



Arcana News

ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry

April 2013

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websites

Deity Worship Ministry
www.deityworship.com

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www.mayapuracademy.org

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mayapuracademy.wordpress.com

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Dear Friends

Welcome to the latest edition of the ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry / Mayapur Academy Newsletter coming to you from Pune, Maharashtra where Gaura-Nitāi, Jagannātha, Baladeva, Subhadrā and the beautiful Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vṛndāvanacandra were just installed.

It's been quite a busy three months since our last newsletter. We've just finished our 6th semester at Mayapur Academy, deities were installed in Pune, an amazing event, more about that later. There are also upcoming installations in Bangalore, Dvaraka (New Delhi), and Dhaka and Taragonj in Bangladesh, all needing input from ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry.

The GBC meetings this year went for a tiring 14 days. ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry presented a report this year that was well received by the GBC. The highlights of the report will be included later.

This is your newsletter so please feel free to write to with suggestions or comments on how to improve our service to the Lord, Śrīla Prabhupāda and ISKCON.

Thanks to everyone who gave feedback on the last newsletter. Your comments help shape the content of future newsletters.

Hope you like the newsletter.

Look forward to hearing more from you all soon.

Your servant,
Nṛsimha Kavaca Dāsa

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Śrīla Prabhupāda on Deity Worship

“One thing though, the deity worship must be completely pure in terms of cleanliness and punctuality, otherwise there will be some offense.”

Letter to: Sri Govinda -- Calcutta 31 January, 1973

“...Deity worship should be practiced by everyone. That cleanses the contaminated body very nicely. It is really the custom that before entering one must be cleansed and bathe himself regularly.”

Letter to: Hamsaduta -- San Francisco 19 September, 1968

“Deity worship means to be very, very clean. You should try to bathe twice daily. The Deities should never be approached without having bathed first and changed to clean cloths after passing stool, etc. Keep teeth brushed after each meal, fingernails clean and trim. Be sure that your hands are clean before touching anything on the altar or the Deities. And cleanse the Deity room, altar and floor daily thoroughly. Shine the various Aratrik paraphernalia after Aratrik. This is described in the booklet for pujaris written by Silavati Dasi. The idea is summit cleanliness -- that will satisfy Kṛṣṇa.”

Letter to: Rukmini -- Los Angeles 20 March, 1970

“The temple and altar should always be very clean and decorated with flowers and incense. We shall touch the Deity altar and Deity in very clean condition, after taking bath and washing mouth nicely. Practice washing hands after eating and wash with soap and water after toilet. Cleanliness is next to Godliness, so this point should be very carefully observed, then you will advance very quickly to the perfectional stage of Krishna Consciousness.”

Letter to: Kancanbala -- Los Angeles 20 April, 1970

upcoming dates in Mayapur

Visnu Masa

April 14

- Tulasi Jala Dan begins (til May 14)

April 15

- Sri Ramanujacarya Appearance

April 20

- Rama Navami. Fasting for Appearance of Lord Sri Ramacandra

April 22

- Fasting for Kamada Ekadasi

April 23

- Damanakaropana Dvadasi

April 25

- Sri Balarama Rasayatra
- Sri Kṛṣṇa Vasanta Rasa
- Sri Vamsivadana Thakura Appearance
- Sri Syamananda Prabhu Appearance

Madhusudana Masa

May 2

- Sri Abhirama Thakura Disappearance

May 4

- Śrīla Vṛndavana Dasa Thakura Disappearance

May 6

- Pakṣa vārdhīni Mahādvadasi
- Fasting for Varuṇīni Ekadasi

May 9

- Sri Gadadhara Pandita Appearance

May 13

- Akṣaya Tṛtīya. Candana Yatra starts (for 21 days)

May 17

- Jāhnu Saptami

May 19

- Srimati Sita Devi (consort of Lord Sri Rama) Appearance
- Sri Madhu Pandita Disappearance
- Srimati Jahnava Devi Appearance

May 21

- Fasting for Mohini Ekadasi



May 22

- Rukmini Dvadasi

May 23

- Sri Jayananda Prabhu Disappearance

May 24

- Nrsimha Caturdasi: Appearance of Lord Nrsimhadeva (Fast today)

May 25

- Krsna Phula Dola, Salila Vihara
- Sri Paramesvari Dasa Thakura Disappearance
- Sri Sri Radha-Ramana Devaji Appearance
- Sri Madhavendra Puri Appearance
- Sri Srinivasa Acarya Appearance

Trivikrama Masa

May 29

- Sri Ramananda Raya Disappearance

June 4

- Fasting for Aparā Ekadasi

June 5

- Srila Vrndavana Dasa Thakura Appearance

June 19

- Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana Disappearance
- Ganga Puja
- Srimati Gangamata Gosvami Appearance

June 20

- Trisprsa Mahadvadasi
- Fasting for Pandava Nirjala Ekadasi

June 21

- Panihati Cida Dahi Utsava

June 23

- Snana Yatra
- Sri Mukunda Datta Disappearance
- Sri Sridhara Pandita Disappearance

June 24

- Sri Syamananda Prabhu Disappearance

June 27

- Sri Vakresvara Pandita Appearance

Mayapur Academy Activities

Since the last issue of Arcana News, much has been happening here at Mayapur Academy. The first ever English/Russian Diploma Course was a great success, with 13 Russian devotees graduating with diplomas and certificates.



As a part of their Saṁskāra Unit, students arranged a wonderful *anna-prāśana* ceremony on the roof of Caitanya Bhavan for the son of our cooking teacher Prema Nitai Prabhu. The students demonstrated skills they had learned over the 4 months of their training by cooking wonderful sweets for the guests, decorating the pandal with beautiful rangoli and flower garlands, performing a *yajña* and chanting auspicious mantras.



The semester concluded last month with a graduation ceremony attended by many senior devotees who were here in Mayapur for the annual GBC meetings.

We are looking forward to the next semester of the Bengali Arcana Course this summer, and the Diploma Course in October.

Donors

Where would we be without the support of our donors? We would like to thank the many devotees who have contributed to Mayapur Academy and the Library over the past years. Your support is invaluable. Thank you.

For the past 3 months:

Donations

Candramauli Swami	INR 10,000
Niranjana Swami	USD 1,200
Arjuna Hari Dasa	INR 25,000
Antony Brennan	AUD 2,000
Kesava Madhava Dasa	INR 5,000
Manoj Kumar	INR 1,001
Late Visnu Murti & Family	INR 50,000

Monthly Donors

Chetan Chheda	AUD 25
Krsna Chandra	AUD 25
Chandu Kattamudi	AUD 100
Nitin Yadav	AUD 50
Murti Priya Devi Dasi	AUD 50
Srinivas Bhat	USD 21

Books

Donated by the Author

Ajita Govinda Dasa	Values of Life
Sarvasakshi Dasa	Vaishnava Pandavali
Rasamandala Dasa	Islam and the Vedas
Riddha Dasa	Mission in the Service of His Divine Grace

Donated by others

Hanuman Dasa	Spanish books – Full set Caitanya-caritamrta, Life Comes From Life, Light of the Bhagavata, Journey of Self-Discovery
Jayananda Dasa	Bhakti Tirtha Swami's new book Surrender
Jananivas Dasa	Mandalibhadra Dasa's Puja-Handbuch



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 worshiping 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



Hand-painted *prasādam* packages for distribution to guests.

Ministry News

As mentioned before it has been a busy three months. With the passing of the installation law in March 2012 the workload of ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry has significantly increased. Since that time we have been in discussion with devotees from Queens – USA, Zagreb - Croatia, Brighton and Crawley in the UK, Butterworth in Malaysia, Dhaka in Bangladesh, Nashik, Lucknow and Pune in India and Lisbon in Portugal. Deities have been installed in Lucknow and Pune in India, Dharan in Nepal, Gaborone in Botswana and Tallinn in Estonia. ISKCON is certainly expanding and there is more to come. Since the GBC meetings this year we have had discussions with Bangalore, Rohini and Dvaraka in New Delhi and three upcoming installations in Bangladesh. All these installations required dialogue with and a visit from ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry.

Our report to the GBC covered our activities for the past 12 months. The report highlighted our activities in Education and Training, including Mayapur Academy, the ongoing development of our network of regional representatives and their duties and activities, and the onsite training programs conducted by them as well as upcoming publications.

We also outlined our three-pronged strategy for the Deity Worship Ministry. This included ongoing development of Mayapur Academy, further development of our network of regional representatives, and launching an online training program.

We also circulated a questionnaire to the GBC members requesting their input regarding their needs interests and concerns in deity worship. This has provided us with a wealth of information about what the leaders of ISKCON feel is important in relation to deity worship. This will help us to strategize future development of the Ministry.



Installation of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vṛndāvanacandra in Pune

An interview with Jananivāsa Prabhu . . . about Nṛsimha-caturdaśī



Gaurāṅga Siṁha: In Mayapur, how are we observing the festival of Lord Nṛsimhadeva's appearance?

Jananivāsa: In Mayapur, Lord Nṛsimhadeva is covered in *candana* up until the day before His appearance and then at 1 o'clock the *candana* is taken off, this will be the day before. The *candana* is taken off, then we give the oil bath. The *candana* is absorbing the oils and everything from His body so again we put plenty of oils, have a big bath, *snāna*.

In the evening there will be *adhivāsa*, early evening, the *adhivāsa* for Lord Nṛsimhadeva, which is preparing for the appearance of Lord Nṛsimhadeva on *caturdaśī*. So the *adhivāsa* is an activity to prepare ourselves for the receiving and worshipping the Lord and understanding the significance of the appearance of Lord Nṛsimhadeva.

And then on Nṛsimha-caturdaśī there will be a *homa* for Lord Nṛsimhadeva in the morning in the courtyard and that goes on for a couple of hours and the classes will be on Lord Nṛsimhadeva. And then in the afternoon at about 4 or 4.30 will be the main *abhiṣeka* of Lord Nṛsimhadeva and here we are offering the *mahā-snāna* to Lord Nṛsimhadeva. This *abhiṣeka* goes on for about 2 hours. We used to have *parikramā*, I don't think we have one anymore. Anyway, then everything is ready for the Lord, the Lord is dressed and a feast is offered then He is opened for the *ārati*. He appears at the *sandhyā*, then He is opened again for *ārati* and *kīrtana*, then devotees will take *prasādam* and honor the breakfast, honor the *prasādam*.





Gaurāṅga Siṁha: Is the Lord offered any new set of cloth every year?

Jananivāsa: Yes. Usually He wears that in the morning. Then generally in the afternoon, after the *abhiṣeka*, the *kavaca*, the silver *kavaca*. So generally he wears that.

Gaurāṅga Siṁha: How was the festival in the beginning as opposed to how it has developed now? Was it always similar?

Jananivāsa: We just had the *śālagrāma-abhiṣeka* at the time of His appearance, at the *sandhyā*, then a *kīrtana* and a feast. We had a deity once; we made a clay deity of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva and Hiraṇyakaśipu across his lap. Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva was tearing him up. Anyway we did *śālagrāma-pūjā*, offered 16 items of worship to the *śālagrāma* in front of the models we had made.

Gaurāṅga Siṁha: Since Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva has been installed, is the festival similar?

Jananivāsa: Well it's just on a grand scale. The *abhiṣeka* is the main function, and there is possibly thousands of liters of different substances and *gaṅga-jāl*. You will see the huge drums.

Gaurāṅga Siṁha: It seems like the festival gets bigger every year in terms of numbers of devotees coming to see the Lord. And it becomes bigger and bigger.

Jananivāsa: Yes, it gets bigger and bigger. A lot of people from South India come because Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva is also very popular in South India. And also Jayapatāka Mahārāja likes to be here for that festival. Many of his disciples are also from South India. The deity was made in Chennai, was manifested in Chennai. So they come for that period. Jayapatāka Mahārāja is there, and the *mahā-abhiṣeka* is there.

Gaurāṅga Siṁha: How can the devotees observe the festival in their homes, if they are not in Mayapur, and there is no deity of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva?

Jananivāsa: They can have classes on Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva, and they probably have a picture of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva, so they could give an *abhiṣeka* in front of the picture, so the picture doesn't get wet. They can have an *abhiṣeka* like that so they have some *caraṇāmṛta* to distribute to everyone. And have *kīrtanas* and breakfast after the sun sets. They can have *puṣpāñjali* at His appearance time. We don't have *puṣpāñjali* in Mayapur, it would be too big. But devotees in their house they could have *puṣpāñjali* and *ārati* and *kīrtana*. Nṛsiṃha-caturdaśī is also called *vrata-rāja*; people like to observe different *vratas*, so it is a good day for it. King of *vratas*. So it is a good day for observing special *vratas*; we will be fasting anyway, most of the day. You can do more; you can read the story of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva in *Bhāgavatam*, chant more rounds, visit the holy places, worship *nṛsiṃhadeva-śālagrāma* or some pictures.

Gaurāṅga Siṃha: Any other thoughts or observations?

Jananivāsa: Two main things that could be observed if you want. There is offering of *prasādam* - *prasādam* distribution, and *harināma saṅkīrtana*. These make any festival successful. Without these two the festival is not complete. So there should be *prasādam* for distribution afterwards, and there should be a lot of *harināma*.

Gaurāṅga Siṃha: Do we take *ekādaśī prasādam* on Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva's appearance? Is it recommended?

Jananivāsa: It is recommended for *viṣṇu-tattva* to honor *anukalpa ekādaśī prasādam*, but we don't do for every *viṣṇu-tattva* deity. According to our *ācāryas* – Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Prabhupāda - we fast for Janmāṣṭamī and Gaura-pūrṇimā, and we do *anukalpa prasādam* for those because these are our main deities of worship. So they indicated that those two days we can have *anukalpa prasādam*. But because Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva is kind of special, there are two forms Lord Kṛṣṇa likes very much: Lord Rāmacandra and Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva, they are very special to Him. So devotees like to do fasting on that day. It is like an unwritten law in Mayapur, and now they make *anukalpa prasādam* for the devotees. Years ago they didn't but now they do. More and more they observe this offering of *ekādaśī prasādam* on that day and then the feasting will be on the next day.





Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva in Mayapur he likes mangos. The Gauḍīya Math devotees they think that sweet rice is His specialty, so they always make sweet rice. They go to Nṛsiṃha-pallī, and they have *kīrtana* and they cook up a lot of sweet rice and eat sweet rice and distribute sweet rice. So there are two things we know the Lord likes; sweet rice and mangos. In India He likes *panakam*, which is gur water mixed with some ginger, lemon juice. It is very popular in South India. They offer it to Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva also.

Gaurāṅga Siṃha: It's very wonderful taste, I had the remnants. Rāseśvarī Mātājī gave one time.

Jananivāsa: So Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva is taking it now. Maybe Rāseśvarī Mātājī is making now also. So this month is the *śālagrāma tulasī jala dan*, dripping water, so He is cool. Then someone is bringing ice-cream, and Rāseśvarī Mātājī is bringing *panakam*.

Another special feature of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva is that He is our protective deity. He is our deity for protection. He is the *iṣṭa-deva* of protection but he is not the *iṣṭa-deva* of most devotees trying to understand our eternal relationship, but He is our *iṣṭa-deva*, our worshipable Lord for protection to remove the obstacles

on the path of *bhakti*. This is why He is so special. That is why Śrīla Prabhupāda introduced worship of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva in ISKCON. Bhaktisiddhānta also had the deity of Lakṣmī-Nṛsiṃhadeva installed at the Yoga-pīṭha. And Nanda Bābā also worships a form of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva in Goloka, so it is like *paramparā*. It goes on in Goloka and the reason Nanda Bābā worships Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva is to protect Kṛṣṇa. He is a protective deity. And Bhaktisiddhānta also, they were having problems there at the Yoga-pīṭha, so they installed the deity and afterwards He kept most of the problems away. So we worship Him as our protective deity, to remove the obstacles on the path of devotional to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

The same idea is expressed in the *Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya*, or the *Navadvīpa-bhava-taranga*, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura goes to Nṛsiṃha-pallī in Navadvīpa and Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva appears before him and blesses him with fearlessness – *abhaya* – and he says you should stay in the *dhāma* and worship Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, chant the holy names of Kṛṣṇa and very soon by the mercy of the devotees you will attain perfection. So this was Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva's desire: worship Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and chant the holy names. He gave His blessing there – fearlessness, *abhaya*.

So Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva has this special function in Mayapur: protecting the devotees devotion to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, whereas in South India they will all worship him and go back to Nṛsiṃha-loka, Vaiṣṇava-loka. In Navadvīpa it is different we worship Him but to remove the obstacles. He helps us to go back to Goloka in Navadvīpa.



Deity Installation at ISKCON's New Vedic Cultural Centre, Pune

Five days before the deities were due to be installed on Nityānanda Trayodaśī the temple was still a huge constructions site. Concrete was still being poured, there were large holes and ditches, the outside of the buildings still looked unfinished and there were hundreds of devotees and workers with huge machines swarming like bees all over the site. Inside was more finished but still it was a hive of activity with last minute electrical work, joinery etc. It was difficult to see how the temple would be ready for the installation. Yet ready it was, and in grand style.



The large temple with beautiful wide verandas, high domed ceiling adorned with cupolas, chandeliers and beautiful artwork is the crowning glory of many years of hard work by the devotees of ISKCON Pune.

The gorgeous, 3-day installation ceremony and its many functions was expertly conducted by the devotees from the Mayapur boys gurukula, headed by HH Bhakti Vidyā Pūrṇa Mahārāja, was attended by thousands of devotees and guests. Many ISKCON dignitaries were in including Lokanātha Mahārāja, Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja, Rādhānatha Mahārāja, Bhānu Mahārāja, Bhakti Viśrambha Mādhava Mahārāja, Ramai Mahārāja,



Bhakti Vidyā Pūrṇa Mahārāja and many other leaders of ISKCON and senior devotees from India and abroad.

There were two installations: In the main temple, Gaura-Nitāi, Rādhā-Vṛndāvanacandra and Jagannātha, Baladeva, Subhadra were installed and in the smaller temple Bālajī was installed.

One of the highlights of the occasion for some was the inauguration of the Cultural Hall by the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee. I say for some, because the security was so tight that most of us could not attend.

In all a wonder event. Many thanks to the devotees of ISKCON Pune, headed by Rādhe-Shyam Prabhu for their kind hospitality.

Your servant,
Nṛsimha Kavaca Dāsa

