



# PADAYATRA WORLDWIDE

NEWSLETTER  
SPRING 2013

Please Post in Your Temple

Get ready to celebrate the  
**50<sup>th</sup>**  
Anniversary of ISKCON  
with Padayatra



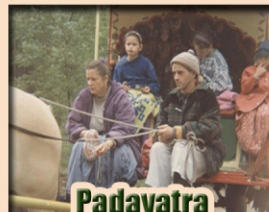
Children and  
Padayatra



The walking monk's  
4th trek across Canada



The Himalayan  
yatra 2012



Padayatra  
Quizz



Tips for  
Organisers



**"My Name will be Heard in Every Town and Village"**

## **Padayatra Worldwide Newsletter : Spring 2013**

"And oxen can be used for driving carts and preaching village to village. What is the question of killing them ? Here in India our Lokanath Maharaja has successfully organized such a program and it is a great success. He has traveled all over India and everywhere they distribute books, prasadam and perform kirtana, village to village. Each night they stop at a different village. We can introduce many millions of such carts all over the world." (Srila Prabhupada's Letter to Nityananda das, March 16, 1977)

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# Editorial

by Lokanath Swami



In only a few more years, 2016 will mark the 50th anniversary of ISKCON. In our movement, a few very significant anniversaries have already been celebrated with padayatra.

First there was the phenomenal nineteen-month walk from Dvaraka to Mayapur (September 1984 to Gaura-purnima 1986) to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's appearance.

Since the first centennial celebration of Srila Prabhupada's appearance, with a padayatra explosion in more than one hundred countries from 1986 to 1996. Since the centennial year Padayatra India has kept walking non-stop, many countries have done occasional repeat walks, and countries such as Slovenia, Czech Republic and Mauritius have organized annual padayatras. During this decade a couple of devotees have embarked on an amazing four-year journey from Pennsylvania, America, to the border of Peru. In his new book, *Following a Prophecy*, Avadhuta Siromani dasa shares his tales of adventure, danger and faith through two continents – more than 300 pages of inspiration. By the way, from 1984 up to this very day our worldwide padayatris have walked a grand total of 150,000km, about three and a half times around the earth.

If you're looking for a simple, non-expensive, fun and pleasing-to-all way to celebrate ISKCON's 50th anniversary, why not organize a padayatra in your country or around your temple? What about a global Padayatra Week like we did in 1996? This issue features a very practical article to help you organize your walk, and you are now able to download the entire contents of the Padayatra Manual from the ISKCON padayatra website. Ignorance

will no longer be an excuse.

As you'll see in this magazine children and young devotees love to go on padayatra. And not only kids need a spiritual vacation with good clean Krishna conscious fun activities in the company of other devotees. All it takes for a new padayatra explosion to happen is at least one motivated person convinced that it can be done without much difficulty. Srila Prabhupada will certainly be very pleased with us if we celebrate the anniversary of his spiritual society with a program that unites devotees and further spreads the holy name. Bhaktimarga Swami, now on his fourth trek across Canada, is seriously thinking about walking from Boston to New York in 2015, the 50th anniversary of Prabhupada's arrival to America, and from San Francisco to Los Angeles to commemorate the 50th anniversary of ISKCON's birth in 2016. In fact, we already posted the list of all the countries that are planning walks. All you have to do is add the name of your temple or country. Let's offer Srila Prabhupada at least fifty padayatras by the end of 2016.

Last, but not least, I'm happy to announce the imminent release of my own book, *The Padayatra Story*. You'll learn more about the tradition of padayatra and Srila Prabhupada's various instructions on the subject. For the very first time you'll be able to follow the small group of devotees who walked with the first Bhaktivedanta

Bullock Cart Travelling Sankirtana Party from Vrindavana to Mayapur. You'll read the narrations of devotees of many nationalities who have gathered their first-hand experience of walking hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of kilometers on the highways and byways of more than one hundred countries through diverse cultures and religious traditions. All the padayatras that took place in ISKCON since 1976 are covered.

Besides being a history for future generations of devotees on all continents, this voluminous book will thrill you with a variety of daring adventures, comprising hundreds of stories and even miracles. Where is the devotee who does not love to hear a good story where the hand of the Lord can be seen? Those who believe that a picture is worth a hundred words will also be pleased to view the accompanying DVD that will feature photographs from 35 years of padayatra

It is said that the taste of the pudding is in the eating, so why not get a personal taste of that nectarean and spicy padayatra cake by reading about it, and even better by participating in or organizing one.

**Nitai-Gaura premanande!**





# ALL KIDS AND YOUNG PEOPLE LOVE PADAYATRA

by Gaurangi dasi

While perusing through hundreds of padayatra photos from around the world, I saw a few babies carried in baby backpacks, young children pushed in strollers or sitting on the deity cart or a special cart reserved for them, and many older children and teenagers. Bringing young children is no problem at all during the annual walk in the Czech Republic, as an organizer explains.



*Rajarama dasa: Devotees also bring their children. Kids are always very happy on padayatra; it's the biggest enjoyment of their entire year. When they are very small we put them on the cart, and when they are about three they just sit in front like little angels. The older kids participate in all the padayatra activities, also the evening festival. One year Madhuradipati took his baby daughter who was just a few months old. She slept in the tent with everyone else. The older devotees were a little disturbed by the cold but the kids did not mind it at all.*

In the summer and fall of 1991 in France I witnessed an amazing Urja mataji managing enthusiastically with her six young children, despite the cold and rain, occasional late accommodations or prasadam. Happily padayatra is much more than a few austerities.

All children and young people love dance and play, music and songs, festivals and adventures, travels and discoveries, being around people their own age, and to be engaged in fun activities. Padayatra offers unlimited opportunities to satisfy these many legitimate desires in a devotional context, in the company of devotees, Srila Prabhupada, Sri Sri Gaura - