

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE
RESEEDENTS OF ISKCON MAYAPUR

Mayapur katha

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS
FOUNDER-ACHARYA HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA

VOL. 4 NO 2



BY BHAGAVATAMRITA DAS:

CASTING OF THE
PANCHA-TATVA DEITIES

read p. 3 - 6

NEED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF
COMMUNITY BUSINESSES

read p. 20 - 21, 24



PIONEER

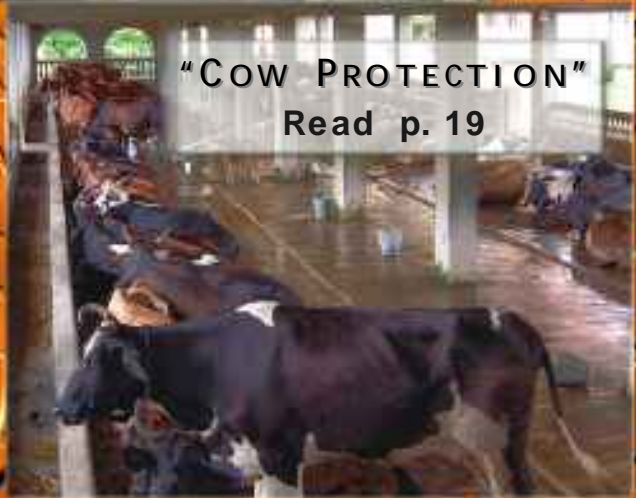


'Everyone is talking about vama-ashrama, but she is going out there and doing it. She has left everyone behind'.
Read p. 9 - 12



"COW PROTECTION"

Read p. 19



Radha-Krishna. Radha's name is first. Why? Nobody can be better devotee than Radharani. As soon as Radha's name is there, Krishna is more pleased. That is the way. If we glorify the devotees, the character of the devotees, before the Lord, He's more pleased than to glorify Himself, He directly.

Hawaii, march 24, 1969

It is very encouraging that you are developing our Mayapur center very nicely. The fences are complete and now you are sowing some hedge plants. Do it nicely.

I am glad to hear that you are harvesting rice. The crop may be saved to utilize for our members nicely. Regarding the bricks, it is a very good idea that you have ordered 10,000 bricks but as soon as the rainy season is stopped we will build our temple. So we require many lakhs of bricks. So if possible, why not purchase them now and soak them in the water.

London, 14 August, 1971,

letter to Acyutananda

the *vaishyas* are meant to protect the cows and bulls and utilize them to produce grains and milk. The cow is meant to deliver milk, and the bull is meant to produce grains.

[SB 1.17.1 Purport]

Even Krishna, whom we accept as the Supreme Lord, had to go to Gurukula and serve the spiritual master as a menial servant.

*Durban,
October 10, 1975*



Yes, we are prepared to purchase the land at a rate of not more than Rs 1500/- per bigha. They are under the impression that Americans will purchase at any price so don't be taken in. We can purchase any neighboring land at the above price.

*Letter to: Jayapataka
London, 24 August, 1971*

Prabhupada Vani

Actually cottage life for chanting Hare Krishna Mantra is very nice, but because we are dealing with the Western people, Americans and Europeans, they require some nice apartment. Therefore we have to construct a nice house for them. My Guru Maharaja's policy was to give nice facility to devotees so that they may chant Hare Krishna Mantra peacefully and make advancement. But we cannot be luxurious. As far as possible minimize the needs of our life but we shall not curtail the bare necessities.

London, 14 August, 1971,

letter to Acyutananda

"So it is better not to mix with my Godbrothers very intimately because instead of inspiring our students and disciples they may sometimes pollute them. This attempt was made previously by them, especially M.Maharaja and T.Maharaja and B.Maharaja, but somehow or other I saved the situation. This is going on. We shall be very careful about them and not mix with them. This is my instruction to you all. They cannot help us in our movement, but they are very competent to harm our natural progress. So we must be very careful about them."

Tirupati, 28 April, 1974, letter to Rupanuga

'MAYAPUR KATHA'

is a facility for you to share your ideas, articles, suggestions, comments, realizations, concerns, etc... with the community of Vaisnavas. You are welcome.

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Casting of Nityananda Prabhu

by Ganga Das

MK: Prabhu, please tell us about the casting of Lord Nityananda.

GANGA PRABHU: On the 8th of May we did the casting of Lord Nityananda.

We reached there the day before. As usual we did the puja and the yajna. This time a lot of devotees came from all over South India. We were very fortunate because H.H. Jayapataka Swami also came with two hundred devotees and we had a big program.

We rented one Kalyana Mandapam, which is like a hall for marriages. One life-member had the place there. And we arranged for the program before the casting of the Deity, around seven o'clock. Jayapataka Swami came from Trichi, where he had another preaching engagement and we had a nice kirtan, bhajan and lecture. Then prasadam was distributed to all the devotees.

Around nine o'clock we started the casting process. They begun to melt the metal at 4:30 PM, it takes a long time to melt the metal. By 9:30 PM we started to pour the metal into the cast.

Jayapataka Maharaja personally came there and put gold and silver inside of each pot (crucible). At that time a lot of devotees were just continuously removing their gold earrings, necklaces, and bracelets - very spontaneously they wanted to serve. We put all the jewelry in paper packets, one for each pot - this time there were forty-four crucibles. Last time we had extra metal left, so this time we put less. Lord Nityananda is one inch shorter than Lord Caitanya.

This time the sthapati hired a crew of people, which were less in number, there were about sixty workers, and last time there was one hundred. But these were much more organized and much more efficient, much more professional. So, the whole casting took actually much less time. This time the whole operation was much better organized. Of course practice makes perfect. We are learning more and more and becoming more experienced.

All the devotees present there were doing kirtana the whole time the casting was going on.

The weather was very very hot, even at night it was almost forty degree, plus the fire... Jayapataka Maharaja wrapped a wet chadar over his head and put the paper packets with jewelry into each pot with a six-foot long spoon.

Many devotees gave their jewelry spontaneously on the spot. Before we put the gold and silver in the

mixture H.H. Jayapataka Maharaja chanted the prayer and read the names of all the devotees who had donated their gold and silver jewelries. It was a big list of about sixty-seventy devotees. Maharaja also donated one kilogram of silver. So, actually a little more gold and silver went into Lord Nityananda's form than in Lord Caitanya's. There was almost one kilogram of gold and around two kilograms of silver. We did not melt all the jewelries into one lump as before, but cut them and put into forty-four paper bags, one went inside each of the melting pots.

We have the list of names of all those who donated gold and silver.

Anyway, everything went smoothly, we finished in much less time. The casting was finished by eleven o'clock at night.

The next morning we took a small sample of the metal and compared with the sample from Lord Caitanya's casting. They polished the samples, so we could see the difference in the color. Lord Caitanya is more golden color and Lord Nityananda is more reddish. Very beautiful.

Ten days after the casting, they opened the cast and the sthapati said that it came out very nice.

They also made two extra samples of the metal for two other Deities - Advaita and Srivasa, because they are supposed to be more whitish. So they are making some slightly different mixture of metal.

MK: Why are the Deities different colors?

G: According to H.H. Jayapataka Maharaja, each Deity should be a different color, slightly different. That's the description of the Shastras. Lord Caitanya is more golden, Nityananda is a little redder, Gadadhara is the same color as Lord Caitanya, Srivasa and Advaita are more whitish color.

MK: How is the difference made?

G: They make these differences by mixing larger or smaller quantities of different metals, like copper, zinc, lead, etc. They have some kind of composition, I do not know, I am not a metallurgist. But the sthapati is making samples for us to choose from.

Now they are working on Lord Caitanya - filing, polishing, cleaning and chiseling. Everything appears on time, within the schedule. They want to finish all the casting before the monsoon sets in. Down there it starts sometime in August-September. After they slowly polish and finish them. So by November-December the Deities should come to Mayapur. U

Casting of Gadadhara Pandit & Advaita Acharya

By Bhagavatamrita Das

The casting of Gadadhara Pandit happened on the 19th and 20th of June. On June 19 they started the preparations and on June 20 the casting was done. It was the same process as previously. They started to bake the clay model and the next day were pouring the hot metal. So, it was basically the same as the other castings.

We were very meditative on Srimati Radharani and the appearance of Gadadhara, so that mercy would come to us.

We also almost got rained out. If during the casting, one single drop gets into the pot of hot metal it creates a splash, there would be an explosion and the droplets of hot metal could hit people. So, casting is always done at nighttime because it is cooler then, between six and ten PM.

The model was baked on June 19, that took all day. It cooled off through the night and the next day in the evening they started casting. The workers were the best, they really knew what they were doing. The whole thing was very fast.

The cast takes three days to cool. With Lord Caitanya they left it for one week, the backside was opened after three days and after a few more days they opened the rest. But now they opened everything after three days, no problem.

Meanwhile we saw Lord Caitanya, he is getting more beautiful by the day. You can see already his shiny effulgence is there. Lord Nityananda also. They are carving them, the full shape of the hands is already there. Very beautiful. Outstanding job. These sthapatis know their job, they are doing excellent work. u

Advaita Acharya was cast twenty days before Srivasa. Ganga Prabhu was there and he stayed for Shrivasa's casting without coming back in between.

MK: *Did they cast Advaita Acharya with beard on?*

B: No. Let me tell you this. This is a pure technical problem. According to the sthapati, if they cast with beard they will cast the whole form with cloth, fully dressed and everything. If they cast without beard we can put the beard later, like clothes, ornaments, etc. So, it was decided that he will be cast in a simple format like all other deities and the beard will be put on later.

MK: *Don't they just do whatever you order them to do?*

B: Yes, in a sense. But we cannot order them anything. We cannot order something, which is not in tradition with Silpa Sastra or the way they cast the deities. We can tell them where to put ornamenting, shape of the eyes - they will follow that with no problem, but if you ask them to do something that is against their tradition - they will talk to us and show why they can not do this and it always makes sense. They have been in this business for 350 years and they have done a lot of casting and are good at it.

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Srivasa Thakura

MK: *When was Srivasa Thakura's form cast?*

B: On July 20 they started preparations and on the 21st the casting was done. Casting takes two days - one day for preparations and the next day for the casting itself.

MK: *What were they preparing?*

B: The cocoon. The deity is wrapped up in clay. They already took the wax out previously and now they heated the cocoon again at a very high temperature, so if any wax was still left it just evaporated. Clay cocoon becomes hard like a brick, very strong after heating. Plus there were one inch steel bars going the full length from head to toe and side ways, reinforcing the model. When the metal goes inside - it is three thousand kilos, so if you don't have a strong model, it breaks. The clay model was already heated up from the day before, so there would not be any thermo-shock when the hot metal is poured in.

When they built the cocoon they did it in layers - one layer then another, put rods in between, then another layer, another one. You cannot see the rods from the outside, but they are inside, the whole thing is very secure.

Plus there are also metal rods inside the form, going from the head to the legs and arms. There will be three thousand kilos of pressure on the ankles of the deity. This is the weakest point, so it helps to give strength in that point, otherwise sometimes even smaller forms can crack.

When they do the wax model these rods are inside and wax all around. When they melt the wax these rods are held by small metal wire like strings, attached to the clay model. So, the rods are staying right in the middle.

MK: How is the metal poured into the clay mold?

B: The form is put into a huge hole in the ground diagonally with face down and back up. The metal is poured through the feet. The first pouring goes straight to the face. They complete the whole job in forty-five minutes. They have to continuously pour hot metal. There is not just one hole, there are three holes and there are also a few channels from the arms, legs and chest for the air to go out. They have a special way of doing that. So they pour in one hole and the air is coming out through another hole.

When everything is finished they fill in one hole with a big iron bar and you can see the liquid metal is moving like water in another hole, as one liquid mass. They do it to check if the metal is solid inside and there are no air pockets.

MK: How do you see inside the holes? Are they big?

B: Well, the holes are about ten inches wide. It is like a cup of water, when it is full liquid starts to come out, so you can see that it is full. Plus the hot metal gives radiance-like light because it is so hot, so you can see the whole thing in there against the dark background of the night.

MK: What do they do if some metal is left over?

B: The extra metal, they put in the ground and make bars to be used in the next casting.

MK: What about other deities, which had been cast earlier?

B: Lord Chaitanya is ninety five percent ready and he is looking so beautiful, unbelievable. The massive size of the Lord is definitely more than life-size, a mountain of golden radiance that couldn't match the effulgence of His compassionate mercy.

Lord Chaitanya's hands and beautiful ornamental belt and bracelets and anklets and His gorgeous brahman thread across His beautiful lion-like chest are the most wonderful thing to behold. Particularly he has a small tiny dhoti, because they don't cast deity in a caupin like in Bengali tradition. All the fine decorative work on that dhoti is amazing, and it is all in metal, very beautiful design. On top of the dhoti there is a belt, which has a beautiful design too.

The first time they carved a very elaborate design, but Jananivasa Prabhu said 'no' to it. Then they made a simple, but very beautiful design, Gaudiya Vaishnava type of design. He also has anklets, bracelets, armlets and he has a beautiful brahmin thread that goes over his chest with brahma-muhurta (the knot) carved with a very beautiful design.

The chest of the Lord looks like a lion's chest. According to the Silpa Shastra when you look at the chest and abdomen of the Lord it should resemble the shape of a cow's face. Sthapati showed us where it is.

Work on the hands is finished - they look very

smooth and beautiful. His hands are raised and palms are facing forward and slightly down giving blessings to everyone.

'Not to be undone' - Jananivas Prabhu has few, but wise words to confidentially share with us - 'we were surprised to see the amount of work that had been put into the Deities after They came out of the casting mold'.

We naively thought a very small amount of work, like a little polishing here and there and the Deities would be ready. But reality taught us otherwise. The massive amount of work in all of the Deities is truly impressive. There are hundreds of work-hours put into each Deity.

The first line of polish is the removal of mud cakes encrusted into 'the metal of the Deity just after the casting is done, then a second polish or carving to bring a general shape of the details of things like the belt, armlets, earlobes, etc. This is called so far the rough polishing. After that the smooth polishing starts. Which is then done by more senior artists. The whole process is intense and at least 10 workers are at any one time working on the deities within different levels of polishing.

Work is going on simultaneously on Lord Nityananda's form as well.

MK: So, are now all five deities cast?

B: Yes. With the casting of Shrivasa Thakura it was like final manifestation of the Pancha-tattva. It was astounding, like a puzzle - when you put the last piece in you suddenly have the full picture. When Shrivasa came I felt that this work is done now - They are here, They are here to stay.

Now finishing work is going on, polishing and then we will bring Them to Mayapur. Then we will have installation and this will be the glory of Mayapur.

We strongly suggest to all the devotees of the universe and beyond to attend the Installation at Mayapur in February 2004! The next opportunity will be 4 million years from now on the next Day of Brahma!!!

Epilogue

I think that all of us in the Mayapur community should focus on one thing - we are always thinking 'well, one day Pancha-tattva will come, one day the temple will come, may be five years, ten years from now'.

The time has come and the time is now. Now, today, now. This incredible manifestation of mercy is coming to us today. And we have to get it in our mind.

We should get it out of our mind that it will happen sometime in the future. Today, now, it is happening, the mercy, Lord Caitanya is there and when the deities will come here - there will be incredible pressure to build the Adbhuta Mandir. This is it. Now, today. Installation is just around the corner. What will be after that? Adbhuta Mandir.

This is our chance to take this challenge and bring Mayapur to the next level. And for that we have to be prepared to be on the next level ourselves.

We will go to the next level of devotional service, because the preaching here will be incredible. Everybody will want to come to see these deities. Lord Caitanya is going to bring this mercy.

We know that by His mercy we are in devotional service, we could not be in devotional service without Lord Caitanya. When Lord Caitanya comes, many more people will get to know how to serve Krishna. This means churning the nectar of devotional service. This means we will get busy here and this is just right for us. U

Interview with Jananivasa Prabhu about the Deity Dress Making Department

MK: *What had inspired the idea to make a Dress Department here, before where were the dresses made?*

Jananivasa Prabhu: They were made in Vrindavan, Omkar Prabhu used to make them, then he left. After that Mother Vidya also was making dresses there. We were making nightdresses here, bhakta France was making them. Then we started to make day dresses as well. This was for several reasons, one is that it was cheaper, another reason, we could see the work as it progressed and could also make changes. Sometimes we have a conception, but when we put it on cloth it looks different, so we were able to make changes as we were going along. When it was made in Vrindavan we just had to wait for the finished results. Sometimes there were some mistakes also. So, it is a lot easier to make dresses here.

MK: *When did the dress-making department start here in Mayapur?*

J: In the late 80s. Isani Mataji was the first one. Before Omkar Prabhu was making everything and after he left we started to make night dresses here and day dresses were made in Vrindavan. Isani Mataji started to make nightdresses. Bipul was the first tailor, he is still here, and then bhakta France came. Bala Gopala



Mataji, she was living here then, with the help of some ladies she made one of the first day dresses. Kurma Chaitanya Prabhu brought the jari workers here.

MK: *Before the jari workers came who was decorating the dresses?*

J: Before the dresses were decorated in a different type of way, with some cloth designs, Bala Gopala was designing the dress. So we started to do half dresses here and half still in Vrindavan, and slowly got more and more workers and now we are making everything here.

MK: *Where do these jari workers live?*

J: Some of them local, some from Kolkatta. They have a room

either here or outside. Some of them live in Gouranga Nagar, just up the road, some in Swarup Ghang, some in Navadvip. Also three brahmacharis are involved in dress making. Nama Avatara Prabhu oversees the work. There are also some initiated devotees in white.

MK: *Who is purchasing cloth and jaris?*

J: Some devotees and sometimes workers go into Kolkatta, we tell them what we want and they are purchasing.

MK: *Who is making the designs?*

J: Keshavi Mataji is making designs for the day dresses, then we decide on the colors.

MK: *Does the designer supervise*

the work or just hand it in?

J: The designer first comes to me and we discuss, sometimes making changes, then we go ahead and make the pattern, then we lay it out on the cloth, then we discuss it again, see if we want to make any changes. By the one pattern we understand how much material is going to be needed for the whole set. Then somebody goes and purchases the material and we start making the dress.

MK: How long has Kesavi Mataji been doing this service?

J: She is involved with making dresses more or less from the beginning. She is married into the Department. Her husband Balaram Nitai Das has been a Pujari for years.

MK: So, she started to work in this department since she got married?

J: More or less. Before she was also giving some ideas sometimes. She is a very humble devotee. She actually has an artistic degree, her paintings are very beautiful.

MK: She has three children now,

did it affect her service?

J: She is doing more than before. She is doing all the drawings for the dresses, laying it out, she has to supervise the work. She is keeping an eye on it and makes the design for the crowns also.

MK: For the last two years Ramadevi Mataji is making night-dresses for Janmastami and Radhastami, involving half of our community in the process. Is it a tradition now?

J: She just comes up before the festivals to make dresses. She will also make a nightdress for Goura Purnima this year. She has another work to do, delivering babies. (She is working with Sri Mayapur Vikash Sangha as mid-wife)

But, I think she wants to come full time into making dresses.

MK: You said that she just comes for making dresses before the festivals. What work is going on in this department at other times?

J: That more or less takes the whole time. Now we have to start making dresses for the big Panchattva, who are coming soon.

MK: When are you going to start to make dresses for Them?

J: Yes, we already started. Keshavi Mataji is making design (dhoti and chadars for now).

MK: How many dresses will you make?

J: We want eight sets before the installation. We will keep it simple because we also will have to make seven nightdresses. All together there will be fifteen.

MK: Are you intending to keep this simple design for the future as well or do something more fancy later?

J: Yes. This is Lord Caitanya's stile - dhoti, chadar.

MK: How do you understand what Srila Prabhupada said about dressing Lord Caitanya as the prince of Navadvipa?

J: Yes, it means opulent dhoti, chadar, you can have turban with mukut, jewelry. In the Gaurarotik song Bhaktivinoda Thakur said: "Just see the opulence of Lord Caitanya".

MK: Thank you Prabhu. Hare Krishna.

More Babies in our community



Pavan Das and Krishna Devi Dasi had a daughter born to them on Rathayatra Day and thus she has been named Subhadra Devi Dasi. She was born in Krishnanagar hospital. She is the first child of this young couple, her mother is eighteen and father is twenty-five. Krishna Devi Dasi was born and grew up here, in ISKCON Mayapur, her parents are Kamaka Das and Maha Laxmi Devi Dasi. Her husband,

Pavan, was born in Santipur and came here very young with his parents, Sada Sidhi Das and Gitamrita Devi Dasi. At present his service is kirtana - teaching, singing in Bhajan Kutir, attending different preaching programs as kirtanier.



Little Yamunangi was born on August 8, on Pavitra Ekadasi and also Sri Sri Radha-Madhava Julian Yatra.

Her parents are Suchitendriya Das and Gouri Devi Dasi, who is a daughter of Srila Prabhupada's younger son, Vrindavan.



I wish to do more. But my 24 hours is almost fully occupied by my two-year-old baby, Bhakta Vatsala, who rightly demands so much attention. My daughters, Medharani and Manjulali take very nice care of the baby after they come home from the school, so I can work on the dress if I am not too tired. Somehow or other we manage to finish the dresses on time by the mercy of Guru & Gouranga.

Transcendental tailor

interview by Gopa Mukherji

June 1984. Just by seeing his affectionate dealings, full of compassion, deep concern for a rotten person like me, my hard heart melted, my stupid dream to become a famous fashion designer disappeared.

I desired so much to surrender myself to his lotus feet, and I moved to the Temple the same day. Although I was staying in the Tokyo Temple, I always wanted to come here to serve Radha Madhava.

I painted the mataji's asram with sky blue and saffron colour (famous Lotus building colour), made a sign "Sri Mayapur Candrodaya Mandir", set up a big photo of Radha Madhava on the wall imagining that I was in Mayapur. Otherwise I would have gone mad, I think I was mad.

Anyway, everyone thought that I was mad, so they let me go on my way to Mayapur. In 1988 I was young and new to India, very much bewildered. Ishani Mataji was taking care of me affectionately and we were making dresses for Radha Madhava together. Since then I'm still serving Radha Madhava in the same bewildered stage.

MK: How long do you want to continue with your service?

K: My Guru Maharaja told me: "you are very fortunate that you are serving Radha Madhava under Jananivas Prabhu, he is your boss. Do whatever he says, that will make me happy". If I can continue this service without committing any offence till the last breath of my life, I consider it would be the perfection. u

MK: Mataji, how do you do these wonderful designs?

Kesavi Devi Dasi: Jananivas Prabhu gives the conception and we make some sketches on paper, sample on the cloth. We try in different ways till he is satisfied. Once a basic design is approved, we draw that design on the tracing paper according to the actual measurement and pattern. After this stage we discuss more details. The fact is that Jananivas Prabhu is designing everything and out of his causeless mercy he is allowing me to take part.

MK: How is this design transformed onto the cloth?

K: We make tiny holes on the drawing line with a pin, place that tracing paper with pin holes on the cloth which is set on the flame like table, spread the mixture of kerosene oil and chalk powder on the paper, thus when we remove the paper and chalk, a dotted line remains on the cloth.

MK: Where do you get these materials?

K: From Kolkata and Delhi.

MK: Who is sponsoring the Deity dresses?

K: Radhapada Prabhu used to sponsor most of the dresses before his departure from this world.

Nowadays, different devotees, life-members and temples donate. Jananivas Prabhu knows exactly who donates for which dress.

MK: Where did you learn designing?

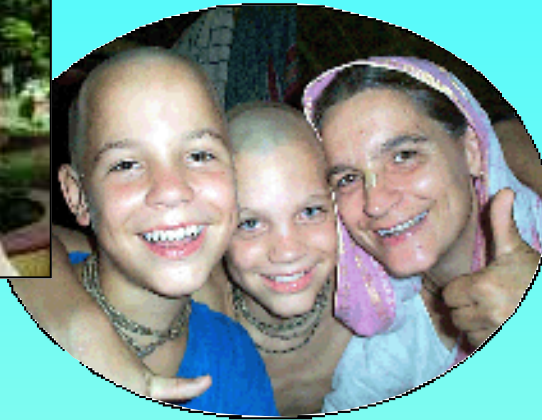
K: I took a fashion design course in my college in Japan and learnt it in an academic way with complicated mathematical calculation to draw the line on the pattern, scientific explanation of the materials, history of fashion. I learnt the art of ancient kimono design also. After I finished college, I went to a fashion design specialist in Tokyo to learn the professional way of designing which includes developing the conception, presentation, the materials, drawing, colouring, textile design, pattern making and stitching.

MK: Who is your spiritual master? Where did you get initiation?

K: My diksa guru is H.H. Jaypataka Swami. He kindly gave me initiation in Tokyo, April 1985.

MK: How did you come to Mayapur?

K: I came here for Goura Purnima in 1984 as a karmi. At that time Radha Madhava where in the Lotus Building and Their close darsan was overwhelming. My Guru Maharaja came to Tokyo in



Interview with Hrimati Devi Dasi

From Pankajanghri Prabhu:

She is actually showing that it is practical to live like that. She lives in a straw hut, she goes everywhere by bullock cart, she is maintaining herself somehow by cottage industry, she is using the bull and the cows to increase her income. She has three children with her. So, she is doing it, supporting all of them somehow. At the moment her health is not good, but she is still pulling on with it. She is a pioneer of what everyone is talking about. Everyone is talking about varna-ashrama, but she is going out there and doing it. She left everyone behind and shows how it is possible in practice. And the fact that she is doing it single-handedly with three children is amazing. Of course, it is a little austere - this is why she is glorious.

MK: Tell us how you got the idea to live like this - in a hut with cows, etc very simple life style.

H: I had to move, I used to live in the Expo, and it was to be demolished, therefore, I needed a place. We had a plot of land and so we built a house according to our budget.

MK: This is a very cosy two-storied hut with mud floor, bamboo walls, and a thatched roof. How much did your house cost to build?

H: Well, with the mud (you have to put mud first, it took twenty truck-loads of mud) it was ten thousand Rupees. Twenty loads of mud, means twenty tractors. One tractor was about 130 Rupees. About 2,600 Rupees went on bringing and putting the mud and later little more, so more or less, Rupees 3,000 worth of mud.

MK: Does one consider this some kind of mud house?

H: It was mud before. The first

year we had mud floor, but so many bugs, frogs, and snakes came all chasing each other. In addition, after the rains, because the land is quite low, the floor stayed wet. Therefore, we decided to reinforce it. First, we put bricks around and as money came, we cemented the floor. My brother gave me a little bit of money. The rest of the house is bamboo, Rupees 3,000 worth of bamboo. Labour charge to make the house was also 3,000 Rupees. The labours were working for two weeks to finish the whole thing, thatched roof, and all.

MK: How did this adventurous idea to build a house like this come to you? Did someone suggest it to you?

H: No. Everyone needs a roof over their head, don't they?

MK: Do you have electricity?

H: That came later. At first, we had no line. Now we have our own line. Actually, there is no problem living

like this.

MK: Why did you decide to get a cow and a bull?

H: Well... we needed milk. We tried to get milk from the Goshala, but we live far away, so it was always a problem, and we did not always have money to buy milk. So, then I asked the temple if they could give me a cow. I asked Gaura Hari and Radhaduti Prabhus. They said that I would have to get permission from Pancharatna Prabhu, if he says it is okay, then I could have a cow. When I asked Pancharatna, he said, "YOU want a cow?" However, after I assured him, that I knew a little bit about cows and my Gardener, Gauranga Gosh, knows also how to take care of cows, he agreed. Thereafter Gauranga and I went to the Gosala and they told us that we could have this one, this one, or this one; however, they needed to check the papers, if someone already sponsored any of those cows.

My children and I had to go to Kolkata for some urgent reason the next day and when we came back; to our great surprise, we found two huge cows in our barn. My gardener said that he had gone to the Goshala and they told him to take Vishnupriya because all the others were sponsored. I never even saw Vishnupriya before. As cow comes with a calf, I got Balaram, the bull, as well. So, I have this huge Friesen Holstein cow and massive half Holstein half Sirival bull.

Vishnupriya was only giving about one and half litre of milk a day. So, I thought; well let us get some food in for this cow. We went to Baman Pukur and purchased some cow feed and gave it to her with lots of Love. Cows respond to Love, you know... Within three days, only three days, I am not lying now; she gave us five litres - three in the morning, two in the evening. Now we had too much milk and did not know what to do with it.

MK: How old was Balarama then?

H: Eight months old.

MK: For how long have the cows been with you so far?

H: I got them more than two years ago. Balaram is three years now.

I make yoghurt and ghee. When I was making a lot of ghee I used to

give it to

Radha-Madhava. Jananivasa told me that he was using it for Their Lordship's bath every morning. He liked the ghee because it was all from the Dham - cow eats food from the Dham, was born in the Dham etc.

So, now we have Balaram. Many people used to tell me 'what are you going to do with this bull? He will get too big and dangerous'. In reply, I said, "no, we will use him". I called a vet and he castrated the bull. We have one neighbour, a local farmer, who trained Balaram. He used to hitch him up with his own bull to plough the field, so he learned how to plough the field quite early and to listen to all the commands. He turned out to be a very good animal.

I always had this idea to make a cart. I found one Professor NS Ramaswami, from South India; he sent me the design for a single animal bullock cart. Then, during Goura Purnima 2003 I met a very nice devotee, who sponsored the cart, because I did not have the money for it.

MK: *How much did the cart cost to make?*

H: The wheel assembly and axle cost five thousand Rupees and the rest was about eight thousand. It was new for the workers to make this, so I had to be there and look over them, measure everything and tell them what to do.

MK: *How do your sons like this kind of life style?*

H: When we first moved in here, Abhay was a little shy to tell people that we are living in a straw hut. However, Nandulal would sit on the veranda and say, "this is real life, natural life, I don't like anything artificial".

MK: *How many sons are with you now?*

H: Originally, they were four, but now one went to the West, so three are still with me.

MK: *How many children do you have all together?*

H: Seven, but only four came with me to India. Now Navadvip grew up and has gone for some training to Italy. Abhay and Nandu are twins, fourteen years old; they are still going to the Day School. Japa goes to Gurukula in Vrindavan. He is sixteen.

MK: *So, your children basically managed to adapt to the new style of living?*

H: Yea, there is really nothing odd about living in a straw hut. It is cool in the summer.

MK: *Do you use a fan?*

H: Well, I use it when it gets very humid. In the Expo, the place where we were living before was very hot, like living inside an oven. Now I don't get bothered by the summer so much, except for when I have to go out into the sun. The straw is very good insulation from the sun.

MK: *And your transport is the bullock cart?*

H: Yes. I have a bicycle, but it is difficult to cycle for me due to some bone disease I have. Sometimes I just have to get off the bicycle and walk. The bullock cart is actually helping me a lot to get around. In addition, when we come to the temple we cut some nice green grass for the cows and are take it home with the cart.

MK: *How much do you pay to your cow keeper?*

H: At first, I was paying him 1,300 Rupees a month, but since my cow had another calf, I increased his money to 1,500. It is a female calf, so now we have got two cows and the bull. This Gouranga (the gardener) is taking care of all of them under my supervision.

