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2001 Nov 14 - Govardhana - Radha Kunda and Syama Kunda

[Dear Maharajas, Prabhus, and Didis,

Dandavat pranams. Jaya Sri Sri Guru and Gauranga. Sometimes, when Srila Maharaja describes the holy places to the devotees, as they all sit at those places to hear, he also reads from excerpts of this Vraja Mandala Parikrama book, which you are now receiving. This will be the last of the Vraja Mandala reports. Srila Narayana Maharaja is now on route to Germany, and he will arrive on Dec.11, at which time he will begin his 2001 winter preaching tour.]

SRI RADHA KUNDA & SRI SYAMA KUNDA

Giriraja Govardhana stretches out from north to south and has the shape of a peacock. His tail in the south is called Puchari, and his two eyes in the north are called Sri Radha Kunda and Sri Syama Kunda in the village named Arita Gaon. These two kundas manifested at midnight on Krsnastami (the eighth day of the dark moon) in the month of Kartika. Hundreds and thousands of people bathe here at midnight on this day known as Bahulastami.

At Radha Kunda, Sri Radha-Krsna Yugala perform Their midday (madhyahnik) lila-vilasa. Here They perform a variety of amorous pastimes freely and without any obstruction. This is not possible anywhere else. Therefore, Radha Kunda is considered to be the topmost place of bhajana, superior even to Nandagaon, Varsana, Vrndavana, and Govardhana.

This most confidential place, surcharged with paramount bhavas, was revealed by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself, who is endowed with the bhava (sentiment) and kanti (luster) of Radha. Previously, Sri Madhavendra Puri, Sri Lokanatha Gosvami and Sri Bhugarbha Gosvami also came to Vraja, where they revealed various pastime-places of Krsna; but they did not reveal this confidential place, which was manifested by Gaurasundara Himself, who is Radha and Krsna combined.

Aristasura was a servant of Kamsa who assumed the form of a bull and attacked Krsna with the aim of killing Him. However, Krsna killed him instead at this place. Sri Krsna killed Aristasura during the day. That same night He met with His beloved Srimati Radhika and the other sakhis here. He was very eager to embrace Srimati Radhika, but as soon as He reached out towards Her, She stepped back. Jokingly, She said, "Today, You have killed a bull, which belongs to the cow family. You have therefore committed the sin of killing a cow. Please don't touch My pure body."

Krsna smilingly answered, "Priyatame! It was a demon who had deceitfully assumed the form of a bull that I killed; so how can sin even touch Me?"

Srimati insisted, "Whatever he was, he had assumed the form of a bull when You killed him. Hence, the sin of killing a cow has definitely touched You." The sakhis supported Her statements.

Krsna asked how He could atone for this sin. Smilingly, Srimati answered, "The only atonement is to take bath in all the tirthas of the entire Earth planet."

Hearing this, Krsna created an extensive kunda simply by striking His heel on the ground. He then summoned all the tirthas of the entire planet to it. Uncountable tirthas immediately came before Krsna in their personified forms. Krsna asked them to enter the kunda in the form of water. In a moment, the kunda filled with pure, sacred water. Krsna took bath in that kunda and again tried to touch Srimati. But Srimati Radhika now wanted to manifest a kunda full of water that was larger and more exquisite than Krsna's, in response to Her Priyatama's bragging. She and Her sakhis therefore stubbornly dug out a very attractive kunda nearby with their bracelets. However, not so much as a drop of water appeared in it.

Krsna joked that they could take water from His kunda, but Srimati, along with Her innumerable sakhis, prepared themselves to bring water from Manasi Ganga in clay pots. Krsna signaled to the tirthas that they should insist that Srimati and Her sakhis fill up their kunda by taking water from His kunda. The tirthas personified pleased Srimati Radhika by offering Her and the sakhis many prayers. Srimati Radhika then gave them permission to enter Her kunda. Immediately, the current of water that had flowed into Krsna Kunda also filled Radha Kunda. With great pleasure, Krsna bathed and performed water sports (jal-vihara) with Srimati Radhika and the sakhis in this dear kunda.

Some time later, when Krsna had left for Dvaraka, both kundas disappeared. While manifesting the pastime-places of Vraja, Krsna's great-grandson, Maharaja Vajranabha, again restored these two kundas under the guidance of Sandilya and other risis. Five thousand years later, however, they had again disappeared. When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to this place, He inquired from the local people about Radha Kunda and Syama Kunda, but they could provide Him with no information. Instead, they told Him about the two fields named Kali Khet and Gauri Khet that lay before them, which contained a little water. Mahaprabhu respectfully addressed Kali Khet as Syama Kunda and Gauri Khet as Radha Kunda, and offered them His pranama. Then, as He bathed in them, He became overwhelmed. Losing all patience, He cried out, "Ha Radhe! Ha Krsna!" and fainted. The place where He sat down is now called Tamala Tala. It is also called Mahaprabhu's baithaka (sitting-place).

