



Arcana News

ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry

December 2012

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websites

Deity Worship Ministry
www.deityworship.com

Mayapur Academy
www.mayapuracademy.org

Blog
mayapuracademy.wordpress.com

facebook
www.facebook.com/pages/Mayapur-Academy/79276657115

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to the December 2012 edition of the ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry / Mayapur Academy Newsletter.

Much has happened since our last newsletter. There have been many exciting changes in the ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry as well as at the Mayapur Academy.

The Ministry now has a representative in North America; Jayānanda Prabhu. He will be travelling extensively in North America to assist, guide and inspire devotees engaged in the service of the Lord in His *arcā* form.

Meanwhile at the Mayapur Academy, there have also been quite a few changes. Our long time staff member, Syāmeśvarī Mātāji, has moved on to a new phase of her life. Her years of dedication and service are greatly appreciated and I hope she meets with ever-increasing spiritual happiness wherever her service takes her.

Our current semester at the Mayapur Academy is our 6th year and began on November 6th and runs through to Nityānanda Trayodaśī on February 23rd. It is proving to be our best year yet as we continually refine our courses.

The past few months have been festival season during which temples made arrangements for the pleasure of the Lord. Guṇḍicā-mārjana and Ratha-yātrā, Jhulana-yātrā, Balarāma's Appearance, Janmāṣṭamī, Śrīla Prabhupāda's Appearance and Rādhāṣṭamī are a few of the festivals we have just celebrated.

I often get letters a few days before a major festival from devotees eager to know how to serve the deities on these days. Our website www.deityworship.com will eventually carry all this information, but for now Jananivāsa Prabhu, Mayapur head *pūjārī*, has agreed to write some articles about little known details of how to observe these festivals. These will be included in future issues.

If you are interested to write articles for the festivals section on our website, you may contact me at nkd@pamho.net. Thanks to all those devotees who have written encouraging us to continue with the newsletter. Looking forward to hearing from you all soon.

Your servant,
Nṛsimha Kavaca Dāsa



Śrīla Prabhupāda on Deity Worship

Śrī Gopālajī then smiled and said, “My dear brāhmaṇa, just listen to Me. I shall walk behind you, and in this way I shall go with you.”

PURPORT

The conversation between Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the brāhmaṇa is proof that the Lord in His *arcā-mūrti*, or form made of material elements, is not material, for those elements, although separated from the Lord, are also a part of the Lord’s energy, as stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Because the elements are the Lord’s own energy and because there is no difference between the energy and the energetic, the Lord can appear through any element. Just as the sun can act through the sunshine and thus distribute its heat and light, so Kṛṣṇa, by His inconceivable power, can appear in His original spiritual form in any material element, including stone, wood, paint, gold, silver and jewels, because the material elements are all His energy. The *śāstras* warn, *arcye viṣṇau śilā-dhīḥ . . . nārakī saḥ*: one should never think of the *arcā-mūrti*, the Deity within the temple, as stone, wood or any other material element. Because of his advanced devotional position, the younger brāhmaṇa knew that although the Deity of Gopāla appeared to be stone, He was not stone. He was the son of Nanda Mahārāja, Vrajendra-nandana Himself. As such, the Deity could act exactly as the Lord does in His original form as Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Kṛṣṇa was talking to the young brāhmaṇa just to test his knowledge about the *arcā-vigraha*. In other words, those who have understood the science of Kṛṣṇa—Kṛṣṇa’s name, form, qualities and so forth—can also talk with the Deity. To an ordinary person, however, the Deity will appear to be made of stone, wood or some other material. In the higher sense, since all material elements ultimately emanate from the supreme spiritual entity, nothing is really material. Being omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, Kṛṣṇa can deal with His devotee in any form without difficulty. By the mercy of the Lord, the devotee knows perfectly well about the Lord’s dealings. Indeed, he can talk face to face with the Lord.

