

IN SEARCH OF BIRTHPLACE OF SRI CHAITANYA: PART I. A STUDY ON HAGIOGRAPHIES UP TO 17TH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT. *In Search of Birthplace of Sri Chaitanya: Part I. A Study on Hagiographies Up to 17th Century.* This paper delves into the exploration of the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya, the Indian saint and founder of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Sri Chaitanya's teachings and his message of love and hope have transcended boundaries and influenced people worldwide, particularly through the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). Despite the global reach of Gaudiya Vaishnavism today, a longstanding debate has persisted since 1894 regarding the actual birthplace of Sri Chaitanya: Nabadwip or Mayapur. This study focuses on analyzing hagiographies and literature published up to the 17th century to shed light on this debate. Through a geographical lens, the research concludes that Nabadwip was indeed the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya, but the exact location within Nabadwip remains unknown. To address this challenge, the paper recommends future research directions that employ a multidisciplinary scientific approach, including archaeology, geology, geomorphology, and botany, supported by state-of-the-art dating techniques.

By undertaking this comprehensive investigation into Sri Chaitanya's birthplace, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the historical and cultural significance of Nabadwip and contribute to understanding Sri Chaitanya's life and legacy. Moreover, the paper underscores the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration to uncover the truth behind historical claims and emphasizes the need for scientific methodologies to complement traditional sources in resolving historical debates.

Keywords: *Nabadwip, Mayapur, ISKCON, Birthplace of Sri Chaitanya, Mahaprabhu.*

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1. Introduction

After the Sena dynasty, Turk invaders with the single objective of plundering threw Bengal's political, economic, social, and spiritual life into a chaotic state. For about three centuries, despotism ruled Bengal (Mukherjee 1984). At this anarchical state of Bengal, saviour Sri Chaitanya advented in Nabadwīp on 14th March of 1486 (Mukherjee 1984) or on 18th February 1486 (Sri Saccidananda Bhaktivinoda Thakura, <https://wisdom.yoga/sri-chaitanya-life-precepts/>) or 27th February 1486 (Chaudhuri 2004a, b) at Nabadwīp. Dejected and demoralized people saw the rays of hope in the clarion call by Him. The poorest of the poor and the lowest cast the society got the most fervent embrace of Sri Chaitanya and for the first time, other people looked at them as fellow human beings (Mukherjee 1984). Sri Chaitanya's call for personalized devotion to Krishna (De 2018) gained unprecedented popularity and Gaudiya Vaisnavism spread amongst Hindu cast hierarchies (De 2018) and even amongst other religions abroad (Bryant and Ekstrand 2004). His love for humanity breached every artificial barrier and flooded parts of every continent of the world. Sri Chaitanya's personality, philosophy, and teaching (Kapoor 1977) ascension him from a regional pundit (well-versed Sanskrit Teacher) to a global saviour philosopher. So, every concern related to Sri Chaitanya has its global appeal (Bryant and Ekstrand 2004).

It is unanimously well-known that Sri Chaitanya was born in Nabadwīp on the bank of the river Bhagirathi. Since the inception of the Sri Nabadwīp-Dhama Pracarini Sabha in 1894 at Mayapur (Dev, 2004), the seed of debate on the exact place of birth of Sri Chaitanya germinated and began to grow to immeasurable proportion. Two groups, *Nabadwīp* and *Mayapur*, demand their favoured places as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya. The controversy is still raging strong, in most cases, having no logical points of demand. Both the groups present some supernatural kinds of literature, composed by themselves or coined haphazardly from irrelevant religious literature, to support their demand (Prabhupada 1980; Bhakti Purusottam Swami 2010; Tridandiswami Srimadvaktivigyan Ashram Maharaj 2017; Bhaktivinad Thakur 2017). The combined effect of the absence of literature on a vivid description of the town, unclear history and the ever-changing geography of Nabadwīp made room for doubt regarding the exact place of birth of Sri Chaitanya (Nakatani 2003). The debate was incepted from '*Bhakti-Ratnakar*' composed by Narahari Chakrabarty in the 18th century. The book mentioned 'Mayapur' which added another dimension to the debate.

Mukherjee (1984) mentioned that "*There are two distinct schools of Vaisnavites pleading for two different present villages to be declared as the 'true' birthplace of Sri Caitanya*". Kedarnath Dutta (2 September 1838 – 23 June 1914), a

Gaudiya Vaisnava guru of the late 19th and early 20th century, well versed in Sanskrit religious kinds of literature, was a deputy magistrate in early life (Vidyaratna 1976; Dev 2004; Fuller 2005). He coined the term 'Mayapur' from 'Bhaktiratnākaraa' of Chakrabarty, Narahari (1760s/b) and renamed a Muslim-dominated village 'Meyapur' or 'Miyapur' as 'Mayapur' (Ray 1954, Dev 2004, Mukherjee 1984, Chaudhuri 2004, Rarhi 1894, Mukhopadhaya 1934). Meyapur was in a rural mouza 'Ballaldighi' (J.L. No. 14) on the flood plain of river Bhagirathi located to the North-North-East of Bhagirathi-Jalangi confluence at 23°29'23''N and 88°28'57'' E (Das 2014). Being disgusted with the then aberrated situation of Vaisnavism in Nabadwīp (Mukherjee 1984) Sri Dutta established Mayapur-based 'Sri Nabadwīp-Dhama Pracarini Sabha' in 1883 (Nakatani 2003; Mukherjee 1984) or 1894 (Dev 2004). It seems that the 'Sri Nabadwīp-Dhama Pracarini Sabha' was established in 1894 not in 1883 because in 1894 Sri Dutta retired from government service (Nakatani 2003) and his family shifted to Mayapur (Dasa 1999) and it is likely that he could devote himself to spirituality only after retirement. However, his industrious and organized nature (Hopkins 1984) brought learned society and other Vaisnava scholars under his leadership and gave every possible effort to prove Mayapur as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya (Chaudhuri 2004a, b). In 1893 he declared 'Yogapitha' as the site of the advent of Sri Caitanya (<https://iskcondesiretree.com/page/yogapitha-birthplace-of-lord-gauranga> retrieved on 31.03.2020) and 'Yogapitha' temple was erected there in 1934. A meeting was held in January 1894 (Majumder 1995; Dev 2004) at Krishnagar A. V. High School under his patronage to have every possible support from the learned elite society of Krishnagar and other places. The schools of Vaisnavites pleading Mayapur as the birth-pace of Sri Chaitanya, publicized a concept, that during the 1740s (150 years before 1890), the then Nabadwīp was swallowed by the river Bhagirathi and residents resettled at Kulia (present Nabadwīp) on the opposite bank of the river Bhagirathi (Chaudhuri 2004a). Therefore, they preached that Nabadwip town at present is not on the site of the original Nabadwip! It is sited at Kulia and Mayapur is the true site of Nabadwip.

After all these initiatives by Kedarnath Dutta, the opponent group feared losing the importance of Nabadwīp (Mukherjee 1984) and smelled conspiracy of deleting the ever-going belief and history of Nabadwīp as a birthplace of Sri Chaitanya (Dev 2004, Chaudhuri 2004a). Sri Braja Mohan Das, an engineer in early life, came to Nabadwīp from Bṛndābana in 1916 (Chaudhuri 2004a). He searched for the true birthplace of Sri Chaitanya and collected pieces of evidence in favour of a village 'Ramchandrapur' located to the north of Nabadwīp town. Subsequently, many erudite scholars (Chaudhuri 2004a; Bhattasali 1937) accepted his findings. And the debate Nabadwip versus Mayapur sprawled. Sir Jadunath Sarkar (1932), the eminent Indian historian, also advocated excavating the site of Dewan (finance secretary) Ganga Govinda

Singh's temple which is said by tradition to lie buried near Sri Chaitanya's birthplace to give the debate Nabadwip vs Mayapur a final settlement. Therefore, identifying the site of Sri Chaitanya's birthplace became an important historical and archaeological issue (Sarkar 1936) of the time.

In these circumstances, tools of geographical study of river-channel oscillation and reconstruction of the then palaeo-channels with the help of satellite imageries, old maps and literature could be a great step towards the solution of the issue. The present study employed its endeavour in this particular direction.

2. Materials and Methodology

Three distinct types of approaches were adopted for this study. *First* of all, pieces of literature related to Sri Chaitanya and his life published before the 18th century were analyzed. *Secondly*, information gathered from the literature was synchronized with geography. *Finally* tried to reconstruct the then geography of Nabadwip and to locate the birthplace based on information from Gaudiya Vaisnava literature.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Nabadwip

'Nabadwīp' headquarters of Community Development Block (C.D. Block) Nabadwīp in the district of Nadia, West Bengal, India. The extension of the town is from 23°23'10''N to 23°25'55''N and 88°21'20''E to 88°22'34''E. As a centre of Sanskrit learning and philosophy, Nabadwip was famous in medieval India even before the advent of Sri Chaitanya (1486 – 1533 AD). **Nabadwip is fondly called the 'Oxford of Bengal'**. The Navya-Nyāya school of logic reached its peak here with the efforts of some well-known philosophers. The word 'Nabadwīp' means new island (Naba = New, and Dwip = Island) or Nine Islands (Naba = Nine, and Dwip = Island) (Chakrabarty, Narahari 1760s/a, Minhaz 1260) or New Lamp (Dwip = lamp) or Nine Lamps. If the objective of a scientific study is to search a geographical place and its characteristics in its name, it is rational to discard the last two meanings 'New Lamp' and 'Nine Lamps'. Although the town Nabadwīp and its surrounding areas were dissected into three or four parts by branches of river Bhagirathi and Jalangi during the historical past but never split into 'nine' to be meant for 'Nine Islands'. Rather it could be more rational from the viewpoint of fluvial geomorphology to call it a 'New Island' (Hunter 1908a, p-73). Because it originated from the deposition of

sediment brought down by the Bhagirathi-Jalangi system and subsequently people inhabited that newly formed island (an extended bar or char). Although the word 'New' used in this context is not considered from a geological time scale. Allison et al (2003), from their extensive sedimentological study of the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta, showed that rather the eastern part of the delta is much newer than that of the western part (Figure 1).

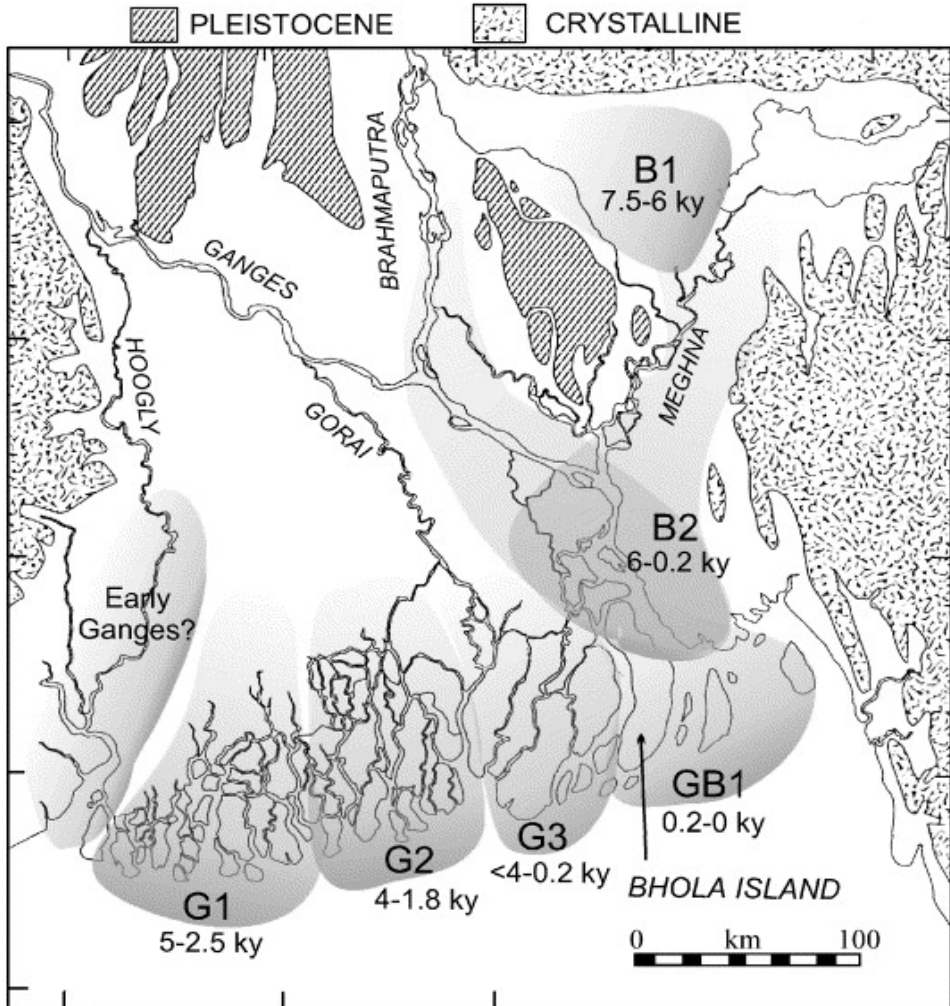


Fig. 1. Map of the pathways and timing of the phases of late Holocene growth of the lower delta plain associated with the Ganges (G1, G2, G3), Brahmaputra (B1, B2), and combined Ganges –Brahmaputra (GB1) (Allison et al 2003)

Although the town Nabadwip was under the impact of channel oscillation and partial attack of the river Bhagirathi and Jalangi, yet never swept away completely (Chaudhuri 2004; Dev 2004). Nakatani (2003) quoting information from Garrett (1910) and Mukherjee (1984) mentioned that the present town of Navadvip had been formed during the colonial rule because the *'Bhagirathi river once had a westerly course and about the beginning of nineteenth century the flow changed and swept the ancient town (Navadvip) away'*. But Chunder (1869) 41 years before Garrett, mentioned that the then Bhagirathi river was flowing through the 'Old Nuddea'. This 'Old Nuddea' indicates that although the river Bhagirathi and the river Jalangi have significantly changed the geographical setup of the town Nabadwip but never swept away the town completely. Mentioning the banyan tree at Pora-maee, he noted that it was at least 100 years old. From 1607 to 1890, different Rajas of Nadia patronized Brahmin pundits of Nabadwip and donated lands, and promoted Śakti worship there (Chaudhuri 2004, Mallik 1911). Raja Girishchandra (1802-1841) of Krishnagar made two big temples at Nabadwip, one for stone-made Kali and the other for a big Shiva Linga (Basu, Nagendranath, 1898). All these indicate the traditional and glorious existence of Nabadwip over 500 years. Nakatani (2003) in his work mentioned that *'According to Mukherjee (1984: 35), there was no reference to the name of Mayapur or Navadvip in any contemporary literature at the time of Caitanya. They appeared only in the early eighteenth century when Narahari Chakrabarty named and described Navadvip and identified Mayapur as the birthplace of Caitanya in his work Bhaktiratnākara (Mukherjee 1984: 35)'*. Murari Gupta was 6 years older (<https://gaudiyahistory.iskcondesiretree.com/tag/murari-gupta/>) than Sri Chaitanya. He composed 'Srikrishna-Chaitanya-Charitamritam' in 1513 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murari_Gupta). In several Prakram, Sargas, and Couplets in this book, he mentioned Nabadwip as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya. Many authors (Narottamadasa 1566-?; Sen Biśārada 1770; Chakrabarty, Mukundaram, 16th Century; Ray 1753) prior and contemporary to Narahari Chakrabarty mentioned Nabadwip.

3.2. Mayapur

Mayapur is a new village established during the last decade of the 19th century (Nakatani 2003). The location of the Srila Prabhupada Puspasamadhi Mandir of the ISKCON at Mayapur is 23°25'24"N and 88°23'18"E. The Yogpeeth temple claimed as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya by the Mayapur school of Vaisnavites is located at 23°26'18"N and 88°23'33"E.