MK: *Are you growing something on your land?*

H: Yes. All kinds of things according to the season - spinach, cauliflower, beans, ladyfinger etc, we also have some mango trees, neem trees, jackfruit trees, a lime tree, and kadamba tree.

MK: *Are they giving fruits?*

H: Not yet. We planted them from the seed in a natural way. And since we moved, there was no flood, so the trees did not die and will have fruits in 2 or three years. We are eating only homegrown vegetables. Potatoes, salt, rice, flower, and some spices I buy in the market. I don't buy any oil. I cook only with the ghee I make myself, from the milk I am getting from my cow. We are also getting plenty of milk to drink. Also I sell milk - four to six litres a day. Money from that pays for the cow-keeper and extra goes for Vishnupriya's feed. We have to get extra cow-feed for her. Plus we grow some grass for them on some land near-

by.

MK: *Is it some special grass?*

H: Yes, Sorghum, it grows very tall. The cows do not eat it directly from the field. We cut it for them. Of course, they also go out in the afternoon to graze. In the wintertime, we grow chickpeas and green peas for them. The whole plant goes to the cow and she gives a lot of milk. Little by little, we learned what feed they like, and which grass is good and which is not.

MK: *How much milk are you getting from your cow?*

H: After she had a new calf in December, she was giving eleven to twelve litres.

MK: *Who is milking?*

H: The cow keeper, but I watch him, so he milks properly, because sometimes he is pulling too hard. I have experience of milking cows from when I was young; I was living on a Hare Krishna farm in America. I've always loved Animals. When I was a kid, I used to be part of an Animal Shelter Club, in Germany. I used to go around asking donations for the benefit of rejected Animals. At home I always used to keep birds, hamsters, dogs, etc. I even had a pet fish.

MK: *How did you join ISKCON?*

H: My brother August got me into it in 1971.

I remember he used to burn those 'Spiritual Sky' strawberry incense sticks in his room. Those Incense back then were by far worse than any incense sticks you can buy in our days in ISKCON temples. I told my brother "If it smells like that in that temple of yours, I will never go there." For our birthday, my twin brother gave me a small record produced by the Apple company; it had the song Govindam Adi Purusham on side 'A' and Govinda Jaya Jaya on side 'B'. I liked side A so much that I wrote the text with big letters on the wall in my room. To the dislike of my four sisters, I played that song day in and day out. The record cover had a picture of Krishna offering Puja to a cow on it. I made a little Altar in the corner of our room and offered, in my own way, water and a flower every day to Krishna. So, slowly, slowly I met some devotees and started chanting more and more, like that.

MK: Did you meet Srila Prabhupada in Germany?

H: I was initiated by letter in April 1973. I first met Srila Prabhupada in 1973 after my initiation. There was a festival in Sweden and I went there, I was very young then. When I joined, I was fifteen.

Right after I finished school, the next day, I went to the temple and never came back again. I was from Hamburg and I went to Heidelberg temple to spend a weekend because they had some Matajis there. In my town's temple they did not have any Matajis, only brahmacharis, so I wanted to go somewhere, where there was some lady-devotees and where I could stay over night and get some experience.

When I wanted to go home after three days, someone asked me "why are you going home? Just stay." I never even thought about it, "you mean I can stay?" So, I stayed. I refunded my train ticket, bought a sleeping bag and stayed in the temple. My parents did not complain until one year later.

I had not gone home since I went there. However, they were not very worried in a sense, knowing that I was in a temple and nothing bad was going to happen to me. They had ten children. My brothers and sisters were giving them plenty of worries. At that time, everyone was into drugs and I was the only one who was not. So, when I went to the temple my parents had no time to go and search me out until a year later. My father actually thought that it was a good experience for me, but when I was not coming back, he started to get a little worried. Later I made a deal with my dad. He was saying that I had to have a job, had to learn something, so I could earn some money later in life. He found me a job in a dressmaking place, so I could learn how to sew and become a fancy dress maker. I was allowed to stay in the temple in Hamburg, near my father's house. From there I was going to my job every day. At that time there were only Brahmacharies living in the temple, so they gave me a corner in a small hallway where everybody hung their coats, just before entering the House from the main entrance. I had a banana box for keeping my

clothes. At night, I was rolling out my mat to sleep on. In the morning, I was doing service, during Japa period I had to go to my job and then I came back in the afternoon. Devotees would save Prasad for me. Then I was doing service in the temple, I was sewing. I was always sewing. And now also, I am earning money by sewing (dolls). Even after marriage I was always in the temple sewing something, everybody would come to ask me to sew something for them - Sankirtan bags, Bead bags, fix their torn clothes etc.

MK: Did you get married in Germany?

H: Yes. Later we moved to America. I lived there for many years. After I had my twin boys, my marriage fell apart. For five years, I was working very very hard to support my seven children on my own. Until I just did not want to live like that any more. Children just off in a school somewhere, no Krishna Consciousness.

MK: What were you doing?

H: Bookbinding work at Hi-tech Publication. It was very hard work. I did not want my children to grow up like that. So, I quit my job and went to Europe. There Harikesha Maharaja said "why don't you check out Mayapur? There are schools, it is green and lush, you can make lots of new friends.... I think you will like it there" and I went for it. I never had been to Mayapur before, so in 1996 I came here for the first time.

So, now, when I moved in this hut I was really poor actually. I used to have some income from Germany, but that abruptly finished. There is a verse in Srimad-Bhagavatam, which states that sometimes to show special favour to His devotees Krishna takes away all one's material opulence. I had to come up with some idea for income. So I decided to make dolls. I got material, made a doll and sold it. Then I got some more material, made two dolls and sold them and so on. Then somebody ordered one hundred dolls and gave me half of the payment in advance. So, I was able to buy materials and made a hundred dolls. It gave me a little boost. And now, after three years I am still making dolls and I keep my children and myself alive

with that. It is with the doll money I built this house. You see, Krishna is acting in a very mysterious way some times. Sometimes Krishna may put us into some difficulty just to purify us and force us to advance in Krishna consciousness.

MK: Where are your other children?

H: I have three older children. My daughter, Nandini dasi and son Nama Chintamani Krishna das are in America. My eldest son Jai Nrisimhadeva is in Germany. All of them are married and have their own children. I have four grandchildren.

MK: Do you go to see them some-time?

H: No, I have no money. My eldest son has two daughters and I have not even seen the wife. I have no money to go and visit them.

MK: Are they devotees?

H: They are initiated devotees. My granddaughter's names are Mirabhai and Lilavati. My son is doing electric welding. My daughter is a technical writer, she writes law books. She has a six year old son named Nitai. My other son is an artist and he is going to Colorado State University, he also works and has a son named Nimai. I love my children very much and they love me too. They are good children. They all went to Gurukula and now they have their own lives. Navadvipa is now in Italy, learning some management from my brother, who is running a big hotel there. He is helping my son to get his life together. But Navadvipa wants to come back here, to Mayapur.

I want to stay in Mayapur, I have no other place to go.

MK: What about your younger sons?

H: They like to live in Mayapur. If I could find a good education for them here... They are talented and want to learn things. Abhay is an artist and Nandulal is inclined to write, he likes nature. I never push my children. Desire to be devotee has to come naturally and it is coming naturally. Nandulal especially doesn't like to be pressured from either side. They are devotees. By living in the Dham this is coming naturally. Abhay is our pujari at home, he is dressing our Gaura Nitai Deities, offers flowers

and cleans the altar. I am not pressuring them that they have to live austere in a straw hut, it is just what we have got. Except for the spiders and frogs jumping across the floor, it is not different from living anywhere else. I have become kind of attached to live here. It is natural living actually. Since I am living here, I have more respect for Nature. It keeps you somewhat humble. Once there was a snake curled up in a water tray underneath my fridge. I went to empty the tray and found this snake sitting there. "OK, sorry to disturb you, but I need my tray empty..." That's been one of the reasons why we redid our floor with cement instead of mud. The mud floor was too soft, the house was full of frogs and snakes would go after them, sometimes we see a snake going across the room with a frog in its mouth, trying to swallow it. You see, it is not boring living in a hut.

MK: *Would you say that you became more self-sufficient then before?*

H: The self-sufficiency is what I really like. Prabhupada wanted that. He told us to grow our own food, make our own clothes. "Work is there. If you have cows and if you have got land, then you till the land get grains, and there is milk, there is fruit, there is flower. Anywhere, you can live peacefully." He even said something about making dolls in Mayapur.

"Similarly we can import nice dolls here. Gradually as our men become expert they can manufacture the same thing here. So, Mayapur inhabitants can be engaged in such a small manufacturing enterprise as well as farming to become self sufficient."

So, now we are living off the land, the cows, we are even making cowdung patties, gobar patties and giving them for puja purposes. At night I make a fire with the patties to get rid of the mosquitoes. I make ghee and yoghurt and we have milk. We sell it to support the cows. I am also making dolls and bead bags.

Prabhupada actually wanted this. So, I am happy. I am much more content and happy than I used to be. I used to be depressed sometimes. You get less mental when living naturally. I

heard that Srila Prabhupada in His last days wanted to go on a bullock cart visiting the holy places.

I am sure Prabhupada would not object to what I am doing. If I would live in some apartment over there, I would have to look for a job. It cost a lot of money to support all that stuff. Here we just depend on the land and the cows.

MK: *It's great what you are doing. Such an example! Many cannot even imagine that it is possible to live like this having a Western body.*

H: It is actually very peaceful living and the local people don't envy you so much. The Indian people are looking, "wow! this Mataji is living like this".

His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami was staying next door, in Dina Caitanya's house during last Goura Purnima. He was saying, "this is amazing that you are living like this, with the cow and everything...". He was asking how I am maintaining and I explained, he said, "it is just like Prabhupada wanted!"

I've done a lot of mistakes in my life. The way I live now is a lot more peaceful, for the mind especially. I think it is important to live with nature.

MK: *Of course, when no one is disturbed with you, your mind is also not disturbed. Has anyone followed your example so far?*

H: Yes. I don't know how he knew, but one devotee from England, David wrote me an e-mail, asking details about living in a straw hut because he heard that I was living like this. And then he actually came and built a hut in Taranpur. He is living there with his son. He is a teacher in the Gurukula.

Another Spanish devotee built himself a hut across the field. We can see it from here. I used to live in a straw hut. I lived like this in the Philippines, my son Navadvipa Chandra was born in a bamboo house. That is where I got the idea to build a hut like this one.

MK: *Who built it for you?*

H: Nazir, a worker from Maharaja's Gurukula. He built huts for them, but I told him that I wanted straight

walls and showed him how to make a second floor.

MK: *So, you lived in Mayapur since 1996. Had you been to India before?*

H: I was in India before, in 1976 for one year, mostly in Vrindavan and on the Hyderabad farm. Prabhupada named my daughter. She was born on Srila Prabhupada's Vyasa Puja Day in Vrindavan.

In Hyderabad Prabhupada talked a lot about living simply off the land and with the cows. I was living simply there.

We spent a lot of time with Prabhupada there. It was very inspiring to see Srila Prabhupada's enthusiasm for developing the farm project. The land was just acquired, there were many thieves, and if you put clothes on the line to dry, they would take not only the clothes, but the line as well. Or in the morning open the altar and there are no more pictures. It was a totally undeveloped area. Devotees had 108 cows and only two or three of them gave milk, about two-three litres a day and there was only eight or ten devotees there. It was quite a struggle.

MK: *Are you feeling secure here in Mayapur?*

H: Local people are very friendly. Thieves are everywhere anyway.

MK: *Where do you sell your dolls?*

H: Goura Purnima Festival, Kartik Festival in Vrindavan. I also supply by Mail Order to 'Back to Godhead' magazine. I also have a website. My daughter and elder sons are helping me with it.

MK: *How is making the dolls?*

H: I make them myself, and one Mataji, Malina, is helping me doing some handwork and stuffing. That's the way to live. I do something with my own hands.

MK: *Thank you Hrimati Mataji, for sharing your experiences in Krishna Consciousness.*

H: You welcome, **Hare Krishna.**

Interview with Hrimati Mataji's twin sons, Abhai and Nandulal, age 14

ABHAI: I am fourteen and I have lived in Mayapur for seven years and I like it very much here. Mayapur is a very beautiful place.

MK: *What do you like to do? Do you have any plan what to do in life?*

Abhai: I don't really know. My mom says that I am a good artist and she wants me to become better. I have an art class twice a week, Chandramukhi Mataji is teaching us in the Day School.

MK: *Are you going to try for an Art School?*

Abhai: I don't know. I went to some places, but they were doing with paints mostly. I like more with pencils.

MK: *Are you looking at some pictures when you draw?*

Abhai: No, I see it in my mind.

MK: *Do you think that you are a good artist?*

Abhai: My friends and mom say I am. I don't know. Also I really like our bull and cows.

MK: *Do you help to look after them?*

Abhai: Yes. They are really enjoying when you brush them. I also learned little bit about milking.

MK: *How do you feel about living out here?*

Abhai: I think it is great here. Life in the city is so disturbing, you hear the cars all the time.

MK: *How old were you when you came to Mayapur?*

Abhai: When we came here I was just turning seven. I remember I was so amazed. Things were so differ-

ent and people too, how they did things. It was a new thing to see bulls ploughing the fields. I was especially amazed with Deities. They are so beautiful, Nrisimha Deva especially, I always liked Him.

MK: *Have you been through some floods since you are here?*

Abhai: Since we moved on this side there was no flood. I had been through some floods in Mayapur. It seems to be fun, but not when you hear about the people who die outside, lots of people died.

MK: *Do you have any plans what to do after graduating from school?*

Abhai: Sometimes I think about that, but don't have anything in my hand now. I still kind of thinking about it. My mother is getting old, so I may be try to help her.

MK: *Do you have someone to look up to in spiritual life?*

Abhai: I don't know, somebody like Jananivasa and Pankajanghri Prabhus. I have some friends, one school boy, also Abhai, came from Spain, I really like him.

MK: *Do you want to be a brahmachari after graduating?*

Abhai: Previously I wanted to stay brahmachari. I don't know now. I don't know what to think about when I grow up. Things are changing all the time.

MK: *Do you have association with someone who inspires you?*

Abhai: No, I am not getting any. I have brothers. I really miss my older brothers, I haven't seen some of them for five years. I hope to see them in the future. U

NANDU: Well, I have a lot of friends here and I have a lot to do. I am studying Ju-jitsu four days a week.

MK: *Can you cure someone or help yourselves with what you learned there?*

Nandu: Recently I had diarrhoea, someone did something we learned in the Ju-jitsu classes, and it helped. We can cure headaches, diarrhoea, constipation and all kinds of diseases. We are also learning computer in school along with the other subjects.

MK: *What can you do on the computer?*

Nandu: We learned about Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word. We know how to type on computer. Before me and my brother used to help with cleaning the floor in the temple before mangala-arotic. I also wrote to 'Mayapur Katha' before. Now I am mostly helping my mom.

MK: *What do you do to help your mom?*

Nandu: Wash pots and kitchen. I like living naturally here and it is more private than living in the

Housing area. It is nice and cool, not so hot and we have whole bunch of mangoes, kadamba trees, we are growing bindis and other subjis.

MK: *Do you have friends here?*

Nandu: Yes, Phanishvara Prabhu's sons. They live just across the road.

MK: *Do you have some plans what to do in life?*

Nandu: I want to be a preacher, travel and preach. First do some preaching and then may be something else.

MK: *What do you think to do to be a preacher - are you going to join the ashram or you want to travel with some other preaches?*

Nandu: Travel.

MK: *Do you already have experience of that?*

Nandu: I travel a little with Phalguna Prabhu and distributed some books during Ratha-yatra in Kolkata. We were going around Kolkata doing kirtan everywhere. We did kirtan in the New Market area and sold a few books.

MK: *Do you want to travel in India or outside of India?*



Interview with Jamastami Dasa

the Director of the MIHE

MK: How long have you been organizing the MIHE?

JANMASTAMI DASA: I started in May of 1999.

MK: Are you satisfied that it has developed according to the vision that you had when you started it?

J: In many ways, I am, but there have also been some disappointments.

MK: What do you feel are its biggest successes?

J: The MIHE has developed a facility whereby devotees from around the world can intimately associate with the most senior devotees in the movement. This year we have seventeen Prabhupada disciples teaching, out of which nine are sannyasis.

Last year I heard from our students many moving testimonies of how attending the MIHE had saved their spiritual lives. Hearing and chanting in Sridhama

Mayapur is very powerful. Systematically studying Srila Prabhupada's books as we have been doing in our VTE Bhakti-sastri course and as we will do in our new VTE Bhaktivaibhava course is a particularly powerful approach to this fundamental process of hearing and chanting in the Dhama. This is true because not only are devotees learning in detail the powerful philosophy that Srila Prabhupada has given us, but they are also learning it in such a way that they can easily apply it in their lives and in their preaching.

Many of our Bhakti-sastri graduates have gone on to become Bhakti-sastri teachers themselves.

The MIHE is also attracting serious devotees to Mayapur to study and live.

This year we will have around 30 international devotees coming to Mayapur for the Bhakti-sastri course. We anticipate over 500 students during our upcoming semester. In this way, the MIHE is helping to develop brahminical culture worldwide and locally.

MK: What are your disappointments?

J: I do not like to focus on these points, but since you ask.

I think the biggest disappointment is the toll my seva to the MIHE has taken on my life as a devotee. When I moved to India, I was hoping that my hearing and chanting would increase as would my time for spending with my family.

In moving here, I planned to work within education as my seva. I tried to work with the existing schools, but somehow or other the chemistry was not quite right, so I started the MIHE. I had no idea how much of my time and resources the MIHE would demand in establishing and maintaining. I underestimated how difficult it would be to accomplish even simple administrative functions in India. As a result, my time to hear, chant and associate with my family actually decreased substantially.

MK: What are you doing to deal with this?

J: By Krishna's grace, three very sincere and competent devotees, Bhakta Stefan, his wife, Bhaktin Gosia, and Rama Prabhu, have come to the MIHE to run much of the administration. By their involvement, I will be free to attend

the MIHE Bhakti-sastri and Bhaktivaibhava courses this year, and teach courses myself in subsequent years.

I am also not going to go to the West to collect as much as I have in the past because I have developed the ways and means of maintaining the MIHE and my family without resorting to this unpleasant endeavour. I am therefore able to spend much more time with my family and with the devotional activities that I love.

MK: What are your plans for developing the MIHE in the future?

J: We are going to try to stabilize and fine tune what we have already developed, and wait to see how Krishna inspires and facilitates us for future development.

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Nandu: Anywhere.

MK: Do you have someone to look up to? Do you want to travel with some particular preacher?

Nandu: It could be anyone as long as he is a nice person.

MK: What do you mean by 'nice person'?

Nandu: someone who is not too strict with you, of course he should be a bit strict, but not too strict. Let us be on our own sometimes, let us do what we want to do sometimes, and also have good kirtans. I can play mridanga and karatals.

MK: Where did you learn?

Nandu: I did not learn anywhere, I just picked it up. I watched a few people playing, that also were just practice mantras, not kirtan once. Kirtan mantras I just make up myself and play. u

Update on Education In Mayapur

By Lalita Devi Dasi

Recently Education in Mayapur has taken a major step forward towards fulfilling Srila Prabhupada's desire that the schools here should be exemplary. The Bhaktivedanta Gurukula and the Sri Mayapura Chandrodaya Day School have amalgamated into one school, under one administrative umbrella, recognizing similarities in educational goals and the economic practicality of uniting as a single educational structure.

This combination means that resources, such as science and computer laboratories, that were once limited to either one of the schools are now shared by both schools, greatly benefiting the children. The unified school now boasts well developed primary and secondary educational facilities, classes being established from KG to grade 10. All aspects of the curriculum of both primary and secondary school are standardized. Children receive an education which is on a par with world standards. To ensure that the education we offer is of a high standard the school is subject to an annual external assessment.

The school is affiliated to Cambridge. We are rec-

ognized as a sub-centre and have our own registration number. Grade 10 students may write certificated IGCSE exams, which are written in Calcutta at the British Council. These exams are internationally recognized and are accepted by Indian universities. Children at the end of Grade 8 write the Checkpoint exams. We are also in the position to offer local children the opportunity to write Delhi Board ICSE exams at the end of grade 10.

So, we have one school on two campuses. Older boys have classes at the former BVG campus and co-ed primary classes and senior girls have classes at the former Day School campus. Teachers move freely between the two campuses.

All children, local or from afar, are welcome to apply to join the school. They are required to take assessment tests and have interviews with academic and ashrama teachers. The school tries to provide a balance between the academic and the spiritual aspects of the children's' lives.

This combined effort of the schools to educate Krishna Conscious children is extremely positive and education in Mayapur now presents a united front. u

Story of an English teacher

By Bhakta David

Hare Krishna!

My name's David, I came to ISKCON Mayapur in October 2002 and I teach English as a second language to adults in the Gurukula here.

Originally from London, UK, I was brought up in an atheistic family in a secular society, but I knew something was missing. As I watched my culture crumble around me and in an attempt to help get things back together, I trashed and practiced as a social worker in central London. My

days were spent talking with local prostitutes about their lives and unwanted pregnancies, arranging care for their children; with confused, depressed and abandoned elderly about their lack of self worth and purpose; with youths turning to crime in their own search for identity and sense of belonging.

It was an interesting but stressful 10 years as I realized that the social work, psychiatric and government services were ill-equipped to make any real, fundamental

change. A brief flirtation with politics brought a speedy realization that the political scene is not the place to look for solutions either.

Then I met a young Rastafarian, an African with knotted hair, who smoked ganja and chatted incessantly in sweet monologues about Jah-a name for God taken from Yahwah or Jehovia in the Bible. I retrained as a carpenter and we set up a small furniture business together. We never made much money - we spent so much



time "reasoning", an important art to Rasta who uses reason and logic to disentangle conditioned thinking from reality. We went to dances in shady hideaways, dancing to Roots Reggae - music about God and reality - until dawn.

When I had my own son -11 years ago - we decided to explore the world with him while he was young. I bought an old van, converted it into a motorhome and my son Zakaya, his mother and I, together with a friend in another van, set off on a 2 year drive to India.

I had trained as an English teacher to make money en route and I left England with a vague notion of wanting to "find God".

Some way into the trip we discovered that amongst our travel reading there was a book in each van by an unknown guru - Srila Prabhupada. We read both books and my friend was immediately convinced that he wanted to become a devotee and that we should head straight for Vrindavan. I agreed, but was more cautious. Vrindavan was a culture shock for me. Intensely hot and just simply intense, I bought a Gita and set of Bhagavatams and went up to the cooler Himalayas with my family. My friend went on to Mayapur - he is now Navaratna das.

When the time came to leave India we drove straight to Morocco. We'd been attracted by Islamic culture and wanted to know more. I met a local muslim, we became friends and we set up a tourist campsite on the beach, still living in our van.

I was now praying in the mosque, reading the Quoran, but also reading the Vedas and starting to chant Hare Krsna. I managed to get hold of a Gita in Arabic and I and a group of locals spent many hours on medina alleyway corners, discussing the similarities

between the Quoran and Bhagavad Gita.

I came to ISKCON basically because Zak was outgrowing home education and needed more than I could give and we needed to express our faith. The Bhagavad Gita expressed beautifully what I had felt to be true but had never been clear before, but I was fearful about entering an organization and secretly hoped we wouldn't like it and could return to Morocco. In the event Zak and I fell in love with the Gurukul and the whole Mayapur ambience. It's been difficult to leave what we knew behind, but now we're settled and want to stay as long as possible. We stay in a small place in Taranpur, and the openness, sweetness and unattached approach to life of the villagers has added to our pleasure here. My Gurukul service brings me into contact with a wide range of devotees and locals. We've had about 90 enrolments in the 2 three months sessions run so far. Brahamacarīs, grāsthas, some local villagers, ISKCON workers aged from 16 to 70, male and female, beginners to quite advanced. Vedānta, an ex-gurukul student helps by sorting and copying materials, administration and translation of the teaching into Bengali for the lower levels. We use a communicative system of learning, which means students are encouraged to use the language in class in various contexts, in pairs, in small groups or whole class activities. This doesn't suit everyone, particularly those who are a little shy or more used to a formal classroom, but nobody is forced to speak, especially in large groups, if they can't.

We use games, roleplays and tasks as a basic for using English. A typical activity might be that a student has to find out a certain piece of information

(for example - who ate the healthiest breakfast this morning) This involves them in formula-ting a question, asking it, understanding the replies and presenting them back to a group. We also cover more traditional areas of grammar, spelling, reading, writing, pronunciation, stress the listening to audio tapes. We follow an Oxford University course and some material is unsuitable for India and devotees. I'm trying to build up more devotional-type material but it is time consuming and often difficult to adapt a text without distorting the meaning. We have used the Krsna book for comprehension, gapfills, story telling, Krsna quizzes, etc, and we've had a student present a work Bhagavatam class.

I'd like to see the service expanded to offer a proof-reading service for documents and leaflets being sent outside ISKCON or helping individual devotees with their own correspondence in English. There is some demand and we've done some work like this, but need an extra teacher (ideally Celta trained) to offer a fuller service. I'd also like to hear from potential students who might prefer an alternative style of class.

There is a need to expand knowledge of the language in ISKCON, so we can better communicate amongst ourselves and with visitors and outsiders.

On two days a week, Mahasrngā and I distribute prasadam in a couple of local villages.

Finally, I'd like to pay tribute to the sweetness and devotion of the devotees here and thank you for your inspiration.

Hare Krsna.

Tulasi the giver of devotion

Letter to the community from *Manohara Gopi Devi Dasi*

Nectar of Devotion, Ch. 11

In the Skanda Purana there is another statement about tulasi, as follows: "Tulasi is auspicious in all respects. Simply by seeing, simply by touching, simply by remembering, simply by praying to, simply by bowing before, simply by hearing about or simply by sowing this tree, there is always auspiciousness. Anyone who comes in touch with the tulasi tree in the above-mentioned ways lives eternally in the Vaikuntha world."

I wish that this letter would be useful for us to increase the care, maintenance and respect for a Pure Devotee such as Srimati Tulasi Devi, who we worship in the temple with "lots of devotion", but outside the temple she is being treated as an ordinary plant.

Yes, She has the body of a plant, but she is the personification of Pure Devotion. I will not be able to explain the real position of Tulasi Devi in connection with the philosophy of Krishna Consciousness due to my lack of qualification, but I believe in her merciful association.

Tulasi Devi is not only an opportunity to serve a pure devotee. Without doubt, to serve Tulasi Devi is a duty of every devotee of Lord Krishna, who always resides where Tulasi Devi is, in that way, she always accompanies Him. This is another reason for taking care of Tulasi Devi with respect, consideration and changing the mentality such as: "I am going to pick fresher leaves to make Krishna happy." But we don't consider that Krishna is actually happy when we care for and serve His devotees, in this case a pure devotee as Tulasi Devi is.

The leaves of Tulasi Devi are her life, and she needs them for her growth and well-being. It is explained in the instruction book of 'Taking Care of Tulasi' that we should offer a manjari with two leaves. It is also explained that one should pick leaves from a full-grown and healthy plant that has lots of leaves. Just take a few of them (3-4) to offer to Krishna.

Sometimes Tulasi has a few or no manjaris, but it's not a question of filling up the bag with leaves without considering whether the plant is big

enough for picking leaves or manjaris. Thinking that I want to offer manjaris and leaves to Lord Nrisimhadeva (for my own benefit), but I am risking taking away Tulasi's life due to ignorance.

Each house already pays 20 Rs a month for the maintenance of the park, how is it that many of the Tulasi plants are being surpassed by grass? Are we giving more priority to the flowers and vegetables than to the care of Tulasi Devi?

If there are only a few manjaris to offer - so be it. Krishna knows very well the reason why we are not offering Him 30 manjaris, but only 3. He does not need the quantity, but all He sees is the quality of devotion and care for Him and especially His devotee.

I am sure if the Mayapur authorities educate the devotees a little bit on how to take care of Tulasi Devi, then she will grow healthy and beautiful, because it's true, the Tulasis are growing everywhere naturally, but are they healthy? Only the ones that are being cared for and protected survive, other ones leave the body when they are small due to lack of care.

Tulasi Devi sometimes needs cow dung, which is one of the essential elements for her health and irrigation. Or at least leave her the leaves that are her support. The essential medicine for her is love and support, considering her on the same level as the Deity, who we worship in the temple with all the paraphernalia.

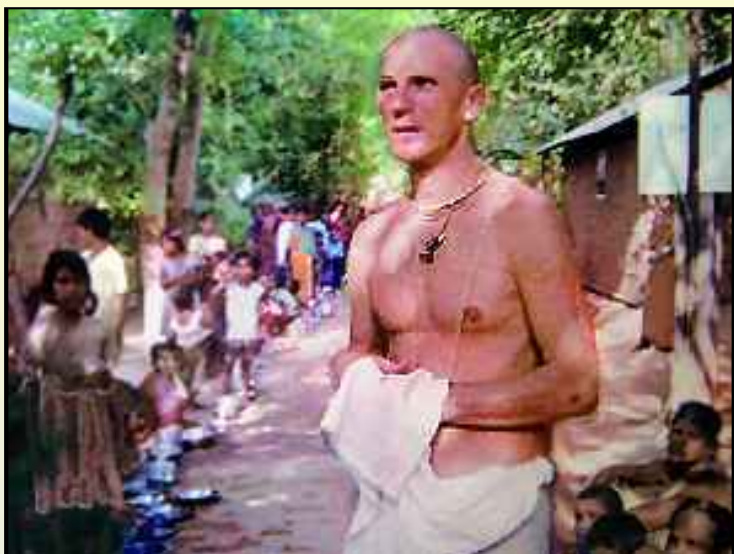
Srimati Tulasi Devi, thank you very much for being so merciful to everybody. Now it's our duty to serve you and protect you. U



Tulasi plants growing everywhere in Mayapur, even on the pathways and doorsteps

PREACHING IN THE VILLAGES

By Sankalpa Devi Dasi



Curiosity motivated me to ask Mahasringa Prabhu and his wife Apavrita if I could accompany them to a neighboring village, Maheshganj, last Saturday. This is one of the villages they visit for their weekly Prasadam distribution program.

For some time I had witnessed a big group of villagers, many children among them, coming to their home and holding ecstatic kirtans, that could be heard in all the grihastha area. I observed the strong bond those villagers have developed with Mahasringa's family. So I decided to go with them and learn about the preaching activities in the villages.

We reached Maheshganj at 3 p.m. that day. The people that saw us approaching greeted us with expecting happy faces and some loud "Haribol". What then I witnessed was amazing.

Living in the Dhama since over six years I had a fixed idea about what the residents around us are like and I had carried some kind of suspicion about them. They are seen by most of western devotees as strangers with unfamiliar lifestyles and habits. Some villagers also carry in their minds memories of unpleasant exchanges with ISKCON devotees on different occasions.

When we arrived Mahasringa Prabhu and bhakta Dave, his voluntary helper, had almost finished preparing the kichari for the distribution. They cooked in a gigantic pot, the size of a huge bath tub. It was supposed to feed about 600-700 people that day.

Mahasringa's wife had told me that without the enthusiastic help of some friends among the villagers this weekly program would not be possible.

A nice network of supporters has developed, simply because the people are so enthusiastic to reciprocate with Mahasringa's friendship and care by keeping this program going. There are some that buy the bhoga and collect the firewood. Some befriended shopkeepers in Maheshganj donate some little amounts of bhoga for the cooking. One man built a hand water pump near the cooking place, so water for cooking is easily available

now. After the cooking was done Mahasringa Prabhu offered the food on the altar in another friend's house. Immediately thereafter many eager helpers came forward with buckets ready to distribute the Prasad to the frantically awaiting crowd of Maheshganj residents. Patiently awaiting their turn, they had their plates filled and also their tiffins to take some Prasad home to their families. There was a friendly mood in the crowd without much pushing and shouting. I also had a turn with distributing the kichari and I saw many familiar faces of people that work inside our ISKCON compound.

Srila Prabhupada considered Prasadam distribution around the Temples as one of the most important preaching programs and one can easily understand the importance.

The people of the surrounding villages are mostly Bangladesh refugees or lifelong residents of the Dhama. This free Prasadam distribution makes them feel connected to ISKCON and their eagerness for a pure life of kirtan and other spiritual practices is easily reawakened. They feel especially deeply connected by receiving personal care from Mahasringa Prabhu and his helpers. He constantly holds bajans in different places in the villages and they often last for many hours and are incomparably enthusiastic. He also cares for the people's personal needs, when they are sick or need any kind of help in their lives. He himself feels very much inspired by all the cooperation and help for this preaching he receives from the villagers.

After the gigantic prasadam pot was emptied, which took only forty-five minutes, the whole clean up was done by another enthusiastic group of volunteers. One older dadu, around 75 years, cleaned the big pot by sitting inside it and scrubbing it single handedly.

Then Mahasringa took us around the village to visit some of his friends. In each and every house we were welcomed with a lot of hospitality, and Prasadam was offered always to us. I could feel how much trust the people have developed towards the devotees.

Mahasringa and his wife told me that they get so many invitations from other nearby villages, also Muslim communities. It's hard for them alone to honor them all, because it takes a lot of energy from them to cook such big amounts.

If you like to participate in any way, please feel free to discuss with Mahasringa Prabhu in the housing area.. U

Letter to the community

As a new resident of Mayapur, I'd first of all like to offer my respectful obeisances to all the Mayapur-vasis and beg for their mercy and prayers that I may be so fortunate to live the rest of my life in this most sacred place.

I arrived here for the Gaura Purnima festival 2003. Although I have been initiated since 1975, I have been here only twice previously, in 1977 and 1985. This time I came more in a mood of taking shelter of the Dhama and thus experienced much transcendental happiness. I was married here on March 6th to 7-year resident Sati Devi Dasi and am grateful to her for encouraging me to relocate to Sri Mayapur. After spending the summer in Switzerland, I was very happy to return to the transcendental atmosphere of Mayapur. I greatly perceive the mercy of Caitanya Mahaprabhu here and feel very much at home. Many devotees here have been very kind and made me feel welcome.



I am serving as the Communications Director for Sri Mayapur Development Project. I work under the direction of Pancaratna Prabhu, and my duties include managing the database of our list of donors and prospects, publishing Mayapur Journal, and assisting the fund-raising campaigns in various other ways. I would like to welcome and encourage devotees to write articles for the Journal.

I have 18 years experience indexing books and have done many indexes for BBT publications. I also have fairly good editorial skills. I would like to use these skills to assist in the publication of the wealth of devotional books that are being and will be produced by the disciples and followers of Srila Prabhupada.

I look forward to assisting the development of Mayapur. It is an exciting time to be here with the magnificent Panca Tattva Deities to be installed this Gaura Purnima and the construction of the big temple scheduled to begin in 2004. - *Grahila dasa*

Grahila Prabhu can be contacted on PAMHO, by phone (245491, or in Chakra office #202.

GOSALA REPORT

**AUGUST 2003
TO SEPTEMBER 2003**

- Milk cows - 68
- Retired - 10
- Bulls (working) - 3
- Bullocks (training) - 14
- Bullocks (working) - 2
- Heifers - 18
- Calves male - 27
- female - 22
- Total - 164

“The vaishyas, the members of the mercantile communities, are especially advised to protect the cows. Cow protection means increasing the milk productions, namely curd and butter.” [SB 1.9.26 Purport]

by Nanda Krishna Das :

As per decision a of ISKCON Cow Protection Ministry, ISKCON Sri Mayapur Goshala is now adopting the policy to stop breeding cows until sufficient funds are available in the future. From the month of August 2003 milk production has been reduced to 100 liters per day, because of cows partially or completely dry.

We just constructed a delivery home for the cows. But with implementation of the new rule - stop cow breeding - it is obvious, if there is no breeding, there is no necessity of a delivery home.

Some money is coming in from selling cow urine, pachanamrita and tooth powder made from cow dung ash, which is gradually increasing day by day.

From Goura Hari Prabhu:

We put before the MAC a petition not to stop cow breeding completely, because it is not healthy for the herd and Radha-Madhava won't get any milk. So, MAC's decision was to carry on breeding the twenty best milking cows, so Sri Sri Radha-Madhava would have milk. (No one else will - thanks to the 'wise' decision of the Cow Protection Ministry)

Economic development in Mayapur community

Interview with Bhagavatamrita Prabhu

MK: Prabhu, do you have some ideas to share with the readers of 'Mayapur Katha'?

Bhagavatamrita Prabhu: Yes. We are talking about being practical. And we are talking about economic development here. Srila Prabhupada said that brahminical culture is cow and land culture. So, based on that we have to see how to develop life here in the Holy Dhama, otherwise our endeavours will be fruitless. Land is the greatest bank in the world. Bank gives ten percent a year. Land gives thousand percent - you put one seed and get thousand fruits with thousand seeds, which you can put in the land again. So, the land is the greatest bank, you have to do work though. To do that, we need a comprehensive effort from the Mayapur authorities and from the grihastha community here. We have to have a synergetic approach. Don't expect that one guy will go there, put his money there and come up with some solution, make something happen. There were people here making bread, ice creams - they left, because there is no business culture here.

And I see that a lot of businesses here that they take a grihastha out and put a brahmachari instead. So brahmacharis are working in the place of grihasthas - so the grihasthas are begging and the brahmacharis are having troubles. This is not very well situated. We have to start from the top and we have to talk about these things.

Do I have some solutions? I think I have and other people have too and I want to hear from them. We have to have a forum for them and discuss all these things, make plans and implement them. Part of it is investment. We have to set up a vision how we are going to finance all these operations, how we are going to control the development of these operations, so people are happy and productive. And when they are happy - they develop brahminical culture, land and the cows, chant Hare Krishna, they have no worries and go back home back to Godhead. They develop a brahminical culture - the land and the cows. This is the nutshell approach. From there we can develop in so many ways.

This is an eco-friendly business vision. Not that you have to go to the West, leaving family unprotected here, but you're a part of this place here. Prabhupada said, "what ever you want you can get from Mayapur" and I believe that. If I have to go out and collect money from outside - it is a failure, I want to get what ever I want from the Holy place, from Mayapur, so I do not have to leave this place

and I want other devotees also to do the same.

MK: Do you have any practical things in mind?

B: There is many practical business, like we have boat program or we are doing Samadhi auditorium program, we are charging to see a movie. We have here a bullock cart, which is a simple program, but it is actually happening. We also have a project for oil extraction by bullock power.

MK: Are you already doing it?

B: No, we are gathering the information to put it all together. We need to get few machines. I have a design, so the ox can generate the power to run these machines.

MK: What machines?

B: Oil pressing machines, so we can make mustard oil, ginger seed oil, sunflower oil, etc - oil production with bullock power. But in the beginning stages it needs the support of the management, of the community.

MK: Do you mean that they should cooperate with your ideas?

B: Unfortunately, people are expecting these things just to happen. Nothing is just happening in the material world. You have to put endeavour, you have to work towards a goal, and you have to make it happen by your action. So, if we have that vision and make endeavours for it to happen, it will happen and people will be able to stay here and work the land and get what they want to survive here.

MK: What stage is your oil project at now?

B: Right now it is in pradhana stage. But it takes very little for it to manifest - just information and then we go for action. But, right now I am trying to get situated here, so I can get my bills paid, I have to go and get some money quick. I don't have much time to concentrate on it.

MK: What do you do to pay your bills?

B: Right now I am praying to Sri Sri Radha-Madhava and Lord Nrisimha Deva and somehow They are answering. I want to actually get some business going and produce, get my bills paid and also have other people have their bills paid from it.

I think that management has a duty to set up that vision and make sure that that vision is being carried out by the grihastha community. Economic development is also one of the primary duties of the kings, the managers, to oversee that it is expressed properly. They have to see that the people are satisfied - otherwise there will be a chaotic arrangement in the kingdom. We should not have brahmacharis run-

ning business and grihasthas are begging for survival here. This is not what Vedic society is all about. Brahmacharis should study and chant and preach and grihasthas should be left to do business.

I know some people want some big plan, some big scheme how to make money, but everything starts with a vision. If you don't have a vision you don't know where you are going and even if you are trying to go you may not go anywhere.

MK: *Once you have a vision, what is the next step?*

B: Vision is everything. Some people think I want to be a lawyer/doctor/teacher/.../devotee...' and because of that vision they start to focus their activities on achieving a particular goal. Action without vision is just a waste of time, because you actually don't accomplish anything.

MK: *How comes your thousands of visions don't manifest on the ground?*

B: The thing is that part of the vision has to come from the authorities, from the management here.

MK: *What do you mean?*

B: First to talk together and make a plan. Second is to implement that plan. That's how everything starts. I can try to do something by myself, but it will be just a waste of time, unless I will go outside of the community and do some small scale something. People tried that. It did not work very well as far as I know. They came, tried to put work into it, but just had so much hard time from the management.

MK: *What do you think the management has to do exactly?*

B: The management has to have a desire and the political will to bring about the economic development of the community. Unfortunately people think that somebody will come and they will do something. THEY will not do until WE take it seriously that we have to deal with this matter, we got to make it happen. Of course, so much the management here could do to help if there is a political will to listen to what is required and work in that direction slowly but surely towards accomplishing that plan. That's where it starts.

MK: *What comes after the vision?*

B: After the vision comes a plan. Prabhupada gave a formula. Now we need a place, man-power, we need management, we need money. Most of these things the grihastha community will come with, some of it have to come from the management. For example, H.H. Bhakti Purusottam Maharaja was saying that it would be nice to have a bank here, where people can take loans - one, two lakhs of Rupees and start a business here. That was never implemented. Without the overall vision where this idea fits into, who is

pushing it forward? When you have a vision set up then all the ideas will find their place. Then we will go somewhere, then every step is a step forward, because it is fulfilling the overall vision of the whole situation. There has to be someone who is caring like a father for the son, caring for the vision, caring for the development of this project, pushing it forward. In India they have a finance minister, this and that minister - why? Because someone has to accomplish all these things and push it. We also have to have that. Unfortunately we think, "oh, this is going to happen somehow..." Nothing is going to happen. Everything, for every brick here - there was orders from someone at some point 'put it here', 'put this there', etc. Nothing just happened. We need political will. Will and desire to accomplish that.

Start with motivation of grihastha community here. There are a lot of people who want to invest their money here, but they are afraid 'what's going to happen?', 'is it going to be a political thing, is my money going to disappear?' There is plenty of money here, we have to capitalize this money properly with good credibility, manage it properly and make the goods we need to come out from the community here. And it takes endeavour from all of us.

Do not think that the grihasthas are going to do it by themselves. Grihasthas are never independent from the kings. The kings would grant land, grant concessions, grant the license for business - they help too.

MK: *It sounds from what you have said that from bottom to the top people don't trust and from the top to the bottom they don't want to help. Is it right?*

B: I would not say it is a lack of trust, I would say it is lack of political will, the desire to carry something to the very end, what ever it cost.

MK: *So, you are saying that there is no leadership?*

B: Something with the leadership and also from the bottom we are not organized ourselves to come up with some plan to the leadership. You cannot just blame one side, it is both sides. We should be so organized that leadership will be inspired - "hey, let's do something together".

MK: *So, you are saying that at the bottom people have to get together.*

B: They have to get together to be organized and have a team spirit. To help each other means to be a part of systematic approach, not just individual persons doing individual things. We have to act as a team endeavour, hundreds of people acting together for a specific goal.

MK: *Are you calling for a natural leader from the mass?*

B: Born-leaders are 0.1% of all people. People actually

continued on page 24

Words of appreciation from Rajendra Nandana Prabhu

Dear devotees, Hare Krishna!

Chatura's, Aja's and my experience here in Sri Dham Mayapur has been nothing but an ocean of mercy. In the material world there is danger at every step, here in the Holy Dham there is mercy at every step.

Srila Prabhupada asked all the devotees, His disciples, to come to Mayapur at least once a year - we certainly have not been following this instruction. But when we come we really can see the value of that instruction - coming to the Gaura Purnima festival, getting the association of the Holy Dham, getting the association of all the elevated Vaishnavas here, taking advantage of the five most important processes of devotional service, to see how they are magnified and easily relishable here in the association of the devotees and the Holy Dham. We are appreciating all of this.

It would be hard to put into words the extent of the mercy that we have received and so in the same way the gratitude we feel. There is an obligation to our spiritual master, there is an obligation to all the wonderful devotees here, there is an obligation to the Lord for giving, giving, giving... so much to us. So, hopefully, we are trying to imbibe the mood of Dhamavasis of wanting to give Krishna to others, give the process of devotional service. We pray to be able to even if it is in a small degree, try and share the glories of devotional service as we live in separation from the Dham, hopefully for only a short time.

We do sincerely pray - not one of those 'if I have offended you please forgive me...' - but I know that we offended so many devotees with our words, our body - please forgive us for our offences.

The nature of the advanced devotees that we find here is that they don't even notice when you offend them and they are giving so much mercy being absorbed in just

giving and sharing the nectar of devotional service and glories of the Holy Name and glories of elevated associates of Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Panchatattva and Radha-Madhava & Their eternal associates in Vrindavana - just giving, giving... The obligation that we have is like... I was thinking today how we can never repay the spiritual master for what He has given us and I was beginning to appreciate a little bit that I do not know how I could repay the devotees here in Mayapur Dham. But at least there is some desire somehow or other to render some service or at least to express my appreciation.

My glorifications you certainly will not hear when we are thousands of miles away, but we will sing the glories of you Prabhus. To the best of our abilities we will try to encourage our associates, our god-brothers and god-sisters and our family members to come home here, this is our home.

You, Prabhus, live here and you make us feel very much at home, you help us very easily fit in by your kind acts and generosity. So, as a way of trying to give some token of payment for the obligation that we have - thank you, thank you, thank you very much.

And also we will pray that you would kindly think of our well-being, and hope that we will remember the mission of our spiritual master as we are away from the Dham and pray that we will very soon come back to be in your association here in Mayapur.

So, being very low, being a fool, being puffed up, I am not able to express myself very well. But at least within my heart I very much feel sincerely what I am saying and begging of you. So, if I may in the very near future be given an opportunity to render some small service to you I hope I will be able to. Thank you, Prabhus. Hare Krishna!

Dear Padmalochan prabhu, can you please put this short note from me in the next issue of 'Mayapur Katha'. Thank you. Ys, Bharat Maharaja Das

A FEW WORDS OF APPRECIATION:

I would like to express my gratitude to the devotees of the Treasury department for their service. They are always courteous and efficient and are setting a very nice example of how to deal with other devotees and the public.

Hare Krsna, Bharat Maharaj Das

Thanks to the Temple Commander:

"I would like to congratulate the Temple Commander, Kesava Prabhu, for introducing the ox cart to remove the garbage from around Mayapur. It's hundreds of times better than that horrible motorized cart that would roar around the temple complex like a gigantic insect. Having oxen do the job is so much more sattvik and in line with the "simple living, high thinking" principle. Please keep up the good work!

Your servant, Ananda Tirtha das



Radharani

By Balaram das (13)

Her beauty that compares
The jewels She wears

Her cooking is the best,
So She passed Krishna's test

She is compassionate
Even to the passionate

She is so attractive
That She makes Krishna
active

She is very shy
And never tells
a lie

Poems about Srimati Radharani by the school children

Radharani is the greatest

By Nandalal das (13)

Radharani so gentle and sweet
She makes Krishna only Her best
sweets

The most beautiful in the world
The most shy in the Universe
No one can separate Her from Krishna
Only because of Her pure love
But I can never understand
Her perfect nature
Because I am
The most fallen
creature

By
Cintamani Dasi (13)

Radharani, You are so fine,
Radharani, Your lotus eyes shine,
Radharani, such nice lotus feet,
Radharani, You are so sweet

Radharani, Your complexion is gold,
Radharani, You are beautiful to behold,
Radharani, Your clothes match Krishna's dhoti,
Radharani, You are Krishna's favorite gopi

Radharani, You are quite shy,
Radharani, You make delicious potato pie,
Radharani, You are very helpful,
Radharani, Your dance is so graceful

So, Radharani, as we conclude,
You can even control Krishna
When You are in Your
charming mood

Interview with Nimai:

MK: Can you briefly describe your Gurukula history?

Nimai: Well, I came here in 1999 for the first time and I really liked Mayapur. My father and I decided that for lack of any good educational system in Australia (that's where I am from), we should look into other possibilities, and the Gurukula in all its glory was at the top of our list. So I joined and quickly adapted to the lifestyle, making lots of friends. Since then I progressed through the Gurukula academic system until I finished my year ten exams.

MK: How do you feel now that you have graduated from Gurukula?

N: I feel thankful to all my teachers and the gurukula for providing for me an academic system in Krsna Consciousness, whereby I could obtain a Gcse certificate and Krsna conscious training at an essential time in my life. I feel that such systems, which provide a balanced educational upbringing should be highly valued in our Movement. It's not like passing year 10 is a major check-point in your life, I mean I'm still me. I would also like to incessantly thank my friends and teachers like Gauravani and Manasi Ganga Mataji for giving me support, encouragement, hope and love, the basis of my will to go on and achieve my potential.

MK: What are your plans for the future?

N: Well right now I have to go back to Australia. I'm hoping to start year 11 and 12 very soon. If we chance upon a nice school in Australia then I might continue my education there. I would like to take advanced maths, physics and psychology for A levels. If Gurukula can provide the necessary teachers then there is quite a possibility that I will return and finish my education here. I guess my future is in Krishna's hands.

MK: Thank you. Hare Krishna.

Sri Navadvipa Astakam

Srila Rupa Goswami

1

I remember Sri Navadvipa-dhama, the eternal and blissful land which is splendidly situated on the charming banks of the holy Bhagirathi River in Sri Gauda-dasha

2

I remember Sri Navadvipa-dhama, which some say is Vaikuntha and others say is Goloka, but those who have realised the truth know it as Vrindavana.

3

I remember Sri Navadvipa-dhama, the land which illuminates all directions. Attractive with its gentle, cooling breezes and various beautiful trees, it provides Sri Gaurasundara with a wonderful facility to perform His midday sankirtana pastimes

4

I remember Sri Navadvipa-dhama, where with her many waves the Bhagirathi joyfully flows, and where steps made of gold decorate the river banks.

5

I remember Sri Navadvipa-dhama, where countless golden palaces are splendidly situated and where Laksmidevi resides in each and every home.

6

I remember Sri Navadvipa-dhama, where the residents are adorned with all good qualities such as knowledge, compassion, forgiveness, and sacrifice, and are praised even by the sages, demigods, and perfected souls.

7

I remember Sri Navadvipa-dhama, where Sri Gaurasundara performed pastimes such as taking birth and where the blissful home of Sri Jagannatha Mishra is situated.

8

I remember Sri Navadvipa-dhama, where Sri Gaurahari and His devotees wandered here and there performing sankirtana, which was so full of prema that it immersed everyone in an ocean of ujvala bhava.

Those who joyfully recite these eight verses of poetry, which bring remembrance of Navadvipa dhama, will obtain love for the lotus feet of Sri Saci-nandana Gaurahari.

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become leaders by perseverance, consistency and hard work. Leaders will make leaders by training. Natural leaders are very small quantity and if we are dependent on waiting for them we cannot do anything. You make leaders by proper training. We can do that if we have everybody lined up in the same consciousness, consciousness is the most important thing. When the soul enters the body it starts to grow.

We don't have a clear vision yet. But we can read about, talk about and start moving in that direction. And all it takes is political will to do what ever it takes to get to the end.

MK: You are using the words 'political will' so much. The word 'political' is not the most favourite word among devotees...

B: Nobody likes, but that's how it works. It hurts and when it hurts it puts pressure on the heart and when pressure is on the heart we do something about it. Otherwise we will sit around for the next ten years wondering where the next pizza will come from.

'Political will' means that we can put aside the self-interest and do what is best for the whole community. Because now sometimes self-interest comes before the good of the community, so we have to be able to put that aside. U