

Question Three

What Does Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's Rādhā-kuṇḍa Look Like?

Our *ācāryas* have written extensively and in great detail about Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Let's take a glimpse of something Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī shares with us in his *Śrī Govinda-līlāmṛta*, Chapter 7.

Description of Lalitānanda Kuñja

The huge, lightning colored kuñja of Lalitā-sakhī, located on the north side of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, had eight sub kuñjas resembling an eight-petaled lotus flower. An astonishing courtyard named Anaṅga-raṅgāmbuja (the lotus of loving pastimes) was situated in the middle of all the kuñjas. The courtyard was shaped like a thousand-petaled lotus whose lovely whorl was a glittering golden platform, which could expand or contract depending on the pastime. The pleasing opulence of all six seasons was always present here to increase the happiness of Rādhā-Mādhava.

Kalāvati, Lalitā's disciple, carefully cleaned and maintained the area, the abode of sweet pastimes. Lalitānanda-da Kuñja (the kuñja which gives bliss to Lalitā) was like a splendid royal pavilion for Rādhā-Mādhava, and Their beloved sakhīs. From the air, Lalitānanda-da Kuñja appeared like a huge lotus with a nucleus of pure gold from which expanded filaments made of jewels. Each petal seemed to be made of different colored gemstones. Surrounding the nucleus, the petals were uniform in size and shape. But the number and size of the petals increased with each successive circle.

A golden lotus temple, which could satisfy the senses with its cooling radiance, sat in the center of the nucleus. Outside there were five successive circles of wonderful platforms. The first circle of platforms was made of gold, the second — cat's eye gems, the third — blue sapphires, the fourth — crystals and the fifth — rubies. The domes above the platforms contained jeweled pictures of mating deer, birds, humans and demigods to arouse amorous love.

Desire trees with green, yellow, white, red and blue leaves and flowers surrounded the golden lotus temple. The branches of the trees met overhead to form natural canopies. The inside dome of the temple was carved in the shape of a thousand-petaled lotus. The jeweled platform under the dome was two feet high.

In the northeast sector of Lalitānanda-da Kuñja was a sub kuñja named Vasanta-sukhadā-kuñja (gives the joy of spring). The beautiful bower had eight sections resembling an eight-petaled lotus flower. Aśoka trees having intertwining branches full of beautiful white, green, blue, yellow and crimson flowers covered the entire area. Buzzing bees and cooing cuckoos surcharged the atmosphere.

The Padma-mandira, the lotus temple made of unlimited types of rare gems, stood in the southwest corner of Lalitānanda-da Kuñja. It had doors and windows on all four sides and jewel-studded paintings of Kṛṣṇa's rāsa-līlā, pūrva-rāga and nikuñja-keli pastimes on its inside walls. Colorful painting of Kṛṣṇa killing the demons from Pūtanā to Ariṣṭāsura lined the outside walls. Lalitā-sakhī painted and hung the pictures.

The jeweled center of the lotus temple emanated brilliant effulgence. Sixteen rooms shaped like lotus petals adjoined the center. These rooms also had sixteen sub-chambers. The second floor design was the same. The third floor was a wall-less room topped by a great-jeweled dome supported by coral pillars on crystal bases. Jugs, flags and cakras ornamented the dome. Rādhā-Śyāma enjoyed the spectacular panorama of Rādhā-kuṇḍa from this high open-air room.

The ground floor contained many enchanting pictures finely crafted from precious jewels. Gem-studded staircases connected the rooms and sub rooms. Trees full of fruits and flowers flanked the stairways. Rādhā-Mādhava relished many intimate loving pastimes in this lotus temple.

Just a little bit different than the Rādhā-kuṇḍa that comes to mind when we presently think of the place, isn't it?!

But its' best that Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's Rādhā-kuṇḍa be our conception and our memory of this sacred place.

Something to work on, isn't it?!