Kedarnath Dutta, Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector of the then Nadia District of British colonial India, was an eminent scholar in Vaisnava literature. He was a scholar in many languages including Hindi, Oriya, English,

Persia, Urdu and Sanskrit (Mukherjee 1984). He intended to lead his retired life as a Mohanta (Vaisnava Saint) and left no stone unturned to have recognition from Vaisnavas of Nabadwip. But as Kedarnath Dutta was from non-Brahmin family, so Mohantas of Nabadwip did not accept him as Mohanta (Dev 2004; Chaudhuri 2004). But a man with huge potency, he did not give up. He coined a term 'Mayapur' from 'Bhaktiratnākaraa' by Narahari Chakrabarty (1760s/b) and founded 'Mayapur' as the birthplace in a village Miyapur in the Mouza of Ballaldighi (J.L. No. 14). He discovered the site of the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya in Mayapur by the way of revelation in a dream (<https://gaudiyahistory.iskcondesiretree.com/srila-bhaktivinoda-thakura-biography/>) and in a mythical way (Nakatani 2003, Rup-vilasa Dasa Adhikari 1989: 162-69; cf. Tridandi Sri Bhakti Prajnan Yati Maharaj 1994: 47-48). A remarkable but questionable occurrence took place regarding pointing out the exact site of the birthplace. The story is told thus: Srila Jagannatha Dasa Babaji Maharaj, aged 142 (Chaudhuri 2004a), who was unable to walk and had to be carried in a basket, made an eldritch revelation about the birthplace. In an extraordinary turn of events, he leapt out of the basket and began dancing and singing, directing everyone's attention towards the sacred birthplace. (<https://egaudiyatresuresofbengal.com/>)!

At the end of the 19th century, Mayapur suddenly popped up in the scenario of Nabadwīp and amongst Gaudiya Vaisnavas. And, the uninterrupted knowing of 400 years that 'Nabadwīp is the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya' was first stumbled in 1894 by the purposive interpretation of couplets of 'Bhaktiratnākaraa' (Dev 2004; Chaudhuri 2004; Majumder 1995).

After 400 years from the early 16th to the end of the 19th century, the geographical landscape of the Nabadwīp region had been thoroughly changed. A significant part of the town Nabadwīp had been eaten away by rivers leaving a part of old Nabadwīp. So, the exact site, where Sri Chaitanya advented, was really untraceable. Dutta took the opportunity of this opacity, *'no one even correctly knew the identity of Mahaprabhu's birthplace'* (<https://www.thegaudiyatresuresofbengal.com/2018/01/08/635/#:~:text=No%20one%20even%20correctly%20knew,royal%20asiatic%20society%20of%20London>) and discovered Mayapura in an eldritch way (<https://gaudiyahistory.iskcondesiretree.com/srila-bhaktivinoda-thakura-biography/>) (Nakatani 2003). One midnight when Kedarnath Dutta was meditating on the rooftop at Nabadwīp, saw a palm tree at 'Meyapur', (meaning the village where Muslims dwell) to the north-east on the opposite bank of the river Bhagirathi emitting effluence light and he discovered and declared that place as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya (Rup-vilasa Dasa Adhikari 1989: 162-69; cf. Tridandi Sri Bhakti Prajnan Yati Maharaj 1994: 47-48). Prior to declaring

it as the birthplace and site for the construction of the Yogpeeth temple, Dutta, who had the privilege of serving the colonial ruler, diligently conducted research and gathered all accessible literature and government records. These sources seemingly substantiate Meyapur as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya and seek to transform Meyapur into Mayapur. (Basu, 1937; Mukherjee 1984: 45; Swami 1996: 262). For the establishment Sree Mayapur post office, the solicitation was made on 28th August 1929 to the Post Master General (Ray 1982) and afterwards, Mayapur came into official existence (Majumder 1995).

3.3. Continuation of the civilization at Nabadwip since 13th century

Some scholars and religious gurus opine that old Nabadwip, sited on the eastern bank during Sri Chaitanya's period, was erased out by the oscillation of the river Bhagirathi and Jalangi about the beginning of the nineteenth century (Mukherjee 1984; Nakatani 2003; Swami 1996: 262) and the present Nabadwip is a new town formed on the western bank of the river during colonial rule (Nakatani 2003). But the continuation of the settlement of the Nabadwip is recorded in different kinds of literature (Bijayarāma Sēna Biśārada 1771; Chakrabarty, Narahari 1760s/a,b; Ray, Bharat Chandra 1753), government and other records (Barlow and Yule 1682; Garrett 1910; Hunter 1876, 1908b; Pertsch 1852; Blochmann 1875) and maps (Van den Brouck 1666; Rennel 1788). It is apparent that the geography of the Nabadwip settlement was altered several times by the oscillation of the river Jalangi and Bhagirathi but the civilization never completely deserted or disappeared or ruined. It maintained a hereditary flow to date.

Mukherjee (1984) in his article, used the term 'new Navadvipa' 8 times and deliberately tried to prove that Nabadwip town to the west of present-day Bhagirathi is a new town having no heritage link with Sri Chaitanya and the then Nabadwip. He commented: *"After Nadia city gradually decayed, initially by the ravage and neglect of the Turk rulers, and later by the change of course of the Ganga through centuries, the new Navadvipa town gradually grew up on the other side of the river during the British period. Some surviving para or Nagar of the old city degenerated into small villages"*. But in the same article, he admitted that the true or old Nabadwip city has partly (not completely) been eaten away by the river Bhagirathi. *"Old Navadvipa city has partially been eaten away by the changing course of the Bhagirathi (Ganga) and during 18th-20th Centuries under the British rule the present Navadvipa city has been built anew on the western bank of the changed course of the Ganga"*. Again, he says that the city grew anew. The statements seem to contain controversial content.

In the 2nd half of the 13th century during the reign of Mughisuddin Tughral, the treasury of Nadia was looted (Chaudhuri 2004, P-19). Sri Chaitanya was born in Nadia or Nabadwip in the 15th century. Acharya Singha (1498), son of Sri Chaitanya's teacher Bishnudas Pundit, wrote a note on Mālatī-Mādhava and mentioned 'Nabadwip', his residence, was a pleasant and peaceful place during the reign of Ala-ud-din Husain Shah. During this period Raghunath Shiromani composed 'Digdwipika' (Bhattacharya 1951). Murari Gupta (1513) in his Kadca also mentioned Nabadwip as a pleasant place for learned Brahmins (Prakram 1 & 3, Sargas 1 & 4, Couplets 16, 4. <https://archive.org/details/MurariGupataKadca/page/n95/mode/2up> and <https://archive.org/details/MurariGupataKadca/page/n265/mode/2up>). The wooden idol of Sri Chaitanya, worshipped by Biṣṇupriyā (wife of Sri Chaitanya), was crafted by Banshibadan in 1513 AD (1435 Śākābda). This idol is currently worshipped in Nabadwip town and its date of sculpture can be observed on the idol's base.

Kavi Karnapura, (1542) in his book 'Sri Chaitanyacharitamrita Mahakavyam' mentioned that Sri Chaitanya advented in Nabadwip (https://archive.org/d/kcc_mahakavyam/page/n19/mode/2up).

In the 17th century, Raghav Ray (1632-1683), the King of Nadia, '*...having set up at Navadvipa a statue of Ganesha, he began to erect a building of bricks which should contain a phallus of Mahadeva. When, however, this was but half-finished, he expired*' (Pertsch W. 1852. Chapter VI, P-20). This incomplete work at Nabadwip by Raghav Ray was completed by his son Rudra Ray (1683-1694) (Pertsch W. 1852. Chapter VII, P-20). Chaudhuri (2004) mentioned that it appears from old documents, that in 1780 Maharaja Krishna Chandra donated land to a Brahmin of Nabadwip (<https://archive.org/details/KshitishVamshavaliCharitam/page/n21/mode/2up>).

