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[Dear Maharajas, Prabhus, and Didis,

On the beautiful, sunny day of the 14<sup>th</sup> of November, Srila Narayana Maharaja led the devotees on Govardhana parikrama, and at each sacred place they prayed for the mercy of the associates of Krsna who performed lila there, and for the mercy of Yogamaya, who is the personification of the complete reservoir of all Krsna's pastimes. The following are excerpts from the recently published Vraja Mandala Parikrama book describing those places. Your aspiring servant, Radhika dasi]

### ANYORA GAON

This village lies on the parikrama path two miles south of the town of Govardhana. Jatipura, or Gopalapura Grama, lies to the west of the village, on the other side of Govardhana. Srimad-Bhagavatam describes how, on the advice of Krsna, Nanda Baba and the other Vrajavis began worshipping Girirajaji here instead of performing Indra puja. It also describes how they performed the Annakuta festival for Girirajaji here. They cooked many delicacies in their homes, filled hundreds of carts with milk, yoghurt, rabari and many kinds of preparations, and presented them before Girirajaji. Sri Krsna Himself offered everything to Girirajaji and at the same time assumed a huge four-handed form, with which He devoured all the offerings by extending His long arms. Begging for more to eat, He called out in great happiness, Ano re! Ano re! ("Bring more! Bring more!")

Krsna folded His hands and said, "We are poor Vrajavis. Whatever we have, we have presented before You. Please be satisfied with this."

In His four-handed form, Girirajaji drank the water of Manasi Ganga, Kusuma Sarovara and other kundas and exclaimed, Tripto 'smi! Tripto 'smi! ("I'm satisfied! I'm satisfied!"), and wiped His hands and mouth with His cloth. He told the Vrajavis to ask for a boon. They requested for only one: "May this lala of ours always remain happy and live a very long life."

When the four-handed form disappeared, Krsna asked the Vrajavis, "Did you ever have darsana of Indra Deva? Girirajaji is very kind. He fulfills everyone's desires."

After performing Govardhana Puja, the Vrajavis considered their lives successful. This place has been named Anyora Grama by Girirajaji's calling out, Ano re! Ano re! At the place where the Vrajavis performed Annakuta, one can find natural markings of their bowls on the rocks of Girirajaji. Nearby is a bajana-sila, which emits a sweet sound when tapped with a piece of rock, a stick or a finger.

## GAURI TIRTHA

A little further east of Anyora Grama is Gauri Kunda. This attractive place is full of kadamba trees amidst luxuriant, green kunjās. It is where the secret viharas of Candravali and Kṛṣṇa took place. The play Vidagdha Madhava gives a very sweet and beautiful description of this. Candravali is the daughter of Candrabhanu Gopa, the elder brother of Vṛṣabhānu Maharaja. In regard to her beauty (rupa), qualities (guna), charm (lavanya), cleverness (vaidagdhya) and so forth, She is the topmost gopi of the party that is opposed (vipaksas) to Srimati Radhika. Padma and Saibya are her principal sakhis. On the pretext of performing Gauri puja with her sakhis, she used to meet Kṛṣṇa at this appointed place. Sri Kṛṣṇa would perform some pastimes with her for a while.

Sometimes, Rupa and Rati Manjaris of Srimati Radhika's party would use clever tricks to take Kṛṣṇa from here to meet with Srimati Radhika at Sri Radha Kunda.

Once, while performing pastimes with Candravali, Kṛṣṇa became confused and inadvertently asked her, "Radhe! Are You alright?" Hearing Radha's name, Candravali became irritated and replied, "Maharaja Kamsa! Are You alright?"

Puzzled, Kṛṣṇa asked, "Sakhi! Where is Kamsa here?"

"Where is Your Radha here?" was Candravali's reply. Kṛṣṇa understood His mistake and, feeling very ashamed, begged Candravali for forgiveness.

## GOVINDA KUNDA

When Indra saw that the Vrajavasis had stopped worshipping him and were worshipping Govardhana instead, he became angry. For seven days he poured torrential rains on them and sent thunderbolts to destroy them. However, he was unsuccessful in his purpose. Finally, being advised by Brahma to ask for forgiveness for his aparadha, Indra performed abhiseka of Kṛṣṇa with the milk of Surabhi Devi at this place.

Kṛṣṇa was named Govinda here because He nourished and gave ananda, or pleasure, to all the go (cows), gopas, gopis and the land of Vraja. This place was named Govinda Kunda because the nama-karana and abhiseka of Govinda were performed here. Sri Vajranabha established this kunda in memory of this lila.

## PUNCHARI

This place marks the southern border of Govardhana. We have previously described that the form of Govardhana resembles that of a cow, but it can also be likened to that of a peacock. This furthest part is raised high like the peacock's tail (puncha). One completes one's parikrama of Govardhana's eastern side here, and from here one begins parikrama of his western side. Apsara Kunda and Navala Kunda are situated here.

## APSARA KUNDA AND NAVALA KUNDA

These two kundas lie near each other. Srimati Radhika is an extremely beautiful apsara, or transcendental damsel. Apsara Kunda received its name after Her, and the eternally youthful (navala means 'young') Nandanandana is present here as Navala Kunda. Nearby is a rasa-sthali with a grove of tamala and kadamba trees. Thousands of kadamba and tamala trees make this rasa-sthali very delightful and beautiful. Sri Radha-Krsna Yugala melted in prema while dancing in the rasa-lila here. Apsara Kunda and Navala Kunda are Their melted forms. Fortunate sadhakas obtain darsana of these kundas.

## SURABHI KUNDA

This kunda, which is filled with clean, sweet water, lies on the right-hand side of the parikrama path, somewhat further along from Raghava Pandita's cave. On Indra's request, Surabhi performed abhiseka of Govinda at Govinda Kunda with the milk from her udder. Later, out of greed to have darsana of Krsna's cow-herding lila and especially of Sri Radha-Krsna Yugala's secret nikunja-lilas, Surabhi resided at this place for the duration of Krsna's manifest vraja-lila. Maharaja Vajranabha built this Surabhi Kunda in her memory. By taking bath and performing acamana here, all one's sins, aparadhas and anarthas are dispelled and one obtains vraja-prema.

## JATIPURA

This is where Sri Madhavendra Puri resided and performed bhajana. When the deity of Sri Nathaji manifested Himself, He was placed on top of Govardhana. Here Madhavendra Puri performed the abhiseka and annakuta festival of Sri Nathaji. On the order of Sri Nathaji, Madhavendra Puri then went to Puri Dhama to procure malayaja candana and camphor after entrusting the seva of Sri Nathaji to his disciples. When he arrived at Remuna, the deity of Gopinatha stole a pot of khira and sent it to him. By this action, Gopinatha received the name Khira-cora Gopinatha.

When Madhavendra Puri was returning from Jagannatha Puri with the candana and camphor, he received an order from Sri Nathaji of Govardhana through a dream. Sri Nathaji told him that by grinding the candana and camphor and smearing it on the body of Khira-cora Gopinatha, the heat of His own body would be dissipated. It is said that by performing this seva for Khira-cora Gopinatha every day for one month, Sri Nathaji's body became cool once more. It is not mentioned whether or not Madhavendra Puri returned to Govardhana. His samadhi lies in Remuna near the temple of Khira-cora Gopinatha.

The Six Gosvamis, especially Sri Rupa, Sanatana and Raghunatha dasa Gosvamis, had very good relations with Sri Vitthalacarya, the son of Sri Vallabhacarya. He had an

affectionate and friendly relationship with Sri Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. Sri Rupa and Sanatana Gosvamis considered Raghunatha dasa to be their younger brother, and so they also regarded Sri Vitthalacaryaji as their younger brother and loved him dearly.

The topmost niskincanas, the Sri Gaudiya Vaisnavacaryas, used to remain absorbed in bhava-seva (meditation on the asta-kaliya lila) of Sri Radha-Krsna Yugala by means of harinama-sankirtana. Therefore, they had entrusted the responsibility of the seva of Sri Nathaji to the sons of Sri Vallabhacarya. Our Gosvamis considered Sri Giriraja-Govardhana to be Sri Krsna Himself, and therefore they never used to climb on Govardhana to take darsana of Sri Nathaji. Whenever the Gosvamis had a distinct desire for His darsana, Sri Nathaji would Himself descend on some pretext or other to bestow His darsana, sometimes coming to Gantholi Grama and sometimes to Sataghada in Mathura. This is mentioned in Sri Caitanya-caritamrita and Bhakti-ratnakara. Sriman Mahaprabhu did not climb upon Govardhana either, and had darsana of Sri Nathaji in Gantholi Grama.