

Srila Prabhupada *Puja* and *Murti* Care Standards

Temple Room Srila Prabhupada *Murti*

Dress:

Daily change Srila Prabhupada into clean clothes. Ensure the clothes are freshly washed and ironed, without holes, stains, and odor, or in disrepair. The clothes should fit properly. Pure silk or cotton are the best fabrics to use for Srila Prabhupada's clothes. Synthetic cloth should never be offered

Dress Srila Prabhupada in the style and color of clothes he wore when he was physically present

Devotees who dress Srila Prabhupada are encouraged to study photos of Srila Prabhupada, such as in the Vyasa-puja book, so they can learn the way Srila Prabhupada dressed himself.

Undress and dress Srila Prabhupada privately.

Where possible dress Srila Prabhupada so both his feet are showing.

***Murti*:**

The *murti* of Srila Prabhupada should be in the standard pose, that is sitting cross-legged with his hands together or with the hands apart and the right finger raised.

The *murti* must closely resemble Srila Prabhupada.

Keep the *murti* of Srila Prabhupada spotlessly clean. Pay special attention to his nostrils, in his ears, and in between his fingers and toes. The inside of the ears and nostrils can be cleaned with a moistened cotton bud (q-tip) or similar.

It is normal for resin *murtis* to sag over time. It commonly happens that the arms get closer to the legs. This is not something mystical and can make it more difficult to dress the *murti*. Sometimes it is necessary to replace resin *murtis*.

The *murti* needs repainting occasionally. Always keep the features of the *murti*, such as eyes, eyebrows, *tilaka*, lips, finger and toenails, etc. in good condition. It is helpful to keep a good quality photo of the *murti*, taken when the *murti* was properly painted as a reference for repainting. Repainting or touching up the paintwork should only be done by an experienced artist who has knowledge of the appropriate paints to be used for the *murti*.

***Vyasa*sana:**

Clean the *vyasa*sana daily. The area immediately around Srila Prabhupada is best cleaned after removing his clothes.

Keep the *vyasa*sana, including upholstery, cushions and woodwork, etc. in good condition. The *vyasa*sana must be stable.

The *vyasasana* is the seat of the representative of Srila Vyasadeva. Cleaning items and devotees personal belongings such as beadbags, etc. must be stored elsewhere. It is acceptable to hang the *camara* and peacock fan (in season) on the back of Srila Prabhupada's *vyasasana* as these items are used daily in the worship of Srila Prabhupada.

Where possible, illuminate the *vyasasana* with suitable lighting. Keep Srila Prabhupada's comfort in mind, for example, it would be uncomfortable for Srila Prabhupada to sit under hot spotlights all day.

Keep the brass vases, incense holders, etc. bright and clean.

Keep at least one vase of fresh flowers near the *vyasasana*. On festival days when the deities are offered extra flowers, offer Srila Prabhupada extra flowers, more opulent garlands, and more vases.

Worship:

As part of regular daily worship, Srila Prabhupada is offered *guru-puja* with full *arati* along with the singing of the *Guru-vandana* prayers written by Narottama Das Thakura. During *guru-puja*, devotees come forward and offer flowers or flower petals to Srila Prabhupada's lotus feet. The flowers must be fresh, not wilted or old. Do not use wet flowers or wet petals.

It is recommended that the flowers offered at Srila Prabhupada's lotus feet be removed after the temple morning program is completed.

Offer Srila Prabhupada a fresh flower garland or a *maha-prasadam* garland (in good condition) daily. This is normally done just before the start of the *guru-puja*. The garland is left on Srila Prabhupada until the temple is closed at night. Where possible, avoid garlands made with flowers that will stain his clothes. Do not use artificial flowers.

Srila Prabhupada's forehead can be anointed with sandalwood paste (*candana*) at the beginning of *guru-puja*. This is more commonly done during the hot season but may be done daily as part of the regular worship. This *candana* may either be *prasada* from the deities or freshly made for Srila Prabhupada. In some cases *candana* may eventually cause damage to the *murti*.

The large resin deity is generally not removed from the *vyasasana*. If there is a need to remove Srila Prabhupada, this must be done with care. Occasions that Srila Prabhupada may be taken from the *vyasasana* are *Ratha-yatra* (when he rides on the cart), or when there is a public *abhiseka*, such as on Srila Prabhupada's Vyasa-puja. The altar deity of Srila Prabhupada may be bathed for Vyasa-puja instead of the temple *murti*.

Items offered during the *arati* to the temple deities may also be physically offered to Srila Prabhupada on his *vyasasana* before being offered to any of the assembled devotees in the temple. However, this is not mandatory. This is done in the same manner the item would be offered to any other devotee, i.e. the lamp is not offered in *arati* style but held before Srila Prabhupada's hands so he may respect the *prasada* of the Lord. Care should be taken to avoid hot ghee staining the *vyasasana*.

Other Notes:

- a) Avoid rubbing offered scents from the deities on Srila Prabhupada's hands. This will eventually damage the *murti*. The scents may be held just before Srila Prabhupada's hands and devotees can meditate they are offering them to Srila Prabhupada.
- b) During the morning *japa* period, Srila Prabhupada may be offered a beadbag.
- c) Before the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* class, place Srila Prabhupada's glasses on him. Open the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* to the current verse and place it in front of Srila Prabhupada on a bookstand so he may read it.
- d) Keep a glass of water and/or water pitcher near the *vyasasana* for Srila Prabhupada to drink. Clean the glass and refill it with fresh water at least once a day. Keep the glass covered. Do not put flowers on top of the cover.
- e) Some temples also have on or near the *vyasasana*, a walking cane, a gong, and beadbag with beads, for Prabhupada's use.
- f) Some temples have shoes for Srila Prabhupada on a footstool in front of his *vyasasana*. This is not mandatory.
- g) If devotees would like to offer glasses to Srila Prabhupada according to the prescription he wore, his prescription is:

Right Lens

O.D. +3.5 -1.00 x 90

Left Lens:

O.S. +3.5 - 1.00 x 90 Add +2.25

x90 is Axis

Add +2.25 is bifocal. Have the optometrist do the bifocal as a small circle in the bottom of the lens.

Respecting Srila Prabhupada:

While taking *darsana* of the deities, as far as possible avoid standing directly in front of Srila Prabhupada's *vyasasana* or with your back directly facing Srila Prabhupada.

If there is a name plaque, use Srila Prabhupada's full name and title as it appears on BBT publications: "His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder-*Acarya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness." The name plaque must be kept clean.

Srila Prabhupada disliked the use of synthetic flowers. Use fresh flowers for decorating the *vyasasana*, for vases, and garlands and placing in Srila Prabhupada's hands.

Devotees and guests must be guided in principles of *sad-acara*. Just as it is inappropriate to sit with one's back to the deities, it is also inappropriate to sit

with the back to Srila Prabhupada. No one should sit on the steps in front of Srila Prabhupada's *vyasasana*.

Altar Prabhupada Murti Standards

Srila Prabhupada requested that wherever his deity was present on the altar there should also be a deity of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura. Where possible, temples should try to follow this standard. All aspects of care for Srila Prabhupada's deity should be extended to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura as well.

Offer the deity of Srila Prabhupada a fresh flower garland daily.

Daily change the deity of Srila Prabhupada into fresh clothes. A metal deity of Srila Prabhupada should be polished and bathed regularly according to the procedures in *Pancaratra Pradipa* (ISKCON's deity Worship handbook.) However, deities made of all other materials should not be bathed with water; rather they should be wiped down with a dry or damp cloth after undressing. If wiped with a damp cloth, dry the deity before dressing.

Where appropriate, the small altar deity may be carefully taken on circumambulation of the temple as seen in Mayapur and Vrndavana. This may be done daily or weekly. Exercise care when moving and carrying the deity.

It is not necessary to offer *bhoga* plates to Srila Prabhupada on the altar. He will take the deities' *prasada* remnants. In temples that do offer plates to Srila Prabhupada, it is suggested that *tulasi* is put on all the preparations, as Srila Prabhupada will offer the *bhoga* to the Lord.

It is also acceptable to wake Srila Prabhupada and put him to bed when these services are being done for the Deities. This may be done according to the guidelines given in the *Pancaratra Pradipa*.

Srila Prabhupada's rooms

For temples fortunate enough to have rooms for Srila Prabhupada, it is important to understand that these rooms are a memorial to Srila Prabhupada. The appropriate mood while in the rooms is one of awe and reverence. This will help increase our appreciation for Srila Prabhupada. When guests enter Srila Prabhupada's rooms, they should become spontaneously appreciative of the devotees' love and devotion for Srila Prabhupada.

In a letter to Gurudas written in 1977, Srila Prabhupada gave the following instruction regarding his rooms at Radha Damodara:

“Everything should be kept neat and clean as if I am staying there.”

As such, Srila Prabhupada's quarters must always be kept in a pristine condition: neat, clean, and everything ready as if Srila Prabhupada were just about to arrive.