Nabadwip is also shown as Neddia in his map drawn in 1666 (Van den Brouck). In 1682, Hedges visited Nabadwip and noted "*December 29 – We lay to at Nuddia, only ye Point of Cassumbazar Island, and after our boat had eaten, rowed all night, and ye next morning by 2 o'clock were past Sanctapoor*" (Barlow and Yule 1682).

Tirtha Mangal of Bijayarāma Sēna Biśārada (1771) sketches the Nabadwip on the west bank of the river Bhagirathi. The couplet describes the upstream journey of the merchant's vessel as–

চলাচল চলে নৌকা নদ্যা বাম ভিতে।
 তেমুয়নি দিয়া নৌকা পড়িল খড়াতে।
chalāchal chale noukā Nadya bām vite
temuyani diyā noukā porila kharyate.

Basu (1915 <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.298280/page/n25/mode/2up>) opined that Tīrtha Maṅgala Kābya was written, during 1770. During that period, Nabadwip was populated by 1700 eminent brahmins scholars and many more people proportionately (<https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.298280/page/n23/mode/2up>).

শতের শত ব্রাহ্মণ আছে নদ্যার ভিতরে।

আর কত কত লোক কে বলিতে পারে॥ (Couplet. 1018)

Śatēra śata brāhmaṇa āchē nadyāra bhitarē.

Āra kata kata lōka kē balitē pārē. (Sēna Biśārada, 1770. Couplet. 1018).

Chunder (1869) quoted “*From the temple of Choitunya we had to pass through a deserted quarter, where a hardly discernible trace of debris was pointed out as marking the site of Agum Bagish’s adobe*”. About the banyan tree at Pora-mae, Chunder (1869) said that “*The banyan tree is at least a hundred years old. It is proved that the river has not encroached upon this quarter of old Nuddea*”. Therefore, even in 1745 (1845-100 years), Nabadwip was sited at the place where it is now. During the 1840s also, Nabadwip was continuing as a centre of education. About Nabadwip as a realm of learners, Chunder said “*Half, at least, of what one hears about the learning of Nuddea, is still found to be true*”. Chunder (1869) also visited Kali established by Raja Krishna Chandra at pora-mae tala, a number of Tols or seminaries, and mentioned Sreeram Shiromonee’s tole. The implication of all these is the continued existence of the town of Nabadwip from the 15th century to the 1840s.

Dewan (finance secretary) Ray, Kartikeya Chandra (1876) of Nadia Raj wrote ‘Kshitish Banshabali Charit’ where he noted that during his time, there were 17 Tols in Nabadwip. He also mentioned that during the period of Ballal Sen, river Bhagirathi was on the west and south of Nabadwip while river Jalangi was to the east of Nabadwip with their confluence at Goalpara, 2 krosh (6.44km) south of Nabadwip, and that point of confluence was known as Trimohini. This statement complies with maps of Van-den-Brouck and Rennels, in which the Jalangi-Bhagirathi confluence is shown at Ambona near Samudragarh.

Therefore, it is clear from the above-discussed testimonials that since the 13th century, before the birth of Sri Chaitanya, there was a continuous mention of the city of Nabadwip in the name of Nuddeah/ Nuddea/ Neddia/ Nooddia/ etc, a well-populated learned town, all along the centuries up to the 18th century, and which was never associated with the name ‘Mayapur’ before Bhaktiratnākara came into the scenario.

3.4. *Hagiography on Sri Chaitanya's birthplace*

In a true sense, there is no authentic historical and geographical account of the town of Nabadwip. So, dependency on religious literature, abundant on religious centre Nabadwip, is a compulsion. Under this section, available literature on Sri Chaitanya and Nabadwip have been arranged chronologically and analyzed them to illuminate the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya.

3.4.1. *Murari Gupta (1480-1540)*

Amongst religious literature and hagiography on Sri Chaitanya, 'Sri Srikrishna-Chaitanya-Charitamritam' the earliest one was authored by Murari Gupta (1513). Murari Gupta (1480-1540) was contemporary to Sri Chaitanya and had an intimate lifelong relationship with Sri Chaitanya. The foundation of his poetic hagiography of Sri Chaitanya primarily rests on personal encounters and direct experiences. So, his work could be considered as the most reliable and authentic source of Sri Chaitanya's life and living. The book is arranged in descending orders of Prakram (No. 4), Sarga (No. 78), and Ślōka (couplet). In several Prakrams, Sargas, and Couplets in this book, Nabadwip is mentioned as the birthplace and residence of Sri Chaitanya but nowhere in any context mentioned the name Mayapur (https://archive.org/details/20201009_20201009_2214/page/n91/mode/2up).

স নবদ্বীপবতীষু ভুমিষু দ্বিজবরৈরভিনন্দিতো হরিঃ

নিজপিতুঃ সুখদো গৃহে সুখং নিবসন বেদষড়ঙ্গসংহিতাম॥

Sa nabadbīpatīṣu bhūmiṣu dbijabaryairabhinanditō hariḥ
nijapituh sukhadō gṛhē sukhaṁ nibasana bēdaṣaṅgasanhitāma.
(Sarga-1/Couplet-3/p-1)

[Meaning: Applauded by the best of the brāhmaṇa community within those lands comprising Navadvīpa, Śrī Hari dwelt happily in the home of his father, giving him great happiness. He then studied the scriptures embracing the six branches of the Vedas.]

নবদ্বীপ ইতিখ্যাতে ক্ষেত্রে পরম-বৈষ্ণবে

ব্রাহ্মনা: সাধব: সান্তা: বৈষ্ণবা: সৎকুলদ্ভবা:

Nabadwīpa itikhyate kshetre parama-vaishnave
brāhmaṇa sādhaba sāntā vaisnavā satkulotbhabā.(Prakram-1/Sarga-1/Couplet-16/ p-4)

[Meaning: There is a famous Vaishnav land named Nabadwip where Brahman, saint, santa, Vaishnav are from the honest clan.]

गच्छतां जाह्नवीतीरे नवद्वीपं मनोरमम्

मातरं परयाभक्त्या मम नाम पुरसरम्॥

gachha tang Jāhnabī tire Nabadwīpangmanaramam.

Matarang paraya bhakta mama nama purasaram. (Prakram-3/Sarga-4/Couplet-4/ p-174).

[Meaning: Go to that pleasant land Nabadwip on the bank of the river Janhabī (Ganga) and with deep respect tell my mother in my name.]

3.4.2. Kavi Karnapur (1524-?)

The next authentic book 'Sri Sri Krishna Chaitanya Charitamritam Mahakavyam' by Kavi Karnapur (1542) was also composed in 1542 (Chaudhuri 2004 P-22). He was also contemporary to Sri Chaitanya and authored the book based partly on direct experience and partly based on hearing and earlier work of Murari Gupta. In the first couplet of this poetic hagiography, he mentioned Nabadwip as the place of the advent of Sri Chaitanya.

जः श्रीबृंदावनभूवी पुरा सच्चिदानंद सैंद्रो

गौरांगिभीः सद्गीश श्रुचिभी श्यामधामा ननर्त।

तासं ससबद्रहरतरपरिम्भसम्भेदत किं

गौराङ्गः सन् जयति स नबद्वीप मालम्बमानः॥

ja sri Brindavanbhubi purā saccidananda Sandro

gourangibhi sadrisashrucibhi shyamdhama nanarta |

tasang sasabdriratarapariranbhasambhedata king

gouraango san jayati sa Nabadwipamalambamana || (Sarga-1/ Couplet-1).

[Meaning: Is dark-complexioned Sri Krishna, condensed form of truth, consciousness, and bliss, who formerly danced with ladies of fair complexion in Brindavana and turned into fair-complexioned by the deep hugging of those fair ladies, living in Nabadwip?]

In the Sri Chaitanya Chandrodaya drama, Kavi Karnapur (1568) again mentioned that Sri Chaitanya was born in the house of Jagannath Mishra and Sachi Devi of Nabadwip, and he nowhere mentioned Mayapur in this book also.

Nabadwipe jagannatha namno misra purandarata

jatah sacyam kumaro 'yam mama karmani krntati. (Act-1/ Couplet-44)

[Meaning: Born in Nabadwip as the son of Sachi Devi and Jagannath Mishra Purandara, this boy has cut my work into pieces.]

In the 1st, 15th, 18th, and 19th couplets of Shri Gaura Ganoddesha Dipika, Kavi Karnapur (1576) again mentioned Nabadwip. Particularly in the 19th couplet, it is clearly stated that ‘taking the name Vishvambhara, the Supreme Personality of Godhead accepted residence in the town of Navadwipa’ (https://gaudiyahistory.iskcondesiretree.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Kavi_Karnapura_Sri_Gaura_Ganodesa_Dipika.pdf).

3.4.3. Prabodhananda Saraswati (16th century)

Prabodhananda Saraswati, another Vaishnava poet of Kasi, composed ‘Chaitanya Chandramritam’ https://archive.org/details/chaitanya_chandramrita_bengali/page/n15/mode/2up (<http://www.harekrnsna.de/caitanya-candramrita.htm>) where he sharply mentioned that ‘the Supreme Personality of Godhead (Sri Chaitanya) has mercifully appeared in the town of Navadvipa’ (Chapter-1 & 7/ Couplet-1 & 62). Moreover, in chapters 9 and 12, and in couplets 104, 105, and 140 he mentioned and praised Nabadwip.

3.4.4. Lochanadas Goswami (1520-?),

Lochana Das, another Vaishnava author composed ‘Chaitanya Mangal’ in 1537. The book was based on the diary of Shri Murari Gupta (<https://gaudiyahistory.iskcondesiretree.com/locana-dasa-thakura-2/>), his personal experience, and information gathered from his *guru* Shri Narahari Sarkar Thakura (Chaudhuri 2004a). In Sutra Khanda of this book, Lochanadas Goswami wrote-

শ্রী মুরারিগুপ্ত বেঝা বৈসে নবদ্বীপে।

নিরন্তর থাকে গোরাচাঁদের সমীপে।।

Sri Murarigupta bejhā boise Nabadwīpe

nirantar thāke Gorāchānder samīpe. (Sutrakhanda/ p – 5)

[Meaning: Sri Murari Gupta always stays near Gorachand (Sri Chaitanya) at Nabadwip.]

ত্রিজগৎ প্রদীপ নবদ্বীপে উদয় কৈল করুণা-কিরণ পরকাশে

অনেক দিনের যত ভকত পিয়াসী ছিল ধাওল প্রেম প্রতি আশে।

trijagt prodip nabadwīpere uday koila, karunā kiran parakāshe.

onek diner jata bhakta piyāsi chila, dhāolo prem proti āshe. (Sutrakhanda/ p – 9)

[Meaning: The lamp of trijagat advented in Nabadwip and radiated beam of mercy. And bhaktas who were long been deprived rushes towards Him for the hope of love.]

সন্যাস আসয়ে নবদ্বীপ ছারি যায়
সন্যাস করিলা প্রভু ভারতি সহায়।।

sanyasāsaye Nabadwīp chhāri jāy

sanyaskarilā prabhu bhārati sahāy. (Sutrakhanda, p-8)

[Meaning: For renunciation Lord (Sri Chaitanya) leaves Nabadwip and took sannyas from Keshava Bharati.]

এথা লক্ষ্মী শচীদেবি নবদ্বীপে আছে।।

etha Lakshmi Sacidevi Nabadwīpe āche. (Ādikhanda, p-128)

[Meaning: Lakshmi (first wife of Sri Chaitanya) and Sacidevi (mother of Sri Chaitanya) is residing in Nabadwip.]

সব অবতার সার গোরা অবতার

তাহাতে নদীয়া পুর প্রেমের প্রচার।।

sab abatār sār gorā abtār

tāhāte nadiāpur premer prachār. (Ādikhanda, p-151)

[Meaning: The core of all avatar Gora spreads love in Nadia.]

দেখি অন্য অবতার সঙ্গী সব কান্দে

নবদ্বীপে অবতার হইলা ব্রজ চান্দে।।

Dekhi anya abatār sangi sab kānde

Nabadwīpe abatār haila braja chānde. (Madhyakhanda, p-166)

[Meaning: Seeing the advent of Gorachand in Nabadwip, associates of all other avatar cries.]

All these couplets of Goswami, Lochanadas (1520-?) mentioned Nabadwīp as the residence/ birthplace of Sri Chaitanya.

3.4.5. Krishnadas Kaviraja Goswami (1496-1588)

Goswami, Krishnadas Kaviraj born in 1496, only 10 years younger than Sri Chaitanya, composed 'Chaitanya Charitamrita' in 1557 based on information from Murari Gupta, Swarupa Damodara, and Guru Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami (1494–1586). In this book (Goswami, 1557), Nabadwīpa was mentioned as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya. Many other localities were also mentioned in the book but nowhere had it uttered the place name 'Mayapur'.

শ্রীকৃষ্ণচৈতন্য নবদ্বীপে অবতরি
অষ্টচল্লিশ বৎসর প্রকট বিহরি॥

Śrīkṛṣṇacaitan'ya nabadbīpē abatari
aṣṭacalliśa baṭsara prakāṭa bihari. (Couplet-7, Chap. 13, Ādi lilā)
[Meaning: Sri Chaitanya advented in Nabadwip and lived a life of 48 years.]

কত নাম লইব যত নবদ্বীপ বাসী
সভারে মিলিলা প্রভু কৃপাদৃষ্টে হাঁসি॥

kata nām laiba jata Nabadwīp bāsi
savāre milila prabhu kripā driste hānsi. (Couplet-152, Chap. 3, Madhya lilā)
[Meaning: How many names should be utter, rather he smiled with mercy to every inhabitant of Nabadwip.]

যত লোক আইলা মহাপ্রভুরে দেখিতে
নানা গ্রাম হইতে আর নবদ্বীপ হইতে॥

jatalok ailā mahāprabhure dekhite
nānā grām haite ar Nabadwīp haite. (Couplet-154, Chap. 3, Madhya lilā)
[Meaning: People who came to meet Mahaprabhu from different villages and from Nabadwip.]

3.4.6. Narottamadasa (1566-?)

Narottamadasa (1566-?) also mentioned Sri Chaitanya's residence as Nabadwīp.

ভজ পতিত উদ্ধারন শ্রীগৌর হরি
শ্রীগৌর হরি নবদ্বীপ বিহারী॥

bhajo patita uddhārana śrī gaura hari;
śrī gaura hari Nabadwīp bihārī
(<http://kksongs.org/songs/b/bhajopatitauddharana.html>).

[Meaning: Worship the savior of the fallen Sri Gaura Hari, the breveler of Navadvipa.]

নন্দের নন্দন হরি
জগৎ ভরিয়া প্রেম দিলা॥

nander nandan hari

নবদ্বীপে আলো করি

Nabadwīpe ālo kari

jagat bhariya prem dila (Narottamadasa1566-?).

[Meaning: Son of Nanda, Hari (Sri Krishna) enlightened Nabadwip and the whole world.]

3.4.7. *Brindavan Das (1507-1589 CE)*

From the viewpoint of geographical importance, the Chaitanya Bhagbat of Brindavan Das (1507-1589 CE) is somewhat different from all other hagiographies earlier to him, where everyone only mentioned Nabadwip as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya. It is Chaitanya Bhagbat, where Nabadwip is not only mentioned as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya but a little geographical detail of the town is also provided here. The route which was followed on the day of marching Kazi's house by Sri Chaitanya and his followers is well described in this volume. In several khanda, chapters, and couplets, Brindavan Das praised Nabadwip for being the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya.

নানা স্থানে অবতীর্ণ হইলা ভক্তগন।

নবদ্বীপে আসি সবার হৈল মিলন।।

nānā sthāne abtirna hoilā bhaktagan

Nabadwīpe āsi sabār hoila milan. (Couplet-53/ p- 68/ Chap.2/ Adikhanda)

[Meaning: Devotees descended in various places. Came to Navadwip and meet everyone.]

নবদ্বীপে হৈল প্রভুর অবতার।

অতএব নবদ্বীপে মিলন সবার।।

Nabadwīpe hoila prabhur abatār

ataeb Nabadwīpe milan sabār. (Couplet-54/ p- 68/ Chap. 2/ Adikhanda)

[Meaning: As prabhu descended at Nabadwip, therefore all the devotees gathered at Nabadwip to meet.]

নবদ্বীপ হেন গ্রাম ত্রিভুবনে নাই।

যহিঁ অবতীর্ণ হৈলা চৈতন্য গোসাঞি।।

'Nabadwip' hena grām tribhubane nāi

jahin abtirna hoilā Chaitanya gosāin. (Couplet-55/ p- 68/ Chap.2/ Adikhanda)

[Meaning: There is no village in tribhuban comparable to Nabadwip where Sri Chaitanya descended.]

3.4.8. *Rupram Chakraborty (17th Century)*

Chakraborty, Rupram (17th Century) in Vandana Pala of his 'Dharma Mangala' mentioned that Sri Chaitanya was born in Nabadwip.

জম্বুদ্বীপ সার পুরি বন্দো নবদ্বীপ
পতিত পাবনি গঙ্গা যাহার সমীপ।।

jambudwipesārpuribandyoNabadwīp

patitpābanigangājāhārsamip. (Chakrabarty, *Rupram* 17th Century)

[Meaning: Worship Nabadwip along which the river Ganga is flowing and which is the core of the Jambudwip.]

কলিকাল আইল বিষম অন্ধকার।

নবদ্বীপে হও গোরাচাঁদ অবতার।।

kalikāl aila bisam andhakār

Nabadwīpe hao Gorachānd abatār. (*Rupram Chakraborty* 17th Century).

[Meaning: Kalikāl (era of Kali) came with intense darkness. O Gorachānd (Sri Chaitanya), descend to Nabadwip.]

শুনিয়া ব্রহ্মার বাক্য দেব নারায়ণ।

নবদ্বীপে জন্ম লইতে করিলা গমন।।

suniyā brohmār bākya deba Nārāyan

Nabadwīpe janma loite karilā gaman. (*Chakraborty, Rupram* 17th Century).

[Meaning: Hearing Brahma's appeal, Lord Narayan goes to Nabadwip to take birth.]

3.4.9. *Churamani Dasa* (17th Century)

Gaurānga Vijaya of Dasa, Churamani (17th Century) states that 'Madhavendra Puri's worship satisfied Krishna and he appeared before him and said that he would be born very soon as the son of Jagannath Mishra and Sachidevi in Nabadwip. Sri Chaitanya was born at a very auspicious moment when the city of Nabadwip was in a fit of pious excitement' (<http://gaurangabhakti.blogspot.com/2013/12/gauranga-vijaya-rare-book-by-chudamani.html>).

3.5. *Synchronizing hagiography and geography*

As already stated in the earlier section, the geographical account of the town Nabadwip and its surrounding is better represented in the hagiographic works of Brindavan Das, Uddhab Das, and Narahari Chakraborty. The following section synchronizes the historical information of this three Vaishnava literature with the geography of the then Nabadwip.

3.5.1. *Chaitanya Bhagbat and the then geography of Nabadwip*

In the 16th century, Brindavan Das (1507-1589 CE) crafted the literary masterpiece known as 'Chaitanya Bhagavata.' Divided into three khandas (sections) - Adi khanda, Madhya khanda, and Anta khanda - the book offers a comprehensive account. Within the 23rd chapter of the Madhya khanda, an intriguing episode unfolds when Sri Chaitanya boldly marches towards the residence of the Kazi, defying his imposed laws. It is within this context that Brindavan Das vividly describes the routes of marching and geographical layout of the then Nabadwip in a series of couplets spanning from verse 298 to 498. In 1509, Sri Chaitanya took renunciation in December. About 3 to 4 months before his renunciation, Sri Chaitanya and his troop marched to Kazi's residence probably in October 1509 (Chaudhuri 2004). And the route of marching as stated in 'Chaitanya Bhagbat' is as follows-

গঙ্গা তীরে তীরে পথ আছে নদীয়ায়।
আগে সেই পথে নাচি যায় গৌর রায়।।
Gangā tire tire path āchhe Nadiyāy.
āge sei pathē nāchi jāy Gour rāy. Couplet-298/ P- 799/ Chap.23/
Madhya Khanda

[Meaning: Paths of Nadia are on the banks of the river Ganga and Goura Ray (Sri Chaitanya) dances and moves pioneering the team on that path.]

আপনার ঘাটে আগে বহু নৃত্য করি।
তবে মাধাইর ঘাট গেলা গৌর হরি।।
āponār ghāte āge bahu nritya kari
Tabē Mādahir ghāt gelā Gour hari. Couplet -299/ P- 799/ Chap.23/
Madhya Khanda

[Meaning: Dancing a lot at first in His own ghat, Goura Hari moved to the ghat of Madhai.]

বারকোনা ঘাটে নাগরিয়া ঘাটে গিয়া।
গঙ্গার নগর দিয়া গেলা সিমুলিয়া।।
Bārkonā ghāte Nāgoriyā ghāte giyā
Gangār nagar diyā gelā Simuliā. Couplet -300/ P- 799/ Chap.23/ Madhya
Khanda
Madhya Khanda

[Meaning: Through Barkona Ghat, Nagariya Ghat and Ganganagar, presently Bharuidanga (Mukherjee 1984), Sri Chaitanya went to Simuliya.]

নদীয়ার একান্তে নগর সিমুলিয়া।
নাচিতে নাচিতে প্রভু উত্তরিল গিয়া।।

Nadiyār ekānte nagar simuliyā

*Nāchite nāchite prabhu uttarilā giyā. Couplet -348/ P- 801/ Chap.23/
Madhya Khanda*

[Meaning: Prabhu (Sri Chaitanya) danced and reached Simuliya, at the farthest end of Nadia (Nabadwip).]

Defeating Kazi, Sri Chaitanya took the return path to come back to His house and visited the following places.

অনন্ত অর্বুদ লোক সঙ্গে বিশ্বম্বর।
প্রবেশ করিলা শঙ্খবানিক নগর।।

Ananta arbud lok sange biswambhar

*Prabesh karilā Shankhabanik nagar. Couplet -428/ P- 805/ Chap.23/
Madhya Khanda*

[Meaning: With an innumerable number of people, Biswambhar (Sri Chaitanya) enters the village of conch product sellers.]

এই মত সকল নগর শোভা করে।
আইলা ঠাকুর তন্তুবায়ের নগরে।।

Ei moto sakal nagar shobha kore

*Ailā thakur tantrabāyer nagare. Couplet -433/ P- 805/ Chap.23/
Madhya Khanda*

[Meaning: This way delighting all the villages, Thakur (Sri Chaitanya) came to weaver's village.]

সর্ব মুখে হরিনাম শুনি প্রভু হাসে।
নাচিয়া চলিলা প্রভু শ্রীধরের বাসে।।

Sarba mukhe hari nām suni prabhu hase

*Nāchiya chalilā prabhu sridharer bāse. Couplet -436/ P- 805/ Chap.23/
Madhya Khanda*

[Meaning: Hearing *hari nām* from all, Prabhu (Sri Chaitanya) smiles and moves dancing towards Sridhar's house.]

জল পানে শ্রীধরেরে অনুগ্রহ করি।
নগরে আইলা পুনঃ গৌরাঙ্গ শ্রীহরি।।

Jal pāne Sridharere anugraha kori

*Nagare āila puno Gouranga Srihari. Couplet -494/ P- 809/ Chap.23/
Madhya Khanda*

[Meaning: Taking water from Sridhar and making him pleased,
Gouranga Srihari came back to the town.]

সর্ব নবদ্বীপে নাচে ত্রিভুবন রায়।
গাদিগাছা পাড়ডাঙ্গা মাজিদা দিয়া যায়।।

Sarba Nabadwipe nāche tribhuban rāy

*Gādigāchā Pārdāngā Mājidā diyā jāy. Couplet -498/ P- 809/ Chap.23/
Madhya Khanda*

[Meaning: Lord of *Tribhuvan* dances all over Nabadwip and moves
through Gadigacha, Pardanga, and Majida.]

