw him into the water and that this would certainly solve the weight problem. Hearing this, the boatman again started rowing, but before he could get much further a storm appeared over the lake. Dark clouds covered the sky and a strong wind started to blow and the waves on the water became agitated. The boatman could see that Radharani and the *gopis* were looking very frightened fearing they might all drown. In order to allay their fears the boatman started to rock his boat back and forth to show its sturdiness. At that moment, terrified that She might fall into the water, Radharani leapt forward and

thrust Her arms around the boatman for safety. As soon as She put Her arms around the boatman, She realized that He was none other than Her beloved Krsna in disguise. Suddenly the clouds cleared, the wind died down, the waves became calm, and the moon suddenly appeared in the evening sky. When all the cowherd girls saw Radharani embracing the boatman they inquired about the meaning of Her behavior. In answer to their inquiry, Radharani pulled Krsna's flute from under His cloak. The gopis then realized that the boatman was actually the transcendental prankster Sri Krsna in disguise. Krsna then took Radharani and the *gopis* on a wonderful boat ride around all the different islands in the Manasi-ganga Lake.



This pastime is described by Jiva Goswami in Gopal champu.

Manasi Ganga Area

There are several important places on the banks of Manasi Ganga or nearby. Close together is the Harideva Temple, Manasi Devi Temple, and Brahma Kunda. On the other side of Manasi Ganga, all in the same area are Chakra Tirtha,

Manasi Devi Temple

The Manasi Devi Temple is on the bank of Manasi Ganga and Brahma Kunda. The devi in this temple, Manasi Devi, is the presiding deity of Manasi Ganga and is one of the four main Devi temples in Braja Mandala. The other three important Devi temples are: Yoga Maya in Vrindavana, Patalesvar Devi in Mathura, and Vrinda Devi in Kamyavana. It is said that by praying at the feet of one of these Goddesses, one may achieve an eternal position in the Vrindavana pastimes of Lord Sri Krsna.



Getting there- If you just turned off the road from the *parikrama* road to go to Manasi Ganga, the Manasi Devi temple is on the left, up some stairs, after about 100m. To get here after leaving the Harideva temple, you make a left after 1017 (30 ft), onto a path. You follow the path around for 20 seconds and this temple is up a flight of stairs on the right. It is a small temple.

Mukharavinda Temple

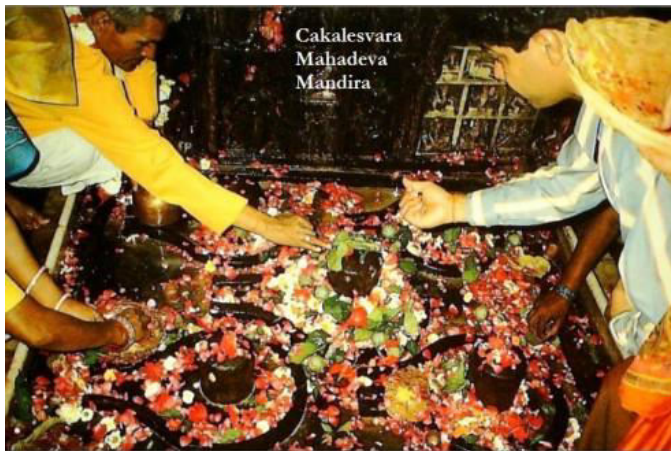
This majestic sandstone temple situated on the banks of Manasi-ganga contains the lotus mouth of Giri-Govardhana. *Mukharvinda* means lotus mouth. Pilgrims visiting the temple bring offerings of milk and sweets to feed the Mukharvinda-sila. Gallons of milk are poured over this sacred Govardhana-sila every day. Although there are a number of other silas that the local people claim to be the Mukharvinda, Srila Bhakti siddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami has confirmed that this sila is actually the real Mukharvinda.



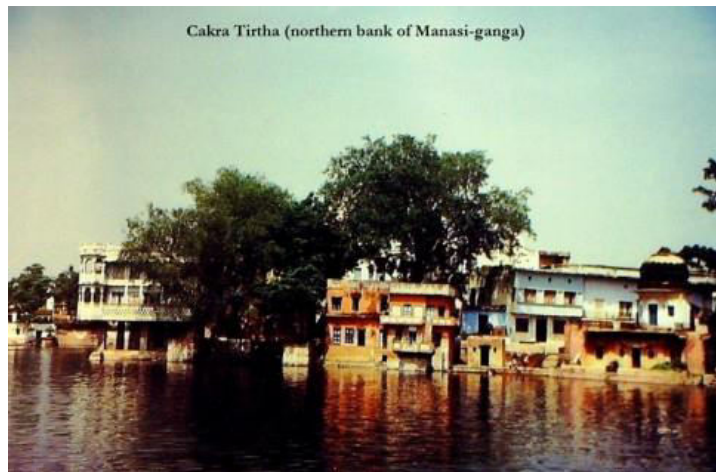
Mukharavinda-sila (front)
and the Mukut-sila

Just behind the Mukharavinda-sila one can see standing upright the Mukut-sila. This sila is marked with the outline of Sri Krsna's mukut (crown). The Vrajavasis traditionally end their parikrama of Govardhana Hill by having darsana at the Mukharvinda temple and then go for a final dip in Manasi-ganga.

Chakra Tirtha



Cakalesvara
Mahadeva
Mandira



Cakra Tirtha (northern bank of Manasi-ganga)

Chakra Tirtha, which was created by the Sudarsana Chakra, is embedded in the northern bank of Manasi Ganga. As Krishna was holding up Govardhana Hill torrents of rain were coming down. Krishna could see that the water would come under the hill and drown everyone. Therefore He had His Sudarsana Chakra stay above the hill for the

entire seven days. The Sudarsana Chakra produced heat equal to many suns which consumed all the rain. Also Sesa Naga came and drank up the rain water. After Krishna replaced Govardhana Hill, the Sudarsana Chakra remained on the northern bank of Manasi Ganga. That place is called Chakra Tirtha.

The Chakra (disc) of Lord Vishnu is called Sudarshana which means "auspicious Vision." The illuminating principles in this world such as the sun, the moon and fire emanate from the effulgence of Sudarsana. Similarly, illumination by knowledge also comes from Sudarsana because with the illumination of Sudarsana one can distinguish one thing from another, the superior from the inferior.

At Chakra Tirtha, Radha and Krishna are said to have first swing pastime.

Getting there- This place is the area where the Chakaleswara Mahadeva Temple is located.



Chakaleswara Mahadeva Temple and Sanatana Gosvami's Bhajana Kutir

Next to the *bhajana kutir* of Sanatana Gosvami is the Chakaleswara Siva-linga Temple. This Siva-linga is one of the five presiding Siva-lingas worshiped in Braja Mandala. It protects this part of the holy *dhama*.

The *bhajana kutir* of Sanatana Gosvami is right next to Manasi Ganga. He would perform Govardhana *parikrain*a as a daily vow. When Sanatana was thinking about moving from this place because of mosquitoes, Lord Siva (Cakaleswara) disguised as a *brahmana* came and told him that the mosquitoes would no longer disturb him. Even now this place is almost free from mosquitoes. This place is within Chakra Tirtha area.

While living here, Sanatana Gosvami would do Govardhana *parikrama* daily and he would often do 1008 *dandavats*. Krishna came to him one day and requested that in his old age he should not continue to keep doing daily *parikrarna*. He then gave Sanatana a Govardhana-shila, which had Krishna's and a cow's footprint imprinted in it. This *shila* is now in the Radha Damodara Temple in Vrindavana.

On the Guru-Purnima, it was the custom of the devotees from Vrndavana to offer worship to Sanatana Gosvami. Headed by the Gosvamis Rupa, Raghunatha dasa, Raghunatha Bhatta, Gopal Bhatta and Jiva, they all came to Sanatana's bhajana kutira at Cakra-tirtha and requested him to lead them on parikrama of Manasi Ganga as he had done every year. When they saw that after long time Sanatana Gosvami did not move but simply sat silently, they realized he had entered into Samadhi.

A great cry of lamentation rent the air as the devotees shed tears in separation of their beloved Sanatana. That was in the year 1558. Sanatana Gosvami was the first of Lord Caitanya's disciple to leave the world, and his disappearance sent shock waves throughout the whole of Vraja as well as Bengal. The Gosvamis brought the sacred body of Sanatana Gosvami in a great procession to entomb it in a beautiful garden next to the Madan-mohan temple on the side of the dvadasaditya Hill.

Getting there- Both these places are right next to each other on the north-eastern side of Manasa Ganga.

Harideva Temple

The Harideva Temple, near Manasi Ganga, was established by Krishna's great-grandson, Vajranabha 5000 years ago. Harideva is one of the four presiding Deities of Vrindavana. Lord Harideva is the presiding Deity for the western petal of the lotus of Braja Mandala. He is the lifter of Govardhana Hill. This temple is architectually interesting. In this temple one can see the *pratibhu-murti* of Lord Harideva.

After bathing in Manasi Ganga, one is supposed to come and *have darshan of Lord* Harideva before beginning Govardhana *parikrama*. Govardhana parikrama without the *darshan of* Harideva is not considered complete.



This temple was built by King Bhagandas of Jaipur, whose son, Raja Man Singh, built the Govindaji Temple in the sixteenth century during the reign of Emperor Akbar. The original Deity of Harideva was moved to the town of Rajdhan near Kanpur, when Aurangzeb sent his soldiers to destroy the Deities and temples of Braja. This Deity of Harideva is still at this place.

There is a very wonderful story about: the appearance of Lord Harideva. One day Srimati Radharani and the gopis were waiting for Krsna to come and meet them near Manasi-ganga. As they were waiting, the gopis started to feel intense separation from Krsna. They then began to chant "*Harideva, Harideva, Harideva*" over and over again, and their feelings of separation intensified so much so, that it appeared they would give up their lives. Suddenly a most beautiful Deity of Krsna as a seven-year-old boy appeared there, holding Govardhana Hill in His left hand and His transcendental flute in the other. The ecstasy Radharani and the gopis felt on seeing that beautiful form knew no bounds. Radharani and the gopis performed all kinds of worship to the Deity and made many wonderful offerings. After the appearance of Govardhana-natha Harideva, Radharani and the gopis would come here every day to worship this beautiful Deity.

Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu also visited this ancient temple on His pilgrimage to Vrndavana in 1515. Upon seeing the beautiful Deity of Lord Harideva, Lord Caitanya danced in ecstasy for hours. The local Vraj avasis were completely astonished to see Lord Caitanya's ecstatic love for Lord Harideva.

Getting there- This temple is about a minute walk from the south bank of Manasi Ganga.

Brahma Kunda

After Indra bathed Lord Krishna, all the demigods, holy rivers and sages offered prayers to Lord Krishna and then bathed Him. At this time Brahma also bathed Lord Krishna. Brahma Kunda is the water that collected after Lord Brahma bathed Krishna. Brahma Kunda is located on the southern bank of Manasi Ganga. Lord Brahma permanently resides here. At one time there were also *kundas* created by Indra (east), Yamaraja (south), Varuna (west), and Kuvera (north) around this *kunda*. These *kundas* are now gone. Most of the one hundred and eight *kundas* situated around Govardhana Hill have also disappeared.

It is said that after bathing in Manasi-ganga and having darshana of Harideva, Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu rested here for some time. Lord Nityananda also rested at Brahma-kunda when He came on pilgrimage to Vraja some years before Lord Caitanya.

Getting there- This *kunda* is directly next to the Manasi Devi Temple, close to Manasi Ganga and the Harideva Temple.

Krishna-Balarama and Nanda Maharaja Temple

In this temple are the Deities (from left to right) of Nanda Maharaja, Balarama, Krishna, Mother Yasoda and Radharani. It is said that Nanda Maharaja, Krishna, Balarama and the residences of Braja spent the night here after completing Govardhana Puja.

Getting there- If you just came out of Chakra Tirtha and proceed to the left for about 40m (120 ft.), when the road turns left, on your right hand side is this temple.

2. Dana Ghati

Dan Ghati means "the place where taxes were collected." Dan Ghati is a pass to cross to the other side of Govardhana Hill. This place is on top of Govardhana Hill, where the Mathura Road crosses Govardhana Hill. The shape of Govardhana Hill is like a peacock. This place is said to be the narrow stretch of the peacock's neck.



The *gapis* would pass through here with their stock of milk, butter, cheese and yogurt on their way to the other side of Govardhana Hill. One time, the *gapis* were crossing Govardhana Hill with their stock of milk products to bring them to a big *yajna* (sacrifice) that was being conducted at Govinda Kunda. Krishna, along with the cowherd boys

such as Sridama, Madhumangala and Sudama came and blocked the pass. Krishna and his friends told the *gopis* that they had to pay a tax. The *gopis*, such as Lalita and Visakha challenged Krishna. They said, who are you to charge us tax. Krishna told them that this place belongs to me, because I am the King of Braja. The *gopis* tried to get through without paying the tax, but eventually they were forced to give a little of all the items they had. Srila Rupa Gosvami describes this pastime in detail in his book, *Dana Keli Kaumudi*.

The Dani Raya Temple is on top of Govardhana Hill. At the present time there is no worship in this temple. It is said that Vajranabha built a temple here because of the tax pastimes that took place here. After you leave the town of Govardhana, after a few minutes, you will see this temple on top of Govardhana Hill.

Getting there- This is the road in the town of Govardhana that the Laksmi Narayana temple is on. This road goes over Govardhana Hill. You are on this road when you make the turnoff to leave the town of Govardhana.

3. ISKCON Govardhana



This place is an old palace with a good size yard and a new stone boundary wall. It is a peaceful place to spend the day, or a good place to rest while doing Govardhana *parikrama*.

Getting there- This place is about half a km out of the town of Govardhana, on the left side of the *parikrama* path. There is a sign saying ISKCON in the wall.

4. Dan Nivartan Kunda

Dan-nivartan means "the place where the tax was excused." After Krishna had taxed the *gopis*, the *gopis* wanted to get revenge. So all the *gopis* got together and hid in the forest. At that time, Krishna was walking through the forest with just a few friends. The *gopis* caught Krishna and His friends. They then made Krishna bow down to Srimati Radharani and beg her for forgiveness, as punishment for making them pay a tax.



Getting there- This *kunda* (15m by 20m) is on the right side of the *parikrama* path, right next to Govardhana Hill. It is about 250m pass the ISKCON property and one km outside of the town of Govardhana.

5. Aniyora

After leaving the town of Govardhana, you come to the village of Aniyora. This town is about 3 km (2 miles) from the town of Govardhana on the *parikrama* path. It is said that the cowherd boys and girls had wonderful pastimes here with Krishna.



In Bengali, *aniyora* means "bring more." In this village, the Annakuta festival took place. After the residences of Braja offered a huge feast to Govardhana, Krishna assumed a huge form and declared that He was actually Govardhana Hill. He then ate all the offered food. Govardhana Hill then asked the cowherd men to "bring more." This is why this place is named Aniyora.

6. Sankarshana Kunda and Balarama Temple



Sankarshana is an expansion of Lord Balarama. It is said in the *Adi Varaha Purana* that by taking bath in this *kunda* the sin of killing a cow is removed. Not far from this *kunda*, at Sringer Stali, is where Madhavendra Puri found the Gopala Deity.

Near this *kunda* is a Balarama temple called the Sankarshana Temple. The Balarama Deity in this temple is said to have been installed by Vajranabha about 4,900 years ago. This Deity was put in Sankarshana Kunda during a Muslim attack. The present temple is about 200 years old. The Deity of Balarama is black and is about 5 feet tall. Next to Balarama is a small Deity of Krishna.

The Annakuta festival was celebrated between Dan Nivartana Kunda and Sankarshana Kunda.

Getting there- This *kunda* is next to the village of Aniyora. From the road that goes around the village, it is on the right. If you are walking through the village or close to the hill it is on your left. It is about 400m from Govinda Kunda.

The Balarama temple is a fairly small temple that looks like a house, next to the road that goes through the village.

Darshan times for the Sankarshana Temple are 8 to 11 am and 4 to 8 pm.

7.Gopala Prakata Sthali



Madhavendra Puri found the Deity of Gopala at this place while staying at Govinda Kunda, about 500 years ago, This place is very close to Govardhana Hill, so one has to be careful not to step on Govardhana when coming to this place. Sri Gopala was discovered before Lord Caitanya came to Vrindavana.

This Gopala Deity is now known as Sri Nathaji and is worshiped at Nathdwar in Rajasthan.

Getting there- This place is almost right next to Govardhana Hill, below where the old temple of Gopala is located, on the edge of the village of Aniyora. It is about a minute walk from Sankarsana Kunda.

Gopala

Sri Gopala (Nathaji) is a beautiful black marble Deity of Lord Krishna, standing with His hand upraised lifting Govardhana Hill. Sri Gopala is Lord Krishna in His pastime of lifting Govardhana Hill. This Deity was originally installed by Vajranabha, the great-grandson of Lord Krishna, 4900 years ago. The Lord's left hand is upraised. His right hand, closed in a fist, rests on His hip. His eyes glance downward affectionately at His devotees. Sri Nathaji is a very special and beautiful Deity.

The Deity appears in a large black stone from which His form emerges in bas-relief. The stone around the Deity bears several marks: two cows, a snake, a lion, two peacocks, a parrot by the Lord's head, two sages seated on His right side and a third on His left, and then below the sages is another snake. Around the Lord's neck is a flower garland, resembling a black snake.

After Madhavendra Puri left Vrindavana, two brahmans from Bengal served the Gopala Deity. After time had passed, Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami saw that there was a need to find a devotee to serve Gopala. He gave this service to Vitthala, the son of Vallabhacarya.

Sri Nathaji was brought to Nathdwar by Rana Raja Singh of Mewar, in the 17th century. The temple of Sri Nathaji in Nathdwar is said to be the second richest temple in India, after the Balaji Temple in Tirupati.

Discovery Of Gopala

Once Sri Madhavendra Puri traveled to Vrindavana, where he came upon Govardhana. Madhavendra Puri was almost mad in his ecstasy of love of Godhead, and he did not know whether it was day or night. Sometimes he stood up, and sometimes he fell to the ground. He could not discriminate whether he was in a proper place or not. After circumambulating the hill, Madhavendra Puri went to Govinda Kunda and took his bath. He then sat beneath a tree to take his evening rest.

While he was sitting beneath a tree, an unknown cowherd boy came with a pot of milk, placed it before Madhavendra Puri, and, smiling, addressed him as follows, "Please drink the milk I have brought. Why don't you beg some food to eat? What kind of meditation are you undergoing?"

When he saw the beauty of that boy, Madhavendra Puri became very satisfied. Hearing His sweet words, he forgot all hunger and thirst.

Madhavendra Puri said, "Who are You? Where do You reside? And how did You know that I was fasting?"

The boy replied, "Sir, I am a cowherd boy, and I reside in this village. In My village, no one fasts. In this village a person can beg food from others and thus eat. Some people drink only milk, but if a person does not ask anyone for food, I supply him all his eatables. The women who come here to take water saw you, and they supplied Me with this milk and sent Me to you. I must go very soon to milk the cows, but I shall return and take back this milk pot from you."

Saying this, the boy left the place. Indeed, He suddenly could be seen no more, and Madhavendra Puri's heart was filled with wonder.

After drinking the milk, Madhavendra Puri washed the pot and put it aside. He looked towards the path, but the boy never returned. Madhavendra Puri could not sleep. He sat and chanted the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*, and at the end of the night he dozed a little, and his external activities stopped. In a dream Madhavendra Puri saw the very same boy.

The boy came before him and holding his hand, took him to a bush in the jungle. The boy showed Madhavendra Puri the bush and said, "I reside in this bush, and because of this I suffer very much from severe cold, rain showers, winds, and scorching heat. Please bring the people of the village and get them to take Me out of this bush. Then place Me nicely on top of the hill."

"Please construct a temple on the top of that hill," the boy continued, "and install Me in that temple. After this, wash Me with large quantities of cold water so that My body may be cleansed. For many days I have been observing you, and I have been wondering. When will Madhavendra Puri come here to serve Me? I have accepted your service due to your ecstatic love for Me. Thus I shall appear, and by My audience all fallen souls will be delivered. My name is Gopala. I am the lifter of Govardhana Hill. I was installed by Vajranabha, and here I am the authority. When the Mohammedans attacked, the priest who was serving Me hid Me in this bush in the jungle. Then he ran away out of fear of the attack. Since the priest went away, I have been staying in this bush. It is very good that you have come here. Now just remove Me with care.'" (*Caitanya Caitamrita* Madhya 4.21-43).

Madhavendra then went to the place where this boy instructed him to go and found the Gopala Deity. A grand installation was held for Sri Gopala.

Gopal temple is on the top of Govardhana Hill, not far from Sankarsana Kunda.

8. Gauri Kunda

Sri Rupa Gosvami describes the pastime that took place here in *Vidagdha Madhava Nataka*. One day Abhimanyu, the husband of Radharani, decided to bring Radharani to Mathura to keep her away from Krishna. He went to Purnamasi and asked her for her blessing to do this. She told him that whatever he had heard was just rumors. She convinced Abhimanyu not go to Mathura and to return home. Abhimanyu then requested Purnamasi to have Radharani start worshiping Gauri Devi. His mother, Jatila, had told him that Chandravali had started worshiping Gauri Devi and her husband Govardhana Malla had become very rich.

Radha then went to worship Gauri Devi. Krishna then came and blocked Her path. After a long argument Radha chastised Krishna and went to pick some flowers for Gauri Devi. Abhimanyu then heard from Padma *gopi* that Radha and Krishna were together at the Gauri Temple, so he rushed there.

Krishna then went to the Gauri Temple and dressed up like Gauri Devi, and stood in front of the Deity of Gauri Devi, blocking the real deity of Gauri. After picking some flowers, Radharani went and offered prays to Gauri Devi. At this time Abhimanyu came rushing into the temple. Gauri Devi (actually Krishna) then tells

Abhimanyu that there is a great danger in store for him. He asked Vrinda Devi to tell him what it is. Vrinda Devi then told him that Kamsa plans to cut off his head in two days. Radharani then begged Gauri Devi to help him. Gauri said she would help him if Radharani promised that she would never leave Braja and would always render service to me. Abhimanyu promised that this would happen. Abhimanyu then canceled any plans of going to Mathura.

Getting there- To get here you make a left from the road that goes around the village of Aniyora, immediately after passing Sankarshana Kunda. If you are walking through the village of Aniyora it is down a road, on the other side of Sankarshana Kunda.

9. Govinda Kunda

Govinda Kunda is about 400m after the village of Aniyora. This is where Lord Indra offered prayers and bathed Krishna, after Krishna lifted Govardhana Hill. This *kunda* was made by the bathing ceremony. Krishna's feet were bathed with Ganges water, milk, *tulasi manjaris* and lotus flowers. This *kunda* was originally filled with these ingredients from the *abhiseka* (bathing ceremony).

In the purport to *Caitanya Caritamrita* Madhya 18.37 it is stated. "Govinda Kunda is exalted for its many spiritual activities. It was here that Indra was defeated by Lord Krishna, and Indra offered his prayers and bathed Lord Govinda. In the *Mathura-khanda* it is also stated: 'Simply by bathing in Govinda Kunda, one is awarded liberation. This lake was produced when Bhagavan Sri Krishna was bathed by Lord Indra.'"



"In this way, Krishna was bathed by the milk of the *surabhi* cows, and Indra bathed Krishna by the water of the celestial Ganges through the trunk of his elephant carrier. After this, the heavenly King Indra, along with the *surabhi* cows and all the other demigods and their mothers, worshiped Lord Krishna by bathing Him with Ganges water and the milk of the *surabhis*." (*Krishna Book*, Chap. 27)

While Madhavendra Puri was staying at Govinda Kunda a beautiful blackish boy came to him and gave him a pot of milk. Later in a dream this same boy came and told him where the Deity of Gopala was located

Getting there- This *kunda* is a large *kunda* (100m by 100m), about 400m out of the town of Aniyora. It is next to Govardhana Hill and from the paved.

Gopala Temple

This temple is next to Govinda Kunda. The worship at this temple is supervised by the Gosvamis of the Govindaji temple in Jai pur.

Indra Tila

This is where Lord Indra and mother Surabhi are said to have bathed Lord Krishna. The water from the bathing gathered in Govinda Kunda.



Getting there- Indra Tila (hill) is a small hill (about 20 feet high) on the southern bank of Govinda Kunda. If you are facing Govinda Kunda and Govardhana, it is in front of you, to your left. It is a little difficult to see it because of the buildings near it.

Radha Govinda Temple

The Radha Govinda Temple is located between Nipa Kunda and Govinda Kunda. The Deity of Govinda in this temple is about three and a half feet tall and is playing a flute. The Deity in this temple is said to have been originally installed by Vajranabha.



Getting there- If you are standing looking at Govinda Kunda and Govardhana Hill, this temple is directly behind you. It is a fairly good-sized temple, with a temple tower over the Deities.

Darshan times are 7 to 11 am and 4 to 9 pm.

10. Nipa Kunda

There used to be many *kadamba* trees on the banks of this *kunda*. Many of their leaves were in the shape of cups. It is said that Krishna and the cowherd boys would use the leaves of these trees to eat on. There is only one *kadamba* tree here now. Nipa means "*kadamaba* trees."

This *kunda* is just about dried up. There is a well next to the *kunda* where water from Nipa Kunda can be gotten.

Getting there- This *kunda* is between the paved road and Govinda Kunda. If you are standing facing Govinda Kunda, this *kunda* is directly behind you, on the other side of the Radha Govinda Temple. Most people do not know about this *kunda*.

11. Jhulan (Govardhana) Shila

If you proceed along the side of Govardhana Hill you come to a large Govardhana-shila. On the *shila* is Radha and Krishna sitting on a swing being pushed by Radha's girlfriends. This *shila* is not so easy to find.

12. Doka Dauji (Balarama Sthali)



This small temple is on top of Govardhana Hill. The black Deity of Balarama in this temple is in a crouching position. The story of this Deity is that there was once a *rasa-lila* dance being done near Govardhana Hill. Balarama, who was on top of Govardhana Hill in a crouching position, became so absorbed in watching the *rasa* dance that he took on a blackish color like Krishna.

At the foot of Govardhana, on the left of the small path that leads to the Balarama temple is the impression of Balarama's crown. It is on a rock, about 10m (30 ft) from the *parikrama* path.

Getting there- After leaving Govinda Kunda, if you walk on the dirt path which is right next to the hill for about five minutes, you will see this temple on top of the hill.

13. Navala Kunda (Punchari Kunda)

Navala means "evergreen." Govardhana Hill is said to resemble a peacock. This *kunda* is also called Punchari Kunda because this area is the tail (*brunch*) of Govardhana. Punchari is part of the area where Krishna performed the spring *rasa* dance with the *gopis*. On the bank of this *kunda* is the Navala-bihari temple.