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 5.97



upcoming dates

Kesava Masa

Dec 10

- Fasting for Uṭpanna Ekadasi
- Sri Narahari Sarakara Thakura Disappearance
- Sri Kaliya Kṛsnadasa Disappearance

Dec 11

- Sri Saranga Thakura Disappearance

Dec 18

- Odana sasthi

Dec 23

- Advent of Srimad Bhagavad-gita

Dec 24

- Vyanjuli Mahadvadasi
- Fasting for Moksada Ekadasi

Narayana Masa

Jan 1

- Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura Disappearance

Jan 8

- Fasting for Saphala Ekadasi
- Sri Devananda Pandita Disappearance

Jan 10

- Sri Mahesa Pandita Disappearance
- Sri Uddharana Datta Thakura Disappearance

Jan 12

- Sri Locana Dasa Thakura Appearance

Jan 14

- Srila Jiva Gosvami Disappearance
- Sri Jagadisa Pandita Disappearance
- Ganga Sagara Mela

Jan 22

- Fasting for Putrada Ekadasi

Jan 23

- Sri Jagadisa Pandita Appearance

This calendar is calculated for Mayapur, West Bengal, India.



Mayapur Academy Activities

The Mayapur Academy is growing from strength to strength as more students eager for real knowledge of the art and science of deity worship are coming forward each year.

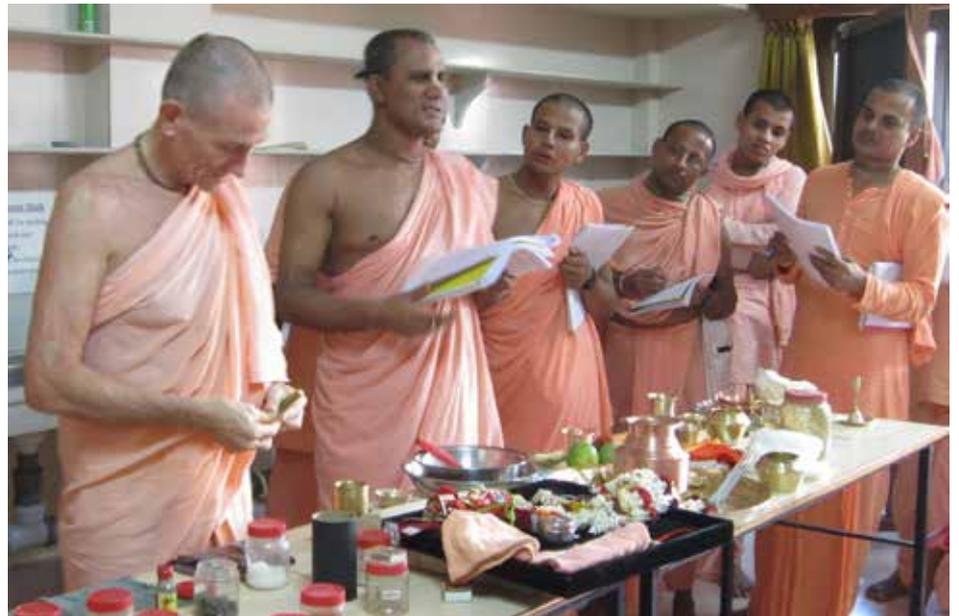
In addition to our regular courses, we have been developing an Astrology course taught by H.H. Bhānu Mahārāja. This course still needs some fine-tuning, but Mahārāja is working on some of the details and we hope it will be perfect this semester.

Another very big development is the launch of our Diploma course for Russian devotees. This semester we have 12 Russian speaking students on the Diploma course. They are receiving simultaneous translation during the classes via a transmitter and headset. This is a very exciting project as there is a great need for training the many *pūjārīs* from the Russian speaking countries.

We are always looking for ways to improve the quality of the education we give at the Mayapur Academy and to this end we have recently engaged some graduates of the Academy in assisting us with the courses. Jayānanda Prabhu has been a great help with the Diploma course in general, and specifically with the Temple Worship unit, which he is now co-facilitating. Mādhurya Mādhavī Mātājī is another great addition to our faculty, assisting in the areas of Temple Worship and Dressing. Most recently Ānanda Līlā Mātājī has also joined us, and she will be assisting in Dressing, Festivals and Cooking.

