

The Vedic History Reveals a Greater Earth Plane

The Vedic History Reveals a Greater Earth Plane — Part One

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In this paper we will look at the Vedic history's account of a greater Earth plane.

"Once when mother earth (*bhumir*) was overburdened by hundreds of thousands of military phalanxes of various conceited demons dressed like kings, she approached Lord Brahma for relief." (*SB 10.1.17*)

With these epic opening words to the the tenth canto of the *Bhagavata Purana* (*Srimad Bhagavatam*), the great sage Sukadeva Goswami informs us of events from five thousand years ago when the Earth (*bhumir*) was overrun by demonic beings in the disguise of human Kings. These apocalyptic events precipitated the appearance of Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who incarnated on the Earth in order to protect the pious people, destroy the demons, and re-establish *dharma* in the world. It should be understood, however, that when Sukadeva Goswami speaks of Earth (*bhumir*), he is not referring to an Earth globe, but rather to a great Earth circle (Bhu-mandala). In the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (or any of the Puranas) there actually is no description of Earth as a globe-shaped planet rotating in dark space. By Earth is meant the Bhu-mandala, a vast circular landscape that crosses the middle of the universe to a diameter of almost 4 billion miles.

As we shall see in the forthcoming papers, the battle for the Earth that took place 5,000 years ago was centered on Jambudvipa, a massive circular island with a diameter of 800,000 miles that is situated at the center of the Earth disc. The great epic *Mahabharata* describes that kings from all over this huge area of the greater Earth, fought in the battle of Kuruksetra—a battle that was to eventually decide the fate of the whole Earth. Krishna and His associates (the Pandavas) emerged victorious from this battle. The eldest Pandava (Yudhishthira Maharaja) became the emperor of the entire area of Jambudvipa. The succession later passed to Pariksit Maharaja, the grandson of Arjuna (Yudhishthira's brother). The Vedic history thus gives information of a greater Earth plane that was ruled by King Yudhishthira and King Pariksit only 5,000 years ago. This historical account of a greater Earth plane has radical ramifications for the common belief that the shape and size of the Earth has been accurately ascertained by scientific measurement, and that images of an Earth globe supposedly taken from outer space are actually authentic images of the Earth.

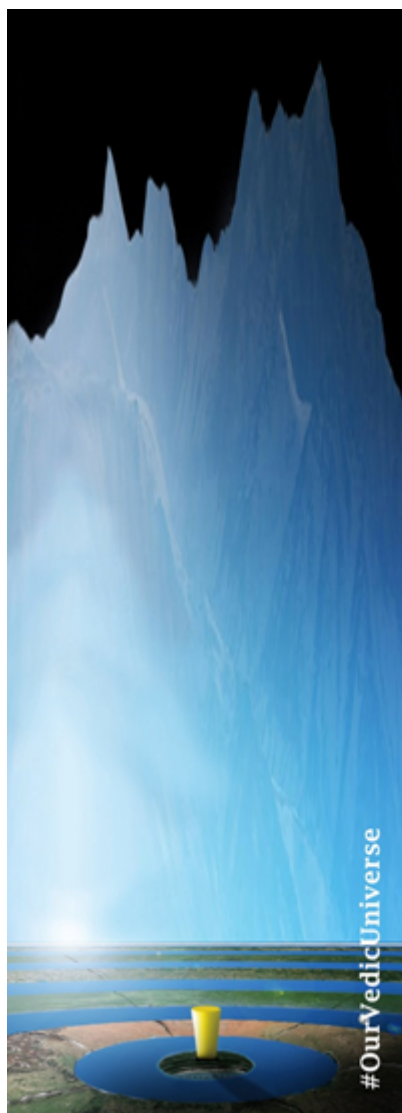
In this first part of the paper, we will look mostly at Srila Prabhupada's terminology in regards to the Vedic Earth (Bhu-mandala). In part two of this paper, we will look at the history of King Yudhishthira's sovereignty over Jambudvipa. In part three we will look at the history of King Pariksit's rule over Jambudvipa. In part four we will look at Pradyumna's conquest of Jambudvipa on behalf of King Ugrasena. This history of Vedic Kings based in India, ruling an island of the Earth measured at 800,000 miles in diameter raises obvious questions about the description of the Vedic Earth: either modern science proves the Vedic history of a greater Earth plane to be wholly implausible and discredited, or else the Earth is not a globe-shaped planet floating in space as we have been led to believe.

In Srila Prabhupada's, *Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead: A Summary Study of Srila Vyasadeva's Srimad Bhagavatam, Tenth Canto*, we read the following words regarding the advent of Lord's appearance on the Earth:

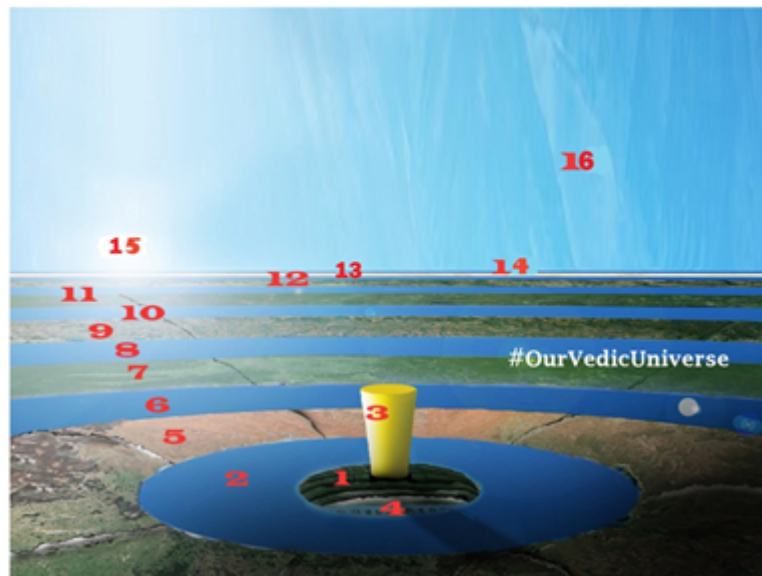
"Once the world was overburdened by the unnecessary defense force of different kings, who were actually demons but were posing themselves as the royal order. At that time, the whole world became perturbed, and the predominating deity of this earth, known as Bhumi, went to see Lord Brahma to tell of her calamities due to the demoniac kings. Bhumi assumed the shape of a cow and presented herself

before Lord Brahma with tears in her eyes. She was bereaved and was weeping just to invoke the lord's compassion. She related the calamitous position of the earth, and after hearing this, Lord Brahma became much aggrieved, and he at once started for the ocean of milk, where Lord Vishnu resides. Lord Brahma was accompanied by all the demigods, headed by Lord Siva, and Bhumi also followed. Arriving on the shore of the milk ocean, Lord Brahma began to pacify Lord Vishnu, who had formerly saved the earthly planet by assuming the transcendental form of a boar."

After listening to Brahma's appeal on behalf of the Earth, Lord Vishnu then informed Brahma that he would appear to curb the demoniac activities on the Earth. When we read the words "Earthly planet" in the above narration, we naturally assume the Earth in question relates to our familiar understanding of Earth as a globe-shaped planet floating in space. However, such a concept of the Earth is not found in *Srimad Bhagavatam*, which otherwise describes the Earth to be a great circular plane that is held by Ananta-sesha. The ocean of milk, for example, mentioned in the above text is actually one of the seven cosmic-sized oceans that surround the Earth's seven islands as shown here:



Bhu-mandala Earth Disc (4Billion miles wide) from Srimad Bhagavatam



1. Island: Jambudvipa (800,000miles wide)
2. Lavana Ocean (800,000miles)
3. Mount Meru (Sumeru) (672,000miles above Earth, 128,000 below)
4. Bharata-varsha, one of the nine varshas of Jambudvipa.
The continents of our known Earth are in this area.
5. Island: Plaksadvipa (1,600,000miles)
6. Ikshu Ocean (1,600,000miles)
7. Island: Salmalidvipa (3,200,000miles)
8. Sura Ocean (3,200,000miles)
9. Island: Kusadvipa (6,400,000miles)
10. Sarpis or Grita Ocean (6,400,000miles)
11. Island: Krauncadvipa, then Kshira Ocean (Each 12,800,000miles)
12. Island: Sakadvipa then Dadhi Ocean (Each 25,600,000miles)
13. Island: Puskaradvipa, then Svadujala Ocean (Each 51,200,000)
14. Golden Land
15. Sun rotating above Manasottara Mountain on Puskaradvipa Island
16. Lokaloka Mountain (1Billion miles high)

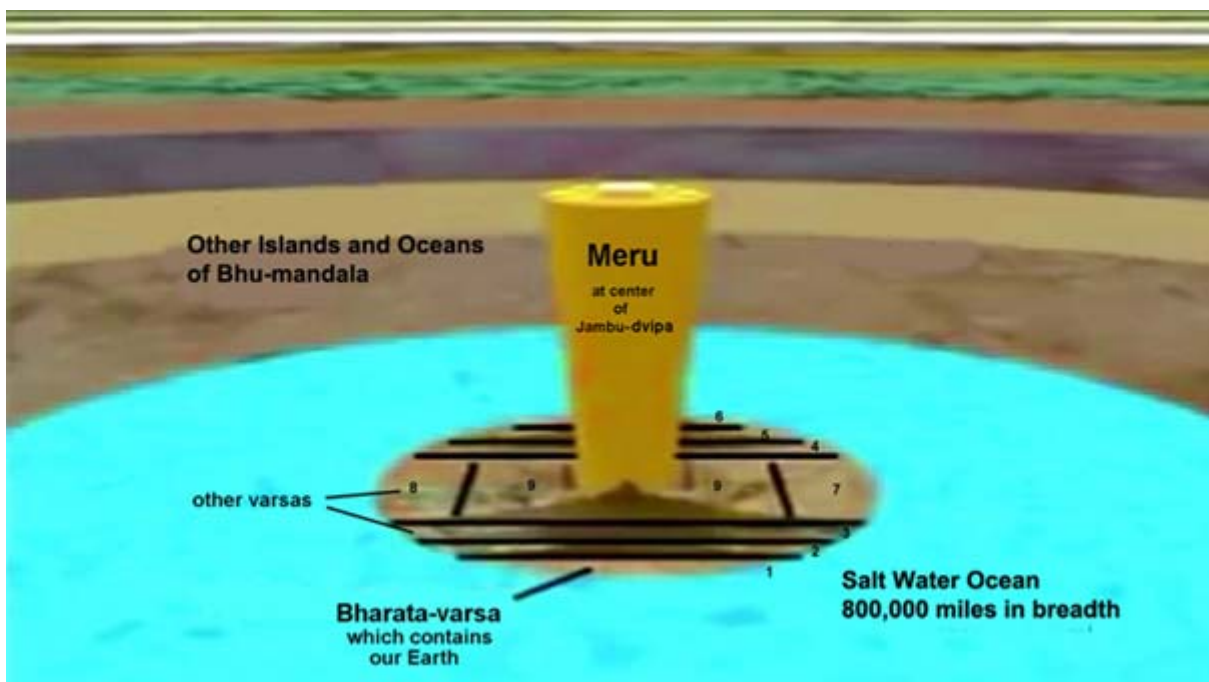
In the above image we see the seven islands and oceans of Bhu-mandala forming their unique pattern of concentric circles and extending for over 200 million miles. These seven islands form the inhabited area of the Earth (though there are further features on the Earth plane). As described in *Srimad Bhagavatam* 5.20.18, the milk ocean (*kshira-udena*) surrounds the island of Krauncha, and is seen in the distance (no.11). Although

Srimad Bhagavatam describes the milk ocean as part of the Earth's landscape (*SB 5.20.18*), Lord Vishnu's abode within the milk ocean is transcendental:

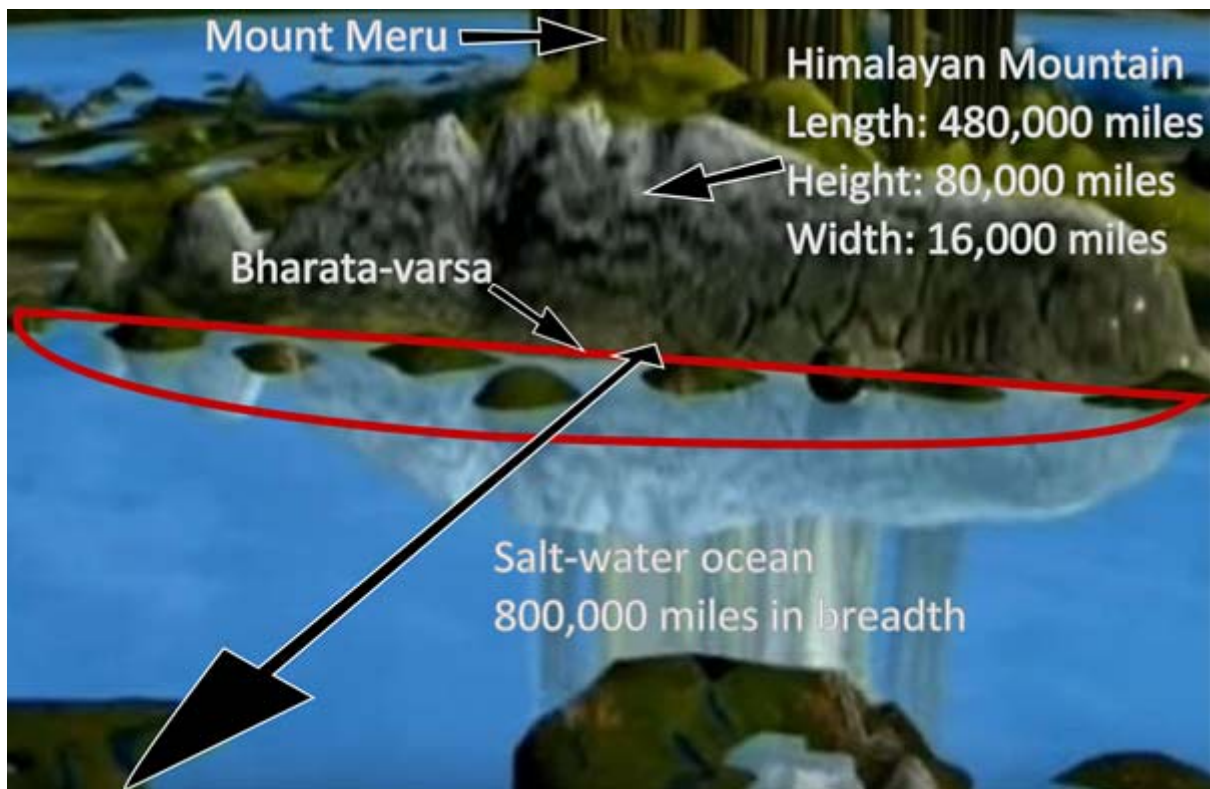
"Concerning *ajitasya padam*, the abode of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the milk ocean of this material world, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura says: *padam kshirodadhi-stha-svetadvipam tamasah prakriteh param*. The island known as Svetadvipa, which is in the ocean of milk, is transcendental. It has nothing to do with this material world. A city government may have a rest house where the governor and important government officers stay. Such a rest house is not an ordinary house. Similarly, although Svetadvipa, which is in the ocean of milk, is in this material world, it is *param padam*, transcendental." (*SB 8.5.24*)

As stated in the above text from *Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*, once the Earth was overrun by demoniac forces. To counteract this, Lord Brahma along with the other demigods crossed the Earth plane to meet the omnipotent Lord Vishnu who resides in a transcendental area of the milk ocean. Lord Brahma's administrative seat in the universe is based at a great city located on top of Mount Meru shown in image 1 (see above) at the center of the Earth plane (no.3).