Getting there- This *kunda* is right next to Apsara Kunda. This *kunda* is at the opposite end of Govardhana Hill from Radha Kunda.

14. Apsara Kunda

This *kunda* is at the tail end of Govardhana. Apsara Kunda is said to have been created when the seven main Apsaras came and bathed Lord Krishna. The beautiful ladies of the heavenly planets are known as Apsaras. This pastime is said to have happened when Indra bathed Krishna. The beautiful forest near Apsara Kunda is called Apsara Vana. In the *Varaha Purana* it is said that if you bathe in this *kunda* you get the benefit of performing hundreds of *rajasuya* and *aswamedha* sacrifices.

On the bank of Apsara Kunda is the Apsara-bihari temple.



To the left of this temple is the Dauji (Balarama) temple. There is also a small Siva temple next to this *kunda*, with a Siva-linga in it called Apsara Iswara.

15. Narasimha Temple



Next to Navala Kunda, on a small hill, is a Narasimha Temple. You can get a good view of Govardhana Hill from the top of the temple, if you can get up there.

Rasa Sthali

This place is close to Punchari. Krishna is said to have performed His *rasa-lila* pastimes here. In this area there are *tamaal* and *kadamba* trees that are in pairs. These trees are said to date back 5,000 years ago and are said to have witnessed the *rasa-lila* dance.

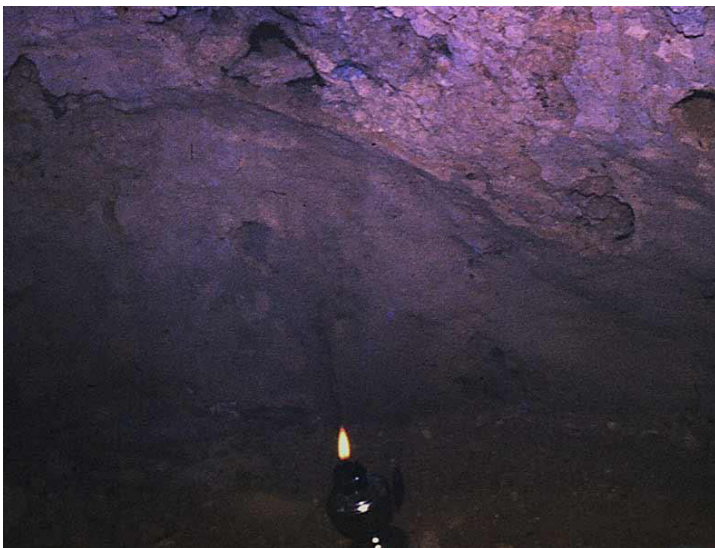
16. Raghava Pandit's Bhajana Kutir and Sotalavana Forest

Just after passing Apsara Kunda, you enter the forest of Sotalavana, and close by is Sutala Kunda. Next to this *kunda* is the Sri Nathaji temple. This temple is less than a hundred years old.

If you go around the Nathaji temple you come to a Mani Kandali Cave. It is said that Radha and Krishna used to have pastimes in this cave. The mouth of this cave is now sealed.

Raghava Pandita, a close associate of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, used to do *bhajana* in this cave. He knew most of Krishna's pastime places in Braja. He is described in *Gaura Ganoddesa Dipika* as being Sri Campakalata Sakhi, one of the eight main *gopis*. He is one of the main personalities in *Bhaktiratnakara*, by Narahari Cakravarti.

Getting there- The Mani Kandali cave is close to Apsara Kunda. To get here you walk along the side of Apsara Kunda towards Govardhana Hill. The dirt path bents to the left and you walk about 170m.



You will then see a dirt path that goes left towards the main *paiikrama* road, and right toward Govardhana Hill. You take the right path for about Nathaji Temple. In front of you and a little to the right, in the woods, is Sutala Kunda. If you walk straight and then go to the left, around the Nathaji Temple, you come to Mani Kandali cave.

17. Punchari Ka Lautha Baba Temple

This temple is dedicated to Lautha, a friend of Krishna, who sat and waited for Krishna to return to Vrindavana from Mathura. Because this temple is close to Punchari he has become known as Punchari Ka Lautha. The deity of Lautha is red and he is sitting. This deity is one of the most famous in Braja.



When Akrura was taking Krishna away to Mathura, Lautha asked Krishna when He would return. Krishna told him he would return the day after tomorrow. Lautha said he would not eat or drink anything until He returned. He then came to this place and sat down. This deity of Lautha is still waiting for Krishna to return.

Getting there- This temple is about 70m from Apsara Kunda, on the main *parikrama* path. It is a bigger than average road-side temple.

Kadamba Van



Surabhi Kunda, Indra Kunda and Airavata Kunda are all in Kadamba Van forest. It is said that Radha and Krishna would meet in this forest and have pastimes here. After you leave the Apsara Kunda area you can either walk on the dirt path, close to Govardhana Hill, or follow the paved road.

18. Surabhi Kunda

This place is where Surabhi got Indra forgiven, for the great offense that he committed against Krishna and the residences of Braja. It is a good-size *kunda* in the middle of the Kadamba Van forest.



Lord Indra asked the Surabhi cow to come with him to ask for the mercy of Lord Krishna, after Indra offended Him. Indra then went before Krishna and offered his obeisances. Then Surabhi approached Lord Krishna and asked Him to forgive Lord Indra.

"The transcendental *surabhi* cow, who also came with Inds to see Krishna, offered her respectful obeisances unto Him and worshiped Him. The *surabhi* offered her prayers to Krishna as follows. "My dear Lord Krishna, You are the most powerful of all mystic *yogis* because You are the soul of the complete universe, and from You only all this cosmic manifestation has taken place. Therefore, although Indra tried his best to kill my descendant cows in Vrindavana, they remain under Your shelter, and You have protected them all so well. We do not know anyone else as the Supreme, nor do we go to any other god or demigods for protection. Therefore, You are our Indra, You are the Supreme Father of the whole cosmic manifestation, and You are the protector and elevator of all the cows, *brahmanas*, demigods and others who are pure devotees of Your Lordship. O Supersoul of the universe, let us bathe You with our milk because You are our Indra. O Lord, You appear just to diminish the burden of impure activities on the earth." (*Krishna Book*, Chap 27)

Getting there- If you are on the inside dirt *parikrama* path, this *kunda* is about 1½ km from Apsara Kunda. This *kunda* is about 30m (100 ft) to the left of the *parikrama* path, through a few trees. You will see a red sandstone building.

19. Indra Kunda



It is said that this *kunda* was made when Indra fell at the feet of Krishna. Tears flowed from his eyes and bathed the feet of Krishna. This water formed this *kunda*.

Getting there- If you stand with your back to Surabhi Kunda and face Govardhana Hill, this *kunda* is about a 100 metres to the right, close to Govardhana Hill.

20. Airavata Kunda

Airavata is the elephant carrier of Lord Indra. Airavata came and put water from the Ganges here, with which he bathed Lord Krishna. This *kunda* is close to Surabhi Kunda.

Getting there- This *kunda* is on your left hand side, if you continue on the inside *parikrama* path another 250m past Surabhi Kunda. It is a good-sized *kunda* with a three foot wall around it.

21. Rudra Kunda (Rudan Kunda)

After proceeding on the *parikrama* path from Airavata Kunda, for about ten minutes, you come to this *kunda*. Lord Siva meditated on Krishna here.

It is said that Lord Siva shed tears (*rudan*) of love for Radha and Krishna here. Rudra is another name for Siva. There is a Siva temple close to this *kunda*. It is said that Radha and Krishna would come and bath in this *kunda*. This *kunda* is on the left side of the paved *parikrama* path in Jati Pura.

22. Jati Pura

Jati Pura is named after Madhavendra Puri, who was *a sannyasi* (in the renounced order), or *yati*. *Yati* means "*sannyasa*." *Jati* is the modern corruption. *Pura means* "town." This town is called Jati Pura because Madhavendra Puri used to live here. He worshiped the Deity of Gopala (Sri Nathaji) here. This town is also known as Gopala Pura.

Sringa Sthali

At Sringa Sthali devotees pour milk over a large Govardhana shila. Hundreds of litres of milk are poured on Govardhana daily at this place. This is on the western side of Govardhana Hill. Sri Gopala revealed himself to Madhavendra Puri on the eastern side of the hill. Sri Gopala was worshiped in a temple on top of the hill. You can see the temple on top of the hill at this place.

The *samadhis* of Vallabhacarya and his son Vithala are located directly in front of Sringa Sthali. The worship of Gopala was entrusted to Vithala.

Getting there- This place is in the town of Jati Pura, right next to Govardhana Hill.

From Jati Pura

From Sringa Stali you then walk along the side of Govardhana Hill for about two minutes and you come to a small temple that contains the well-dressed Dandavati-shila. From here you make a left and return to the *parikrama* path. As you leave Jati Pura you come to Surya Kunda. This *kunda* is on the left hand side, a short distance into the fields. This *kunda* is always dry and is called Sukda Kunda by the locals.

23. Vilasa Vana and Vilachu Kunda

About halfway between Jati Pura and the town of Govardhana is the Satya Narayana temple. This temple is a small road-side temple about a km from Jati Pura. You can see the Deity of Satya Narayana from the road. In you proceed into the fields, which are directly behind the temple, for a km you come to Vilasa Vana and Vilachu Kunda. On the southern bank of Vilachu Kunda is a broken stone seat. It is said that Radharani and Krishna would sit there and talk together. The Deity of Harideva was hidden here during the Moghul rule, when the Muslim would destroy temples and Deities.

Govardhana Town

The path gets a little tricky when you enter the town of Govardhana. You go on the main road, then you make a right and a left and go through the main bazaar. There may be a detour before this point that goes to the left. After walking through the main bazaar for ten minutes the road bends to the right and after passing the town hall you make a left turn. This road then goes straight going pass Uddhava Kunda, until you reach the town surrounding Radha Kunda.

On the way through the town of Govardhana you can stop at Chakra Tirtha, which is on the bank of Manasi Ganga. Just before you leave the town of Govardhana, you can see Manasi Ganga on the right side of the road. Manasi Ganga is only about 20m (60 ft) wide at this place. You turn right at this place to get to Chakra Tirtha.

On the road going from the *parikrama* path to Chakra Tirtha, there is a temple (house) that is said to mark the place where Saubari Rishi resided after he got married.

After leaving Govardhana town you come to Sakhi Vana.

24. Sakhi Vana and Sakhi Sthali (Sakhikhara)

This is the place of Chandravali. This place is where she used to meet Krishna. There is a run-down *kunda* here on the left hand side of the *parikranta* path. This *kunda* is called **Sakhi Kunda**. It is said to have been created by the 64 *sakhis* (girlfriends) of Chandravali. Chandravali is the transcendental competitor of Srimati Radharani for the attention of Krishna.

At this place Chandravali lived with her husband, Govardhana Malla, who was a close friend of Abhimanyu. Her 64 *sakhis* also lived here. Krishna had pastimes with the cowherd boys at this place.

Getting there- This place is about 3/4 km (half a mile) from the town of Govardhana. Sakhi Kunda is a fairly small kunda, which looks like it has not been used for a while.

25. Uddhava Kunda



This is the place where Uddhava, after meeting with the *gopi*, desired to have a future birth as an insignificant clump of grass in Braja. As you approach Uddhava Kunda, on the right side there is a small temple with Radha-Krishna Deities. These Deities are said to have been installed by Vajranabha.

Getting there- This place is a few km pass the town of Govardhana, on the right side of the road. You cannot see this *kunda* from the road. This *kunda* is about a half hourwalk from the town of Govardhana. It is next to a group of building. This *kunda* is on the back side of Kusuma Sarovara, on the other side of Govardhana Hill.

26. Siva Khari (Siva Pushkarani)

You then walk awhile until you reach Siva Khari Kunda, which is on the right hand side of the *parikrama* path. The word *Siva* with a long i means "jackal."

Between the path and the *kunda* is a very small temple (3 ft high, 4ft by 4 ft) dedicated to Lord Siva who is known as Ramesvara. Lord Siva stays here to protect Radha Kunda.

There is a story about Siva Khari in the *Padma Parana*, *Vrindavana Mahatmya*. Once a female jackal was drinking some water from the *kunda* here. Some children came and started beating the jackal with some sticks. The jackal hid in a nearby fox hole. The children built a fire in front of the hole to catch the jackal. Srimati Radharani was passing by at this time and heard the cries of the jackal. She said, "No one should be distressed in my favorite place (the area of Radha Kunda)." Radharani then sent some *gopis* to chase the children away. The *gopis* then brought the jackal to Radharani. The jackal fell down before her crying. Srimati Radharani patted the jackal and blessed the jackal with eternal service.

Getting there- If you are doing Govardhana *parikranaa*, this *kunda* is on the right as you are entering the town around Radha Kunda. It is about 15 minutes from Uddhava Kunda. About 35m after this *kunda* the *parikrama* path turns to the left.

To get here from Radha Kunda, you first go to the Banke Bihari Gaudiya Math temple, and then you walk backwards on the Govardhana *parikrama* path about 150m. At the intersection make a right and walk 35m. The body of water on the left side is Siva Khari.

27. Malyahari Kunda

It is said that the *gopis*, after picking flowers at Kusuma Sarovara, would come here and make them into garlands. Malyahari Kunda is a small *kunda*. There is a sweet water well next to this *kunda* called Malyahari well.

