

Mahā Abhiṣeka Procedure

Based upon the Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janma Tithi Vidhi by Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī
As performed at ISKCON Mayapur

Preliminary Activities

- Thoroughly clean, setup and decorate the *snāna vedi* (bathing place) for the deities.
- Bring and arrange the items and paraphernalia for worship.
- Purify all the items used in the worship by *prokṣaṇa*.
- Draw a *goloka yantra* with sandalwood paste in the *snāna vedi* where the deities will stand. Also, you may decorate around the *snāna vedi* with fruits and flowers.
- Place *tulasī* leaves in the center of the *snāna vedi*, specifically where *viṣṇu-tattva* deities will be placed.
- Dress the deities privately in bathing cloth; usually yellow or white silk. Then offer *puṣpāñjali* to the Lord's lotus feet while chanting *eṣa puṣpāñjali* and the deity *mūla-mantra*.
- Bring the deities to the *snāna vedi* in procession (on a palanquin if possible) with conches blowing and *cāmaras* waving, along with the accompaniment of *bhajanas* or *kīrtanas*. *Brāhmaṇas* may also chant *svastī-vācana* to invoke auspiciousness for the *abhiṣeka* ceremony at this time.¹



Goloka Yantra

Abhiṣeka²

1 Āsana (seat)

- Place the deities on the *snāna vedi*, and begin worship with the 16 *upacāras*.
- Chant *idam āsanam* and the deity *mūla-mantra*

2 Svāgata (welcome)

- Chant *svāgataṁ su svāgataṁ* and the deity *mūla-mantra*

3 Padya (foot wash)

- Chant *etat padyam* and the deity *mūla-mantra*

4 Arghya (offering of auspicious articles for reception)

- Chant *idam arghyam* and the deity *mūla-mantra*

5 Ācamana (water for sipping)

- Chant *idam ācamanīyam* and the deity *mūla-mantra*

¹ If available, *brāhmaṇas* may chant the appropriate *mantras* throughout the *abhiṣeka* as prescribed in *Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janma Tithi Vidhi*.

² Offer *tulasī* leaves with all the items offered to *viṣṇu-tattva* deities.

6 Madhuparka (high-class honey refreshment)

- Chant *eṣa madhuparkaḥ* and the deity *mūla -mantra*

7 Punar-ācamana (again, water for sipping)

- Chant *idaṁ punar-ācamanīyam* and the deity *mūla -mantra*

Piṣṭa dīpa: offer seven times around the Lord's body.

8 Snāna (bathing)

Sugandha-tailam: massage the deities with fragrant oil.

Til pisti: massage for the deity using sesame seed paste. Some of this paste is also put in the water used for the next *upacāra* — *til snāna*.

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE OFFERED IN A CONCH:

- **Til-snāna:** water with sesame seed paste
- **Pure water**
- **Pañca-gavya-snana:** offer the following items from the cow one after another in the following order:
 - milk
 - yogurt
 - ghee
 - cow urine
 - cow dung
- **Kuśa-snana:** *kuśa* grass tips 1-1.5" long mixed in pure water
- **Pañcāmṛta-snāna:** offer the following items one after another in the following order (everything should be warm and pourable):
 - milk
 - yogurt
 - ghee
 - honey
 - sugar water
- **Fruit juices:** five different types of fruit juice. Mango, pomegranate and grapes are recommended by *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, but nothing salty or too sour.
- **Colored scents snāna:**
 - Orange – musk or *jatamamsi*
 - Red – rose
 - Saffron – saffron
 - Green – *kuśa*
 - Yellow – *aguru*
- **Sugar cane juice:** available according to season

- **Uṣnodaka-snāna:** rinse with pure warm water
- **Powders:** dust the deities with a brush made from the hair at the end of a cow's tail.
- **Uṣnodaka-snāna:** rinse with pure warm water
- **Dobs:** pour coconut water directly from coconuts
- **Tīrtha-jala:** water from sacred places such as the Yamunā and Ganges, Rādhā-kuṇḍa, etc.
- **Pure water**
- **Sarvaṣadhi-snāna**³: herbal bath
- **Mahaṣadhi-snāna:** second herbal bath
- **Maṅgala-snāna:** auspicious bath
- **Bijāṣṭaka-snāna:** eight-seed bath
- **Ratnodaka-snāna:** jewel-water — one can either leave the jewels in water for some time, or place *pañcaratna* or *navaratna* in the conch shell during the bathing.
- **Puṣpodaka-snāna:** flower-water — bathe with water in which scented flowers have been soaking for some time.
- **Phalodaka-snāna:** fruit-water — place a whole peeled banana into the conch, add water and then pour over the deity. (Be careful to not drop the banana onto the deity)
- **Gandhodaka-snāna (asta-ghanda-snāna):** scented-water bath — bathe the deities with water mixed with scents such as musk, *aguru*, sandalwood, *jatamamsi*, camphor, saffron, *kusa*, and *gorocana*.⁴
- **Gandha:** sandalwood paste — cover the deities bodies (may be left on for a few minutes)
- **Candanodaka-snāna:** sandalwood-water — bathe the deities with water which has been mixed with sandalwood paste.

WHILE POURING WATER CONTINUOUSLY INTO A SAHASRA DHĀRA (ROUND TRAY WITH HOLES FOR SHOWERING), PLACE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS INTO THE SAHASRA DHĀRA, ONE AFTER ANOTHER:

- **Mahaṣadhi**
- **Gandha**

³ In the Radha-Ramana temple, the *sarvaṣadhi*, *mahaṣadhi*, *maṅgala*, and *bijāṣṭaka* are put in the conch and then with water is added. The items could also be placed in pots of water and allowed to soak for some time before pouring in the conch.

⁴ As offered to Radha-Ramana during His abhiṣeka.

- ***Bijāṣṭaka***
- ***Puṣpa***
- ***Phala***: peeled banana
- ***Ratna***

THE FOLLOWING TWO ITEMS ARE POURED INTO THE SAHASRA DHĀRA⁵:

- ***Pure water***: eight *kalaśas* (water pots)
- ***Tīrtha-jala***: sixteen *kalaśas* of sacred water mixed with *tulasi* & sandalwood paste — chant *Purusa Sukta* while offering.

OFFERING OF SNĀNA IS CONCLUDED AT THIS POINT

- Offer towels to dry and cover the deities.
- Offer fragrant flower petals of various types and colors.
- Escort the deities back to a private area (i.e. *pujari* room) in order to offer concluding items of worship.
- ***Vastra*** (clothing)
- ***Upavīta*** (*brāhmaṇa* thread)
- ***Ābharāṇa* / *Alaṅkāra*** (ornaments)
- ***Nirmañcana*** (showing herbs to drive away inauspiciousness)
- ***Dṛṣṭi Uttarana*** (deliverance from evil glances)
- ***Matsya Mocana*** (deliverance of a fish)
- ***Gandha*** (sandalwood paste on head, and/or feet)
- ***Puṣpa*** (flowers)
- ***Dhūpa*** (incense)

⁵ As done in Mayapur

- ***Dīpa*** (lamp)
- ***Naivedya*** (feast)
 - ***Tāmbūla*** (after-meal refreshment, otherwise known as *pan*): may be offered after the feast
- ***Pranama***

Appendix

Abhiṣeka is offered to the deities by clean, *brāhmaṇa*-initiated devotees according to the same standards as other temple worship on the altar.

Piṣṭa dīpa (also called **piṣṭa pradīpa**):

A nine-wicked lamp offered to the Lord before an *abhiṣeka*. Knead barley flour (or white flour), sugar and milk into a firm dough and then fashion into nine lamp holders. Draw an eight-petaled lotus with *kum-kuma* and rice flour (or *kum-kuma* mixed with ghee) on a metal plate made of gold, silver or bell metal. Place one lamp on each lotus petal and one in the center of the lotus.

Padya

śyamaka: millet (*Panicum frumentaceum*)
viṣṇukrānta: butterfly pea (*Clitorea ternatea*)
dūrvā: Bent grass (*Panicum dactylon*)

Powders

Mix barley flour, flour, *sindhura*, urad dal flour — along with *āvātā* (banana powder and ground rice). They are applied to the deities' body with a brush made from the hair from a cow's tail. This produces a nice finish. After cleaning Him with a cow-tail brush, one will then bathe Him with warm water.

Sarvauṣadhi: pure water mixed with following crushed ingredients...

māmsī or *jatāmāmsī*: spieknard (*nardostachys*)
vāca: sweet flag roots (*Acorus calamus*)
kuṣṭha: kuth (Hindi) (*Saussurea auriculata*)
śaileyam or *saila*: dill (*Anethum graveolens*)
śāthī: ginger (*Curcuma zedoaria*)
mustā: nut grass (*Cyperus rotundas*)
campaka: fruit of a plantain tree
rājanī dvāya: turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) and a relative (*Curcuma aromatica*) (wild turmeric)
dāru-haridrā: (*Berberis aristata*)
murā: (Valerian)

Mahauṣadhi: pure water mixed with following crushed ingredients...

sahadevī: (*Echites frutescus*)
simhī: eggplant (*Solanum melongena*)
śaṅkhaṣpi: dankuni (Bengali) (*Canscora decussata*)
vyāghrī: (*Solanum jacquini*)
balā: (*Sidonia cordifolia*)
ati-balā: (*Sidonia rhombifolia*)
sūryavartā: (*Polanisia icosandra*)
vāca: sweet flag roots (*Acorus calamus*)

Mangala-snāna: (sometimes called *sumaṅgali* or *sarvamaṅgala*) water mixed with the following ingredients...

padmaka or *padmakam*: (wood from *Cerasus puddum*) or lotus seeds (crushed)

jāti: chameli (*Jasmin grandiflora*)

kunda: (*Jasmin multiflora*)

kuśa grass: (*Poa cynosuroides*)

darbha: (*Saccharum cylindricum*)

rocana or *gorocana*: a yellow pigment made from the bile of a cow (crushed)

Bijastaka: water mixed with the following ingredients...

rice paddy

wheat

barley

ṣaṣṭhikā dhānya (60 day rice)

sesame seeds

millet

panic seed

wild rice

Ratnodaka

use *pañcaratna* or *navaratna*

Nirmancana

sahadevā (bala): (*Sida cordifolia*)

sadābhadrā: gamari (Bengali) (*Gmelina arborea*)

sūryavartā: (*Polanisia icosandra*)

śirīṣa: (*Acacia sirissa*)

rajanī: turmeric (*Curcuma longa*)

kuśa grass: (*Poa cynosuroides*)

Cow urine and cow dung

Use a very small amount (teaspoonful) of cow urine and cow dung. Dilute in water. Both should be filtered through fine cotton cloth.