From this description of marching different areas of Nabadwip, one can grasp the most probable outlook of the site of the house of Sri Chaitanya and the then historical geography of the town Nabadwip (Figure 2).

From the above description of the onward and return journey for *nagar parikrama* (marching) and from the study of available maps it is found that- i) there is no spotting of Sri Chaitanya's Ghat, Madhai Ghat, Barkona Ghat, Nagoriya Ghat, Conch sellers' village, weavers' village, and Sridhar's house on available maps; ii) Ganganagar (presently Bharuidanga), Simuliya (presently Bamanpukur), Gadigacha, and Majida are spotted on modern maps. So, based on these two kinds of information, we can't locate the site from where Sri Chaitanya started his journey. But it appears crystal clear that in his return journey for coming back home, He moved at least 7km south up to Majida. But if Sri Chaitanya's house was at 'A' marked on the map 'b', then on return journey from Kazi's house, why did the procession move south up to Majida seem irrational. Another thing that appears from the presently known relative location of Ganganagar, Simuliya, and Majida is that Sri Chaitanyas' house was somewhere to the South-south-west of Ganganagar.

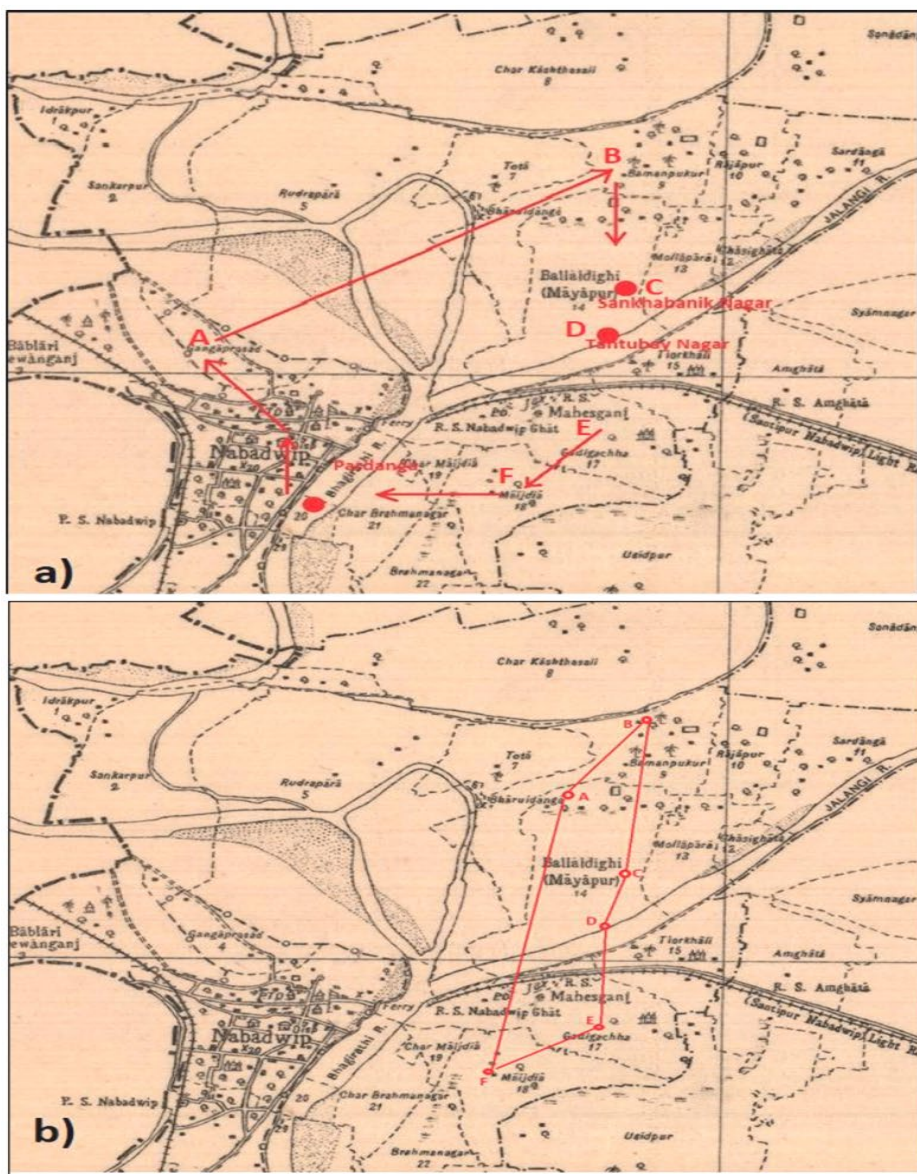


Fig. 2. Marching of Kazi's residence by Sri Chaitanya and his followers as narrated in Chaitanya Bhagbat. Alphabets A-F showing places He visited. A= Birthplace of Sri Chaitanya, B= Kazi's residence (Sri Chaitanyas own ghat, Madhai Ghat, Barkona Ghat, Nagoriya Ghat, and Ganganagar lies in between A and B) C= Conch seller village, D= Weavers village, E= Gadigachha, and F= Majida. (a). As is claimed by Nabadwip school and (b). As claimed by Mayapur school (path marked on Police Station Map of Nabadwip, surveyed in 1917-21 and published in 1931).

3.5.2. *Uddhab Das and the then geography of Nabadwip*

Resident of Brindavan, Uddhav Das was contemporary to Sri Chaitanya (Mukhopadhyay, Harekrishna 1934; Choudhury 2004). Uddhav Das in one of his Padābali, drawn the detail picture of paths taken by Sri Chaitanya and his followers on the day of marching Kazi's house. In a song, he described the path as follows (Figure 3).

যেদিনেতে গৌরহরি কাজীরে দলন করি, নবদ্বীপে করিলা ভ্রমন।
 চারি ঘাট উত্তরিয়্যা গঙ্গানগর গ্রাম দিয়া পরে জলাশয় সুশোভন।।
 জলাশয় ঐশানেতে চাঁদকাজী করে স্থিতে সিমুলিয়া নাম সেই স্থান।
 কাজীরে দলন করি ভক্ত সঙ্গে গৌরহরি দক্ষিণ দিশা করিলা গমন।।
 সংকীর্তনে মত্ত হৈ শঙ্খ তন্তু পল্লী দুই মহানন্দে করিলা ভ্রমন।
 শ্রীধরের গৃহ হৈয়া গাদিগাছা মাজিদা দিয়া পশ্চিম দিশা পারডাঙ্গা স্থান।।
 তাহার উত্তর দিয়া রাজ পন্ডিতির গৃহ হইয়া ভক্তগনে মহাসুখী করি।
 বায়ুকোনে কিছু দুরে গঙ্গার দক্ষিণ তীরে নিজ গৃহে গেলা গৌর হরি।।
 উত্তরেতে নিজ ঘাট তার পূর্বে মাধাইয়ের ঘাট নিকটেতে শ্রীবাস অঙ্গন।
 তাহার ঐশান্য কোনে বারকোনা ঘাটনামে যাহা হয় শুক্লাবরাশ্রম।।
 তার উত্তরে কিছু দুরে নাগরিয়্যা ঘাট বারে তার উত্তরে গঙ্গানগর গ্রাম।
 এ উদ্ধব মন্দমতি শোধিতে আপন মতি নগর ভ্রমন বিরচিল গাণ।।

Jēdīnētē Gaurhari Kāzīre dālāna kari
 Nabadwīpē karilā bhramana.
 Chāri ghāṭa uṭāriyā Gaṅgānagara grāma diyā
 pāre jalāsaiy susabhāna.
 Jalāsaiya oissānētē Chānd Kāzī kare ṣṭhitē
 Simuliyā nāma sēyē ṣṭhāna.
 Kāzīrē dālāna karī bhakta saṅē Gaurahari
 dakṣhiṇa ḍisā karilā gamana.
 Saṅkīrtanē matta hai saṅkhā tantu pallī duyō
 mahānandē karilā bramana.
 Śrīdharera griha haiā Gādigācha Mājidā diyā
 pāsacima diśā Pāradaṅga ṣṭhāna.
 Tāhāra uttara diyā rāja paṇḍitera griha hyāya
 bhakta ganē mahāsukhī kari.

Bāyu kōnē kicu durē Gaṅgāra dakṣhiṇa ṭire
nijā grihē gēlā Gauṛa hari.
Uttarētē nijā ghāṭa tāra purbē Mādhāyēra ghāṭa
nikatētē Śrībāsa aṅgana.
Tāhāra anśan'yā kōnē barakōnā ghāṭa nāma
jāhā hai suklāmbaraśrama.
Tāra uttarē kichu durē nagariyā ghāṭabārē
tāra utaṭārē gaṅgānagara grāma.
E udadhaba mandaōmati śōdhitē āpana mati
nagara barmaṇa biracilā gaṇa.

[Meaning: The day on which Sri Chaitanya defeated Kazi and roamed Nabadwip, first passed by four ghats and then by Ganganagar village where was a beautiful water body. Kazi's residence Simulia was to the North-East of the tank. Defeating Kazi, Sri Chaitanya (Goura Hari) along with his followers, chanted and moved south by localities of traders of Shankha and Tantu. From there He went to Sridhar's house and moved towards Gadigacha and Majida. From there moved west to Pardanga. To the north, via the house of Pundits of King's courtyard, moved North-West to His own house and His followers were very much happy. To the north of His residence was own Ghat to the east of which was Madhai's ghat. Sribas's house was nearby and to the North-East of which was Barkona Ghat. Near this Ghat was the Ashrama of Suklambar. To the north of it was Nagariya Ghat and further north was the village Ganganagar. This bad-minded Uddahb composed the song of circumambulation of Nagaras for purifying his own mind].

This pada (song) indicates the house of Sri Chaitanya must be to the northern part of the present Nabadwip town. But there is ample scope for doubt about the authenticity and age of this script. First, the script of the song appears only in a few pieces of literature (Harekrishna Mukhopadhyay, 1934; Chaudhuri 2004) of recent times, long after the debate was raised. Second, its vivid description along with route directions to support Nabadwip as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya attract doubts about its authenticity. However, search by the present author for the authenticity of the lyrics might have limitations.

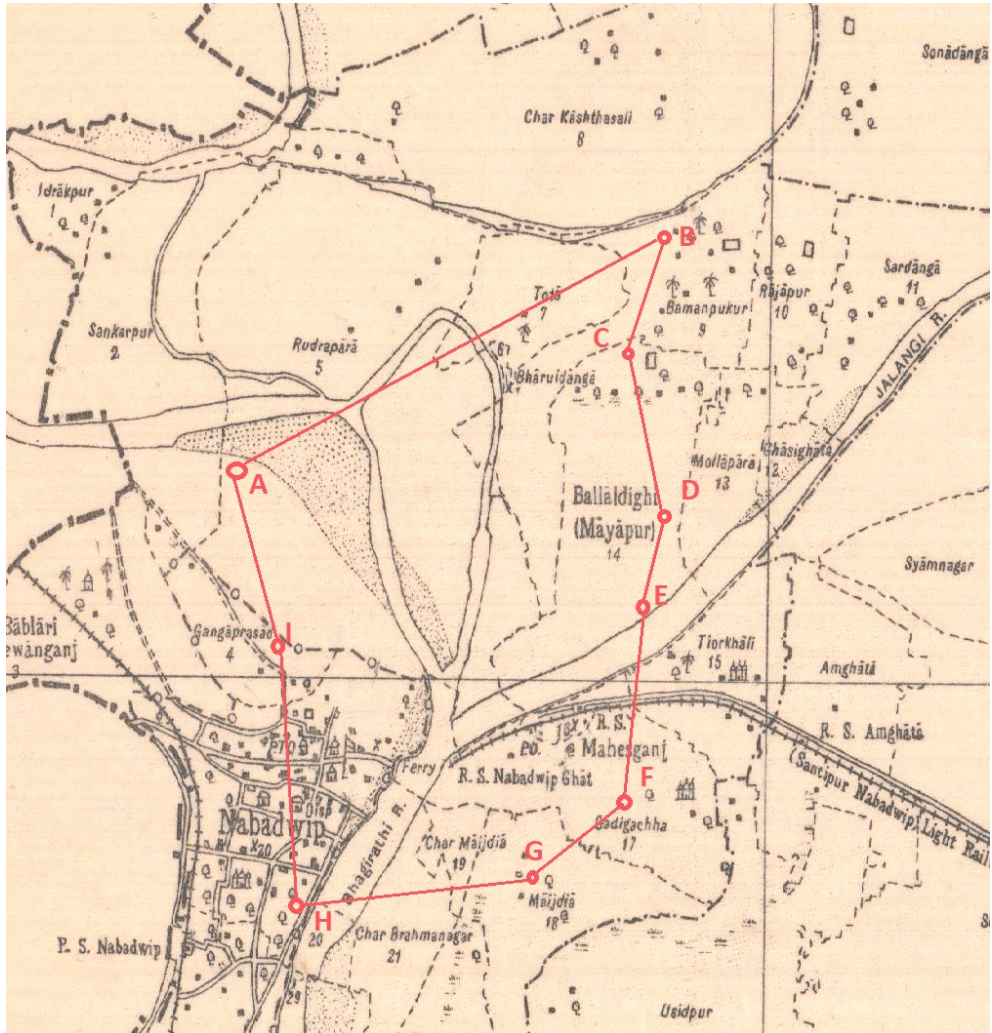


Fig. 3. Marching of Kazi's residence by Sri Chaitanya and his followers as narrated by Uddhab Das's Pada. A to I indicating Approx sites of A= Sri Chaitanya's Ghat, B= Kazi's residence, C= Large pond, D= Conch seller's village, E= Weavers village, F= Gadigacha, G= Majida, H= Pardanga, I= Sri Chaitanya's House (path marked on Police Station Map of Nabadwip, surveyed in 1917-21 and published in 1931).

4. Conclusion

Nabadwip/ Nadia/ Nadiya/ Nuddeah/ Noodeah is a place of age-old history and legacy. Although the geospatial and socio-economic-cultural setup of the town has changed significantly but never completely lost its inheritance to date. Channel avulsion and channel migration of river Bhagirathi and Jalangi have eaten away a part of the town especially from its north. Yet a part of the land of old Nabadwip has been there and the town has been continuing its cultural heritage as a centre of learning.

From the analysis of the available literature and documents, it is apparent that the name 'Mayapur' was projected on a rural Muslim village 'Miyapur' or 'Meyapur' during the last decade of the 19th century by Kedarnath Dutta. There was no association of glorious heritage or history with the place name Mayapur before the 20s of the 20th century. What Bhaktiratnākara wanted to mean by 'Mayapur' keeps opening the discourse. Whether it means a site within Nabadwip or an allegorical word to mean mundane hallucinated site for heavenly activities, is yet to be solved. The present study underscores the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration to uncover the truth behind historical claims and emphasizes the need for scientific methodologies of state-of-the-art dating techniques in collaboration with fluvial geomorphology, geology, botany and archaeology to complement traditional sources in resolving historical debates.

Although the exact site of the house of Sri Chaitanya is not yet pointed, yet it is beyond any question that Sri Chaitanya was born in Nabadwip. So, unless the exact site is discovered/ established by sufficient proof, none should doubt millions of devotees over the world showing possibly a fake place and saying false cock and bull stories. Rather, wherever the site is, the greater Nabadwip can go hand to hand for the truth.

After hagiographies is the era of geography recorded in maps with reliable scales and bearings. And I will discuss the next geographical history of the town based on those maps and records in Part-II as a continuation of this research.

5. Acknowledgement

Debabrata Das digitized all mouzas of six C.D.Blocks. Suresh Paul, Subrata Sarkar, and Poly Haldar made ground verification of different sites at and near Nabadwip. Dr. Aznarul Islam and Suman Deb Barman provided valuable suggestions for the enrichment of text and visualization. I express my deep gratitude to all.

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