The golden Mount Meru is located on Jambudvipa the central island of Bhu-mandala. Jambudvipa is divided into nine colossal areas (*varshas*) one of which is called Bharata-varsha. Our own area of the Earth is located in this area called Bharata-varsha which is located at the southern side of Jambudvipa:



When particular areas of the Earth are mentioned in *Srimad Bhagavatam* such as Bharata-varsha, we must refer to the original description of these places in chapters 16-26 of the fifth canto in order to understand their size, shape, characteristic features, etc. This will enable us to understand the nature of the Earth as it actually is and, not as we assume it to be. Perhaps to give us some bearings in the Vedic Universe, Srila Prabhupada would sometimes refer to Bharata-varsha as India itself, or even this planet Earth, but according to *Srimad Bhagavatam*, Bharata-varsha extends even further beyond our known area. Bharata-varsha is actually 72,000 miles from north to south, and its northern border (the Himavat Mountain) is 480,000 miles from west to east. Our own area of the Earth is situated somewhere in this vast area of Bharata-varsha. The image below shows Bharata-varsha to the south of the mainland of Jambudvipa, with the great Himavat Mountain forming a border to the other varshas in the north:



In response to Brahma's appeal to save the Earth, Lord Krishna appeared in Mathura which is in present day India. Although Lord Krishna appeared in Mathura which is an area of Bharata-varsha, the pastimes of Lord Krishna and the Pandavas extended beyond Bharata-varsha and included all of Jambudvipa. Therefore, when it is stated that Lord Krishna appeared on the Earth, we must be conscious of what Srimad Bhagavatam means by the Earth:

"The burden of the earth [bhu-bhara] was certainly diminished by the Personality of Godhead and by others as well. When He was present as an incarnation, all good was performed because of His auspicious footprints." (SB1.17.26)

Here it is mentioned that Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead appeared on the Earth (Bhu) and left His auspicious footprints in the dust:

bhagavatah padaih ananya-purusha-sribhir hina bhur

The world [*bhuh*—the earth] was fortunate to have been marked with the footprints of the lotus feet of the Lord. (SB 1.14.21)

In order to thus understand the shape, size, and nature of the Earth that Lord Krishna walked upon, we have to look at the description of the Earth in chapters 16-26 of the fifth canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. According to this description, Lord Krishna walked on the Earth circle (Bhu-mandala), not an Earth globe. The idea of an Earth globe is a concept that simply does not exist in the *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s original cosmological description.

INTENTION IN LANGUAGE

Before looking in some detail at the history of the Pandavas on this greater Earth plane, we would like to first say something about Srila Prabhupada's terminology in regards to the Earth.

For followers of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, the idea that Lord Krishna appeared on an Earth globe arises because Srila Prabhupada generally translates Sanskrit names for the Earth

using the conventional language of 'Earth planet' and 'Earth globe.' The reader of *Srimad Bhagavatam* who is unaware of the original description of the Earth contained in chapters 16-26 of *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s fifth canto, may thus unwittingly assume that *Srimad Bhagavatam* is presenting the Earth (Bhu-mandala) as a globe floating in space, when in reality it presents the Earth as a great circular disc or plane. This is not a fault on Srila Prabhupada's part; it is simply a lack of information about Bhu-mandala on the part of the reader.

When Srila Prabhupada began translating *Srimad Bhagavatam*, he simply used conventional English words for the Earth to refer to the much more complex Vedic concept of the Earth known as Bhu-mandala. Thus in one of the opening chapters of the first canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam* we read:

yada mukundo bhagavan imam mahim

"When the Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna, left this earthly planet..." (SB 1.15.36)

Here the Sanskrit word for Earth is Mahi. During the course of his translation of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, Srila Prabhupada generally did not differentiate between the Vedic concept of the Earth (bhu-mandala - earth circle) and the modern concept of the Earth as a globe or planet floating in space. Perhaps for convenience, and simply to give the reader some bearings in the Vedic cosmos, Srila Prabhupada was content to translate Sanskrit names for the Earth as 'Earth globe' or 'Earth planet'—names that the modern reader was familiar with, and could relate to.

It was only later in 1975 (*after the translation of the fifth canto which contains the description of Vedic cosmology, and the subsequent announcement to exhibit the Vedic cosmology at a Planetarium in Mayapur*), that the radical distinctions between the Vedic and modern conceptions of the Earth began to emerge. When plans to build the Vedic planetarium began to unfold, it obviously became necessary to understand how the Vedic and modern ideas of the Earth relate to each other. As it turns out, the Vedic and modern conceptions of the Earth don't relate to each other at all; in fact the difference between these two world-views amounts to two entirely different concepts of reality. Although the incompatibility of these two world-views was becoming apparent, no definitive pronouncements on the subject were presented by the time of Srila Prabhupada's departure in 1977. Despite this ambiguity, the tendency of those who are attached to the globe idea, is to simply pick statements from Srila Prabhupada where he speaks of the 'Earth globe' or 'Earth planet' as if this somehow constitutes a proof that the Vedas describe it as such. Unless one is aware of the original description of the Earth in *Srimad Bhagavatam*, and conscious of why Srila Prabhupada spoke of the Vedic Earth using modern conventional terms, one could easily take a wrong understanding about the Earth from Srila Prabhupada's terminology. This is not a fault on Srila Prabhupada's part; it simply requires more information about the subject on the part of the reader.

In this regard it may be helpful to consider how Srila Prabhupada's use of certain words was not always intended as we may commonly understand them today. Srila Prabhupada was educated at the prestigious Scottish Churches College in Calcutta from 1908-1915, and his use of certain English words sometimes reflects older meanings of the terms. For example, the word 'cult' is used favourably by Srila Prabhupada on hundreds of occasions to describe the Hare Krishna movement itself:

"We are also preaching this cult, that "You serve Krishna." Krishna says, *man-mana bhava mad-bhakto mad-yaji mam namaskuru* [Bg. 18.65]. We are preaching this cult." (*Nectar of Devotion, Bombay, January 11, 1973*)

"...Our mission is that this Krishna cult should be preached all over the world." (*Conversations, August 31, 1976, Delhi*)

"Therefore Lord Caitanya, you see, He is preaching this cult, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna..." (*Srimad Bhagavatam 1.5.2, Los Angeles, January 10, 1968*)