Gopāladeva Prabhu is a new addition to the administrative staff and is working very hard on the websites and student database as well as dealing with correspondence and many other things.

We also held this year's Arcana course for Bengali devotees from July to September. Last year we were unable to hold the Bengali course due to Jananivāsa Prabhu being unable to attend, so this year everyone was looking very much forward to the course. The Bengali course comprises of 4 units, Arcana, Dressing, Cooking and Saṁskāras, and was very well attended.



like to help?

Mayapur Academy is a new project and needs all kinds of things to help us grow. Vaisnava scriptures, commentaries of our acaryas, various spiritual books, Sanskrit dictionaries, etc.

Art and craft books, jewellery making, dress design and making etc. etc.

We also need deity paraphernalia for dressing and worshipping our deities.

ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry depends upon your support to continue in our service to ISKCON.

If you would like to make a donation, please visit our websites:

www.deityworship.com

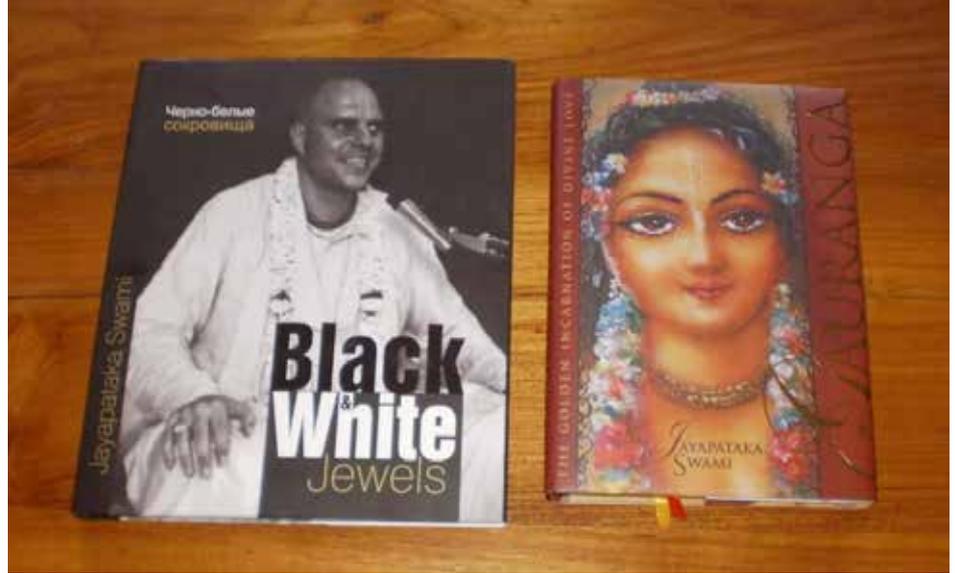
or

www.mayapuracademy.org

contributions

Keep this newsletter alive. Send your contributions, articles and photos to: info@deityworship.com

The Mayapur Academy Library is another project which is constantly developing, with new books flowing in all the time thanks to the generous donations of many devotees. We are working on getting the books catalogued at the moment. Our plans for the library in the near future include new bookshelves multi-media facilities and a new reception area.



Mayapur Gandharaj, our pure incense project, is also growing very nicely. Our famous Pure Frankincense continues to be extremely popular as we have had orders of over 300kg so far this year sent to South Africa, U.K., Australia and France. We have developed a wonderful new jute package that holds 20 sticks and these are proving to be a great success as well.



Ministry News



In order to better serve the deities and devotees at our ISKCON temples, we are pleased to announce that the ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry has brought aboard Jayānanda Prabhu this year to serve as the North American representative.