After the disappearance of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami came from Jagannatha Puri and performed bhajana at Radha Kunda. Once, the Mughal emperor Akbara was making his way along this path with his vast army. The entire army, along with elephants, horses, and camels were very thirsty. Akbara asked Dasa Gosvami, "Is there any big pond nearby?" Dasa Gosvami motioned to him to take water from Kali Khet and Gauri Khet.

The emperor thought, "This water is not even sufficient for a single elephant. How will it quench the thirst of my entire army?"

However, on the repeated requests of Dasa Gosvami, Emperor Akbara encouraged his men to drink. To his utter amazement, the entire army, together with horses, elephants and camels, drank to their full satisfaction, and yet the water in these ponds did not reduce even slightly. The emperor's astonishment knew no bounds.

After performing bhajana here for some time, the thought of restoring these two kundas entered Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami's mind. However, when he remembered the transcendental glories of Sri Radha Kunda, he began to reproach himself for thinking this. Just then, a wealthy person arrived at that place from Badrikasrama, looking for that supreme renunciate Dasa Gosvami. He offered his dandavat pranamas (prostrated obeisances) at the feet of Gosvami and said, "I am returning from a pilgrimage to Badarikasrama. Bhagavan Sri Badri-Narayana has sent me to you. On His order I am offering to cover all the expenses required to restore these two kundas to their beautiful forms. Kindly accept my offer."

At first Dasa Gosvami rejected the offer, but he later relented, knowing it to be the desire of Sri Radha-Krsna. He thus began the work of re-constructing the two kundas.

Sri Radha Kunda easily manifested in the shape of an elegant quadrangle. The construction work on Syama Kunda then began, with the idea of giving it a quadrangular shape also. To achieve this, some trees on its bank needed to be cut down. That night, while Dasa Gosvami was performing bhajana, he dozed off for a short time. In his dream, he saw five persons standing in front of him. "We are the five Pandavas," they said. "In the form of trees, we worship Yugala-Kisora here, so please don't cut us down. Rather, let the shape of the kunda be crooked."

For this reason, Dasa Gosvami did not have the trees cut down and instead allowed the kunda's shape to be crooked, just like Sri Krsna's shape. He only deepened the kunda and had its ghats well repaired. Both kundas still have these shapes today, and only a few repairs have occasionally been carried out.

In Krsna-bhavanamrita, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura describes Sri Radha Kunda and Sri Syama Kunda in a very delightful and charming way:

Although Vrajendranandana Sri Krsna is the source of all incarnations, the origin of everything and yet Himself without any origin, akhila rasamritamurti (the personification of all nectarean mellows) and sarva-saktiman (the source of all saktis), He is subservient to the prema of mahabhava-svarupa Srimati Radhika, the topmost of all of Krsna's beloveds. He always establishes the glories of His priyatama, Sri Kisoriji, as superior to His own. Radha Kunda and Syama Kunda are non-different from the svarupa of Radha and Syamasundara, but Krsna Himself nonetheless gives more fame to Radha Kunda.

In the center of Sri Radha Kunda is Anangamanjari-anandada Kunja, shaped like a sixteen-petalled lotus inlaid with moonstones, and it is the kunja of Ananga Manjari. It is connected with the bank by a bridge made of moonstones.

At the sangama, meeting place, of the two kundas is a platform made of many kinds of jewels. This place is also called the Yogapitha of Krsna-lila.

Surrounding both Radha Kunda and Syama Kunda are kalpataru trees of mango, jackfruit, kadamba, bakula and so forth, which are laden with an abundance of flowers and fruits. The bases of these trees are held by platforms of various precious stones. All seasons are eternally serving Sri Yugala under the guidance of the spring season. Vrnda-devi makes all the arrangements in a variety of ways for the seva of the Divine Couple.

The cuckoos coo and the peacocks dance and make the sweet ke-ka sound. Blue and red lotuses and various kinds of ketaki flowers frolic on the waves of the kundas, while intoxicated, buzzing bees hover above. Royal swans, cakravakas, and cranes play in the water with their consorts, making sweet sounds. Different kinds of birds recite love poetry on the branches of the trees, thus giving pleasure to Sri Radha-Krsna Yugala. Deer and does roam about in the attractive kunjias nearby. Except for Srimati Radhika's most intimate girlfriends, no one can enter this forest.