The modern reader, who is unfamiliar with Srila Prabhupada's usage of the word 'cult', may be under the impression that Srila Prabhupada wanted to propagate a movement that has all the characteristics of what we generally assume to be cultish such as mind control techniques, fraud, deception, manipulation, exploitation, unquestioned obedience, etc. *Certainly some members of the Hare Krishna movement may act in this way*, but that is not what Srila Prabhupada meant or intended when he referred to 'the cult of bhakti' or 'the cult of devotional service.' Srila Prabhupada's use of the word is now practically archaic and belonged to a time when the word 'cult' was used in an innocent and favourable sense, similar to the word 'culture' and denoting a shared belief:

Cult: The English term originated in the early 17th century, borrowed via the French culte, from Latin cultus (worship). The French word, in turn, derived from the Latin adjective cultus (inhabited, cultivated, worshiped), based on the verb colere (to care, to cultivate). (The word "culture" also derives from the Latin words cultura and cultus; "culture" in general terms refers to the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a religious or social group. (*Wikipedia*))

Cult: A system of religious veneration and devotion directed towards a particular figure or object: 'the cult of St Olaf' (oxforddictionaries.com)

Although Srila Prabhupada's usage of the word 'cult' is completely different from the modern usage, unfortunately, any use of the word arouses suspicion and distrust in people who think of 'cult' as referring simply to a brain-washed sect. For someone who is only familiar with the modern sense of the word, they may mistakenly think that Srila Prabhupada is promoting Krishna consciousness as a cult in the negative sense of the word.

Another word that occurs thousands of times in Srila Prabhupada's vocabulary is 'propaganda.' Although Srila Prabhupada was aware of the pejorative sense of the word, and often denounced atheistic scientists, etc., for their 'bogus propaganda' or 'false propaganda,' he nonetheless also used the word in a positive sense when referring to the preaching activities of the Hare Krishna movement:

"Therefore our this Krishna consciousness movement is simply to make propaganda from door to door, that "Please chant Hare Krishna mantra." (*Ahmedabad, December 8, 1972*)

"You should make vigorous propaganda for making people understand the utility of the Krsna consciousness philosophy." (*Letter to Alanatha, Bombay 13 November 1975*)

"So organize this propaganda work very carefully and our movement will be very much successful by introducing literature from village to village. Lord Caitanya wants this, so carry out His order." (*Letter to Tamala Krishna, Bombay, 21 November 1974*)

Here Srila Prabhupada uses the term 'propaganda' in its older and more favourable sense which simply refers to the popularization of an idea. The ecclesiastical origin of the term is explained in the on-line etymological dictionary as follows:

"1718, "committee of cardinals in charge of Catholic missionary work," short for *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* "congregation for propagating the faith," a committee of cardinals established 1622 by Gregory XV to supervise foreign missions. The word is properly the ablative fem. gerundive of Latin *propagare* (see propagation). Hence, "any movement to propagate some practice or ideology" (1790). Modern political sense dates from World War I, not originally pejorative.

Meaning "material or information propagated to advance a cause, etc." is from 1929." (<https://www.etymonline.com/word/propaganda>)

When referring to the preaching activities of the Krishna conscious movement as 'our propaganda,' Srila Prabhupada uses the term 'propaganda' in its older sense of simply 'propagating the faith.' To anyone unfamiliar with the sense in which Srila Prabhupada advocates 'propaganda,' they may mistakenly think that he is instructing his followers in the use of misleading information and unscrupulous tactics in order to further their cause (such is the modern idea of what constitutes propaganda). Srila Prabhupada's intention was actually to free people from such manipulation, and thus he spoke of the enthusiastic preaching of Krishna consciousness as 'our propaganda.' By 'our propaganda' Srila Prabhupada simply meant the dynamic presentation of spiritual ideas that are an intelligent, rational, and energetic counteraction to the materialistic society:

"The whole world is engaged in unnecessary hard labor with their factories. It is a brain killing civilization. Let them come to free life. Spend time chanting Hare Krishna, reading books and making their lives successful. This is very essential propaganda. People must be informed." (*Letter to Rupanuga, Vrindavana, 4 September, 1974*)

Just as one may misunderstand Srila Prabhupada's meaning when coming across his use of words like 'cult' and 'propaganda,' a similar misunderstanding may arise when it comes to Srila's Prabhupada's usage of words like 'Earth planet' or 'Earth globe.' It may be argued that looking for a deeper or additional meaning to Srila Prabhupada's usage of the English words, 'Earth globe,' is unnecessary and unfounded since Srila Prabhupada openly spoke—and indeed argued—that the Earth was 'round,' and therefore choose and used words such as 'globe' intentionally as they reflected his belief. I'm not denying there is much evidence to support that idea, and there is no question that Srila Prabhupada seemed to speak of the Earth as if he believed it was a globe-shaped planet floating in space. However, the follower of Srila Prabhupada must also understand that any reference to the Earth by Sukadeva Goswami, (the speaker of *Srimad Bhagavatam*), is a reference to the Bhu-mandala which Sukadeva Goswami describes in chapters 16-26 of the fifth canto of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Through the course of these ten chapters, Bhu-mandala is described as a vast circular plane, not a small round globe floating in space. Although Srila Prabhupada translates the various Sanskrit names for the Bhu-mandala using the conventional language of 'Earth planet' or 'Earth globe,' we have to be aware that the Vedic and modern ideas of the Earth are actually two radically different concepts. As we have presented in previous papers, the question of the Earth's shape and size was one that Srila Prabhupada was open to consider; indeed, for very good reasons, the question of the Earth's shape was raised during the Bhu-mandala discussions of June/July 1977. We shall look at Srila Prabhupada's answer to that question later in this paper.

Srila Prabhupada's usage of terms like 'surface of the globe' 'Earth globe', 'Earth planet' etc., must therefore, be understood in the historical context in which they appear. The question of the actual shape, size, and nature of the Vedic Earth didn't become an issue until 1975, when Srila Prabhupada had actually completed the translation of the fifth canto (which contains the description of the Earth), and later inaugurated his plan to present the Vedic cosmology in the Temple of Vedic Planetarium. The correct depiction of the Earth and other features of the universe would naturally require more specific definitions that would ultimately derive from a deeper study of the fifth canto itself. Srila Prabhupada delegated this study to his disciples and supporters:

"So now you all Ph.D.'s must carefully study the details of the 5th Canto and make a working model of the universe. If we can explain the passing seasons, eclipses, phases of the moon, passing of day and night, etc. then it will be very powerful propaganda. I am sending this letter to you, and you can make photocopies of it and send to our other Ph.D.'s and **begin serious research into the matter in detail.**" (*Auckland, 27 April, 1976*)

"Prem Yogi [Bhakti-prema dasa] showed Srila Prabhupada some illustrations from the Srimad-Bhagavatam, Fifth Canto, and explained them briefly. Prabhupada was impressed with his proper understanding. Prabhupada showed him the Mayapur model and explained what we intended to do there. Srila Prabhupada then expressed his concern: **"We must exactly follow the description of Bhagavatam.** As we are going to spend many crores of rupees, and there will be those who will try to find fault in our presentation, 'Caesar's wife must be above suspicion.' I have explained *whatever I could* already in my books. Now my brain is no longer able to work properly. **You young men can tax your brains to understand the Sanskrit and English descriptions and present them."** (TKG's Diary: Prabhupada's Final Days, May 30 1977)

In a letter to Mr Dhani, Srila Prabhupada wrote:

"The plans for this very large project are being taken solely from the references found in fifth canto Srimad Bhagavatam and its authoritative commentaries by important acaryas, along with other Puranas and Samhitas like Brahma-samhita etc.

As you can appreciate, the work involved in this project will be gigantic and **the advice of many experts from all fields will be needed** to make it come out successful. It will be a glorious exhibition of India's Vedic culture that will attract visitors from all the world. **I am inquisitive to know how you can help us with this project, as I know you are an expert in the field of Puranic astronomy.** Hoping to hear from you in the near future." (Letter to S.L. Dhani, 14 November, 1976)

These letters reveal a progression in Srila Prabhupada's presentation of the Vedic cosmology: when Srila Prabhupada first began translating *Srimad Bhagavatam*, he had been content to use conventional English words for the Earth to refer to the much more complex Vedic concept of the Earth known as Bhu-mandala. Later when Srila Prabhupada inaugurated the grand plan for a Temple of Vedic Planetarium, he realized that this would require a more specific understanding of the Vedic Earth based on a detailed study of the description found in *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s fifth canto. He delegated this task of deciphering the fifth canto to his young disciples; as we read in the letter above: *"You young men can tax your brains to understand the Sanskrit and English descriptions and present them."* Srila Prabhupada himself presented the Vedic cosmology as an unfolding concept:

"That is our plan, to make a very big temple and to show all the planetary system within that from Srimad Bhagavatam. It will not be an ordinary temple, so that people from the whole world, they'll come. This is our contemplation...There are many lokas, Caranaloka, other. They are all described. So if there is chance, we shall present these lokas, how they are situated, where they are situated, how they are moving, how the sun is moving around them. The sun is not fixed up; sun is moving. So all these things, we have got such dream to show. If there is opportunity, we shall do...**there are so many things to be known still from Vedic literature, it is not yet unfolded, but we are trying.**" (SB 7.9.8, Mayapur, February 15, 1976)

By understanding Vedic cosmology as an unfolding concept, we are better able to understand translations such as the following:

"After this, the king of all kings, Maharaja Prithu, leveled all rough places on the surface of the globe by breaking up the hills with the strength of his bow. By his grace the surface of the globe almost became flat. (SB 4.18.29)

Here the Sanskrit word for Earth is *bhu-mandalam* which Srila Prabhupada translates as 'surface of the globe.' For anyone who is familiar with the description of Bhu-mandala in

the fifth canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, a question can be legitimately raised: by translating Bhu-mandala as 'surface of the globe' did Srila Prabhupada *intend* to make a cosmological argument that the Bhu-mandala corresponds to the assumed 24,900 mile circumference Earth globe that supposedly floats in space, or was Srila Prabhupada's *intention* simply a helpful attempt to translate Sanskrit names for the Earth using conventional language that a modern reader will understand? Since the verse in question is referring to the name Bhu-mandala, isn't it obvious that we have to understand Srila Prabhupada's *intention* with reference to the description provided in chapters 16-26 of *Srimad Bhagavatam*'s fifth canto? Indeed, with reference to the original description of Bhu-mandala, we can conclude that Srila Prabhupada's translation of Bhu-mandala as 'the surface of the globe' was merely the conventional way of referring to the Earth, and not intended as a specific description of Bhu-mandala itself.

When an uninformed reader of *Srimad Bhagavatam* comes across a reference to 'the Earth planet' or 'the Earth globe', they may take it for granted that Srila Prabhupada's *intention* in this choice of words was to propagate the idea that the Earth of *Srimad Bhagavatam* is equivalent to our modern conception of the Earth globe floating in space. However, Srila Prabhupada's *objective or purpose* in using words like 'Earth globe' and 'Earth planet' was not necessarily with the *specific intention* of arguing that the Vedic Earth is actually a globe; more likely, his *initial and preliminary* intention was simply to inform the Western reader (in the conventional language and understanding of the day) that various Sanskrit names such as Bhumir, Mahi, Prithivi, etc., refer to the Earth (as opposed to referring to planets like the Sun which is called Surya, or the moon which is called Chandra, or indeed, to any other place in the Vedic cosmology). The actual nature of the Earth in question is a further detail that the reader of *Srimad Bhagavatam* has to explore, and it was undoubtedly Srila Prabhupada's ultimate intention to bring the reader to that understanding. As we shall see later in Srila Prabhupada's letter to Mr Dhani, the presentation of Bhu-mandala in the Temple of Vedic Planetarium is proof of Srila Prabhupada's ultimate intention.

However, since Srila Prabhupada invariably translates Sanskrit names for the Earth such as Bhu-mandala, Ksiti, Mahi, Prithivi, etc., as 'Earth globe,' or 'Earth planet', the uninformed reader (with no understanding of what Bhu-mandala originally refers to) may think that *Srimad Bhagavatam* is describing the Earth to be an Earth globe when, in fact, *Srimad Bhagavatam* describes the Earth as a great circular disc. This is not a fault on Srila Prabhupada's part; it is simply a lack of information on the part of the uninformed reader. In a previous paper we have given the example of Lord Varaha who performed the wonderful *lila* (pastime) of lifting the Earth. The Earth in question was not an Earth globe, but the entire Bhu-mandala:

"O Lord, as the peaks of great mountains become beautiful when decorated with clouds, Your transcendental body has become beautiful because of Your lifting the earth (Bhu-mandala) on the edge of Your tusks." (SB 3.13.41)

Here it is specifically said *ca saukaram bhu-mandalenatha data dhritena te*, in the form of a boar you lifted Bhu-mandala on your tusk. We have discussed this question in a previous paper called *Did Lord Varaha Lift an Earth Globe?* The paper can be [found here](#).

By going back to the original description of the Earth in *Srimad Bhagavatam*, we can go beyond the surface meaning of Srila Prabhupada's use of words like 'Earth planet' and 'Earth globe' to understand that any reference to the Earth in *Srimad Bhagavatam* is a reference to Bhu-mandala. It logically follows that Sukadeva Goswami's description of Bhu-mandala is ultimately how Srila Prabhupada would wish us to understand the nature of the Earth.

In stating above that Srila Prabhupada had a *preliminary* and *ultimate* intention in presenting the Earth of *Srimad Bhagavatam* to his readers, we do not mean to imply that Srila Prabhupada had some covert agenda that spanned many years. On the contrary, it was not until after the translation of the fifth canto in 1975 (and subsequent

announcement of plans for a Vedic planetarium) that the requirement to understand the exact nature of Bhu-mandala even became a relevant issue. Moreover, it was only during the Bhu-discussion of June/July 1977 that any serious questions regarding the differences between the Vedic and modern conceptions of the Earth began to emerge. Until that point, Srila Prabhupada had been content to present the Earth in the conventional understanding as a globe-shaped planet floating in space. Nonetheless, there can be no denying, that for Srila Prabhupada, the Earth must ultimately be as it is described in *Srimad Bhagavatam* - and that is the version that he insisted his followers must present in the Temple of Vedic Planetarium. Srila Prabhupada did not present the Bhu-mandala concept more himself for reasons stated in our previous papers (see links below).

Therefore, just as we must understand Srila Prabhupada's *intended* use of words like 'cult' and 'propaganda' was different from how the modern reader may understand it, so also we must understand that Srila Prabhupada's *intended* use of the word 'Earth planet' is different from how the modern reader may understand it. *Although Srila Prabhupada may have translated Sanskrit names of the Earth as 'the Earth planet,' he ultimately intended the reader to understand that 'the Earth planet' he is referring to, is the Earth (Bhu-mandala) described in Srimad Bhagavatam.* Indeed the Temple of Vedic Planetarium was conceived to do just that—to present the Vedic cosmos as it is described in Srimad Bhagavatam.

Regarding the specific depiction of the Earth in the Temple Of Vedic Planetarium, Srila Prabhupada writes the following instructions in a letter to Mr. S.L Dhani:

"Now here in India, we are planning construction of a very large "Vedic Planetarium" or "Temple of Understanding". Within the planetarium we will construct a huge, detailed model of the universe as described in the text of the fifth canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam*..."

Srila Prabhupada then goes on to list 15 parts of the exhibition which will depict various areas of the material and spiritual world. Second on the list is the Earth or Bhu-mandala with its various features. Srila Prabhupada's letter reads as follows:

"The planetarium is planned to be approximately 400 feet high and will have floor space of approximately 90,000 sq. ft. The model will depict (from bottom to top)

- 1) The lower planetary system
- 2) The earthly system (Bhu-mandala with Sumeru in center, seven islands (saptadvipa), seven oceans (sapta-samudra), Manosattara Pravata, Lokaloka Parvata, Aloka-varsa.
- 3) The Bhuvarloka (Siddha-caranadi-loka)
- 4) etc...

(Letter to S.L. Dhani, November 14, 1976)

Here we see clearly that the Bhu-mandala concept of Earth is the one that Srila Prabhupada intended to be exhibited in the TOVP. The seven islands of Bhu-mandala are mentioned here. These islands form the inhabited area of the Earth and cover a distance of over 200 million miles. As shown already in the images above, Jambudvipa is the first island of Bhu-mandala measuring 800,000 miles in diameter. Bharata-varsha is on the southern side of this super-continent. Bharata-varsha is thus on the plane of Bhu-mandala, not a separate planet floating in space. They are all part of the one Earth plane:



Jambudvipa at the center of the Earth disc

Despite speaking of the Earth in the conventional language of 'globe' and 'planet', Srila Prabhupada's emphatic instruction was to depict the Earth and other features of the Vedic cosmos 'exactly' according to *Srimad Bhagavatam*:

Prabhupada: We are intending to make a huge planetarium. If you can help us?"

Tamala Krishna: Mentioning the Fifth Canto, Bhagavatam?

Prabhupada: **Exactly to the description of Fifth Canto, we want.**

(Room Conversation, May 8 1977, Hrishikesh)

As Srila Prabhupada understood, such a depiction of the Vedic universe obviously requires developing convincing arguments that will 'educate people to that idea.' The Vedic Planetarium was not intended as a historical exhibition of an antiquated and irrelevant Vedic culture, but rather as a presentation of the truth of the Vedic universe, and a direct challenge to all prevailing materialistic ideas regarding the nature of life and the universe:

Prabhupada: We shall show the Vedic conception of planetary system within this material world and above the material world. [break] We are going to exhibit the Vedic culture throughout the whole world, and they'll come here...Actually it will be an unique thing in the world. There is no such thing all over the world. **That we shall do. And not only simply showing museum, but educating people to that idea.**" (Morning Walk, Feb 27, 1976, Mayapur)

Since the Earth of *Srimad Bhagavatam* is described as a great circular disc, the Temple of Vedic Planetarium has the responsibility of 'educating people to that idea.' But before

members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness can 'educate people to that idea', they first have to *educate themselves to that idea*. Educating oneself and others to the idea of Bhu-mandala, obviously requires challenging all contemporary education, science, and propaganda that has led us to the false construct of reality that we live on a globe.

One may argue, that if it was actually Srila Prabhupada's intention to bring people to the idea that the Earth is really a great circular disc (and not a globe-shaped planet), then he would have presented such an idea himself. We have argued in previous papers (see links above) that Srila Prabhupada did not preach on this revolutionary concept of the Earth for the following reasons: (1) Although Srila Prabhupada began the revival of Vedic cosmology in the modern world, a comprehensive study of Bhu-mandala had not been completed by the time of Srila Prabhupada's departure in 1977. (2) In the absence of a comprehensive conception of Bhu-mandala, Srila Prabhupada had simply spoken of the Earth in the conventional understanding as a globe in space. It's that simple! A detailed explanation of why we believe Srila Prabhupada called the Earth a globe can be [found here](#) and [here](#).

As mentioned earlier, the question of the Earth's shape and size (according to *Srimad Bhagavatam*) was a question that only began to surface in 1976-77, specifically during the bhu-mandala discussions in July 1977. During these discussions, Srila Prabhupada's answer to the shape of the Earth was rhetorical, and he challenged his own disciples to find an answer by taking the version of *Srimad Bhagavatam*:

Yasoda-nandana: Prabhupada, what is the shape of this tiny portion of earth or whatever place we are on? What is the shape of this, whatever you call...

Prabhupada: Ask them. Why don't you ask them? Sometimes they say flat, sometimes they say it is round. Why don't you ask them, the scientists?

Yasoda-nandana: We don't accept what they say.

Prabhupada: No, no. Formerly they were under the impression the world is flat. And now they are saying round. So what they'll say after few years?

Yasoda-nandana: They are not consistent. That's a fact. They're very inconsistent in their theories.

Prabhupada: Ask them which is correct. "Probably" this is correct.

Bhakti-prema: When someone asks this question, first one would reply.

Prabhupada: I answered it. You people say like that, so which is correct? Flat or round?

Tamala Krishna: They will say "What does the Bhagavatam say?"

Prabhupada: Huh?

Tamala Krishna: They may reply to us, "All right, we are rascals. So please tell us what is the fact."

Prabhupada: That is, we are...

Tamala Krishna: That's what he's asking. What should be shown? Actually we're a little stumped by... I mean...

Prabhupada: Yes, you must have proper answer as far as possible.

Tamala Krishna: We just read... We got a version from South India, and we've even found that there are different conceptions of what the Bhagavata is saying. But the Puranas, they give some Puranic references.

Bhakti-prema: It is written the world... The earth is round and flat.

Prabhupada: Hm?

Bhakti-prema: Earth is round and flat both, together.

Prabhupada: Yes.

Bhakti-prema: First we should reply it is acintya. This should be the reply. "Inconceivable."

Yasoda-nandana: If it is inconceivable, then they will say how we can conceive it?

Prabhupada: **Take the version of Bhagavatam... we have to accept sastra.**

(Discussions about Bhu-mandala, July 5 1977, Vrindavana)

Here Bhakti-prema dasa says that the Earth is round and flat together which, of course, is the accurate description. Bhu-mandala is round and flat taking the form of a huge circular plane that crosses the center of the universe. The important point here is that Srila Prabhupada's own answer to questions about the Earth was to invite his followers to find the answer in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*; his insistence is on following *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Who then can cite a Sanskrit verse from *Srimad-Bhagavatam* that describes our Earth as a small planet floating in space? Such a verse doesn't exist in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* for the simple reason that our known area of the Earth (which is in Bharata-varsha) is where Sukadeva Goswami describes it—at the southern side of Jambudwipa (the central island of the Earth plane). Bharata-varsha is not floating in space, it is on the plane of the great Earth circle, specifically at the southern side of Jambudwipa. Only 5,000 years ago, King Yudhisthira was Emperor of this greater Earth area.

In part two of this paper we will discuss the Vedic history that describes King Yudhisthira's sovereignty over this massive area of the greater Earth plane.