At this place Krishna and the *gopis* had a pastime here which involved pearls. This pastime is described by Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami in his *Sri Mukta Charita*. Krishna told this story to one of His wives in Dwarka, Satyabhama. Krishna came to Malyahari Kunda and saw *the gopis* stringing pearl necklaces. He asked Radharani and the *gopis* to give Him some pearls to decorate His favorite cows, who were named Harini and Hasini, which they refused to do. Lalita Devi told Him that she did not have even one pearl suitable for decorating His cows.



Beautiful Malyahari-kunda, site of
Radha and Krishna's Pearl Pastimes

I went home and asked Mother Yasoda for some pearls to plant a garden. She laughed and told me that everyone knows that pearls come from oysters. She eventually gave me some pearls and I planted them in a field. After a few days, some creepers grew, which began to produce some big pearls. The *gopis* wanted some of these pearls, but I did not give them even one of them.

The *gopis* then tried to grow their own pearl garden. They collected all the pearls they had, not even keeping one, and planted them in a field. Not even one pearl grew. Fearing that their elders would punish them the *gopis* came to me and asked me for some of my pearls. I told them that they would have to come individually. At first we could not reach an agreement for me to give them some pearls.

Krishna then strung some pearls into necklaces and put them in golden boxes. He gave the first box to Radharani and then sent a box to all the *gopis*. In return, Radharani sent Krishna some scented garlands, betel nut, and some food that She personally cooked.

Getting there- If you are doing Govardhana *parikrarna*, you reach here by making a left onto the path just before Siva Khor Kunda. You walk to the end of the road and make another left. A short distance down the road, on the left, is Malyahari Kunda.

To get here from Radha Kunda you first go to the Radha Kunja Bihari Temple. From the Radha Kunja Bihari Temple you walk 40m (120 ft) back-wards on the Govardhana *parikrarna* path. You turn right onto the cobble-stone road, which is just after a big tree surrounded by a low stone wall, on the right hand side of the road. When the road bends to the right after 250m, on the left side is Malyahari Kunda.

28. RADHA KUNDA AND SYAMA KUNDA



This is a very tranquil and peaceful place. It is considered by Gaudiya Vaishnavas to be the most holy place in the Braja area. It is a very important place to visit. There are two holy tanks here, right next to each other. The town here is also known as Aristavan. In this village, the demon Aristasura was killed by Krishna. Radha Kunda is 26 km (16 miles) west of Mathura.

For years Radha Kunda and Syama Kunda were lost and no one knew exactly where they were located. When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to Vrindavana in 1514, He rediscovered these two important *kundas*.

Part of the *parikrama* of Govardhana Hill is going around Radha and Syama Kunda. Radharani and Krishna have their midday pastimes at Radha Kunda.

When Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami first stayed at Radha Kunda, Radha Kunda and Syama Kunda were only 12 feet by 12 feet in size. At that time one rich man named Sampanna went to Badrinath to offer Lord Narayana a large donation. In a dream, Lord Krishna told him to go to Radha Kunda and give the money to Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami to renovate the *kundas*, which he did. Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami and Jiva Gosvami supervised the expansion of the *kundas* around 1554.

In the center of Radha Kunda is a small walled-in area called Kancana Kunda. This *kunda* is said to mark the location of the original *kunda* that Srimati Radharani and the *gopis* dug with their bangles. It is said that Vajranabha built a bathing tank at Syama Kunda to commemorate the place where Krishna killed Aristasura. When there is water in Syama Kunda this *kunda* cannot be seen. When Syama Kunda is empty, you can see a wall encircling a small deep *kunda* in the center of Syama Kunda. This *kunda* is called Vajranatha Kunda. Syama Kunda is also known as Arista Kunda. In the eight directions surrounding Radha Kunda are the *kunjas* (garden groves) of Sri Radha's *asta-sakhis* (eight main *gopis*). They are the *kunjas* of Lalita Devi, Vishakha Devi, Citra Devi, Indulekha Devi, Campakalata Devi, Ranga Devi, Tungavidya Devi, and Sudevi. Sri Ananga Manjari's *kunja* is in the center of Radha Kunda.

Radha Kunda appeared at 12 midnight on Bahulasthami, the eighth day (*asthami*) of the waning moon, in the month of Kartika (Oct-Nov). On that day, thousands of people come and bathe at 12 midnight in Radha Kunda. It is an ecstatic and exciting event.

"Mathura is superior to Vaikuntha because Lord Krishna appeared there. Vrindavana is superior to Mathura because Krishna performed His *rasa-lila* there. Govardhana Hill is superior to Vrindavana because Krishna lifted it and enacted many blissful pastimes there. But the superexcellent Radha Kunda stands supreme above all for it is overflowing with the ambrosial nectarean Prema of Radha and Krishna. (*Sri Upadesamrita*, verse 9)

"Great sages say that Radha Kunda is as dear to Krishna as Radha Herself. Indeed, Krishna's love for Radha Kunda and Srimati Radharani is the same in all respects." (*Sri Upadesamrita* verse 11 purport)

In the *Adi Varaha Purana* it is said that by bathing in Radha Kunda the sin of killing a cow, man or a *brahmana* is immediately removed. According to the *Adi Varaha Purana*, by bathing in Radha Kunda and Shyama Kunda one attains the result of performing a *rajasuya* and *asvamedha yajna*.

Apperance of Radha Kunda

Killing of Aristasura

"One demon named Aristasura entered the village like a great bull with a gigantic body and horns, digging up the earth with his hoofs. When the demon entered Vrindavana, it appeared that the whole land trembled, as if there were an earthquake. He roared fiercely and after digging up the earth on the river-side, he entered the village proper. The fearful roaring of the bull was so piercing that some of the pregnant cows and women had miscarriages. Its body was so big, stout and strong that a cloud hovered over its body just as clouds hover over mountains. Aristasura entered Vrindavana with such a fearful appearance that just on seeing this great demon, all the men and women were afflicted with great fear, and the cows and other animals fled the village.

"The situation became very terrible, and all the inhabitants of Vrindavana began to cry, 'Krishna! Krishna, please save us!' Krishna also saw that the cows were running away, and He immediately replied, 'Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid.' He then appeared before Aristasura and said, 'You are the lowest of living entities. Why are you frightening the inhabitants of Gokula? What will you gain by this action? If you have come to challenge My authority, then I am prepared to fight you.' In this way, Krishna challenged the demon, and the demon became very angry by the words of Krishna. Krishna stood before the bull, resting His hand on the shoulder of a friend. The bull began to proceed towards Krishna in anger. Digging the earth with his hoofs, Aristasura lifted his tail, and it appeared that clouds were hovering about the tail. His eyes were reddish and moving in anger. Pointing his horns at Krishna he began to charge Him just like the thunder bolt of Indra. But Krishna immediately

caught his horns and tossed him away, just as a gigantic elephant repels a small inimical elephant. Although the demon appeared to be very tired and although he was perspiring, he took courage and got up. Again he charged Krishna with great force and anger. While rushing towards Krishna, he breathed very heavily. Krishna again caught his horns and immediately threw him on the ground, breaking his horns. Krishna then began to kick his body, just as one squeezes a wet cloth on the ground. Being thus kicked by Krishna, Aristasura rolled over and began to move his legs violently. Bleeding and passing stool and urine, his eyes staring from their sockets, he passed to the kingdom of death." (*Krishna Book*)

Story of Radha Kunda



The story of Radha Kunda is that one demon named Aristasura, in the body of a bull, was killed by Krishna. The *gopis* (cowherd girls) told Krishna, "that for killing a bull, the symbol of religion, He had to purify Himself by visiting every, single holy place in the three worlds. If you take bath at all the holy places, You will be relieved of the offense of killing him."

Krishna then said, "Why should I visit all these places, I will just bring the water from all these places here and then bathe in them." Krishna then struck His heel on the ground and all the waters of all the holy places entered into Shyama Kunda. Krishna then bathed in Shyama Kunda. He finished his bath sometime before midnight.

After bathing, he said that the *gopis* had become impure because they had sided with a demon, even though he had been in the form of a bull. The *gopis* led by Radharani then dug another pond nearby with their bangles. There was no water in the hole, so the *gopis* formed a line to Manasi Ganga and began to fill the hole they dug by passing water from one *gopi* to another. Then a representative of all the sacred places told Radharani, "Our lives would be successful if we could enter Your pond." The holy waters from Syama Kunda then flowed into Radha Kunda with the permission of Radha. So Radha Kunda is the holy waters from all the sacred places.

In the center of Radhakunda of today is small area with the wall around it called Kankanakunda (or Kancankunda). It is the area of the original pond created by gopis with their bracelets.

Description of Radha Kunda in the Spiritual World

Radha Kunda is surrounded by *kadamba*, *campaka*, *asoka*, mango, *punnaga* (white lotus) and *bakula* trees, and *lavanga* and *vasnati* creepers. The banks are decorated with different kinds of gems. Radha and Krishna swing on a gold gem-studded swing, hanging from a tree.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur gives a description of Radha Kunda in his book, *Gita Mala*. The banks of Radha Kunda are made of desire-fulfilling touchstones. There are hundreds of beautiful transcendental gardens surrounding the lake. The trees and creepers of the gardens are made of coral and rubies and the fruits they produce are pearls and diamonds.

Krishna Dasa Kaviraja in his *Sri Govinda-lilamrita* and Sri Visvanatha Cakravarti in his *Sri Krishna Bhavanamrita* describe Radha Kunda in the spiritual world. On the four sides of Radha Kunda are jeweled stairways leading to jeweled bathing *ghatas*. A jeweled bridge connects Radha Kunda with Shyama Kunda. On either side of the *ghatas* are pairs of swings. There are jeweled platforms around the stairs of the *ghatas*, flanking gem-studded cottages.

There are many shade trees and flowering creepers. These flowering creepers have unlimited flowers. On all side of Radha Kunda, are *kalpa-viksa* (wish-fulfilling) trees. The bathing *ghatas* are surrounded by various *kunjas* (forest groves or gardens).

Taking Caution when Bathing at Radha-kunda

One of the most auspicious times for bathing at Radha-kunda is on Bahulashtami, the appearance day of Radha-kunda. Nevertheless, when one bathes in the sacred waters of Radhakunda, one has to be extremely careful not to commit any offences. Radha-kunda is considered to be the liquid form of Radharani; therefore one must observe the proper etiquette in accordance with the Vaishnava scriptures. In the opinion of Srila Prabhupada, only those who are on the same spiritual level as Raghunatha Dasa Goswami, are fit to live at Radhakunda and bathe in Her transcendental waters. Therefore, when bathing there, one must follow in Srila Raghunatha's transcendental footsteps while emulating his mood of humility and servitude.

Bathing at Radha-kunda should be performed as a sacrificial offering to Radharani, with the same reverence as when worshiping the deity of Radha and Krishna in the temple. It is a Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition, that when entering the sacred Radha-kunda to take bath, one should first put one's right hand into the water followed next by ones feet; this is because Vaishnavas do not enter the sacred *kunda* with feet first. The same etiquette should also apply to Shyama-kunda. There are some Vaishnavas who even crawl on their knees into the *kunda* out of respect for Radharani. Some Vaishnavas, who are unwilling to enter the sacred *kunda*, *scoop* water in a *lota* or *kamandalu*, and pour it over their heads in order to bathe without committing any offence.

In 1936, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, the illustrious founder of the Gaudiya Matha, led a one thousand strong *parikrama* party on the Vraja Mandala Parikrama. When they arrived at Radha-kunda, out of great reverence for the sacred *kunda*, they did not take bath, but simply sprinkled three drops of water on their heads, which, according to the Vedas, is equal to bathing, while at the same time showing the utmost respect for Radharani's sacred *kunda*.

In 1976, Srila Prabhupada heard that a *parikrama* group of his junior disciples were frivolously joking around on the banks of Radha-kunda and jumping into the sacred lake as if they were at a swimming pool or beach resort. Srila Prabhupada became very upset saying, "There is no difference between Radha-kunda and

Radharani, so how can they jump over Radharani? You cannot even touch your feet to Radha-kunda. You can take a little water on your head. This is showing respect to Radha-kunda." Srila Prabhupada also said regarding the offensive mentality of some devotees, "Don't go to Radha-kunda simply to become a monkey in your next life".

On another occasion years later, a group of western female devotees clad in bikinis were seen jumping and splashing around in Radha-kunda as if they were on the beach at Goa. Such rank neophyte devotees should never go to such a holy places like Radha-kunda in the first place, as they are spiritually unfit due to their offensive behavior and irreverence towards Radharani. Such neophytes cannot reap the benefit of visiting such an exalted holy place; on the contrary, they will simply become degraded due to committing Dhama-aparadha. There is a very famous saying of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, regarding the rank neophyte devotees and sahajiyas who congregate at Radha-kunda, when he once said, "There are many babajis who come to Radha-kunda to live, but because of their grievous offences, they are not actually living at Radhakunda, but at Naraka-kunda (hell)."

Kunjas of Eight Sakhis

Radha Kunda is surrounded by the *kunjas* (garden groves) of the eight main *sakhis*.

1. Sri **Lalita Sakhi's Kunja** (north, lighting) is the largest *kunja*. There are platforms made of gold, sapphires, crystal and lapis lazuli. In the center of a courtyard is a golden temple called Ananga Rangambuja, which is in the shape of a 1,000 petal lotus.
2. Sri **Visakha Devi's Kunja (northeast)**.
3. Sri **Citra Devi's Kunja** (east, multi-colored) has a wonderful variety of forms and colors. *Citra* means `variegated or wonderful."
4. Sri **Indulekha's Devi's Kunja** (southeast, white). Everything is completely white in color, including the trees, thrones, cottages, etc.
5. Sri **Campakalata Devi's Kunja** (south, gold).
6. Sri **Ranga Devi's Kunja** (southwest, *syama-blue*) is Srimati Radharani's favorite, because the dark blue color of everything reminds Her of Krishna.
7. Sri **Tungavidya Devi's Kunja** (west, crimson). Everything is a crimson color in this *kunja* and the entire grove is inlaid with rubies.
8. Sri **Sudevi Devi's Kunja** (northwest, green). Everything is green. It has emerald covered thrones.
9. Sri **Ananga Manjari's Kunja** is in the center of Radha Kunda. It is connected to the north bank of Radha Kunda by a crystal bridge. The north bank is where Jahnava's Devi's sitting place is located. In the center of this *kunja* is a jeweled temple.

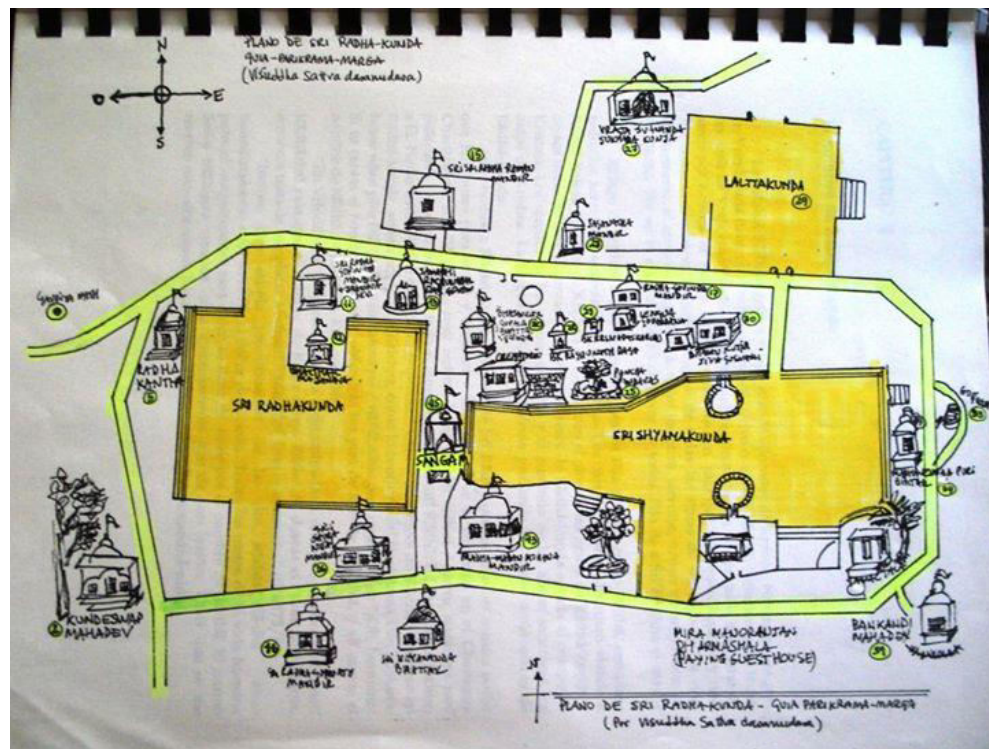
Kunjas of the Eight Sakhas

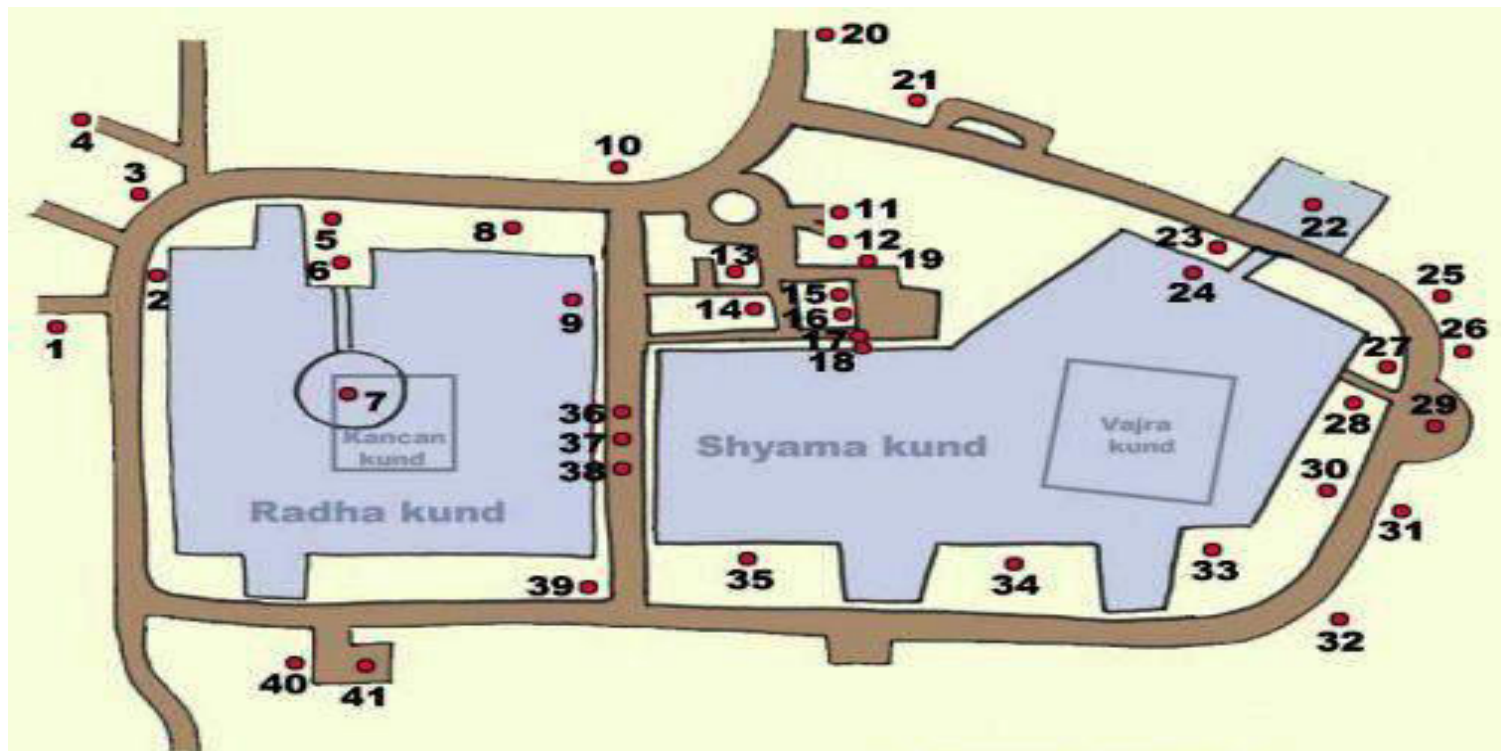
Syama Kunda is surrounded by the *kunjas* of the eight main *sakhas* (cowherd boyfriends), called *priya-narma sakhas*. These boys are Krishna's most intimate cowherd boyfriends and they understand and are submissive to Krishna's dealing with the *gopis*. The cowherd boys give their *kunjas* to different *sakhis* to manage.

1. **Subala** Kunja (northwest) is on the side of Syama Kunda where Manasa-pavana Ghata is located. It is managed by Radharani. Radharani and the rest of the *sakhis* bathe daily at 12 noon at Manasa-pavana Ghata.
2. **Madhumangala's** Kunja (north) is managed by Lalita Devi.
3. **Ujjvala's** Kunja (northwest) is managed by Visakha Devi.
4. **Arjuna's Kunja** (east) is managed by Citra Devi.
5. **Gandharva's Kunja** (southeast) is managed by Indulekha.
6. **Vidagdha's Kunja** (south) is managed by Campakalata.
7. **Kokeela's Kunja** (southwest) is managed by Ranga Devi.
8. **Sanandananda's Kunja** (west) is managed by Tungavidya Devi.

Radha Kunda Pratibhu Deities

In 1670, many of the original Deities of Vrindavana were moved to Jaipur. Their first stopping place was Radha Kunda. Small replica temples of the original temples in Vrindavana were built at Radha Kunda. Pratibhu-murtis (expanded forms, non-different from the original Deities) were established at Radha Kunda to honor the Lord's visit here, and the worship has been continued for centuries. The residents of Radha Kunda can visit the seven major temples of Vrindavana without leaving Radha Kunda.





1. Radha-Krishna Purana Mandira
2. Jhulana sthali
3. Gopala Manipur Mandira
4. Radha-Shyamasundar Mandira
5. Radha-Gopinath Mandira
6. Ma Jahnava Baithak
7. Ananga Manjari kunj
8. Raghunatha das Gosvami Samadhi
9. Govinda Ghata
10. Radharaman Mandira
11. Radha-Govinda Mandira
12. Jihva Mandir (tongue of Govardhan)
13. Gopala Bhatta Gosvami Bhajan Kutir
14. Three Gosvami Samadhi
15. Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami Bhajan Kutir
16. Vishvannatha Cakravati Bhajan Kutir
17. Pilu tree
18. Manasa-pavana Ghata
19. Krishnadasa Kaviraja Bhajan Kutir
20. Bhaktivinoda Thakura Bhajan Kutir

21. Jagannatha Mandira
22. Lalita Kund
23. Jiva Gosvami Bhajan Kutir
24. Jiva Gosvami Ghata
25. Lalita-Bihari mandir
26. Manipur Maharaja Mandira
27. Radha-Vinoda Mandira
28. Madhavendra Puri Baithak
29. Gopi-kupa
30. Ashta-sakhi Mandira
31. Nital-Gauranga Sitanath Mandira
32. Radha-Madhava Mandira
33. Caitanya Mahaprabhu Baithak
34. Pasha-khela Ghata
35. Radha-Madana-mohana Mandira
36. Lotus Footprints
37. Sangam
38. Giriraja Maharaja
39. Mahaprabhu Mandira
40. Radha-Gopinatha Mandira
41. Nityananda Prabhu Baithak

AROUND RADHA KUNDA

Radha Gokulananda Temple

From where you arrive by taxi or by bus you walk down the road toward Radha Kunda. Just past the small hospital, on the left, is the Radha Gokulananda Temple. There is a sign above the doorway that says Radha Gokulananda Temple in English, Hindi and Bengali.

This temple contains the *pratibhu-murtis* of Radha Gokulananda. The original Deities are at the Radha Gokulananda Temple in Vrindavana. The *puspa samadhis* of Lokanatha Gosvami and Narottama Dasa Thakur are next to this temple.

Sri Kundeswara Mahadeva Temple

As you continue walking to Radha Kunda, you come to the small white marble roadside temple of Sri Kundeswara Mahadeva, on the left. This is just before you see Radha Kunda on your right. There are four Lord Siva temples in the four directions, surrounding Radha Kunda, to protect Radha Kunda from intrusion of unqualified persons.

Jhulan Sthali

As you continue on this road, Radha Kunda is on your right. Another 65m (200 feet) from the Sri Kundeswara Mahadeva Temple is a stone structure shaped like an upside down U, on the right side of the path, near Radha Kunda. This marks the site of Radha's and Krishna's swing pastimes.

Radha Krishna Temple and ISKCON Temple

If you walk up the small alley sloping up the hill to your left, near Jhulan Sthali, you come to the blackish pyramid-shaped Radha Krishna Temple, on your left. This temple is the oldest temple at Radha Kunda. Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami rediscovered the Radha-Krishna Deities in this temple when he excavated Radha Kunda. They are said to be the presiding Deities of Radha Kunda. There is a large neem tree and banyan tree en-twined together in the courtyard of this temple, which are worshiped as Radha and Krishna.

Next to this temple is a small ISKCON Temple, which has a good view of Radha Kunda from the roof.

Gopala Manipur Mandir and Radha Kanta Temple

You return to the *parikrama* path, turn left and walk 20m (60 ft) . The next road you see is the Govardhana parikrama path. Just after this junction, on the left, is the red stone Gopala Manipur Mandira. In 1994, Bhakti Swarupa Damodara Maharaja took possession of this temple.

The white building opposite this temple houses the *pratibhu* Deities of **Radha Kanta**. The original Deities were worshiped by Sri Vakreswara Pandita in Jagannatha Puri. There is a *murti* of Vakreswara Pandita on the right side of the altar.

Radha Kunja Bihari Gaudiya Math Temple

Coming out of the Radha Kanta Temple you turn left, walk 7m (20 feet) , and turn right going backwards on the Govardhana *parikrama* path. After a five minute walk (100 metres) you come to the red stone Radha Kunja Bihari Temple. This temple is on the Govardhana *paizkrama* path. Located here are the Deities of Radha Kunja-bihari and Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Next to this temple is the *puspa-samadhi* of Gaura Kisora Dasa Babaji Maharaja. He lived in Vrindavana for 30 years and was the spiritual master of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Maharaja. This temple was founded by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta in 1935.

Radha Syamasundara and Radha Damodara Temples

Back at the Radha Kunda *parikrama* path, just pass the Gopala Mandira, you turn down a small lane on the left. Five metres (15 ft) down this lane, on the left hand side, is the Radha Syamasundara Temple. Syamananda Prabhu's sitting place and *puspa-samadhi* are here.

Further down this lane (30m, 90 ft), on the left, is the small red-colored Radha Damodara Temple. Across the street from this temple is the sitting place of Srinivasa Acarya.

Gopinatha Temple & Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami's Samadhi

If you go back to the main road and continue down the road 30 seconds, just pass the water taps, you come to the Radha Gopinatha Temple, on the right. This temple is right next to Radha Kunda. On the altar of this temple, the Deity of Gopinatha is in the center, on His right hand side is Srimati Radharani, and on His left hand side is Ananga Manjari, the younger sister of Radharani.

Some of the ashes of Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami are entombed in this temple. There is 24 hour *kirtana* at this spot. Behind the *samadhi*, is a small movable stone. Under this stone is *charanamrita* from Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami's *samadhi-murti*. You can also get some of Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami's buttermilk *mahaprasada*, which is kept behind the *kirtana* party in a small niche in the wall.

Jahnavi Baitaka



If you exit out the door to the left of the altar, containing the Deity of Gopinatha, it leads to a small platform jutting out into Radha Kunda. This is where Jahnava Devi (in 1582), the wife of Lord Nityananda, stayed. This spot is known as Jahnava Baitaka, the sitting place of Jahnava. There is a tamal tree and a small shrine here. Next to this place is **Jahnava Ghata**.

Mahadeva Siva and Radha-Raman Temples

You then return to the *parikrama* path and continue down the path 15m (45 ft). On your left is the red stone Mahadeva Siva Temple. Lord Mahadeva protects the northern side of Radha Kunda.

Right next to this temple is the Radha-Raman Temple. In 1879 the Deities of Sri Radha-Raman and Sri Sri Revati-Balarama were installed in this temple.

Radha Govinda Temple and Tongue of Govardhana

Across the street from the Radha-Raman Temple and down a little is the Radha Govinda Temple, on the right. This temple contains the *pratibhu* Deities of Rupa Gosvami.

In the outer compound of this temple is the **Tongue of Govardhana**. To get to the tongue of Govardhana you turn left immediately after leaving the Govindaji temple, before you reach the path. You walk up some steps and you come to a small gar-den with a small white temple in it. The temple is known as the Jihva Mandira. *Jihva* means "tongue."

Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami saw the need of a water source other than Radha Kunda, so he decided to have a well dug. As the workers dug down, they struck a rock and blood flowed from it. That night in a dream it was revealed to Raghunatha Gosvami that the stone was the tongue of Govardhana and should be worshiped.

Teen Samadhis and Krishna Dasa Kaviraja Gosvami's Bhajana Kutir

If you turn to the left after leaving the Radha Govinda Temple, on the path toward Syama Kunda, and walk straight 20m (60 ft) , you then come to the Teen (three) Gosvami Samadhis of Raghunatha Bhatta (left side), Krishna Dasa Kaviraja (center), and Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami (right side). Each of these devotees left this world on the same day, but in different years: Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami (1563) , Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami (1583) , and Krishna Dasa Kaviraja (1588). Gopal Bhatta Gosvami's bhajana kutir is twenty feet to the right, as you face the Teen Gosvami Samadhis.

To the left of the Teen Samadhis is the *bhajana kutir* of Krishna Dasa Kaviraja Gosvami. It is set back, about 50 feet, from the side of Shyama Kunda. This is where he wrote the *Caitanya Caritamrita*.

Gadadhara Caitanya Temple

The Gadadhara Caitanya Temple is right next to Krishna Dasa Kaviraja's *bhajana kutir*. Sachidevi (Ganga mata) and Laksmipriya, the disciples of Haridasa Pandita, did their *bhajana* where this temple is located. The Deities in this temple are from left to right: Sri Nityananda Prabhu, Lord Caitanya, and Sri Gadadhara.

Haridasa Pandita Gosvami is mentioned in *Caitanya Caritamrita*. Ganga Mata was a princess. After her father died she ruled the kingdom. After a short time, she renounced the kingdom and came to Vrindavana. She then got initiated by Haridasa Pandita. She then moved to Radha Kunda to join Laksmipriya, who was chanting 300,000 names a day and worshiping the Deities of Gadadhara-Caitanya. Eventually Ganga Mata moved to jagannatha Puri, where she initiated many followers.

Bhajana Kutirs of Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami & Visvanatha Cakravarti

The *bhajana kutir* of Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami is directly opposite Krishna Dasa Kaviraja Gosvami's *bhajana kutir*. It is down a few steps, toward Shyama Kunda. It is a rectangular building with metal gates. He lived at Radha Kunda for 41 years. At this place Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami would speak three hours a day about the ecstatic pastimes of Lord Caitanya.

There is a painting inside his *bhajana kutir*, in which he is absorbed in thinking about Krishna, not realizing that there are two tigers near by drinking some water from Shyama Kunda. Nor did he see Krishna standing near him, protecting him. Sri Sanatana Gosvami is standing in the left corner of the painting, observing what is happening. Sanatana Goswami gently rebuked Raghunatha Das Goswami not to take service from Krishna. Another time Raghunatha Das Goswami was absorbed in chanting the holy names of Krishna on the bank of Radha Kunda. The sun was gradually rising up & souring in the sky. The afternoon heat was intense. Sanatana Goswami was passing by & happen to see that Radharani was holding her upper cloth over Raghunatha Goswami to give him shedding from the sun. While doing that she was perspiring. Again Sanatana Goswami gently rebuked Raghunath Das. He requested Raghunatha to build Bhajan Kutir. That was begining of building bhajan kutir in Vrindavana.

On the left side of the same building is the *bhajana kutir* of Sri Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura. He lived here about 100 years after Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami.

Pandava Trees



Also near here is where the Pandavas lived as trees on the bank of Shyama Kunda. When Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami was excavating Shyama Kunda, Maharaja Yudhisthira appeared to him in a dream. He told him not to cut the trees besides Shyama Kunda, because he and his brothers, the Pandavas, were living there as trees, meditating on the banks of Shyama Kunda. He therefore dug around the trees, giving Shyama Kunda its irregular shape. Local authorities say the Pandavas have left and only a dead tree marks the place of their previous residence. The place where these trees used to be located is to the left of Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami's *bhajana kutir* (if you are facing Shyama Kunda), next to Shyama Kunda.

Manas Pavan Ghata

At Manas Pavan Ghata, Radharani and her girlfriends are said to bathe every day at noon. This *ghata* is close to Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami's *bhajana kutir*.

Bhajana Kutir of Bhaktivinoda Thakur and Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati

Bhaktivinoda Thakura's (1838-1914) house, which was built in the beginning of the century, is located down a side road going away from Shyama Kunda. After leaving the Govinda Temple and turning right back onto the *parikrama* path, you walk about 25m (75 ft). You then go left onto the broad cobble stone road, when the *parikrama* path turns right. You then walk 70m (200 ft) and this place is on the right side of the road. It has a colorful sign above the entrance which says: Vraja Swananda Sukhada Kunja.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati used this *bhajana kutir* from 1900 to 1936. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati would come here during the month of Kartika (Oct/ Nov). The *puspa-samadhis* of both Bhaktivinoda Thakur and Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati are located here. There are personal articles of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta in this house: his wooden shoes, walking stick, bed, chair, and table. Here at Radha Kunda, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati instructed Srila A C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. "If you ever get money, print books."

If you follow the path that goes to Bhaktivinoda Thakur's *bhajana kutir* to the edge of the town, there are two bodies of water. **Balarama Kunda** is on the right side and **Vrishabhanu Kunda** (Bhanu Khor) is on the left. Vrishabhanu Maharaja (Radharani's father) is said to have had his camp here during the time of Govardhana *puja*.

Jagannatha Temple

If you proceed back to the *parikrama* path from Bhaktivinoda's house and make a left, you come to the Jagannatha temple on the left, after about 25m (75 ft). The Deities in this temple are taken around the *kunda* every year on Rathayatra.

Lalita Kunda and Lalita Mohana Temple

A little further down, on the left side of the road, is Lalita Kunda. The body of water just past the wall of Lalita Kunda is Mohan Kunda. It is said that Lalita and Mohan (Krishna) called the 68 *tirthas* (holy places) to come and reside in her *kunda*. One who bathes in this *kunda* gets the benefit of becoming free from the sin of six kinds of *hatya* (murder) : (1) *brahma-hatya* (killing a brahmana), (2) *go-hatya* (cow slaughter), (3) *bhrina-hatya* (abortion), (4) *krimi-hatya* (killing insects), (5), *shvana-hatya* (killing dog), (6) *atma-hatya* (suicide).

Next to Lalita Kunda is the Lalita Mohana Temple, where there are Deities of Krishna and Lalita Devi. These Deities are the presiding Deities of this *kunja* (forest grove). This temple is managed by followers of the Nimbarka *sampradaya*. To take some water from Lalita Kunda on your head you have to go through this temple to reach the *kunda*. To the left of the altar is a door that leads to Lalita Kunda.

Jiva Gosvami's Bhajana Kutir

Directly across the road from Lalita Kunda is the *bhajana kutir* of Jiva Gosvami and the small Radha Damodara temple. Jiva Gosvami did much of the practical work of excavating and managing Radha Kunda. Inside the *bhajana kutir* is the impression of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's footprints.

Radha-Vinoda Temple

Thirty metres down the *parikrama* path from Lalita Kunda is the Radha-Vinoda Temple, which is a small temple on the right side. In this temple are Radha-Vinoda, the *pratibhu* Deities of Lokanatha Gosvami.

Gopi Kupa

About 15 metres down the path, on the left, is the well where the tongue of Govardhana was found, called Gopi Kupa. This well is a large circular stone structure. This well is also known as *Giriraja jihvaa prakata sthali*.

Srila Madhavendra Puri's Baithaka (Sitting Place)

Across the street from Gopi Kupa well, behind a building, is where Madhavendra Puri sat while doing Govardhana *parikrama*, several years before Lord Caitanya revealed Radha Kunda. To get here you walk down the lane opposite the well and then you enter the gate on your left. There is a small raised shrine on the right of the courtyard. This place is known as Vyasa Ghera.

Radha Madhava Temple

After Madhavendra Puri's sitting place you come to the **Asta Sakhi Temple**, on the right side of the path. In this temple are small Deities of Radha and Krishna. There are also deities of Lalita, Visakha, Citra, Campakalata, Tungavidya, Indulekha, Rangadevi and Sudevi in this temple. They are the eight main *gopis*.

On the opposite side of the street from this temple is the **Nitai-Gaura Sitanatha Temple**. The Deities in this temple are from left to right: Nitai (Nityananda), Gaura (Sri Caitanya), and Sitanatha (Advaita Acarya).

The next temple to be reached is the Radha Madhava Temple, which is on the left side of the path. Radha Madhava are the *pratibhu* Deities of Jayadeva Gosvami, the author of *Gita Govinda*.

Bankhandi Mahadeva Siva Temple

If you continue around the path you come to a water pump on the left. Just before the path bends to the right, 10 metres (30 ft) further, on the left hand side is a small dirt path which leads to the Bankhandi Mahadeva Siva Temple. This Siva Deity protects Radha Kunda on the eastern side.

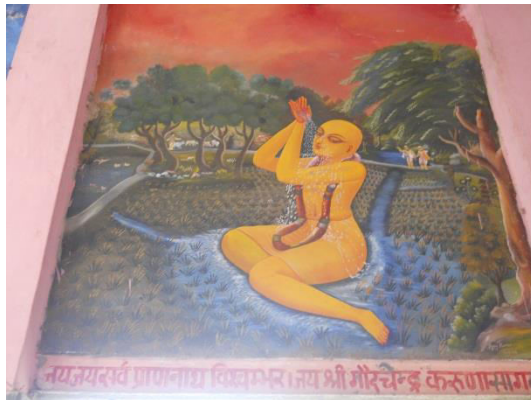
This temple is on the bank of **Narayana Sarovara**. It is said that Krishna manifested His four-armed form of Lord Narayana here to play with the *gopis*.

About a km past Narayana Sarovara is **Lagamohan Kunda**. It is said that Shankhacuda (Shankhacura) left Radha and the *gopis* at this place, after Krishna ruined his attempt to kidnap them. This is the place where Krishna killed the demon Shankhacuda. Krishna took the jewel from his head and gave it to Balarama. Balarama then gave the jewel to Radharani. Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami stayed here when he first came to Vrindavana. He was requested by Sanatana Gosvami to move to the bank of Shyama Kunda. Not many people visit Lagamohan Kunda, so it is a peaceful place.

Mahaprabhu's Baithaka (Tamala Tala)

If you continue about 10 metres (30 ft) around Syama Kunda, you come to the place where Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu sat when He came to Radha Kunda and Syama Kunda. This spot, called Tamala Tala, is on a platform with a tamala tree on it, on the bank of Shyama Kunda. Lord Caitanya's footprints are enshrined here. Mahaprabhu's *baithaka* means "Mahaprabhu's sitting place." When Lord Caitanya came here, Radha Kunda and Shyama Kunda were small ponds surrounded by forest and fields. All the buildings around Radha Kunda have been built since Lord Caitanya discovered Radha Kunda, almost 500 years ago.

Lord Caitanya Discovers Radha Kunda



"Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu asked the local people, 'Where is Radha Kunda?' No one could inform Him, and the *brahmana* accompanying Him did not know either.

"The Lord then understood the holy place called Radha Kunda was no longer visible. However, being the omniscient Supreme Personality of Godhead, He discovered Radha Kunda and Shyama Kunda in two paddy fields. There was only a little water, but He took His bath there.

"When the people of the village saw Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu taking His bath in those two ponds in the middle of the paddy fields, they were very astonished. The Lord then offered His prayers to Sri Radha Kunda.

"Of all the *gopis*, Radharani is the dearmost. Similarly the lake known as Radha Kunda is very dear to the Lord because it is very dear to Srimati Radharani.

"Srimati Radharani is most dear to Lord Krishna, and Her lake known as Radha Kunda is also very dear to Him. Of all the *gopis*, Srimati Radharani is certainly the most beloved. In that lake, Lord Krishna and Srimati Radharani used to sport daily in the water and have a *rasa* dance on the bank.

"Indeed Lord Krishna gives ecstatic love like that of Srimati Radharani to whoever bathes in that lake even once in his life. The attraction of Radha Kunda is as sweet as that of Srimati Radharani. Similarly, the glories of the *kunda* are as glorious as Srimati Radharani.

"Because of its wonderful transcendental qualities, Radha Kunda is as dear to Krishna as Srimati Radharani. It was in that lake that the all opulent Lord Sri Krishna performed His pastimes with Srimati Radharani with great pleasure and transcendental bliss. Whoever bathes just once in Radha Kunda attains Srimati Radharani's loving attraction for Sri Krishna. Who within this world can describe the glories and sweetness of Sri Radha Kunda?" (*Caitanya Caritamrita Madhya* 18.3-14)

Pasa Ghata

About 20m (60 ft) further down the path is the Manoranjan Dharamshala. Directly across the path, is a door that leads to Shyama Kunda. If you go through this door you come to a stone platform jutting out into Shyama Kunda. This place is known as Pasa Ghata, which is where Radha and Krishna are said to play *pasha khela* (a board game with dice) during their midday pastimes. *Govinda Lilamrita* says that Radha and Krishna play dice in Sudevi's *kunja* on the northwest side of Radha Kunda.

In this compound is a temple that commemorates Vallabhacarya's stay here.

You then return to the *parikrara* path. About 30 metres down the path, on the left, is the Laksmi Narayana Temple, which is an old temple, about 500 years old.

Madana Mohana Temple

A little distance down the path, on the right, is the Madana Mohana Temple. There is a big archway near the entrance of this temple.

Pathway between Radha Kunda and Shyama Kunda

About 5m (15 ft) past the Madana Mohana temple are the stairs that lead to the path where Radha Kunda and Shyama Kunda meet. Near these stairs is a Gaura Nitai temple.

The savant (meeting place) of Radha Kunda and Shyama Kunda is called Ratna-vedi (jeweled platform). There are slits in the stone path between Radha Kunda and Shyama Kunda, that allows mixing of the waters of these two *kundas*.

On this path, just past the mini-mountain of Govardhana shilas, is a small open air shrine honoring the lotus footprints of Radha Syamasundara, called **Sri Carana Cinha**. The Banke Bihari Temple is an old temple on the right, just beyond Sri Carana Cinha. There are some interesting Govardhana-shilas in this temple.

About five metres (15 ft) further is a neem tree hanging over the path beside Radha Kunda. This area is called **Govinda Ghata**. This is where Radha and Krishna are said to sometimes enjoy *jhulana* (swing) pastimes.

Radha Gopinatha Temple, Nityananda Baitaka and Imli Tala

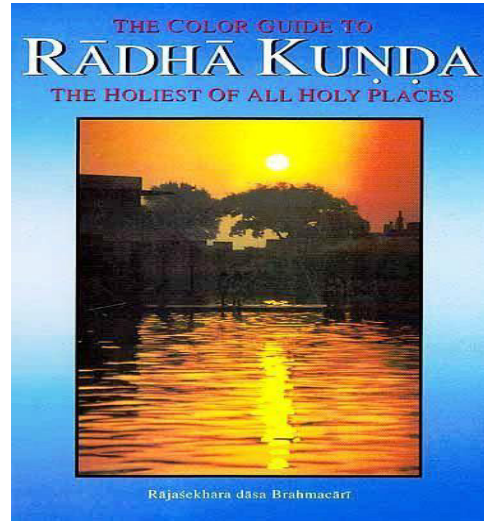


If you come back up the stairs and continue to the right down the path after 30 metres (90 ft) you come to the Radha Gopinatha Temple on the left side, just before the shops. In this temple are the *pratibhu* Deities of Madhu Pandita's Deities, which are now worshiped in Jaipur.

In this compound, just opposite the temple, is a small building that marks the place where Nityananda Prabhu sat, called **Nityananda Baitaka**.

By here, in the courtyard of the **Braja Mohan temple**, is the Imli Tala tree, near which Rupa Gosvami sat.

About 20 metres (60 ft) further down the path is a Deity of Hanuman, on the right side, in between some shops. This completes the *parikrama* of Radha Kunda and Shyama Kunda.



Radha Kunda to Kusuma Sarovara

A few minutes after leaving Radha Kunda you pass the road that goes to Vrindavana, on your left. About sixty metres pass this turn off is Tamala Kunda, which is a muddy pond.

Just after crossing the Yamuna canal, there is the Kali Devi (Parvati) temple. Next to this temple is a small *kunda* named Mayur Kunda. Krishna is said to have taken the form of a peacock (*mayur*) here and danced.

As you proceed down the path, the Gwallior temple is on the right. The Deities in this temple are Radha Krishna and Gaura Nitai.

29. Kusuma Sarovara

Kusuma Sarovara is a 25 minute walk from Radha Kunda. *Kusuma* means "flower," and here the *gopis* would pick flowers for Krishna. During Lord Caitanya's time this place was known as Sumanah Sarovara. It is stated in the *Caitanya Caritamrita* that Lord Caitanya took bath here. The *ghatas* at this *kunda* were built by Jawahir Singh around 1764. Kusuma Sarovara is 460 feet long and the platforms go out 60 feet into the water.

On the upper level are three tombs. The main tomb of Raja Suraj Mall has beautiful paintings on its ceiling depicting the pastimes of Krishna. There are also some paintings of Raja Suraj Mall in his court. The other tombs are those of his two queens, Kishori and Hansiya.



It is said that Asta Vakra Muni left his body on the bank of Kusuma Sarovara. The small Siva linga temple on the western bank of the *kunda* marks the spot where he gave up his body.

Ashoka-lata, *a kunja* (forest grove), is also on the bank of Kusuma Sarovara. This is where Krishna braided Srimati Radharani's hair. This pastime is described by Krishna Dasa Kaviraja Gosvami in his *Govinda Lilamrita*. There is a small temple, on the left of Kusuma Sarovara, by the road, that marks the place where Krishna decorated Radharani's hair.

30. Uddhava Temple

Near Kusuma Sarovara is a temple dedicated to Uddhava that was established by Krishna's great-grandson about 4900 years ago. Uddhava remains here in the form of grass. Krishna sent Uddhava to Vrindavana, with a message to the residents to pacify their deep feeling of separation.



After delivering Krishna's message to the *gopis* Uddhava realized their exalted position and he prayed, "The *gopis* of Vrindavana have given up the association of their husbands, sons and other family members, who are very difficult to give up, and they have forsaken the path of chastity to take shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, Krishna, which one should search for by Vedic knowledge. Oh, let me be fortunate enough to be one of the bushes, creepers, or herbs in Vrindavana, because the *gopis* trample them and bless them with the dust of their lotus feet." (*Srimad Bhagavatam* 10.47.61)

Uddhava is the cousin of Lord Krishna. He is the son of Vasudeva's brother and was almost the same age as Krishna. His bodily features resembled Krishna's almost exactly.

Gettin there- This temple is next to Kusuma Sarovara. It has a good sized wall around it. If you are standing on the road, it is in the left back corner of Kusuma Sarovara. The temple is in a courtyard surrounded by a high wall. Its looks to be the main entrance is almost always locked. The entrance door is a norrnal sized door on your left as you approach the building.

31. Narada Vana

Narada Vana is near Kusuma Sarovara. Narada Muni is said to have wrote the *Narada-bhakti sutras* here. He performed *tapasya* here after being instructed by Vrinda Devi to do so. He desired to witness the conjugal pastimes of Radha Krishna at Radha Kunda, but could not do so Because he was in a male body. After being blessed by Vrinda Devi, he took a female body after bathing in Kusuma Sarovara. He then witnessed the pastimes of Radha and Krishna at Radha Kunda. Lord I rishna then instructed him to write about the glories of *blaakti*, devotional service. There is a good sized *kunda* here called Narada Kunda. There is a temple here, with a deity of Narada Muni. Not many people visit this place.



Getting there- To get here from Kusuma Sarovara you walk a short distance (80m) towards the town of Govardhana (away from Radha Kunda). On the left is a dirt road. From the road it is about 400m (a 5 minute walk) to Narada Vana. When you reach the end of the dirt road, the Narada temple is on the right and Narada Kunda is directly in front of you, behind some trees.

32. Shyamavan and Shyama Kutir (Ratna Simhasana)



Shyamavan is known as the black forest. At Shyama Kutir (also known as Ratna Simhasana) there is a *kunda* called Ratna Kunda. This *kunda* is said to mark the spot where the demon Shankhacuda (Shankhasura) carried off Radharani, who was sitting on the Ratna Simhasana (jeweled throne). It is said that he carried the Ratna Simhasana to Lagamohan Tirtha and left it there, in fear, because Krishna was pursuing him.

Right outside of the entrance to the ashrama, about 7m (20 ft) into the trees, is the imprint of Krishna's left foot. The rock that is embedded into the ground here is painted red where the footprint is located.

Gettin there- This place is in the woods, across from the Sant Nivas Ashrama, about 3 km from Kusuma Sarovara. Sant Nivas Ashrama is the first good sized building that you will see on your left and is a fairly active place. Just before you reach Sant Nivas there is a dirt road (which is the first of two) that goes off into the woods. You walk 120m into the woods and then you make a right turn onto the path that goes to the right. You walk 115m and there is an ashrama and temple directly in front of you. About 7m (20 ft) before the entrance to this ashrama, about 7m (20 ft) into the trees is the imprint of Krishna left foot.

Story of Shankhacuda (Shankhasura)

"At that time, while they were so much absorbed, almost in madness, a demon associate of Kuvera (the treasurer of the heavenly planets) appeared on the scene. The demon's name was Shankhasura because on his head there was a valuable jewel resembling a conchshell. Shankhasura though since he belonged to the rich community of Kuvera, he, not Krishna and Balarama, should enjoy the company of so many beautiful girls. He therefore decided to take charge of them. He appeared before Krishna and Balarama and the damsels of Vraja and began to lead the girls away to the north. He commanded them as if he were their proprietor and husband, despite the presence of Krishna and Balarama. Being forcibly taken away by Shankhasura the damsels of Vraja began to call the names of Krishna and Balarama for protection. The two brothers immediately began to follow them, taking up big logs in Their hands. 'Don't be afraid, don't be afraid,' They called to the *gopis*. 'We are coming at once to

chastise this demon.' Very quickly They reached Shankhasura. Thinking the brothers too powerful, Shankhasura left the company of the *gopis* and ran for fear of his life. But Krishna would not let him go. He entrusted the *gopis* to the care of Balarama and followed Shankhasura wherever he fled. Krishna wanted to take the valuable jewel resembling a conchshell from the head of the demon. After following him a very short distance, Krishna caught him, struck his head with His fist and killed him. He then took the valuable jewel and returned. In the presence of all the damsels of Vraja, He presented the valuable jewel to His elder brother Balarama." (*Krishna Book*, Chap. 34)

33. Gval Pokhara

There is a small pond here called Gopala Kunda. It is said that Krishna would have lunch with the cowherd boys here. *Gval* means "cowherd boy." *Pokhara* is another name for a *kunda*.



Getting there- Directly across from Sant Nivas Ashram, there is a dirt path on the right side of the *pdmkrama* path. If you go down this path 170m you come to Gval Pokhara, on your left.

34. Yugal Kunda

It is said that Nanda Maharaja stayed at this place. There is a small path that goes into the field, about 50m before the tax-gate (toll). This path is next to a broken wall (1m high). At the end of this wall is a 3m (9 ft) high tower, about 20m (50 ft) into the fields. From the *parikrama* path Yugal Kunda is on the left, about a one minute walk away, behind some trees. You can not see this *kunda* from the road.

35. Ear of Govardhana

Right after the tax-gate (toll) the road forks in two directions. The right road is the correct path. About a half km pass the tax-gate is a small road side temple on the right side of the road, where the ear of Govardhana is said to be located.

36. Pancha Tirtha Kunda

This place is called Pancha Tirtha because five holy places are said to be within its water. They are: Gomati, Narmada, Sarayu, Vetri and Kanchi. The building in front of this *kunda* is known as the Bharatpur Raja's Chatri.

Getting there- This place is on the right hand side, just after entering the town of Govardhana. It is set back from the *parikrama* path, behind a good sized structure that looks like the one at, Kusuma Sarovara. It is across the street from Manasi Ganga.

Twenty-four Mile (40 km) Govardhana Parikrama

There are several important places in the vicinity of Govardhana Hill, which are not visited on the normal *parikrama*. Many of these places are close to Govardhana Hill (within 5 km). The 24 mile *parikrama* visits many places that are not visited on the normal Govardhana *parikrama*.

When you come to the T intersection (the road ends) on *parikrama* path, on the left side of the road is **Rinamochana Kunda**. Rinamochana Kunda is near the Govardhana power station. Usually only after it rains will there be any water in this *kunda*. *If* one bathes in this *kunda* they are freed from all vices.

You then make a right at the T intersection. You then make a left onto the Mathura-Sonk Road after going about 50m. After about 50m, **Papamochana Kunda** is on the left. It is said that anyone who bathes here has all his offenses removed.

You then return to the road to Mathura and then go in the direction of Mathura, passing the government bus stand on the right. You then come to a small hill on the right hand side. Next to this hill is a small pond known as **Indra-dhwaja Tila**. This is where the cowherd men would normally worship Indra.

You then go about another kilometre, and there is a turn off to the right going to the village of Jamanta. It is a good idea to ask the local residence where this turn off is located.

Parasauli (Muhammed Pura)

If you are doing *parikrama* you then walk through the fields for about 1½ km and you come to Parasauli. Today it is known as Muhammed Pura. This is the place where Krishna would enjoy his spring *rasa* dance. It is said that the area where this *rasa* dance took place is the same area as the 24 mile *parikrama* of Govardhana Hill. The *gopis* wandered from place to place eventually returning to Parasauli. Chandra Sarovara and Petha can be visited at the same time.

Chandra Sarovara is on the other side of the main road which runs by Parasauli. This is where the moon-god (Chandra) ceased all external consciousness (movements) while watching the *rasa* dance. This pastime is described in *Caitanya Caritamrita* and *Ujjvala Nilamani, Nayika Prakara*. Krishna rested here with the *gopis* after the spring *rasa* dance. It is said that Radha and Krishna would come to this *kunda* daily.

The **Candra-bihari Temple** is next to Chandra Sarovara, close to the road. In this temple are Deities of Krishna and Balarama. The entrance to this temple is next to the road, through a wooden door.

The ***samadhi and bhajana kutir of Sura Dasa***, the great Vaishnava poet, is located next to Candra Sarovara. To get to his *samadhi*, if you are coming from the road, you go to the far left hand corner of Chandra Sarovara. His *samadhi* is about 60m from the bank of Chandra Sarovara, pass a courtyard.

Gandharava Kunda is said to be where the Gandharvas became overwhelmed by Krishna's singing. In Parasauli, there is the Rasa Mandala, Indra Dundubhi and Duvela Kunda. Mohavana and Moha Kunda are close by.

Getting there- This place is about 1½ km from the town of Govardhana, on the road that goes from Govardhana to Sonk. Chandra Sarovara is on the right side of the road and it is a big kunda, so it is hard to miss. This place can also be reached from the town of Aniyora (Anaur) by going east, down a dirt road, for two km.

Petha (Paitha)

From Chandra Sarovara you take the main road towards Sonk for about 3 km and you come to Petha, where the **Caturbhuja Narayana Temple** is located. It is said that Krishna hid here in the bushes to observe the *gopis* mood of separation. At this place, during the spring *rasa* dance, Krishna hid from the *gopis*. There is a temple here with a *catur-bhuja* (four armed) Deity of Krishna. This is a Deity of Krishna taking the form of Lord Narayana. This Deity is said to have been installed by Vajranabha.

Narayana Sarovara is next to the Caturbhuja Narayana temple. Laksmi Kup is on its eastern bank. It is said that once there was a kadamba tree here that Krishna sat under. It is also said that Krishna entered into a cave here, to get under Govardhana Hill, in order to lift it.

Getting there- Petha is about 5 km (ten minutes drive) from the town of Govardhana, on the road from Govardhana to Sonk. This place is about 4 km east of Gonda Kunda. Unless you are walking the best way to get here is from the town of Govardhana.

The Caturbhuja Narayana Temple and Narayana Sarovara are on the outskirts of the village. They are on the right side of the road, about half a km from the road.

Krishna Assuming His Narayana Form

"During the season of springtime, when the *rasa* dance was going on, suddenly Krishna disappeared from the scene, indicating that He wanted to be alone with Srimati Radharani. Krishna was sitting in a solitary bush, waiting for Srimati Radharani to pass by. But while He was sitting, the *gopis* arrived there, like a phalanx of soldiers. 'Just see!' the *gopis* said, seeing Krishna from a distance place. 'Here within a bush is Krishna, the son of Nanda Maharaja.' As soon as Krishna saw all the *gopis*, He was struck with emotion. Thus He could not hide Himself, and out of fear became motionless.

"Krishna assumed His four-armed Narayana form and sat there. When all the *gopis* came, seeing Him they spoke as follows. 'He is not Krishna! He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Narayana.' After saying this, they offered obeisances and the following respectful prayers. 'O Lord Narayana, we offer our respectful obeisances unto You. Kindly be merciful to us. Give us the association of Krishna and thus vanquish our lamentation.' After saying this and offering obeisances, All the *gopis* dispersed.

"Then Srimati Radharani came and appeared before Krishna. When Lord Krishna saw Radharani, He wanted to maintain the four-armed form to joke with Her. In front of Srimati Radharani, Sri Krishna tried His best to keep four arms, but He was completely unable to do so. The influence of Radharani's pure ecstasy is so inconceivably great that it forced Krishna to come to His original two-armed form." (*Caitanya Caritamrita* Adi 17. 282-292)

Aniyora to Punchari

One then proceeds to the village of Aniyora and from there to, Punchari. Then you go to Shyama Dhak, which is about 1½ km west of Punchari.

Shyama Dhak

This is a small forest where Krishna and the cowherd boys would play. Some of the leaves of the kadamba trees in this forest are shaped like cups. It is said that Krishna and His cowherd friends would use these leaf cups to drink buttermilk and eat yogurt. At this place is **Gopi Saga Kunda**, where Krishna is said to have enjoyed with the *gopis*. There are many kadamba trees here. Shyama Dhak is a peaceful and secluded place.

Getting there- This place is about 1½ km west of Apsara Kunda and the village of Punchari. There is a fairly run-down road that comes to this place.

Gantholi (Ganthuli)

One then proceeds in the direction of Govardhana Hill. You then go to Jati Pura and from there you proceed on a paved road that goes northwest toward the town of Gantholi.

Just before you reach Gantholi, on the left hand side of the road, is **Gulala Kunda**. Krishna and the *gopis* would throw colors at this place. During the spring time red colors can be seen in this *kunda*.

While playing Holi, Radharani and Krishna were sitting. The *sakhis* (cowherd girls) secretly tied their clothes together, like a couple does when they get married. When Radha and Krishna stood they found that their clothes were tied together. They felt embarrassed and the *sakhis* all smiled. After throwing dyes on each other (playing Holi), the *sakhis* untied their clothes.

Lord Caitanya had the *darshan* of Gopala (Sri Nathaji) in the town of Gantholi.

Getting there- This town is about 3 km west of the town of Govardhana, on the road going to Dig. Gantholi is 1.5 km northwest of Jati Pura. The road going between Jati Pura and Gantholi is not very good. Gulala Kunda is about a quarter of a km from Gantholi, on the road that goes to Jati Pura. It is a large *kunda*, but you can not see it from the road because there are some buildings in front of it. It is about a 100m from the road.

Mainhadi Kunda and Saunkhrai

You then get on the main road that goes to the town of Govardhana. You pass Vilachuvan on your right hand side. About a half km from Govardhana town, on the left hand side, is a run down *kunda* called **Mainhadi Kunda**. It is said that Radharani washed her hands here and the henna on her hands turned this *kunda* yellow.

You then come to the village of Sakarwa, which used to be known as Saunkhrai. At this place there is the Giridhari temple, Gvala Kunda and Sakra Kunda.

Nimgram (Nibgoan)

You then go to the village of Sakhi Sthali. You then get on the road to Varsana and go about 2½ km to the town of Nimgram. This is the place that **Nimbarka Acarya** did *bhajana* for years. There is a temple and *kunda* here managed by followers of Nimbarka Acarya. Nimbarka Acarya was the main *acarya* of the Kumara-sampradaya.

Getting there- This village is about 2.5 km northwest of the town of Govardhana, on the road to Varsana.

Patalgram and Navagram

You then take the road that goes to Chata for about 2½ km to the town of Padal (Patalgram). It is said that Radharani would pick pinkish flowers here. Patal means "pink." Near Patal Kunda is the Banke Bihari temple.

You then go east 2 km to Navagram. It is also known as Kunjara, because it marks the border of the *kunjas* (groves of Radha Kunda) . Nanda Maharaja is said to have stayed here when he was on his way to Nandagram. There is a Balarama temple and a small *kunda* here, called Navagrama Kunda. At this place, it is said that Radha and Krishna rode on an elephant, that was made up of the *gopis*, making themselves into the form of an elephant. There is a picture here of that pastime.

You then go east a few km to Surya Kunda.

Surya Kunda

At this place, there is a temple dedicated to **Surya Narayana**. Surya Kunda and Gopala Kunda are here. The Surya Narayana temple is on the bank of **Surya Kunda**.

Once Radharani placed Her *mukut* (golden crown) on a rock while she was bathing in Surya Kunda. The rock melted and still there are the marks of **Radha's crown** imprinted into the rock. This rock is located in the **Gaura Nitai temple**, near the *samadhi* of Madhusudana Dasa Babaji, on the west bank of the *kunda*. The rock is embedded in the back wall.

The ***samadhi of Madhusudana Dasa Babaji***, the *guru* of Srila Jagannatha Dasa Babaji, is here. Jagannatha Dasa Babaji did *bhajana* here for some time. The *samadhi* of Sri Bhagavat dasa Babaji, the *sannyasa* guru of Gaura Kishor Dasa Babaji, is also here.

Radha and Krishna would come here to enjoy their **Suryapuja pastimes** around 3 pm. This was one of the few places that Krishna and Srimati Radharani could meet safely. On Sunday, Radharani would come to this place and worship the sungod, Surya. This was the only place her mother-in-law would allow her to go. The pujaris in this temple were two respectable looking *brahmacaris*. One was the *guru* and the other was his disciple. Krishna was acting as the *guru* and Madhumangala was acting as His disciple. There is a full description of this story in *Govindalilamrita* and *Krishna-bhavanamrita*.

It is also said that Krishna would pick flowers here and make them into a garland for Radharani.

Getting there- Surya Kunda is near the village of Vasanti. It is on the 24 miles *parikrama* of Govardhana Hill. This place can be visited when going between Vrindavana and Radha Kunda. It is about 7 km off the road between Radha Kunda and Chatikara.

To get here from Radha Kunda you drive east on the road back to the town of Vrindavana, until just before the village of Ral. This is the first busy inter-section on your left. You turn left at the asphalt road just before Ral. You then go about 7 km. The road winds through many fields. You may have to ask the local people directions to make sure you are going the right way. After driving about 5 km, you come to the village of Konai. You go around this village and the village of Surya Kunda is on your right, after 1½ km.

Konai to Magavera

You then keep going east 1½ to Konai (Konhai). This place used to be called Kennai and now it is called Konai. There is a Parvati temple, Gval Kunda and Go Kunda here. Krishna felt very impatient not being in the present of Srimati Radharani. Krishna asked Radha's servant why she has not come (*kenna ai*)

You next come to Bhadayai (now called Badhal). This is the village of Bhadra Sakhi. There is the very old Bhadra Devi temple here.

From here you proceed to Magahera. This place is now known as Maghera. At this place is Krishna Kunda and Gval Kunda.

Getting there- If you are driving from the road that goes between Chatikara and Radha Kunda to Surya Kunda, you pass the village of Konai on the way. Konai is about five km from the road that goes between Radha Kunda and Chatikara.

Vasanti

The next place to come to is Vasanti. It is also known as Vasoti or Rasithi. Vrishabhanu Maharaja made his camp here after leaving Raval. At the same time Nanda Maharaja had his camp at Chatikara. Since both camps were so big they were right next to each other. Raj Kadamba is a tree which has the impression of Radharani crown in it. There is also Lalita Kunda and Vasant Kunda here.

Getting there- This place is 2 km from Radha Kunda, on the road between Radha Kunda and Chatikara. You pass this village while you are going from Vrindavana to Radha Kunda.

Mukharai

Mukharai is the village of Radharani's maternal grandmother, Mukhara. There is the **Mukhara temple** here on the bank of Krishna Kunda. The deities in this temple are from left to right: Mukhara Devi, Srimati Radharani and Kirtidi Devi (Radharani's mother). There are some stones here called *bhajan shilas* that Radharani (some say Krishna) is said to have played as musical instruments. The *pujarin* in this temple knows how to play them. The *pujaris* in this temple are very friendly.

Getting there- This place is about 3 km southeast of Radha Kunda. To get here from Radha Kunda you get on the road that goes to Vrindavana and you then go about 2 km. You then turn right at the road which is just after a small bridge. You go about a km and the road come to an end in the village of Mukharai. When the road ends, you turn left and the Mukhara temple and Krishna Kunda are on your left, after about 50m.

Pailgram

Next you go to Radha Kunda, Kusuma Sarovara, Narada Kunda and Syarna Kutir. You then go to Pailgram, which is the birthplace of Palita Sakhi.

Kilol Kunda (Kelanvan) and End of Parikrama

You then proceed to Kilol Kunda. This is a large *kunda* which has nice bathing *ghatas*. The temple of Kilol Bihari is right next to this *kunda*. It is said that Radharani and the *gopis* would have water pastimes here. It is said that Krishna would play ball in the forest surrounding this *kunda*. This place is also known as Kandukaksetra. From here one proceeds to Manasi Ganga and then takes bath. This ends the *parikrama*.

Getting there- This forest is close to the main road that goes from Radha Kunda to Govardhana town. Kilol Kunda is about 300 metres from Manasi Ganga.