Jayānanda Prabhu has served the Lord in His deity form for nearly 10 years. He attended deity worship training in Mayapur in 2007 and has been personally trained by Jananivāsa Prabhu in the various arts and skills of deity worship. In 2011, he became a member of the Mayapur Academy's management team and teaching staff and co-facilitated the Festivals course with Jananivāsa Prabhu and the Temple Worship course with Nṛsimha Kavaca Prabhu. Additionally, he is actively involved in the revision of ISKCON's deity worship manual.

As a representative of the ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry, Jayānanda Prabhu's main service is to

assist *pūjārīs* in their efforts to care for the deities in their temples. He is able to assist temples in the following ways:

- Provide training for temple *pūjārīs* (both new and seasoned)
- Assist in the daily temple worship
- Offer guidance to congregational members regarding home worship
- Offer suggestions to enhance your deity's worship (as appropriate)
- Offer association and encouragement to your *pūjārīs*

Jayānanda Prabhu spent over 3 months this summer visiting approximately 20% of the ISKCON temples in North America, spending a week at each location. He is back in Mayapur currently serving at Mayapur Academy until Gaura-pūrṇimā. He then looks forward to visiting other temples in his area in the Summer of 2013.

Pūjārī Profile

This month our featured *pūjārīs* are a husband-wife team based in the city of Baltimore in the USA.

Sampradāya Prabhu and Daivī Śakti Mātājī have been dedicated servants of Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā for many years. Amongst the many services they offer to the deities, driving and serving Them in various cities for annual Ratha-yātrā festivals in the Northeast USA is one of their most notable.

They originally hail from Trinidad where they first met each other prior to joining ISKCON. Sampradāya Prabhu joined ISKCON in 1979 and was initiated in 1981. Upon receiving brahmana initiation in 1983, he was asked by his spiritual master to serve in Baltimore. By 1990, he was joined by Daivī Śakti Mātājī along with their first daughter, Viśākhā. Their second daughter, Vrinda, was born a year later. By 1991, driving to Ratha-yātrās with Lord Jagannātha became a family affair.



The Jagannātha deities from Baltimore have presided over many Ratha-yātrās over the years. Śrīla Prabhupāda rode on the chariot with these deities when he attended the New York Ratha-yātrā in 1976. Over the following years Lord Jagannātha also travelled to, and in some cases inaugurated, Ratha-yātrās in New Jersey, Cleveland, Harrisburg, Chicago, and now His own hometown of Baltimore for the past 10 years.

Sampradāya was a travelling *saṅkīrtana* devotee for his first three years in Baltimore. After which he became a full-time temple devotee. In 1986 he began driving Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā, along with Their *pūjārī* to New York City for the Ratha-yātrā festival. Since then he has been performing the service as Their driver and servant for all the Ratha-yātrā festivals that the deities attend annually.

Sampradāya says, "After thorough consideration on how I can better serve the Lord during Their travels, I came up with the idea of building Their own special *āsanas* for riding in the van to festivals. After a lot



of trial and error, my idea manifested on how I could design and build the *āsanas*. I built them made from solid mahogany wood that is used only for their Lordships to ride in. I have also made special cushions and pillows. When it's time to take Jagannātha to a festival, the regular van seats are removed and the special *āsana* is placed in the van for Their trips. Over the years, as I considered how to better care for the deities while traveling, better vehicles and facility for Their Lordships has somehow come."

When Mother Yadunandana, Jagannātha's main *pūjārī* for many years, left Baltimore in 2000 to live in Florida, Daivī Śakti continued the service. Daivī Śakti says, "When the deities ride on their chariot on a Ratha-yātrā day, offerings are constantly made on the cart. At the end of the parade all of the *mahā-prasādam* is distributed to everyone from the cart. There is always a mad rush! The deities are usually taken off the cart at the end of the parade and placed on an altar especially set up and decorated for Them at the festival site facing the main stage. Offerings are constantly made and everyone is given the opportunity to fan the deities and receive *mahā-prasādam*. In Washington DC, the deities stay on the cart and everyone can come up similar to what's done in Puri."

We wish Sampradāya and Daivī Śakti to share together many more years of dedicated service to Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadra.