

padayatra

WORLDWIDE

Newsletter 2020
PLEASE POST IN YOUR TEMPLE

PADAYATRAS DONE IN 2019

INDIA

All-India (since 1986)
All-Telangana All- Maharashtra
All-Uttar Pradesh
All-Andhra Pradesh All-Gujarat

Maharashtra :

- Pune to Pandharpur • Jalgaon
- Amravati • Dhamangaon • Latur
- Sangli • Nandurbar • Akola
- Alibag • Kasegaon to Pandharpur

Other states

- Jamshedpur (Jarkhand)
- Ahmedabad (Gujarat)
- Baroda to Dakor (Gujarat)
- Bhubaneswar (Orissa)
- Noida to Vrindavana (U.P.)

Note: Some of these temples did several One Day Padayatras, special or longer walks

EUROPE

Hungary
Slovenia
UK
Czech Republic

NORTH AMERICA

Canada

SOUTH AMERICA

Guyana
Trinidad

REST OF THE WORLD

La Réunion
Mauritius
South Africa





This newsletter is dedicated to ISKCON Founder-Acarya, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Why did Srila Prabhupada personally instruct Lokanath Swami to organise a bullock cart sankirtana travelling party in the fall of 1976?

a The permits for the Mercedes buses of the Nitai-Gaura sankirtana party with which Lokanath Swami was travelling were about to expire.

b Just a few months before Srila Prabhupada had written to a young Indian man named Panjabi Premananda, "I can immediately take up this programme and tour village to village."

c Srila Prabhupada was aware of Lokanath Swami's village upbringing and his bullock cart experience.

Find the correct answers on page 13

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Front cover main photo: The first All-Vaisnavis Padayatra organised by Jayabhadra Dasi in Amravati, Maharashtra (India)



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EDITORIAL

By Lokanath Swami

Dear readers,

Are we now witnessing another padayatra explosion, as it happened in the nineties, the years preceding Srila Prabhupada's Centennial celebrations? Padayatra is indeed expanding, particularly in India. Besides its two ongoing walks, the All-India Padayatra and the Andhra Pradesh/Telangana Padayatra and the regular smaller padayatras, two new teams have recently taken to the road with ox carts, in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. Their goal? To keep walking, chanting and dancing to every town, village around these states in order to fulfil Lord Caitanya's prophecy and desire that the holy names reach every town and village of this planet.



UK 1991 Departure of Padayatra Europe from Newcastle in a freezing cold

Another form of fun-filled and easy padayatra is also spreading due to the enthusiasm and determination of Muralimohan Dasa from Ahmedabad, Gujarat: the One Day Padayatra, especially geared to grhasthas, women, children and busy devotees. He started this program in 2016 at the time of the «ISKCON50» celebrations and since then he has conducted over 40 One Day Padayatras, mainly in Gujarat. Some of the areas are Limbdi, Surendranagar, Himmatnagar, Kathwada to name a few. He has also inspired the devotees of ISKCON Bangalore and Jamshedpur to conduct a similar program. ISKCON Bangalore has done this once every month for the past one and a half years. We're now waiting to see this One



US 1989 Inauguration of Padayatra America in San Francisco

Day formula adopted in the rest of the world. As Srila Prabhupada said so many times, "What is the difficulty?" Other innovations : Jayabhadra Dasi from Amravati in Maharashtra organised a children and a Vaisnavi padayatra. They are easy to organise, cost practically nothing and fulfil childrens' need for Krsna-centred fun activities and adventure and Vaisnavis' need to get together in a women-only setting.

Padayatra is the means adopted by many of our great acaryas to spread spiritual teachings as is also done on Vraja-mandala Parikrama. This is also a great opportunity to present and glorify our own founder-acarya, Srila Prabhupada. Once again, besides book distribution the All-India Padayatra is taking the lead by giving hundreds of CDs of Srila Prabhupada singing. We are also encouraging them to also distribute profusely the DVDs of Yadubara Dasa's excellent movie: Hare Krishna ! The Mantra, the Movement and the Swami who started it all. This documentary on Srila Prabhupada's life and the humble beginnings of his new spiritual movement won first prize at the 2017 Illuminate Festival in Arizona, USA. On July 11, freelance writer, Bridgette Jackson-Buckley wrote, "At a time when chaos on the world «stage» appears to be contagious, Hare Krishna! eloquently reiterates one of Swami Prabhupada's most pertinent messages that was brought to the West more than 50 years ago and yet remains vitally relevant today: "Forget politics. What the world needs is a revolution of consciousness... By raising our level of consciousness and expanding our awareness—in the midst of personal trials and global challenges—we can effectively alleviate not just our own suffering but also the suffering of those around us". To this day this movie has been shown in many movie theatres in India and worldwide.



USA East Coast 1990
Lokanath Swami & Akhiladhara dasa receiving a 100 dollar bill

We cannot talk about padayatra without mentioning our four-legged padayatris, the noble oxen. In this issue you'll discover new things about these padayatris who are the most beloved of Lord Govinda. Kurma Rupa Prabhu, the late manager of Care for Cows in Vrindavana, introduces us to the subtle, non-verbal communication of our four-legged friends. Dr Sahadeva Dasa, the author of many books on cows reveals how the British broke the backbone of India's wealth and spiritual culture by introducing slaughterhouses, killing thousands of cows and oxen. ISKCON goshalas should train bulls to pull the carts and then do bullock sankirtana around the farm. The sad news is the departure of our beautiful ox Vitthala who was killed by a car on a road in the Maharashtra padayatra.



El Salvador 1992 With Yajna at Finca Vrindavan

Last, but not least, we are happy to announce that this year the Padayatra Worldwide Ministry will print volume Two of the Padayatra trilogy. Volume Two, entitled Padayatra Explosion, describes the more than 100 padayatras completed after July 1986, heading the massive celebration of the Srila Prabhupada's Centennial in 1996, with Padayatra India as the leader and the mother of all padayatras. If you have not already done it, we invite



Malaysia 1992 With Jayapataka Swami and Muslim leader

you to buy and read Volume One, an elegant and well illustrated book covering two very long walks in India: the Vrindavana to Mayapur (and then to Puri) bullock cart padayatra from September 1976 to March 1977, and the 7000 km phenomenal padayatra from Dwarka to Mayapur via South India from September 1984 to March 1986 to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Lord Caitanya's advent.

"Walking on tour of holy places with His Holiness Lokanath Swami on padayatra was one of the best things I never did in my life. And now Maharaja leads us out on padayatra again, in the present book." Jayadvaita Swami



France 92 in the South with Paramgati Swami

AMRAVATI WITNESSES INAUGURAL ISKCON VAISNAVI PADAYATRA

By Jayabhadradevi dasi



Happily walking

On March 10, International Women's Day, the Amravati, Maharashtra, ISKCON Girls' Forum successfully completed the movement's inaugural vaisnavi one-day padayatra. I was always fascinated by padayatra and in February had been contemplating what to do with regard to organising one, a difficult undertaking for a woman. Then I heard about the soldiers who were killed in Pulwama and how everyone did something to pay homage to them. With the International Women's Day fast approaching, Adishakti devi dasi suggested bringing these two events together for a preaching opportunity, and I realised the Lord had shown us the way.

Our team then got down to planning the walk. Padayatra would begin at the ISKCON temple and wind its way for 7km to Kalyan Nagar, ending at the house of devotee Mukundahari dasa. To create awareness, we printed



Bicycle cart ready to go!

banners and posted notices through all media including newspapers. The IGF girls and senior matajis Rasamanjari devi dasi and Champakalata devi dasi distributed the pamphlets and invited all our vaisnavis, including those from nearby centres. Also invited as chief guest was BJP corporator Mrs Seema Savale. Our attention now turned to the question of the padayatra deities that would sit on a small hand-cart which we girls or matajis would pull. It was eventually suggested we enlist the AIP deities, but we had to



Street play with Jayabhadradevi dasi holding the mike



Kirtan forever!

have the permission of AIP leader Acarya dasa who was in Mayapur. My husband, Manoj, reached Acarya by phone early on padayatra day and he agreed that Nitai-Gaurasundar should accompany us. At 5am Manoj and I drove to Kaundanyapur and returned with the deities and pujari Prasana Shayam dasa just in time for padayatra's opening ceremony.

At 8:15am as Amravati temple vice-president Srigoinda dasa welcomed the guests, senior pujari Padmanabha dasa performed maha arati. Mrs Savale then put padayatra on the road by cutting a ribbon and breaking a coconut. Our orange-coloured flags, made especially for the walk by Mr Arun Bakor and carried by our IGF

girls, were unfurled and padayatra began with Champakalata leading the kirtan as we walked in two lines following the padayatra banners. Padayatra stopped first at senior devotee Vaidarbhi mataji's house, where arati was performed by her family. Further along we stopped at Himanshu and Kunjan Ved's house where we all danced, including the ladies in Kunjan's family. The family had arranged prasadam for us and following that we had street plays by the IGF girls depicting the importance of the IGF and spiritual life, and by the congregation matajis on the importance of Gita and the holy name. Senior mataji Manlila devi dasi sang bhajans glorifying the holy name in Marathi as the colony residents



Honoring prasadam

came out and had darshan of Their Lordships and sang with us.

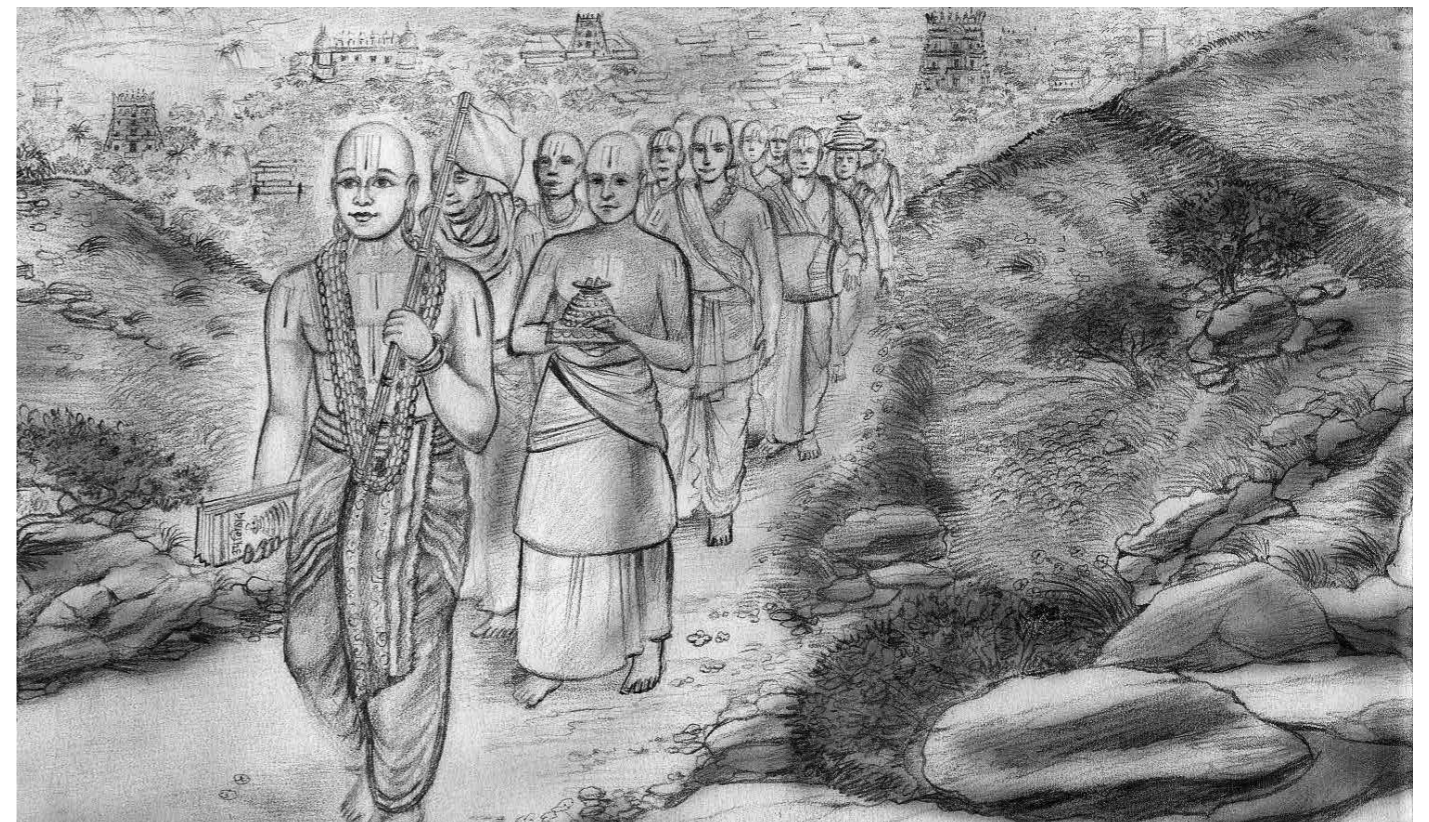
We then moved towards Poonam Deshmuk's house, where arati was also performed, before heading to congregation devotees Arun and Kalpana Bade's house where we did sankirtan and prasadam was provided by Kalpana. Along the way people were coming forward and offering garlands to Their Lordships and in return we gave them prasadam, the IGF girls distributed books, and announcements called ladies to join and chant the holy names. As we reached our destination Mukundahari and his wife, Janhavi devi dasi, welcomed us with garlands and washed the feet of a few matajis. They also performed arati of Their Lordships and then delicious prasadam was served to everyone. We had thus completed the first ever vaisnavi padayatra by the mercy of our Gurudev Lokanath Maharaja •



Enthusiastic response from the public

ALL THE GREAT VAISNAVAS ACARYAS WENT ON PADAYATRA

By Gaurangi dasi



Srila Madhvacarya leading padayatras for almost 20 years.

From the beginning of creation people have been walking, individually or in groups, for short distances or long journeys, and for many reasons: as a way of life, to explore the world, migrate, look for food or trade, to search for God and meet Him at holy places. More recently they've done it for recreation, health, ecological, social or political concerns. The tradition of padayatra is universal; it existed in ancient civilizations and is still present today in many of the world's religions. We can understand the importance holy padayatra played in Vedic civilization when we remember that constructing roads, planting trees along them, and digging wells were all considered pious activities – because they were essential to the comfort of pilgrims. It's the duty of vanaprasthis in the varnasrama system to live in a more

simple way at the end of their lives and particularly to travel to holy places to purify themselves and hear the Lord's glories from the sadhus in residence. India is a grand theater for continual pilgrimage, and a wealth of roads links the tirthas to many, many places.

It is said that Indians walk to the place where God descended just as if called to meet an important person. They go in groups and are joined by other groups of walkers along the way, forming a single wave in a moving river of humanity. Many centuries-old padayatras still exist in India, among them the Dindi-yatra in Maharashtra, the Vraja-mandala parikrama, the Navadvipa-mandala parikrama, and the annual 300-km walk from Ayodhya, Lord Rama's city, to Citrakut, the place where

He lived while in exile. Most of the previous acaryas of the four Vaisnava sampradayas went on padayatra, often at great personal risk, to visit holy tirthas, chant the Lord's glories, spread their teachings and defeat other schools of philosophy. God Himself, in His incarnations as Lord Rama, Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and Lord Balarama, spent many years on the road.

Sankaracarya traveled the length and breadth of India to defeat Buddhism

After attaining enlightenment at thirty-five, Buddha is said to have spent the last forty-five years of His life traveling and teaching as an ascetic in the Gangetic Plain. At the beginning of the ninth century, Adi



Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura started the Navadvipa Mandala Parikrama in 1921

Sankaracarya walked the length and breadth of India to defeat Buddhism, which by then was the predominant spiritual practice, and to preach Mayavada philosophy – a form of impersonalism based on the Vedas – to help India return to its Vedic roots. Throughout his travels he engaged in a series of debates with learned Buddhists and scholars of the Purva-mimamsa school while also writing commentaries on the Upanisads, Visnu Sahasranam, Brahma-sutra, and Bhagavad-gita.

Sri Ramanujacarya walked more than 4,000 kms to defeat impersonalism

In the eleventh century Sri Ramanujacarya, the philosopher and acarya of the Sri sampradaya, walked throughout India to spread the glories of Narayana and defeat Sankaracarya's impersonal philosophy. His first journey took him from Sri Rangam to the temple of Lord Venkatesvara, a distance of about 385 kms, his second from Kanchipuram in the north of Tamil Nadu to the capital

of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram (now Trivandrum), a distance of about 700 kms. His third walk from his home town of Udipi in South India to Kashmir via Vrindavana and Badarikasrama was the longest—about 3000 km- and most productive of all. Accompanied by seventy-four of his chief disciples, Ramanujacarya was constantly challenged by logicians, paṇḍitas, Buddhists, Jains, and all varieties of impersonalists, yet was always able to point out the defects in their doctrines and establish the supremacy of Vaisnava philosophy. At that time philosophical debates were public and could last for days, and converting a school's leader meant the automatic conversion of all his followers. Sometimes

Ramanuja converted thousands of people a day.

Srila Madhvacarya preached on padayatra for almost twenty years

The padayatras of Srila Madhvacarya, the powerful thirteenth-century Vaisnava acarya, are among the

most documented and eventful. His mission was to revive the theistic teachings of the Brahma sampradaya at a time when its acaryas were not strong enough to fight the Buddhist and Mayavada philosophies. Srila Madhvacarya went on padayatra with his followers for almost twenty years, debating with educated brahmanas and the heads of various philosophical schools. On his second tour to the Himalayas, from 1260 to 1271, he walked to Badarikasrama accompanied by fifty sannyasis, a group of brahmacaris, and some devoted grhasṭha followers. At that time South India was ruled by pious kings following the Vedic culture whereas the north was controlled by Muslims hostile to Hindus. This made traveling north dangerous for Vaisnava pilgrims. There were also dacoits and wild beasts to contend with, and Madhvacarya and his disciples were attacked on more than one occasion, but due to the acarya's extraordinary physical strength, he always defeated the bandits and on one occasion killed a tiger with his bare hands.

Srinivasa Acarya initiated bullock cart traveling sankirtana

In the middle of the sixteenth century, shortly after Lord Caitanya's disappearance, Srinivasa Acarya became one of the three heroes of the first transcendental "book distribution" party. He had studied under Srila Jiva Goswami in Vrindavana along with Narottama dasa Thakura and Syamananda Pandita. All three were extremely devoted, and Jiva Goswami entrusted them with carrying the original manuscripts written by the six goswamis 1500 km to Bengal so the devotees there could copy and study them. This is at a time when there were no printing presses, and all texts were written by hand on palm leaves. The manuscripts were placed in a wooden chest and secured on a bullock cart. Guards were procured to accompany the three devotees. As the party reached the border of Bengal, however, an astrologer told the local king, Virambhira of Vana Vishupur, that a great treasure was entering his kingdom. He assumed the astrologer meant gems, so he sent dacoits out to steal it.

When they discovered that the manuscripts had been stolen, Srinivasa begged Narottama and Syamananda to continue on foot to Bengal to preach Lord Caitanya's message while he tried to recover the manuscripts. In due course he found his way to the king's court where he managed to impress the king with his purity and scholarship. King Virambhira became his disciple, admitted to having stolen the manuscripts, and returned them. Srinivasa then resumed his journey to Bengal, where he delivered the writings to jubilant devotees.

Modern acaryas continue the walking tradition while innovating

Much has changed since the sixteenth century, the printing press was invented and railroads built, and it's no longer necessary to walk long distances to spread spiritual teachings.

Still, in the late nineteenth century, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura walked throughout Bengal in service to Lord Caitanya's mission, establishing more than five hundred nama-hatta groups in the villages and towns of Gauḍa. With his discovery of Lord Caitanya's birthplace in 1888, he established Navadvipa as the principal place of pilgrimage in Bengal. The later discovery of the Adhoksaja Visnu deity worshiped by Jagannath Misra led to more interest in the area and the unearthing of many more of the Lord's pastime sites. As he neared the end of his life, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura instructed his son Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati to "develop Sri Navadvipa parikrama, for by its performance all the people of the world can become liberated."

In 1921 Srila Bhaktisiddhanta made Navadvipa-mandala parikrama an annual event. His parikrama took nine days, with thousands of chanting pilgrims following in procession behind beautiful Gaura-Nitai Deities mounted on the back of an elephant. Because Srila Bhaktisiddhanta was revolutionary in the broadness of his preaching – admitting all sincere souls into his movement and giving brahminical initiation without discriminating by birth – the smarta-brahmanas opposed him and, when the parikrama reached Navadvipa, the shopkeepers refused to administer to the pilgrims and closed

the temples. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta eventually tamed the opposition, and his parikrama still continues to this day. Padayatra India inaugurated the first ISKCON parikrama in 1990. Year after year it has been growing in size – from about 100 devotees the first year to 10,000 in 2014. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta also saw the value in using modern means to propagate the science of self-realization and in 1933, he took his disciples preaching and chanting around Navadvipa in two automobiles.

Taking his spiritual master's yukta-vairagya mood, Srila Prabhupada would become a "jet-age parivrajakacarya". Accepting utility as the principle he traveled in cars and planes as necessary to serve the Lord. But first, as he established his League of Devotees in Jhansi in 1953, he adhered to the age-old method of nagar-sankirtana, chanting the holy names while walking through the city's neighborhoods. He also went on a five-day padayatra with his first disciple to nearby Chirgaon. In 1976, our empowered founder-acarya, who flew around the world thirteen times, ordered Lokanath Swami to organize a bullock cart sankirtana padayatra throughout India. Since that day Padayatra has taken place in more than 106 countries, with or without ox carts, and it will continue for many centuries•



ISKCON Padayatra Led by Lokanath Swami

GOPAL, THE BULL STAR BUSIER THAN BOLLYWOOD HEROES

By Dr Sahadeva Dasa

(From his book, Noble Cow, Munching grass, looking curious and just hanging around)

The father of hundreds of powerful sons and daughters

Gopal, a 14 year-old bull from Samosra village in the Kutch district in India has dates booked till 2013 (2 years). He has already mated 486 times, and packs in a busy schedule, with interested parties from as far as Haryana having to book a « mating appointment. » And some think that only Bollywood stars have their dates packed for the next two years ! He has a top-notch mating record and is in demand all over Gujarat, Punjab and Haryana. According to the Gaushala (cow shelter) trustees, Gopal is available by appointment-only system. In the last eight months, his schedule has been extremely tight. People coming from far off areas have been camping in the village with their cows.

The reason Gopal is in heavy demand is because he begets « powerful offsprings ». He has fathered many illustrious sons and daughters. His sons are becoming powerful bulls and his daughters are yielding 15 to 17 -liter milk per day, much higher than regular cows. While the average bull tends to mate about 50 times in his lifetime, Gopal has already impregnated 486 cows. And he still has another seven years of his mating cycle to go.

Gopal arrived at the Samosra Gaushala five and a half years ago when a Kutchi gentleman based in Australia gifted Gopal to the Gaushala, impressed by the work they were doing. Gopal was picked up because of his ancestry which can be traced to the Gir cow, belonging to a famous milk cattle breed on India



Gopal

found in the Gir hills of Gujarat and the forests of Kathiawar. Like every busy star, Gopal gets off time too -twice every year, around June and December.

The reason of such scarcity of bulls is simple to understand. In the last 250 years, there was a deliberate attempt to break the backbone of a nation and subjugate it by destroying its economic fabric.



Govinda , the lord and lover of the cows (murti of New Mayapur, France)

India has the world's best draught animals, particularly oxen. They were promoted in pre-Independence India by princely states and temple trusts, which provided funds to develop specialised breeds as well as stud bulls for breed improvement in villages. Of India's over 100 known cattle breeds, more were developed for draught in times when the economy ran on animal power. With the Green Revolution, it was assumed tractors would make draught animals irrelevant. Government support for breed maintenance died out. So much so, most indigenous cattle <80-90> percent is now categorised as <non-descript>. This trail of destruction in fact began with the arrival of the British in the middle of the 18th century in India. India was well known all over the world for her immense wealth and a highly advanced culture. Cows formed the backbone of it and cows were such an inseparable part of its daily life that Indian culture of that period can safely be termed a cow culture.

How the British broke the backbone of India's economic by opening slaughterhouses

When the British colonized India, they studied India thoroughly to keep her under subjugation. Robert Clive, the Governor of British India at the time made an extensive research in Indian economic and agricultural systems. He found that Indian society was firmly footed in its age-old customs and sound economic and agricultural practices, all based on cow protection. We can quote a letter of Lord Mclau here, a British colonial dated February 2, 1835.



Petting session of the padayatra oxen in Mayapur

« I have traveled across the length and breadth of India and I have not seen one person who is a beggar, who is a thief, such wealth I have seen in this country, such high moral values, people of such caliber (of noble character), that I do not think we would ever conquer this country... unless we break the very backbone of this nation which is her spiritual and cultural heritage. »

So during his surveys, Robert Clive found that in 1740, in the Arcot District of Tamil Nadu 54 quintals of rice was harvested from one acre of land using manure and pesticides made from cow urine and cow dung. Cow was the foundation of this great nation and cows greatly outnumbered men. He realized that unless this foundation was shaken up, they could not keep their hold on India for too long. This inspired him to open the first ever slaughterhouse in India in 1760, with a capacity to kill thousands of cows every week. As a part of the master plan to destabilize India, cow slaughter was initiated. Cow slaughter, engineered by them, divided Hindu and Muslim communities which had coexisted peacefully for the last 700 years. Millions died in ensuing riots which lasted for decades. To this day, India and Pakistan are locked in bitter enmity and continuous suffering.



Padayatra ox from Slovenia

Lost paradise

Bereft of cattle wealth, India had to approach England for industrial manure. The industrial manure like urea and phosphate made way to India. Indian villages, in which once flowed streams of milk and butter, became haunted hamlets, wretched and starving. A Paradise was lost. An India where horses and bullocks were made to drink ghee, was now suffering from scarcity of margarine. It was total devastation of a great civilization.

The British established an educational system which decried anything connected with Indian tradition. This was a crafty engineering by Macaulay who said, « We must at present do our best to form a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but British in tastes, in opinion, in morals, and in intellect. » He did this so effectively that even after sixty years of independence Indians still continue to exist in a state of stupor, unable (and even unwilling!) to extricate themselves from one of the greatest hypnoses woven over a whole nation.

By the time the British departed from India, thousands of slaughterhouses were in operation and now it's hard to keep a count of them. The result is this -40,000 suicides of Indian farmers every year and the largest number of malnourished children in the world •

Dr Sahadeva's

Website : cowism.com

Books :

Cow and Humanity,
Made for Each Other

Cows are cool, love them !

To kill cow means to end human civilization

Capitalism Communism and
Cowism : A new economics for the 21st century

OXEN ARE VERY SPECIAL ANIMALS

MANY DISCOVERED BURIED STATUES OF THE VIRGIN MARY IN THE WEST

By Gaurangi dasi



Banner with the ox kneeling above the buried statue of the Virgin Mary



Diorama in the church

A few years ago I moved in a little village near Dijon in the East of France. One day, seeing the church door open, I ventured in to check it out and chant a few rounds in this holy place. The inside of the church was very well maintained and richly ornamented, with a small statue of the Virgin Mary presiding high above the altar on a small throne. What was not my surprise to see in the area containing several relics of great Christian saints a small diorama depicting an ox standing near a statue of the Virgin Mary. Above it was a fresco of villagers gathered around an ox and the Virgin Mary, and on the opposite wall a painted banner of an ox kneeling on the grass above a statue of Mary buried underneath. There was also a colorful stained-glass window of the scene. I've never seen oxen in churches except at Christmas time, near the manger where baby Jesus laid. It looked like Krishna had sent me to the right village, near a devotee who has two oxen, near a church with statues and paintings of a special ox, and on that same hill where that ox made a miraculous discovery.

I went to inquire about the presence of this ox to the man who was repainting some parts of the church. He told me

an amazing story. Around 1435, on top of the nearby small mountain, a farmer was regularly seeing his ox kneeling down, as Christians do in their church, and grazing on the very same spot in the field. The next day the grass had grown again, even greener and thicker than before. Intrigued by this scene, the farmer, who also happened to be a butcher, had the earth dug at this place. People made an amazing discovery: a 20 cm high statue of the Virgin Mary holding child Jesus. It had probably been buried there during some barbarians' invasion. The farmer took the statue to his home, where many miracles started to take place: a twelve year old boy afflicted by an unknown disease and a ghost possessed madman were cured by the touch of the statue on their head. Many people went to visit that house before the statue was taken to a nearby church, but one day it simply disappeared. Much later on two shepherds discovered it on top of that same mountain called "Etang Hill" (The pond's hill). A chapel was then built on that spot, and it became a famous pilgrimage place visited by thousands of people, even kings of France. Later on the small statue of the Virgin Mary was moved to the church of Velars sur Ouche, and an 8 meter

high statue installed at the top of the hill near the place it was discovered. Pilgrimages continue to this day.

It is no accident that after writing this story I came upon a book on black statues of the Virgin Mary on a friend's shelf. It contained at least a dozen accounts of oxen, and sometimes cows, discovering buried or hidden statues of the Virgin Mary. Who can doubt that oxen and cows are very special animals in the eyes of God?•



Original statue discovered by the ox

ONE DAY PADAYATRA: A FEASIBLE AND JOYOUS EVENT FOR EVERYONE

By Muralimohan dasa



Ahmedabad One Day Padayatra honoring the memory of the 40 Indian soldiers killed in a terrorist attack in Kashmir in 2019

Most ISKCON temples go on harinam sankirtan during the week-end, on Saturday or Sunday, so that working devotees and their children can attend. We are inviting all temples to turn one of these harinams into a One Day Padayatra, at best once a month, or to organize such event. It is my own experience in Gujarat, India, that many more families enthusiastically participate in an occasional regular event than a weekly one.

What are the differences between an ordinary harinam and a One Day Padayatra ?

The duration of the walk : Harinam Sankirtan devotees usually go out for no more than two hours, after morning prasadam, in the

afternoon or in the evening, depending on the availability of devotees and the times where they will encounter the maximum number of people. There are of course various options. One Day Padayatra could leave around 8 am, either after breakfast prasadam or with their prasadam packet that they will take on the way while kirtan and book distribution are going on. They can reach their destination by 1 pm, at which time they can take their lunch. They will thus have walked around 5 hours, and 5 to 7 kilometers, which is the strict minimum required for a harinam to be called a padayatra

Obviously it is much better if devotees can organize a full day padayatra and walk around 10 kilometers. After all Padayatra is a walking festival, not just a walk around the block.



Ahmedabad Muralimohan das (left) and Pushkar das addressing the crowd

The activities taking place during this event :

Harinam sankirtana mainly concentrates on chanting the holy names, dancing to the tunes, distributing pamphlets, invitations and books, and some prasadam such as laddus, pop corn or fruits. On the One Day Padayatra devotees



Jalagaon in Maharashtra The fourth One Day Padayatra

can distribute more books, more substantial prasadam in small packets or even full plates (usually khicadi)

◆ The One Day Padayatra is more casual, like a family get-together, a monthly picnic, a day for spiritual outing to share Krishna consciousness with others, especially if it's possible to walk inside or towards a dhama. Also, children are more targeted that day; in Gujarat we conduct 20 minutes small seminars or skits for them , to their great delight.

◆ On the One Day Padayatra we can organise seminars to inspire devotees to distribute the holy names and books. We regularly do this in Gujarat with great results.

◆ On the One Day Padayatra, we can make regular stops to address the crowd and get them to participate in the harinams by chanting loudly or raising their hands.

◆ During the One Day Padayatra we can arrange to show a video of ISKCON's programs (Cow protection, Food for life, etc.) and of Srila Prabhupada, especially Yadubara Dasa's movie, Hare Krishna ! The Mantra, the Movement and the Swami who started it all.

◆ On the One Day Padayatra we can bring small deities of Gaur Nitai on a palanquin.



Ahmedabad college students love it

Our experience in Gujarat

On the All-India Padayatra only brahmacharis, vanaprasthas and sannyasis can walk continuously all year around or for many months in a row, but this is not possible for householder devotees who have jobs

and families to take care of. That's why I thought of organising One Day Padayatras, which my Guru Maharaja, Lokanath Swami, strongly encouraged me to do. He's the one who inspired me to start these and he continues to inspire me to expand this style of padayatra in India and around the world. With the leaders of the Ahmedabad temple I arranged to engage the grihasthas in a smaller padayatra -a walk longer than our usual harinams- at least one day per month. This One Day Padayatra is not designed for austere life but as a fun-filled event where anybody can participate, men, women, teen-agers, children and even babies in their crib. We started this program in 2016 at the time of the «ISKCON50» celebrations. This One Day Padayatra was launched especially for householder devotees. Since that year we have continuously celebrated this walking festival in Ahmedabad and surrounding rural areas, like Limbdi, Surendranagar, Himmatnagar, Kathwada, and so on. We conducted our 40th One Day



Ahmedabad kirtan team with Murlimohan das in the center

and they have been conducting one every month since one and a half years. Devotees in of Jamshedpu in Jharkhand District have also organised this event since more than one year.

My only concern is to engage grihasthas in Krishna conscious activities, get them to walk and distribute the holy names, books and prasadam in rural areas and cities. I know that by doing these on padayatra one's life is successful. After all, Lord Rama walked for 14 years, the Pandavas walked for 14 years and Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu walked for 6 years. Srila Prabhupada loved walking daily and he organised a short padayatra near Jhansi. He instructed Lokanath Maharaja to distribute the holy name with padayatra. I desire that my only mission in life, after being empowered by my Guru Maharaja, will be to accomplish Lord Caitanya's vision and mission : to spread the Lord's names and knowledge of Him to every town and village, not only in India, but in many other countries•



Ahmedabad

Answer to the question under Srila Prabhupada photo on the contents page:
All answers are correct.

FROM TELANGANA TO GUJARAT

By Visnuswami dasa



Many souls attracted to Sri Sri Gaura Nitai thanks to Visnuswami Dasa

In January 2019 the Telangana Padayatra travelled in the Nizamabad district, with daily evening nagar sankirtan, prasadam and book distribution. Ashokatma dasa helped a lot by gathering people to participate in sankirtan and serving the padayatra devotees. The party later travelled to the Vikarabad district and for Janmastami it came to Kukatapally, Hyderabad. After that it went to the Kamyavanam farm belonging to Sriram dasa, a disciple of Bhakti Raghava Swami. Maharaja also participated in the padayatra; he did go puja and blessed the padayatris so they would shower the mercy of Gaura Nitai on the state of Telangana.

Due to the interest of the devotees of ISKCON Baruch in the state of Gujarat our padayatra was able to go there and they have been traveling throughout that state since last November.

In 2019 Padayatra Telangana traveled 600km and distributed 1000 Big books, 2000 medium and 6000 small books •



Telangana Padayatra

ISKCON NOIDA: FOURTH PADAYATRA TO VRINDAVAN

By Radhakunda dasa

This year padayatra included arrangements for the ladies, whereas for the past three years it had been for men only. About thirty devotees participated in that walk. The inauguration ceremony took place on September 29, after the Sunday love feast in ISKCON Noida. About 200 devotees gathered for the arati and coconut breaking. The procession was followed by ecstatic kirtan and dance. There was a welcoming swagat party at sector 50 by Jagannath Swami prabhu's bhakti vriksha group. The next day, after walking about 3km, we reached Ballav Prashad Agarwalji's biscuit factory. Mr. Agarwal donated the Noida property on which the Radha-Govinda temple is located. His family welcomed us warmly with garlanding and arati of Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai. Vamsidhar dasa, the Noida temple president, gave a small token of appreciation for all the seva that the Agarwals have done. After breakfast at the factory we our walk to the Greater Noida centre where we were welcomed by Rasaraja Gaura dasa and his team. After taking rest we attended the evening class, followed by prasadam and harinam in Greater Noida.

We visited many villages between Greater Noida and Vrindavan, finally reaching Panigaon on October 12. Many congregation devotees from Noida joined us there and brought flowers for decorations. Radha Raman Maharaja also came and gave a wonderful katha. From Panigaon we departed for Vrindavan on October 13, the first day of Kartika, where we were welcomed at the Jagannath temple by the sannyasis and the head of the temple. Another eighty Noida devotees joined us at Atalla Chungi. We were welcomed at the house of the family of Radhakunda dasa, Indranilamani prabhu and Jhanavi mataji, and offered garlands and lemon water. At 9am we were royally welcomed at the Krishna-Balaram temple in Vrindavan with a warm kirtan and garlands. We then took our Gaura-Nitai to Prabhupada samadhi and took darshan of Gaura-Nitai, Krishna-Balaram and Radha-Shyamsundar.

At 5am on October 14 we brought our oxcart in front of the temple and did the Vrindavan parikrama with about 2000 devotees from around the world. The Noida to Vrindavan padayatra distributed a total of 3381 small books and 97 big books.

Note: the entire article can be seen on the padayatra website: padayatra.com
You'll be able to view many beautiful photos there, but their resolution is too small to be printed •

THE BRUCE TRAIL IN CANADA

By Bhaktimarga Swami



In the arms of Brother Tree

The image was so vivid - autumn leaves spiraling down from the heights of hardwoods. Our eyes were widened to the stark reds, oranges, and yellows. It was captivating. A magical descent. Prettier than snow. Beauty reigned for sure. We saw it also in the lichen, fungi, and mushrooms. David sees it in the wild ginger. He forged some for the dhal to be cooked up for later on. For snacks along the trail, Oksana brought her baked muffins. Jaya, ambling in pace, was quiet, focused on japa meditation. Gyan is more talkative, and while in queue behind me, repeated the mantra, <be careful>. At one point along the rocky trail I had to say, <please don't mother me>. Gyan means well. His consistent smile redeems it for me.

And, there was Christopher, his first day with us. He resembles Jesus somewhat, with his full beard. During our trek today, he lost balance twice, slipped and fell. So did I, fall, but not like the leaves. It was my first fall since starting the Bruce Trail in the summer of 2018. I'm able to make the time when available, on which occasion I bring friends. One day, a group of southeast Asian students came along, numbering 35. They LOVED it - <it's all green!> said one (it was summertime). New to them, also, was the frivolous water fun. After 10 kms walking in grand Lake Ontario, <isn't that an ocean?> asked another.

Challenges: The Bruce Trail is a 900 km path along the Niagara Escarpment, where the terrain is mostly angular.



The beauty of nature

At one point the trail, a creek the rocks and leaves all merged. It is tough to gain a foothold. But, for the most part, the day is one of rhapsody. There are plenty of waterfalls to calm any nerves. I take it back - no challenges. I've done 1/5th of the trail.

The greatest reward of a day like today on a Sunday October morning, 2019, is the culmination of our walk - a visit to a god-brother, Giri Jadhava, my former sankirtan leader of my early monkhood days. He prepared a great meal for our walking group. The apple cider was a big hit, even after a mere 9 km hike.

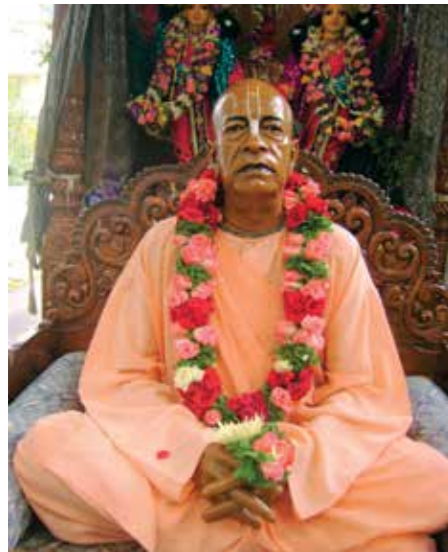
And let it be noted that a walk like this builds up gratitude •



The Bruce Trail forest

INCREASING PRABHUPADA CONSCIOUSNESS ON THE ROAD

By Gaurangi dasi



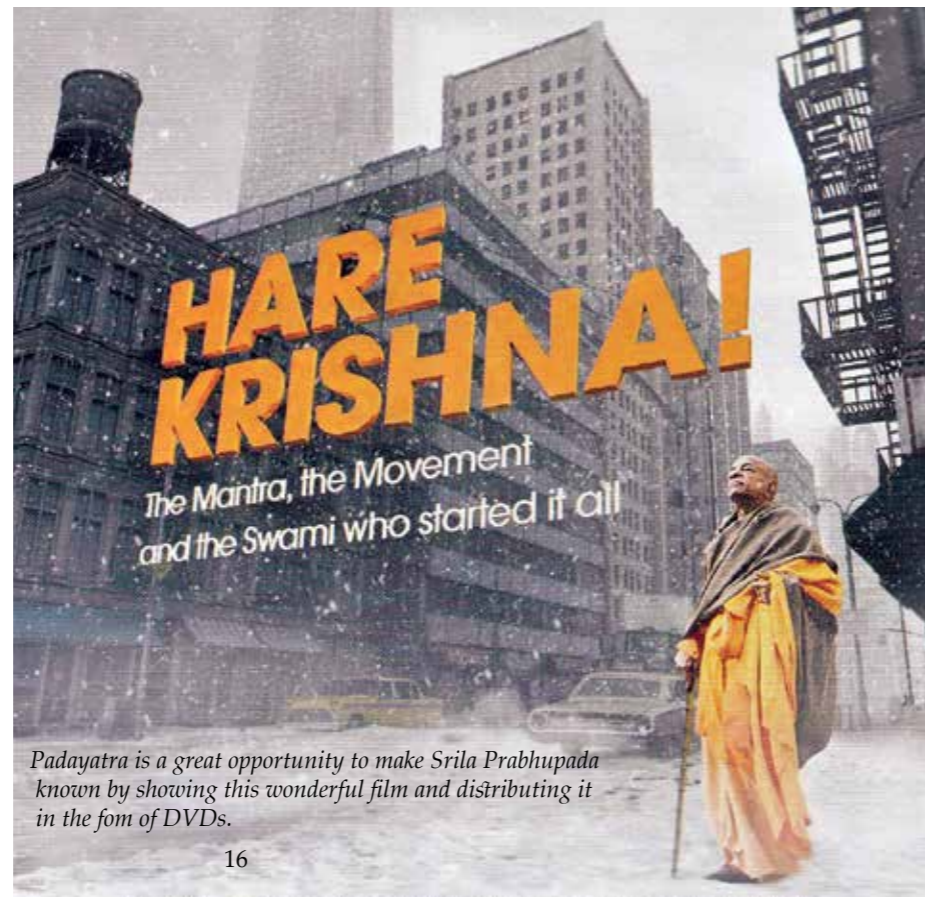
Padayatra India

Padayatra is a great opportunity to increase Prabhupada consciousness among the public and the devotees. During Prabhupada's Centennial years Bhakti Caitanya Swami wrote a wonderful article about giving Srila Prabhupada to future generations, in which he says, "Krishna consciousness could develop a lot more if we would grasp the importance of Srila Prabhupada as the leader of the Hare Krishna Movement and someone whom the people in general would automatically be attracted to, simply because he is the leader, what to speak of his real spiritual qualifications." Today, with the abundance of internet programs, smaller and cheaper technical media such as CDs, pindrives and so on, it is much easier to give or sell someone a means to get to appreciate and know Srila Prabhupada and his universal message of peace and love.

WHAT WAS DONE ON PADAYATRA DURING THE CENTENNIAL YEARS

- Srila Prabhupada's Centennial was the main theme of the walk.

- All Padayatras had a murti of Srila Prabhupada on the Deity cart, and some a large photo
- All Padayatra banners mentioned his Centennial Celebration. Large photos of Srila Prabhupada were taken on harinam when there was no murti.
- Large size oil paintings of Prabhupada were fixed on each side of the cart on Padayatra India.
- There was a wide distribution of Prabhupada Lilamrita to the public, hosts and VIPs.
- Different booklets, fliers and pamphlets about Srila Prabhupada's life and accomplishments were distributed profusely
- Prabhupada photos, posters and other paraphernalia (bags, pens, T-shirts) were sold or given away.
- The Movie "Your ever well-wisher" was shown to the public in almost every village Padayatra India visited from 1984 to 1996.
- Prabhupada was the theme of the evening program: movie, lecture, worship, etc.
- Many reunions were organised to reunite Srila Prabhupada's family and were continued afterwards.
- Many exhibits, dioramas and multi media shows were presented to the public
- A newspaper article series about Srila Prabhupada was done in the



Padayatra is a great opportunity to make Srila Prabhupada known by showing this wonderful film and distributing it in the form of DVDs.



Mauritius 1996 Padayatra

- US and several radio interviews focusing on Srila Prabhupada were conducted.
- Celebrate the important dates in Srila Prabhupada's mission.
- Organise a Prabhupada night.
- Sell Prabhupada's murtis, photos and posters.
- Play Srila Prabhupada's bhajan or kirtan tapes, on the walk, during prasadam, etc
- Establish Bhaktivedanta libraries in devotees' homes.
- Encourage devotees to bring fruits, flowers and garlands to Srila Prabhupada murti.
- Encourage home worship of Srila Prabhupada.
- Famous personalities who have met Srila Prabhupada were invited to speak; the movie, "Your ever well-wisher" and the Lilamrita were offered to VIPs; photos of Srila Prabhupada were put in Indian Embassies.
- Padayatra India sponsored the construction of a 60 foot high Prabhupada memorial gate in Dvaraka, and memorials of Srila Prabhupada were established in temples and in public places.
- Padayatris visited Prabhupada's pastime places in many cities worldwide: New York, San Francisco, Boston, Paris, Amsterdam, etc.

ADDITIONAL THINGS THAT CAN BE DONE WHILE TRAVELLING

1) Among devotees and the congregation:

- Hold weekly classes about Srila Prabhupada.
- Read the Lilamrita and various books about his life.
- Read instructions on a specific topic related to Padayatra from the Siksamrita.
- Invite Prabhupada's disciples to share memories.

2) For the public:

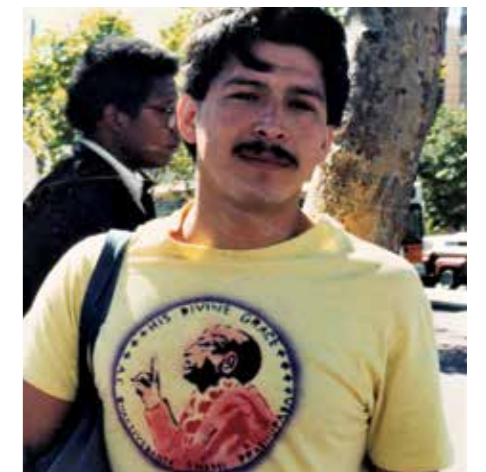
- Sell audio and visual materials about Srila Prabhupada: Audio tapes, MP3s, DVDs and pin drives of the Abhay Caran series of Bhakti Caru Swami, Following Srila Prabhupada videos series of Yadubara dasa and his recent film, "Hare Krishna! the Mantra, the Movement, and the Swami who started it all."
- Put a set of Prabhupada's books and books about him in libraries and universities.
- Present dramas about Srila Prabhupada.
- Invite the public to a grand Vyasa-puja celebration.
- Install the footprints of Srila

Prabhupada on the Deity cart.

- Install a little plaque near the murti of Srila Prabhupada explaining who he is.
- Systematically send to the media a news package including the biography of Srila Prabhupada compiled by the ISKCON Communication Office •



On the New Zealand Padayatra cart



One member happy to show his love for Srila Prabhupada (Padayatra America 1989)

5 DAY
PADAYATRA
IN
LA REUNION
ISLAND
NEAR
MAURITIUS

By Dayalu Radha dasi

From August 1 to 5 the Sankirtan Association of La Reunion Island gladly received the Padayatra team from Mauritius (22 devotees) led by Hari Hare das. A five day program had been planned by Ramapriya dasi and the association's president, bhakta Pajany Raynaulds, in order to propagate the holy name in different areas of the island. Two padayatras were conducted in the city of Saint André and on the beach of Saint Gilles. A kirtan program with distribution of prasadam was held in Saint Denis, the capital, and to conclude an abhisheka of Sri Sri Nitai Gaurasundar, Giriraj and Lord Narasimhadev was performed at Ramapriya dasi's place. The local TV and newspaper broadcast the event and people responded favorably.

The chanting of the Holy Name and dancing in the streets attracted curious people and tourists. Those who were shy at the beginning couldn't resist in taking part in the joyful dancing of devotees, and glanced at the festival with amazing eyes. In La Reunion there are many Tamil who worship different devas so darsan of Sri Sri Gaura Nitai was a special favour for them. They also enjoyed the prasadam and bought the books of Srila Prabhupada to get more knowledge about bhakti yoga. At the end the Mauritian and Reunion devotees all wished to maintain this cooperation in the future to fulfill Gauranga Mahaprabhu's desire that in each village of the world the holy name be chanted•

PADAYATRA UK 2019 – THE CANTERBURY TALE

By Dayal Mora dasa

"O hail to thee, lover of a Canterbury tale. Harken to one oft told of war and peace, of crime and punishment, and of a midsummer night's dream." Interestingly, Chaucer's "The Canterbury Tales" are a collection of stories told by a gallery of characters who would perhaps never have met if not on the same pilgrimage to Canterbury. Indeed, many a pilgrim has trudged to Canterbury to visit the shrine of Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Becket, assassinated in 1170. Even England's King Henry II, whose utterance "will no-one rid me of this turbulent priest?" is credited with instigating Becket's murder, walked barefoot to Canterbury as an act of penance. For Becket, sticking to what he regarded as the truth proved dangerous. We are fortunate to be representatives of the absolute truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thanks to Srila Prabhupada we have something to live for in this overrated world. Padayatra UK 2019, the "Pilgrimage for Peace," held from August 12 to 20, has for a fourth successive year once again swept through the Kent countryside, going from village to village and town to town spreading the holy names of the Lord. Starting in Ashford and finishing in Margate, we traversed an epic fifty miles in recognition of fifty years since the installation of Sri Sri Radha Londonisvara. With a fifty-strong team consisting of the best padayatra devotees, auspiciousness pervaded the atmosphere as we marched into Canterbury's high street on day four of our nine-day pilgrimage. We met the Sheriff of Canterbury outside the cathedral gates, filling her ears with the holy name. The devotees of the Lord became overjoyed to hear her chant Hare Krishna, along with cathedral representative Canon Mary. Lord Balaram went on pilgrimage

throughout India as penance for His killing of a brahmana, and a fortuitous coincidence was that we were in Canterbury on the day of His appearance. With the Sheriff and Lord Mayor in attendance we celebrated a full-moon festival that evening in Dane John Gardens, a beautiful park a stone's throw from the cathedral gates, performing kirtan, drama, magic, and distributing prasadam. About 100 members of the public joined the festival thanks to a social media promotion by local leader Mantra Caitanya prabhu and everyone was plied with varuni, that sacred peace-making beverage, to their full satisfaction.

Our realisations from the padayatra included that the problem with Henry II was he couldn't adapt to a spiritual relationship with the saintly Becket due to his addiction to sense gratification. On the other hand, our pilgrimage created an ideal situation for devotees to become close friends through service and sacrifice. From various backgrounds and interests, the padayatris all testified before the final campfire at Joss Bay how the sweetness and ecstasy of an austere life on the road with our two noble bullocks is unparalleled. By putting our material desires to the side and enthusiastically doing something positive for the world, there is no likelihood of enmity and envy manifesting.

Note: you can read the entire article on the Padayatra website: padayatra.com. It is accompanied with a variety of interesting photos, which resolution is alas too low for printing purposes•



SLOVENIA'S EIGHTEENTH PADAYATRA ACCENTUATES HARINAM SANKIRTANA

By Aradhika Radha dasi



Sri Sri Gaura Natharaja

For the eighteenth time, a Padayatra Festival has been celebrated by the Ljubljana, Slovenia, temple community. Under this year's theme of "Door-to-Door Harinama Sankirtan" padayatra visited about thirteen villages, mostly within about a one-hour drive from Ljubljana. Twenty-five to thirty devotees from Croatia and Serbia and many other countries also took part in the festival. The padayatris covered approximately 110km over sixteen days pulling a small hand-drawn cart with Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai deities in front of the procession accompanied by loud kirtan, passing through each village without missing a single house.

There were several special guests who visited padayatra, Prahladananda Swami joining us for most of the first week. He gave Srimad-Bhagavatam class every morning and led kirtan on padayatra in the afternoons. Later Bir Krishna Goswami came to inspire us. Maharaja stayed for four days, giving a class each day. As soon as Bir Krishna Goswami left Ljubljana, Narayani dasi arrived from Finland to give her valuable association. Over the course of four days she gave class each day.

Besides the walking and sankirtan in the villages, some devotees got inspired to do a couple of hours more sankirtan during free time

in Tivoli Park, the largest park in Ljubljana. Many books and thousands of vegan cookies prasada were distributed as we visited every village household if there was a sign that someone was home. During the last five days of the festival Subhag Swami joined us, giving a class every day and going with our padayatra party, preaching to the villagers and singing on sankirtan.

Note: you can read the entire article on the Padayatra website, padayatra.com•



WE MUST TAKE THE LEAP: “ON THE ROAD TO CHANGE” PADAYATRA 2019 IN HUNGARY

By Vrajaloka dasi

This summer the Budapest temple devotees again held our padayatra, a highly anticipated event in the life of Hungarian devotees. It gives them an opportunity for preaching together, it is a positive programme for families and ashram devotees, and provides Krishna conscious recharging and the best team-building activity. In addition, this annual pilgrimage is an important part of the training of newly joined devotees.

Planting trees during the “Green Pilgrimage” of ISKCON Hungary

The padayatra took place from July 25 to August 4. As we did in previous years, our harinama group visited the busiest holiday spots: cities and villages in western Hungary and around Lake Balaton and Lake Velencei. There were several new initiatives this year, having oxen and a well-decorated oxcart carrying Gaura Nitai, and a strategy for outbound communication. For the past three years we had chosen almost the same route with the same theme: « Walk against alcohol, drugs and violence ». This summer we adopted a new theme, linked to climate change and ecology.

We launched the walk with the theme “On the Road to Change,” as part of the “Green Pilgrimage” of ISKCON Hungary. In addition, we wanted to raise attention to the urgent need to protect our planet and the importance of non-violent, environmentally friendly lifestyles through tree planting in the villages we visited. These days scientists, civil activists, and religious leaders have explained that modern society, which is based on overconsumption and exploitation, cannot be maintained and the world has reached a stage



Hungary - Gaur Nitai

where change is inevitable. In this context, we were able to talk to people about the principle of simple living and high thinking and the importance of developing spiritual awareness.

Inspired by Lokanath Maharaja, an ox cart from Krishna Valley, ISKCON's Hungarian eco-farming community Nava Vraja-dham, joined the march for three days. The oxen helped us taste the traditional padayatra feeling ; they created such an amazing mood during harinam, people loved them. Sometimes their transport was difficult but it was well worth it. Throughout the walk we visited

nineteen locations and planted ten trees, at some places helped by representatives of local government, civic organisations and young people.

We went to around twenty towns and planted beautiful saplings in half of them while chanting the holy names. This planting had been previously announced to local authorities, so some people had come to watch this event. We delighted in the thought that in future padayatras we would be able to rest under the trees' shade when we get tired. We love our regular route as in the summer we have the hottest days of the year and



people always stay near the cooling lakes, where we can also bathe.

The core group consisted of almost thirty devotees but during the weekend there were as many as fifty people. At one point on the most visited day, eighty-two devotees, and two oxen from Krishna Valley, participated in the harinama and distributing of Srila Prabhupada's books. Many brought their children as well, meaning that entire families were included. For a few days the teachers and students of the Nava Vraja-dham gurukula joined the group and we also had devotees from England, Germany and Sweden.

Asita Krishna Maharaja also joined the pilgrimage for four days - as he does every year. In addition to his elevating morning lessons and inspiring company, he repeatedly devoted time to talking with the new devotees and to the training of the future brahmacaris. He also planted a tree on the bank of Lake Velencei.

The group stayed in village primary schools (this time of year is summer school holiday), from which they departed each day to visit the villages and cities with the harinama. In the



schools we set up a kitchen and every day the delicious breakfasts and dinners of Sadhu-priya prabhu satisfied the devotees. Sadhu-priya is the official cook of the Hungarian padayatra - dedicating his holiday for this service every year.

A new communication strategy that proved very successful

During the pilgrimage, the newly joined devotees of the Budapest temple began their book-distributing service.

They were very enthusiastic about this service and, thanks to the training and team spirit, they achieved very nice results. All together seven or eight devotees distributed transcendental literature daily alongside the harinama group. Within ten days we distributed almost 1300 books and Back to Godhead magazines.

The new communication strategy also proved very successful. There were several articles and television reports on the pilgrimage and the tree-planting activities in the rural press, and we continued to report on the pilgrimage on ISKCON Hungary's online platforms :

<https://www.facebook.com/padayatrahungary/>

In response to many of our reports, logins were followed up with high viewership rates, many positive comments, and feedback testifying to the success of the new communication concept. Our most watched live stream was seen by 3300 people. The success of padayatra was also shown by the fact that on the last afternoon, Lord Jagannath, Baladeva, and Subhadra Devi visited the pilgrims and we closed the 2019 padayatra

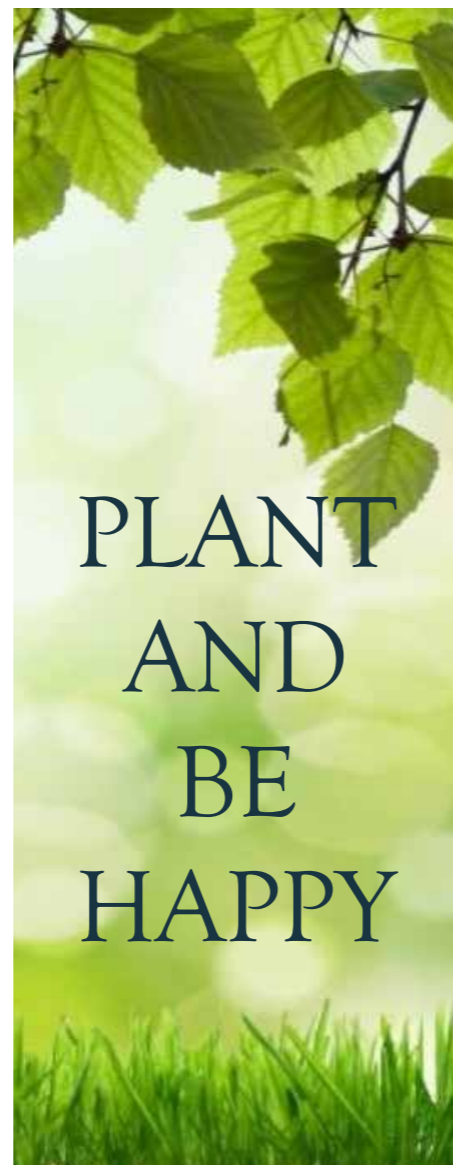
with a beautiful festival, a great feast and enthusiastic kirtan, followed by a group experience report the next day.

The padayatra winning formula : live simply, depend on Kṛiṣṇa, sing everywhere and share our books

When Lokanath Maharaja met the Hungarian padayatra team last year he said: "I can give you some info on how it worked: Live simply, depend on Kṛiṣṇa, sing everywhere and share our books. Prabhupada was very pleased with this formula. He was so happy. Happiness could be read on his face. It was perfection for us to do padayatra because it made Prabhupada happy." Every year

the Hungarian padayatra team also experienced this happiness which comes from Srila Prabhupada's satisfaction. And each year during the pilgrimage, we can also experience the special grace and blessings of Lord Caitanya, the original padayatri .

Overall that was a great and memorable padayatra. In spite of a lot of moves and crowded accomodation, Mahaprabhu and Prabhupada brought devotees together. In the future we are planning to have the oxen and the oxcart for the entire padayatra and do a full walk without being transported in cars. We also want to continue promoting our message of climate protection with the planting of trees•



THE AMRAVATI ISKCON GIRLS FORUM PRESENTS A MINI PADAYATRA FOR YOUNG VAISNAVAS

By Jayabhadrada dasi, Amravati IGF preacher



Let's go on padayatra

For the Amravati ISKCON Girls' Forum annual three-day children's summer camp our team thought that as this year is the 70th Vyasa-puja of our spiritual master, Lokanath Swami Maharaja, we would offer something very dear to his heart: a dedicated padayatra. As a part of the camp we therefore arranged for a mini-padayatra by young Vaishnavas to be held on April 28, our objectives being to sow the seeds of padayatra in little hearts and to inspire their elders to start padayatra.

Our team got busy with the arrangements almost three weeks earlier. We began by printing a banner with photos of Sri Sri Nitai-Gaurasundar, for the All-India Padayatra is the mother of all padayatras and our children's padayatra would be her grandchild. Padayatra also needs posters, so at the start of the camp we had a padayatra-preparation session where the kids made posters and handouts

announcing the event. The coming ashadi ekadashi would surely be special for all of us, so we decided to try to give padayatra the appearance of being a dindi, seeking kartals for all the kids but at first without much success. However, Bhakta Subham Kapile, a staunch supporter of padayatra, searched every nook and cranny of Amravati and eventually found enough kartals for everyone.

On the first day of the camp we also held a padayatra rehearsal, and on day two we had kartal classes for the kids so they would be able to play them while walking. Initially we were thinking of carrying a large photo of Sri Sri Nitai-Gaurasundar, but padayatra without deities would not have been as powerful, so IGF member Vaishnavi dasi suggested we take her little fibre Gaura-Nitai deities from Mayapur. We now had to think about Their stand, but searching through my house I found a box which Vaishnavi decorated complete

with a small plastic umbrella. Once again, we had Gaura-Nitai with us on padayatra, just as They were on our recent Vaishnavi padayatra.

On padayatra day the children assembled in front of the temple with the deities and Srila Prabhupada and two boys holding the banner. It was a wonderful scene, reminding us of Vraja Mandala Parikrama. Haripran dasa performed arati of Their Lordships, and by the Lord's arrangement we had Shatiparayan dasa, an All-India padayatri, in the temple, so I requested him to show the flag and inaugurate our padayatra. We all walked for about 2km and everyone was amazed to see these little Vaishnavas on padayatra and with folded hands as they had darshan of Their Lordships. Along the way Bhakta Vilas Wankhade



Dev holding Gaura Nitai



On the road with Gaur Nitai

distributed sweets for the children, which they were very glad to receive, and eventually we arrived at Vaidarbhi mataji's house where the children had darshan of Sri Sri Radha-Kunjabhahari and we all honoured breakfast prasadam.

After prasadam we walked towards our temple where Amravati temple president Anantasesa was waiting to congratulate us. He was glad to

see the children walking and singing and inspired us by saying that ISKCON Amravati had pioneered the Vaishnavi padayatra, and now the little Vaishnava padayatra. Then my husband, Meghashyam dasa, a doctor by profession, gave the kids a check-up, just to rule out any potential health problems. They were perfectly fine, happily saying that they had never done anything like padayatra•



Prasadam time with sharing of realizations



Loudly chanting the holy names



Jayabhadrada dasi and son Nimai

ALL MAHARASHTRA PADAYATRA

By Damodarleela dasa, Maharashtra Padayatra leader



Sri Sri Radha Gopal of ISKCON Aravade

On July 16 the Maharashtra Bullock cart Padayatra was inaugurated at Pandharpur dhama in the presence of senior Vaisnavas and Lokanath Swami during his Vyasa-puja festival.

Janmastami celebrated in Aravade

Padayatra arrived in Aravade a few days before Janmastami. In the surrounding villages people joyfully received us and did arati of Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai and washed the hooves of our oxen. On the day before Janmastami our harinam party in Aravade was joined by up to 200 congregation devotees from the surrounding area. Along the way we stopped at the birthplace of our spiritual master and danced to our hearts' content.

On Janmastami the padayatris sang bhajans and performed kirtan throughout the day in the temple. That evening, after performing the abhisheka of Sri Sri Radha-Gopal, Brajavilas dasa took us to Vrindavan through his katha and made us dance and sing. Fifty-six bhogas were offered to Radha-Gopal and also to our Gaura-Nitai deities.

A rose bush blooms by Their Lordships' mercy

Last year when I was with the All-India Padayatra, we visited the village of Kanganroli. In a garden near a temple I had noticed a huge rose plant growing. I had approached the home-owner to ask her for roses for worshipping Sri Sri Nitai-Gaurasundar, but the plant didn't have many. However, one mataji there

gave me flowers saying, "Prabhu, this plant looks big but gives very few roses, I am sorry I could not do much to serve Their Lordships." I replied, "Don't worry mataji, the Lord will definitely like your service attitude."

When padayatra arrived at Kanganroli on September 17 that mataji heard about us and came for darshan. She was surprised to see that padayatra had changed. I told her, "Mataji, we have started a padayatra that will walk only in Maharashtra." She said, "I know the Lord has come just so I could serve Him with the flowers. By the mercy of Their Lordships that plant now has thousands of roses."

Students learn to chant during World Holy Name Week

For World Holy Name Week padayatra



Sri Sri Vitthal Rukmini in Pandharpur

of the village was a cooperative man who gladly welcomed us. As we were setting up for sankirtan, I saw there were several barrows and a large crowd on the road in front of the shops so that we had hardly any place to walk. It was the weekly market day, going on till 18pm. I thought, "Oh Lord, how can the sankirtan happen and how will we do our padayatra procession?" But the Lord provides all solutions for preaching. One of us went to the sarpancha and asked for help. He said, "Don't worry. I will take care that padayatra goes on in our village. You have come all the way from Pandharpur bringing the mercy of Lord Panduranga. We will extend all help." He instructed a few boys to shift the market to another location

was still in the Sangli area, and we were fortunate to have the association of Rupa Raghunath Maharaja for one day. This was an auspicious start to our commemorative week. As a part of the celebrations we visited every school on our path. We would stop at a school and encourage the children to chant the holy name with us. We also gifted them CDs of the "Lost Village" documentary about Lokanath Maharaja. We held twenty-five school programmes throughout that week, ensuring the youngsters learned the maha mantra and the value of Srila Prabhupada making it available worldwide.

Wherever we went, after harinam we had a small class about the holy name and distributed 3000 maha mantra stickers so that everyone would chant with us and take home the mantra for their family. After every sankirtan we also distributed prasadam to the assembled villagers. The book score for the week was 266 maha big books, 9,266 big books, 845 small books, making a total of 1120 books distributed during World Holy Name Week.

Village market-place relocated to leave room for padayatra programme

On November 28 we were in the village of Amnapur where the sarpancha (political head, equivalent to mayor)

they had faced. They appreciated that our padayatra had arrived and said the Lord Himself had come to give them solace. "No such dindi has ever come to our village," we were told. "It's a marvellously systematic programme - arati in the morning and kirtan is the heart of it. Please keep coming whenever you pass this way." We also held a school programme where the children joined us in sankirtan and wrote the maha mantra 108 times. We then gave them prasadam which they were happy to receive•

Note: this article is a summary of several articles posted on the Padayatra website, which contains many photos, not printable here.



ISKCON Aravade

so that we could proceed with our programme. By the Lord's mercy the vegetable vendors agreed and soon the way was cleared, enabling us to do sankirtan and Gaura arati.

Padayatra brings relief from Mother Krishna's flood in the village of Nagthane

Walking towards Nagthane we had darshan of the Krishna river, also known as Krishnaveni. Due to heavy seasonal rain, the Krishnaveni recently flooded Nagthane, causing much damage; as the villagers took darshan they described the problems



Pandharpur was visited by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu

FOUR NEW ALL-STATE PADAYATRAS IN INDIA

The year 2019 saw the birth of 4 new All-State padayatras: Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. We wish these will inspire all the 29 states and the 7 Union Territories of India, and why not other countries, to follow in their footsteps.

Andhra Pradesh Padayatra: from Tirupati to Ahobilam and Simhachalam

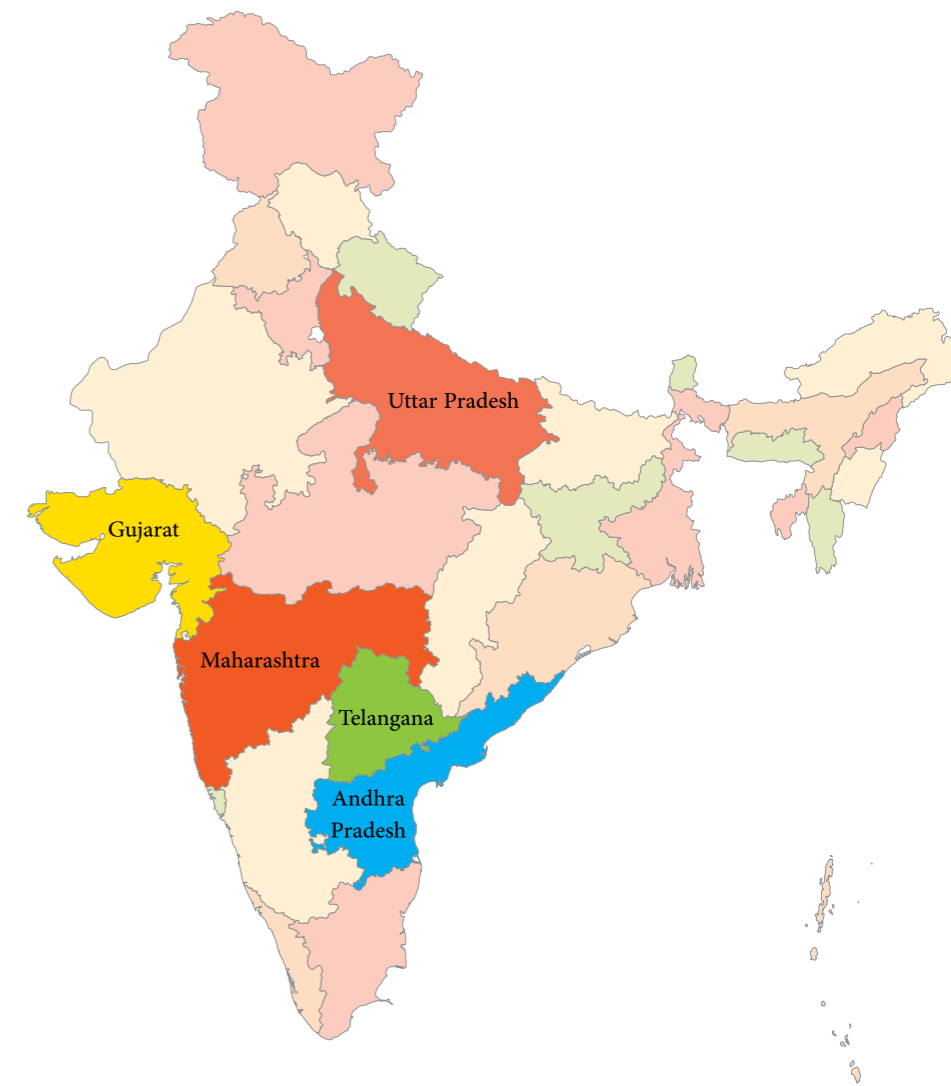
By Radhavallabha dasa, Andhra Pradesh Padayatra leader

On October 2019, 17, the city of Tirupati witnessed the grand opening of the Andhra Pradesh Padayatra. The ceremony took place in the courtyard of the ISKCON Sri Sri Radha-Govinda temple. The first arati was performed by Lokanath Maharaja, the inspiration behind our padayatra. By the Lord's arrangement it was GBC meeting time in Tirupati and the inauguration was attended by many senior disciples of Srila Prabhupada including Bhanu Swami Maharaja, Anuttama prabhu, Kavicandra Swami and staunch padayatri Bhaktimarg Swami. After the arati, the oxen were yoked to the cart and everyone was eager to begin the first walk. All the guests fed jaggery to the oxen, the godbrothers held large scissors together to cut the inaugural ribbon, and the holy walk was under way enriched with wonderful kirtan. It was wonderful to see Lokanath Maharaja driving the beautifully decorated ratha pulled by the two oxen in their best outfit. We walked from the Radha-Govinda temple to the base of Tirumala Hill and at a square circumambulated a statue of Garuda before returning to the temple.

We plan to take two years walking from Tirupati to Ahobilam then Simhachalam and then come back to Tirupati, thus forming

a triangle. There are thirty-six Nrsimha temples in Telangana in Andhra Pradesh and our schedule includes visiting and taking darshan of all of them. We currently have one ratha, four oxen, one bus, one bicycle, and eight devotees walking, with several local devotees occasionally joining. After moving through the outskirts of Tirupati, we continued at the speed of 18km a day. While passing through the villages around the city of Chittoor, we were often invited to programmes at devotees' homes.

On December 6, we reached the small town of Chandragiri where we performed harinam in the main square. As news spread that padayatra had arrived, the Chandragiri constituency member of the AP Legislative Assembly, Mr Chevireddy Bhaskar Reddy, visited us the next day. Mr Reddy paid obeisances to Their Lordships as he got out of his car along with his bodyguards. We welcomed him by offering a garland and, as the Gita marathon was going on, we also gifted him a Bhagavad-gita.



On December 11, our party got a grand welcome in the village of Chenuvativari Palli. As we entered the village, everyone gathered around us folding their hands and offering obeisances to Their Lordships. I made announcements in the local Telugu language explaining the objectives of our padayatra, the glories of the holy name, and how kirtan is the only way out of this material world. Village people were interested and followed what we said, eagerly joined us dancing in sankirtan, after which we gave a small talk about the glories of Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai. One of the villagers then came forward and offered to arrange our accommodation. The next day we visited a school and had a fantastickirtan for the children. They were amazed to see the oxen, and although it was new to them, they appreciated our chanting and danced happily. It's a wonderful experience walking on padayatra when we are totally depending on Their Lordships for everything. Some padayatris are from other states and face a language problem, but every soul understands the maha mantra and that is our best tool to go on preaching.

Uttar Pradesh Padayatra inaugurated at Kanpur temple on Radhaṣṭami

by Rasutsava dasa

On September 6 the Uttar Pradesh Padayatra began under the inspiration of Lokanath Maharaja and the guidance of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan zonal secretary Devakinandan dasa. ISKCON Kanpur temple president Premhari dasa glorified the padayatra and offered his best wishes to the padayatris. Sri Sri Nitai-Gaurasundar, brought from Bakuda, are the UP Padayatra deities and Rituvipa dasa its leader.

Our padayatra currently has one rath, four oxen, one bus, one bicycle, and seven devotees walking with several local devotees. These seven padayatris are doing all the services, from cooking, kirtan, announcements, care of oxen, to prasada and book

distribution. Uttar Pradesh is the most populous and fourth largest state in India, and we will be sure to visit every nook and cranny. We took the first few months just covering Kanpur as it's such a large city. With the help of our well-wishers and congregation members we arranged evening programmes and announced those events well in advance so that devotees throughout the state could attend. In this way they all got the opportunity to serve padayatra.

To celebrate our padayatra's first World Holy Name Week, we went to different parts of Kanpur and its suburbs every day, performing sankirtan for four to five hours while the book distributors busily encouraged onlookers to make a purchase. We displayed Srila Prabhupada's books on the rath so people would see them, give a donation and take one home. Our technique to reach as many places as possible was to centre ourselves in a location and cover three nearby villages in a day lasting from 4am to 10pm, and by the mercy of Guru and Gauranga as a result we visited about thirty villages in eight days. After Gaura arati in each village we would then hold a small class on Harinama Mahatmya, which inspired people to chant the holy name on the beads we had given them. Every day we distributed halwa prasadam to the villagers, who would then join the padayatra chanting and dancing to the next village. Our book distribution score for the World Holy Name Week was 100 Bhagavad-gita and 150 small books.

The All-Gujarat Padayatris trained by the All-India padayatris

by Acarya dasa, All-India Padayatra leader

In 1975 in Sanand Srila Prabhupada declared that he would personally travel by car taking dozens of men to preach in the villages of Gujarat. He was eager to see this programme established and said that mass propaganda of sankirtan

and prasadam distribution will save India. To fulfil that desire of Prabhupada and also of Bhakti Vikas Swami, the Bharuch devotees inaugurated a padayatra on December 15th in the presence of Rupa Raghunath Maharaja and about 1500 congregation devotees. This inauguration was arranged at the time the All-India padayatris would be in Bharuch. Lokanath Maharaja was overjoyed to hear that Gujarat now had its own padayatra. Later both padayatra carts went through the city, thus announcing the beginning of the Gujarat Padayatra.

This padayatra, to be known as the Harinama Sankirtan Padayatra, will initially cover more than 1500 villages of the Bharuch and Narmada districts. The oxen Ramai and Nandai, named after assistants of Govinda, Caitanya Mahaprabhu's personal servant, are carrying Their Lordships Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai. Because the oxen were not trained, they spent ten days with the AIP learning to walk independently. The new padayatris also got trained for book distribution, advance party duties and announcements. The Gujarat padayatris walked with the All-India padayatris till December 26, then continued walking in the district villages.

Note: the complete reports can be viewed on padayatra.com



STORIES FROM THE FIRST BULLOCK CART PADAYATRAS IN INDIA

PRABHUPADA'S BEAMING AT THE 1977 KUMBHA-MELA IS WHAT GIVES ME THE STRENGTH TO PUSH ON PADAYATRA WORLDWIDE

by Lokanath Swami

For me, the best part of Kumbha-mela was that I could be close to my spiritual master. One afternoon Srila Prabhupada asked me to lead kirtana near him, but my best moment was the private conversation I had with him about bullock cart sankirtana, just the two of us in his tent. He was anxious to hear how things were going. Even though we had sent him two reports, I was honored to tell him more in person – how in four months we'd walked 2000 km and been to more than sixty places, how we had managed to buy our bullock cart in the first place, and many details of our travels from Vrindavana to Allahabad. Prabhupada listened attentively. He made me feel there was nothing in the world more important to him than listening to my report and encouraging me to say more. I told him we often had to disappoint villagers who wanted us to stay a few days, and how on many occasions they walked with us to wherever we were holding an evening festival.

He asked me a number of questions, and seemed not to want me to rush my answers but to slowly provide details. Prabhupada wanted to know where we stayed, how we kept clean, and what we did during our morning program. I described how sometimes after mangala-arati we went through the village chanting Hare Krishna and singing jiv jago, jiv jago, gauracandra bole: "O sleeping souls, wake up! Lord Gauranga is calling you!" And I told him that when we did this, adults and children alike came running into the streets directly from their beds, pleased to hear the sounds of mridanga, karatalas, and the holy name.

Prabhupada then wanted to know what foods people donated and in which what quantity; how we cooked for so many people and what kind of prasada we made. "Usually we serve kichari," I said, "but if we get milk or ghee and sugarcane gour, we make sweet rice or halvah." Prabhupada heard all this with great pleasure. He was especially pleased to hear how we depended on Krishna. The more I spoke the more enlivened he became – his jubilation was written plainly on his face.

Forty three years later, if there's anything that inspires me about bullock cart padayatra it's the memory of how pleased Srila Prabhupada was when he heard my report



Lokanath Swami at the 1977 Allahabad Kumbha Mela

about its early days. The satisfaction his joy gave me is something that's stayed with me through the years. I still have a vivid mental image of Prabhupada beaming that day in his Kumbha-mela tent – his smile gives me the strength to push on padayatra worldwide.

MAKING A SMALL EXPERIMENT BY DEPENDING ON KRISHNA ON THE WALK FROM VRINDAVAN TO MAYAPUR IN 1976-1977

by Ravi Dasa

I was scared when Prabhupada first outlined the original bullock cart sankirtana program. To a materialist like



Ravi Dasa as one of the Padayatra England leaders in 1991

me, the concept of throwing yourself on Krishna's mercy and having to depend on it seemed fraught with what ifs – what if Krishna didn't provide the party with enough to eat? What if we couldn't find a place to sleep? These were all mundane bodily considerations. All philosophical understanding seemed too theoretical. When it boiled down to it, I guess I preferred the Boy Scout motto, "Be prepared." After all, why rely on Krishna when He had given a mind and intelligence that can make so many arrangements to avoid all kinds of discomfort? But in the association of more advanced souls, somehow my dubious mind relented and I agreed to make a small experiment.

TASTING THE ECSTASY OF SPREADING THE HOLY NAME

by Nrsimhananda Dasa (ITV)

The ecstasy of spreading the holy name is felt more in the holy dhamas and in the association of devotees, and in immersing oneself in devotional service every minute of the day. The padayatra gives one the opportunity to do just that, because from morning till night your whole life is centered on the holy name. It's like life in the early days in ISKCON, when we were chanting from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. You really begin to experience what "transcendental" means. It's not imaginary – you get the feeling that's what Lord Caitanya was really talking about. Any anxieties or mental conceptions can be cleansed by chanting. You can actually become happy. To be in that mood where you are actually chanting and dancing, not because you're putting on a show but because you're spontaneously moved to chant in the association of devotees, was an amazing experience. When I was walking I felt, just for a moment, that tinge of ecstatic emotion. I realized my good fortune to be actually participating in Lord Caitanya's sankirtana padayatra. It was wonderful. I was born thousands of miles away, but by amazing grace I was in India walking with the deities of Gaura-Nitai and Srila Prabhupada,



Sridhar Swami getting very high on the holy names

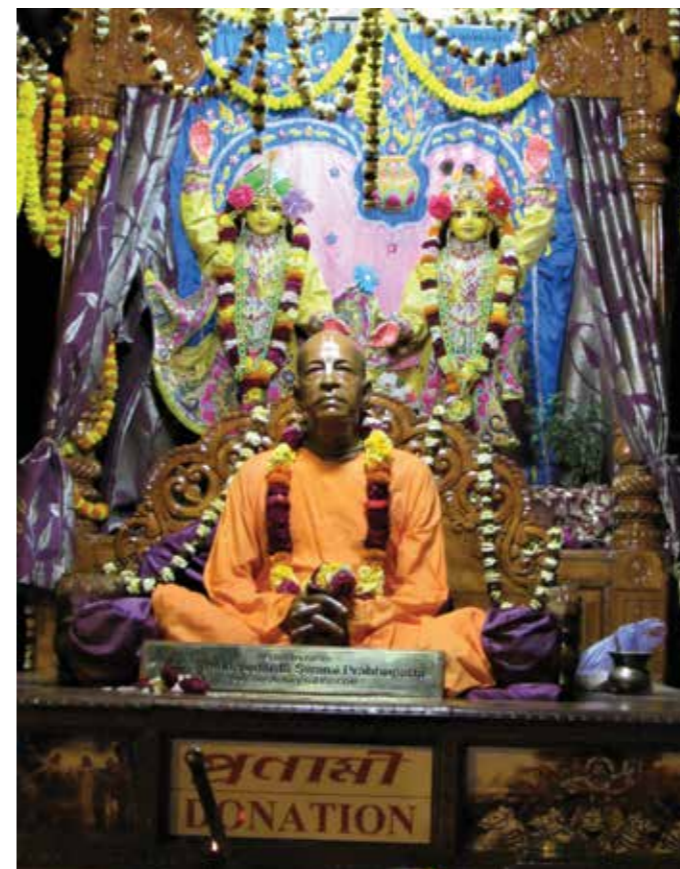
chanting and passing out prasada. I can tell you, it was overwhelming•



Radhadyuti dasa's convincing smile

STORIES FROM THE 2019 ALL-INDIA PADAYATRA

By Acarya dasa



Padayatra India cart at night

Human bullocks and the magic cart

Last January I was completely intrigued when the villagers of Vela in Maharashtra came to our assistance to negotiate the padayatra cart through a very narrow street. The people removed the the oxen' harness, put their shoulders against the cart and pushed it through while singing Hare Krishna. It was remarkable to see how the cart inched its way through that street. I came to believe that this cart which had been travelling across India and giving darsana to hundreds of thousands of people since 1984, is an expansion of Lord Balarama– expanding into the Lord's paraphernalia to serve Him.

Another time I was nudging Jai, one of our oxen, to walk faster because of a car in front. The ox lost control and the padayatris just closed their eyes anticipating a huge crash. But Jai miraculously stopped to avoid a collision. After touching the cart many people said they felt as if they had touched the Lord Himself.

The accidental departure of our dear Vitthala

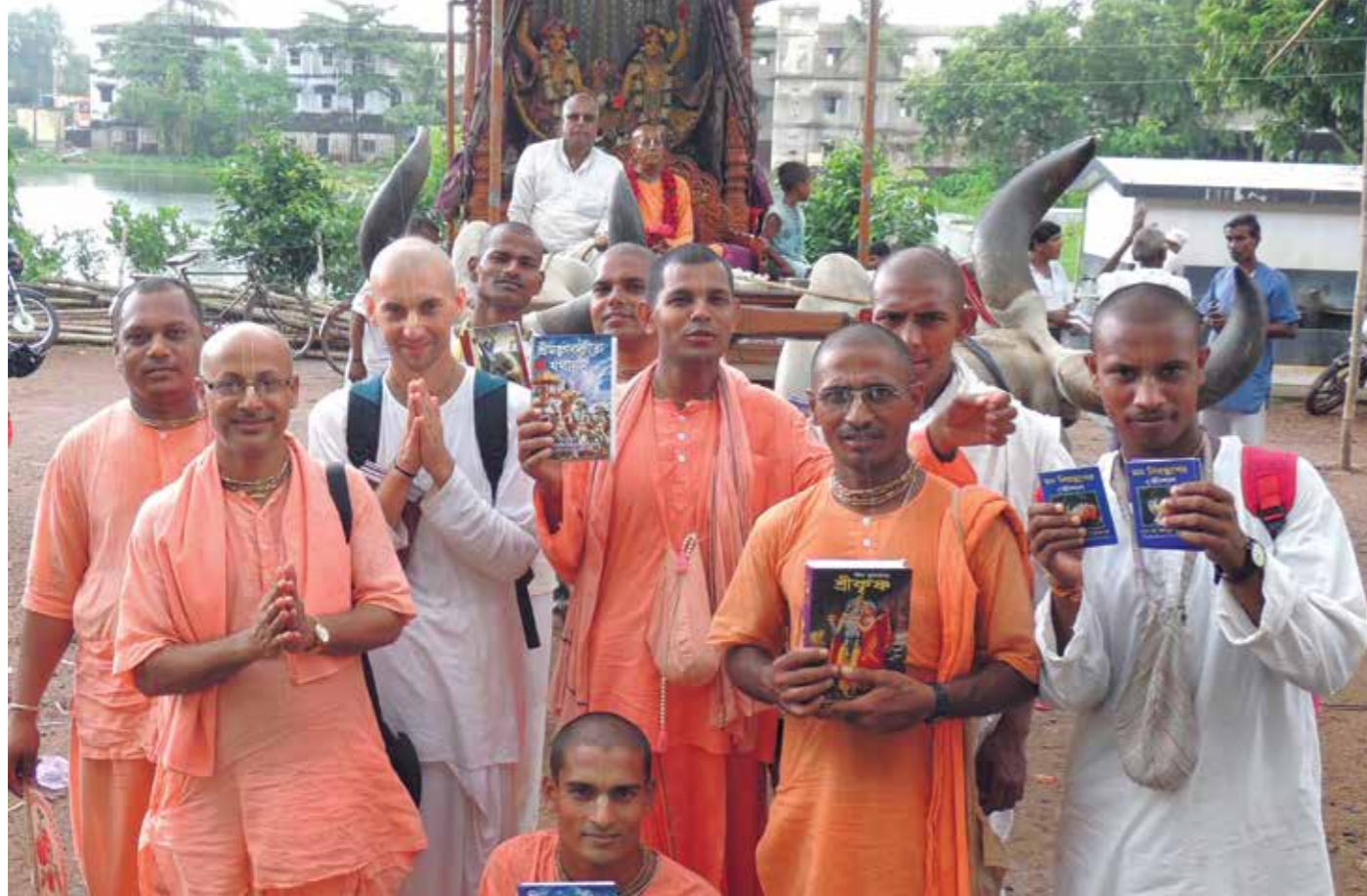
On October 2 we were travelling from Virar to Govardhana Eco village, Wada. After walking about 10 kms of the 18km, the party stopped for prasada near a small river, after which the padayatris recommenced their walk. Vitthala, the ten year old padayatra ox who was at the Kumbha-mela, was walking behind the ratha. Unfortunately, Vitthala was struck by a speeding truck and sustained severe internal injuries. Although the doctor intervened, Vitthala left his body a few hours later. The padayatris were extremely sad. Lokanath Swami advised them to pray for him. Kirtana was performed from the moment of the accident until all the final rites were completed at a nearby farm.

How Padayatra pacified a belligerent youth

Bhakta Nakul from Rajasthan met the All-India Padayatra in 2011. His devotee parents were fortunate to serve Sri Sri Nitai-Gaurasundara and the padayatris when they came to his city. Although he was fascinated with the



The magic ratha



The happy Padayatra India family

oxen, he did not chant and had a very aggressive personality. In April 2016, when padayatra was in Trivandrum in the state of Kerala, his mother who was worried about his extremely belligerent behaviour, asked him to pack his bags and join the All-India Padayatra for a month. Before he left his mother told him, "Come back when you are in saffron." After associating with the wonderful and staunch padayatris and travelling with them for a month, his heart became anchored to Sri Sri Nitai-Gaurasundara and the oxen. In spite of being injured in 2018, during the padayatra in Bangalore, he went back to care for the oxen after a short rest at home. He has been happily walking with the All-India Padayatra for the last two years.

Saved from suicide by the loving care of the padayatris

On February 10, after a most enchanting Nagpur Ratha-yatra, I happen to counsel a lost, unhappy and disturbed boy named Swapnil who was seriously contemplating suicide. I convinced him to join the padayatris to Ramtek, about 50km northwest of Nagpur, and

he received further counselling by Rupa Raghunatha Maharaja and Akhiladara dasa, a senior padayatri from America. Swapnil then accompanied the padayatris to the Jagannatha Ratha-yatra in Amravati where he met Lokanath Swami. When Maharaja enquired about his health, the boy replied, "Vaikuntha". Back in Nagpur, his parents were relieved to receive a more composed Swapnil, an engineer by profession. When he saw the poor condition of the padayatra motor bike, he sponsored one for the padayatra. The Lord had made the necessary arrangements when it was most needed, both for Swapnil and the bike.

A child gets khira prasadam of the padayatra deities on his anna prasan ceremony

One day we went to Balarama dasa's house in Gujarat. Balarama has always helped the padayatra whenever it was traveling in his region. The padayatris would be accommodated at his home, the "Hare Krishna Residency" as it is known. By the Lord's arrangement we arrived the day of the anna prasan (first grain ceremony) of Balarama's grandson. Everyone was happy that

padayatra had come to the house on such an important day for the family, and the padayatris were invited to participate in the ceremony. We gave some khira prasad of Their Lordships to Balarama. When the Bhagavad-gita was placed in front of the child he immediately moved towards it. Everyone clapped saying, "Jai, he will be a great devotee!" •



Acarya dasa leader of the All India Padayatra

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2019 ALL-INDIA PADAYATRA

Note : the compilation of all Acarya das' articles posted on padayatra.com was done by Radhaprema dasi and Gaurangi dasi

VISITING HOLY PLACES IN MAHARASHTRA



Sri Sri Nitai Gaurasundar

On January 10, upon reaching Chamorshi, our padayatra was initially not received with respect, but eventually it had the hearts of the villagers transformed, and even the drunkards were bowing their heads in supplication to Their Lordships, Sri Sri Nitai Gaurasundar. At the end of February we entered Kaundanyapur dhama, capital of the Vidarbha Kingdom in Dwarpa Yuga, and the birthplace of Rukmini Maharani. This quiet village far from the city was perfect for sadhana along the holy river Vardayani. All the padayatris happily took darsana of Sri Sri Rukmini Dwarkanath and Giriraja at the ISKCON temple. The temple president, Akrura dasa, and his family received the party with much reverence and were overjoyed to hear that we would be staying there for one month.

IMPRESSIVE PARTICIPATION OF ISKCON DEVOTEES AT THE PRAYAG ARDH KUMBHA-MELA

Undoubtedly, the highlight of 2019 was our presence in Prayag for the Ardh Kumbha-mela which was held at the Triveni-sangam in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, for about eight weeks from January 15 to March 4. Eight padayatris, our oxen - Krishna and Vitthala- and Sri Sri Nitai-Gaurasundar graced the event. On Mauni Amavasya, during which 30 million people took their bath at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati rivers, 3000 devotees had gathered in the ISKCON camp managed by Sanak-sanatan dasa, a former All-India padayatri. We all participated in that day's biggest procession with our

padayatra cart - the only bullock cart in the entire mela. Each day our cart travelled 10km around the various camps performing resounding kirtan, and during the main bathing days devotees mingled with other holy men and pilgrims.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu attended this Kumbha-mela and bathed in the 3 holy rivers for ten successive days. In 1977 Srila Prabhupada was at the Kumbha-mela. Lokanath Swami, who was also there with his Bullock Cart Sankirtan Party, believed that among all the camps, Caitanya Mahaprabhu's ISKCON camp, was the best, "representing Brahma-madhva-Gaudiya sampradaya, which is the super-excellent school of thought." During the 2019 mela the Noida, Panjabi Bhag and New Delhi teams joined forces to distribute Srila Prabhupada's Bhagvad-gita As It Is. An additional attraction was the Kumbha book by Lokanath Maharaja, which covered the history of the Kumbha-mela and recalls Srila Prabhupada's involvement in the festival. The book scores totalled 39,258: 20,800 Bhagvad-gita, 17,600 Kumbha (Hindi), 858 Kumbha - The Festival of Immortality (English) were distributed at this colossal gathering.

SRI SRI RADHA-GOPINATH FACE TO FACE WITH SRI SRI NITAI GAURASUNDAR

« You can view hundreds of beautiful and colourful photos of this padayatra on our website, but since they are taken with a smartphone and have very low resolution, they cannot be printed »

Following the Gaura-purnima celebrations at Dhamangaon, we travelled to the city of Amravati and its nice ISKCON temple. During the evening arati, I announced that the padayatra's ratha had done the char dhama yatra (visiting the four major pilgrimage sites of Badrinath, Dwaraka, Puri, and Rameswaram). "If you join arati, I said, you will get the benefit of the char dhama yatra." Many people were enthused to then take darsana of Their Lordships and participated in the arati. At the beginning of April, we were forced to take shelter from the rains in an old Sri Sri Radha-Gopinath temple in Lohara, although this was not part of the plan. I entered the altar and kept Sri Sri Nitai Gaurasundar face to face with Sri Sri Radha-Gopinath, much to the delight of the resident pujari who expressed serious concerns about the declining seva at this temple. It is anticipated that this temple will soon be handed over to ISKCON, to ensure proper seva of their murtis.

THREE PADAYATRA PARTIES MEET IN PANDHARPUR DHAMA

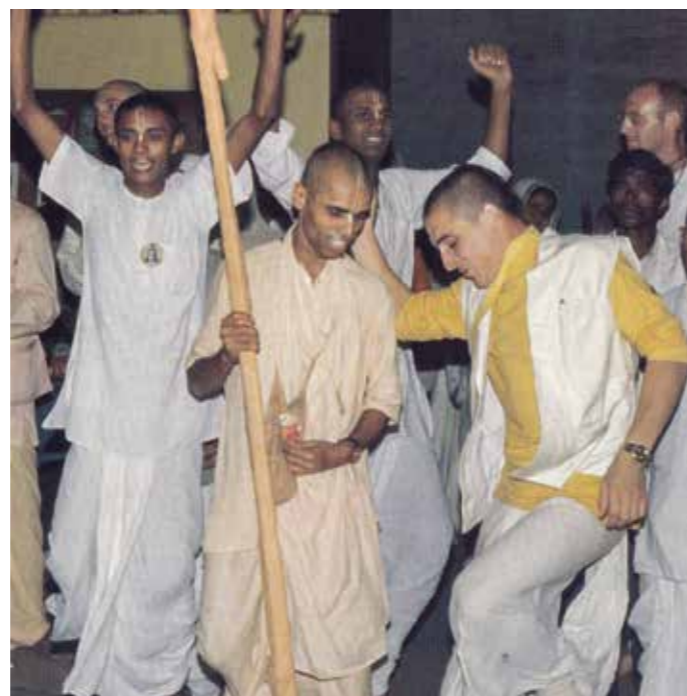
In July, during Lokanath Maharaja's seventieth mahaVyasa-puja, three padayatra parties and their bullock carts arrived in Pandharpur dhama for the gorgeous celebration: the All-India padayatra, the Dehu dindi, and the Alandi dindi. On July 16 the Maharashtra Padayatra was inaugurated at Pandharpur dhama and walked together with the All-India Padayatra up to Satara. On August 22, two days before Janmashtami, we reached Pune, the second largest city in Maharashtra. The devotees were at the main gate of the ISKCON temple with garlands and kirtan to welcome the team. The last time the All-India Padayatra had come to Pune was in 2009. On October 6th, we entered Dehu while performing a rousing sankirtan. Tukaram Maharaja, who was born there in 1609 into the Warakari community; he is renowned as the Maharashtra's saint-poet, and is said to have pioneered the sankirtan movement throughout west-central India.

REMEMBERING SRILA PRABHUPADA IN JUHU BEACH



Lokanath Swami assisting Srila Prabhupada's distribution of prasadam in Bombay 1974

Another highlight was our arrival at Srila Prabhupada's office, Juhu Beach in Mumbai, for the World Holy Name Week which began on September 17. The temple president, Brajhari dasa, welcomed the padayatris with garlands and a joyous harinam. Brajhari was with the padayatra in 1984, so his affection for All-India Padayatra is very strong. Ekalavya dasa, the organiser of the World Holy Name Festival expressed his appreciation. Being in Juhu meant that at every step we were reminded of Srila Prabhupada. As we were preparing to leave Sura Dasa asked us, "How can you go now? It's raining?" I replied, "Padayatra can't stop. We have to keep going. That's the order of Caitanya Mahaprabhu." He was surprised to hear rain wasn't an obstacle for us. Before bading farewell he gifted clothing to all the padayatris, saying, "Thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve Their Lordships."



Lokanath Swami dancing with Hari Sauri Prabhu in Bombay 1974



Sri Sri Radha Rasa Bihari in ISKCON Juhu



ISKCON Juhu in Mumbai

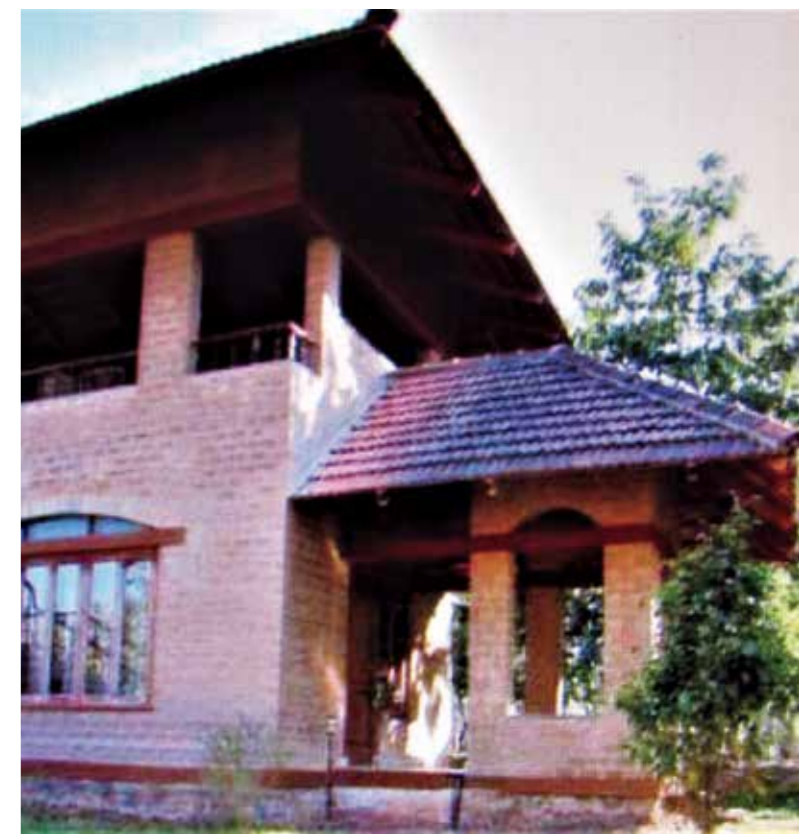
THE ACCIDENTAL DEPARTURE OF VITTHAL, ONE OF OUR DEAR FOUR-LEGGED PADAYATRIS

On October 2 some unhappy event took place as we were walking toward the Govardhana Eco village in Wada. Vitthal, one of our oxen, was walking behind the ratha with one padayatri holding his rein. A truck traveling at full speed hit him badly and the driver did not even stop to see what had happened. We all came running towards Vitthal to check the injuries. Externally, there were just minor scratches. A padayatri at heart, Vitthal got up and started walking again. Later we stopped at a place and searched for a veterinarian, but unfortunately he came after 2 hours. By that time Vitthal was in great pain. Panduranga, his ox partner, came running towards him as he could sense Vitthal's suffering. The veterinarian said there was a lot of internal injuries, and after some time Vitthal left his body. His eyes were opened and his face was bright; it did not look like he was dead.

We all were disheartened; for us Vitthal was one more padayatri, not a mere animal. He was filled with good qualities: he was humble, always ready to serve Their Lordships, never bothered about food or never troubled us for anything. If any devotee went near him he would raise his head and get his neck rubbed, and also put his head on their feet. He always respected any person in a dhoti or kurta and never harmed anybody. Vitthal was 10 years old, he had joined padayatra in Pandharpur in July 2018. He walked slowly so that people could have darsana of Their Lordships. He mostly pulled the book trolley which carried Srila Prabhupada's books, thus being instrumental in preaching and spreading Krishna consciousness. He had completed a full round of Maharashtra. The other oxen, Krishna and Kaliya, were very sad, they were all in tears and did not take food for some time. As I called Lokanath Maharaja, he said "Vitthal has definitely gone back to Godhead as he served Their Lordships. Let us all pray for him. We will all miss him; in fact padayatra will remember him and always glorify him. We performed kirtana from the time of his accident till all the final rites where completed in a nearby farm.

FEELING THE MOOD OF VRINDAVANA AT THE GOVARDHAN ECO VILLAGE

On October 4 we entered the Govardhan Eco Village (GEV) at Wada. It is a seventy-acre sustainable farming community and retreat in the foothills of the Sanhyadhri Mountains, 108km north of Mumbai. The GEV is a fusion between ancient Vedic wisdom and modern science. Srila Prabhupada frequently encouraged his disciples to adhere to this principle by developing farms for healthful and ecological living. To help fulfil this desire, Radhanath Swami envisioned such a community in India and inspired his followers to create the GEV. He



Govardhana Eco Village house

has brought the essence of Vrindavan to Wada especially for the Mumbai public who cannot easily go to Vrindavan. Venudhari dasa arranged a grand welcome for us. The gurukula children were at the GEV gates to greet us with sankirtan and Hanumanta Prasad Maharaja performed arati for Sri Sri Nitai-Gaurasundar. The congregation devotees then took darshan of Their Lordships and the gurukulis served our oxen. World famous kirtaniya Madhava dasa was also on hand to glorify padayatra. In the evening I told the congregation about padayatra, when it started and its objectives. Being so close to the Vraja Mandal Parikrama that we would soon be joining, it was the Lord's arrangement that we continually experienced the mood of entering Vrindavan felt throughout the GEV. Radhanath Maharaja disciple Laxminarayan dasa and several other devotees later walked with us for about 8km to Manorgaon, where we honoured parasadam, had shobha yatra, sankirtan and prasadam.

KARTIKA BREAK IN THE NILACHAL DHAM FARMING COMMUNITY IN TALASARI, 150 KMS FROM MUMBAI

After Wada we stopped at the house of Hemant Borke, on whose property Vitthal had been buried. It seemed that Their Lordships wanted to meet him once again. The Borke family was very happy to have padayatra at their house again. Mr Borke said, "We are fortunate to serve Vitthala as well as Their Lordships. We will make a samadhi for Vitthal, so that he is remembered by generations to come."

In Nilachal Dham there are more than seventy adorable cows, calves and bulls, well taken care of by Krishna dasa and his team. A lover of padayatra, he placed Nitai Gaurasundar on the altar of Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra, thus bringing Mayapur and Jagannath Puri together. When I told him that most padaytris were going to the Vraja Mandala Parikrama he insisted our oxen and the murtis stay at their farm in the company of two padaytris for the whole month of Kartika. Normally when we are on padayatra we don't get to hear lectures from senior devotees or sannyasis, but parikrama was a feast of hearing for us, along with chanting, serving in different departments and dhama vasa. We are very grateful to the Talasari devotees who took such great care of the padayatra oxen and deities. It's because of them we could immerse ourselves in the bliss of Vraja dhama.

WALKING INTO SOUTHERN GUJARAT

Upon our return from Vrindavana we embarked once again on our holy walk, accompanied by many local devotees. Destination Vapi, a large city



Gujaratis getting the mercy

renowned for its chemical factories and its ISKCON Radha-Govinda temple. In Pardil went to the same place we had been during our last visit. The trustee Mr Dhirubhai was not there, but the person in charge was happy to receive the party. When



Welcoming Nitai Gaurasundar in Gujarat

Mr Dhirubhai showed up he followed the ratha when he saw us marching towards his ashram. He took darshan of Their Lordships, welcomed us, and made arrangements for our accommodation and prasadam. As we were leaving, he said, "Whenever you come to the area, please feel free to come to my place. It will be my pleasure serving you all"•



Gujarati children

ALL-INDIA PADAYATRA BOOK SCORES FOR 2019

Month	S1	S2	S3	H4	Total
January	2263	-	49	2569	4881
February	1003	-	36	1860	2899
March	2282	-	13	614	2909
April	2596	-	67	2500	5163
May	2609	-	65	3368	6042
June	2341	2	28	2256	4627
July	1433	-	6	713	2152
August	795	-	8	600	1403
September	1672	-	2	686	2360
October	448	9	18	79	554
November	496	-	2	345	843
December	2515	-	46	1459	4020
Total	20453	11	340	17049	37853

Note: From October 10th to Nov 20th the padaytris were at the Vraj mandal Parikrama so there was little book distribution during that period.

A VERY DYNAMIC COUPLE for the PADAYATRA WORLDWIDE MINISTRY

Meghashyam dasa, the Padayatra Ministry's coordinator, and his wife Jayabhadra dasi, form a very dynamic couple. She inaugurated the first All Vaisnavi and the first Young Vaisnava Padayatras in their home town of Amravati, Maharashtra, where they work as doctors. Their young son Nimai is getting a good taste of padayatra. Maybe, with Gauranga's blessings, he will become a future padayatra leader.

DO YOU WANT YOUR PHOTOS TO APPEAR IN THE ANNUAL PADAYATRA NEWSLETTER?

If your answer is "yes", you MUST send only high resolution photos taken with a good camera, NOT a cell phone. The minimum resolution should be 1 Mo. No problem to post your low resolution photos on the Padayatra Website!

SEND ONLY GOOD QUALITY PHOTOS

Make sure they are clear, not hazy, interesting and capture all the various aspects of your walk. Better have a few good photographers on hand as one single devotee cannot be at several spots at the same time.

PADAYATRA MANUAL

INSPIRATION, INFORMATION, INSTRUCTIONS AND PRACTICAL TIPS ON HOW TO ORGANISE YOUR PADAYATRA.

- Available in paper format (233 pages) at the Padayatra Ministry
- Can be downloaded from the padayatra website



VRAJA MANDALA DARSHAN:
A 30 day Parikrama Experience,
by Lokanath Swami
576 pages, with hundreds of photos

HOW to ORDER THESE BOOKS

VRAJA-MANDALA DARSANA: A 30 day Parikrama Experience
PADAYATRA WORLDWIDE: On the Road with Lord Caitanya (India padayatras from 1977 to 1986)

PADAYATRA FOREVER: Padayatra Manual

Email: padayatrappress@gmail.com

Books available at: <http://amazon.in>

All books of Lokanath Swami: <http://lokanathswami.com/>

PADAYATRA WORLDWIDE MINISTRY

Please send all news, articles, reports, photos, questions and suggestions to the Padayatra Ministry's coordinator:
Meghashyam das "padayatraiskcon@gmail.com"

OFFICIAL ISKCON PADAYATRA WEBSITE
www.padayatra.com

FACEBOOK PAGE : "ISKCON's Padayatra Worldwide".
<https://www.facebook.com/ISKCONPadayatraWorldwide/>

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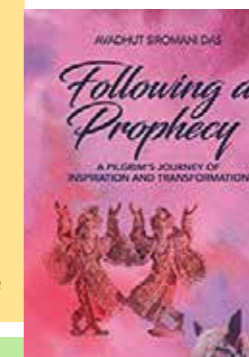
Contact the Padayatra Ministry's coordinator or give directly to the Padayatra Worldwide minister,
Lokanath Swami

FOLLOWING A PROPHECY

by Avadhuta Siromani Dasa

The heroic narration of a 14,000 km journey with a horse cart across North, Central and South America

- Paper format: 250 pages
- Ebook format on Amazon.com



New book by Krishna Ksetra Swami (Kenneth Valpey):

Cow Care in Hindu Animal Ethics

Available for free download
<https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783030284077#aboutBook>
Download your copy: <http://bit.ly/2JW5j15>

VIDEOS OF the 2019 VRAJA MANDALA

PADAYATRA OF PARASURAM DASA:

<https://vimeo.com/10101860>

<https://vimeo.com/14628622>

PADAYATRA WORLDWIDE



“Walking on tour of holy places in India on padayatra was a chance to visit sacred places, especially in South India, following the route traveled by Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu. A chance to live simply and chant Hare Krishna, day after day... A chance to meet India close up, going from village to village, getting to know what the people are like and how they live ... A chance to travel with others-Indians, Westerners, ISKCON devotees, pious people from outside ISKCON... A chance to broadcast the message of Krishna consciousness all along our route. And most of all the chance to travel in the company of Lokanath Maharaja himself, an ideal friend and guide...”

*Condensed quote of Jayadvaita Swami -
Former padayatri (1985-86)*

THE BEGINNINGS OF ISKCON PADAYATRA

This historical book takes you on a visual tour of the first two large padayatras in India: the 1976-77 walk from Vrindavana to Mayapur and the 1984-1986 phenomenal walk from Dvaraka to Mayapur via South India to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the appearance of Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

It's a must have book for all Padayatra leaders and devotees interested in this programme. We encourage all ISKCON temples and preaching centers worldwide to make this book available both in their giftshop and their local library. And, if your temple does not have a library yet, why not start one by ordering this book? It's very important that ISKCON devotees and congregational members know the history of ISKCON projects since their inception, learn from their mistakes and get inspired and enthused by their success.

Hardbound	One copy	Rs 700	(9,86 - £ 7,54 US\$ - 8,85 €)
	Bulk rate	Rs 550	(7,75 - £ 5,39 US\$ - 6,95 €)
Softbound	One copy	Rs 500	(7,07 - £ 5,39 US\$ - 6,32 €)
	Bulk rate	Rs 400	(5,63 - £ 4,31 US\$ - 5,06 €)

Note: The exchange rate varies every day, so these prices are give you an idea of the price in £,\$ and €.

BULK ORDERS

Contact: padayatrapress@gmail.com

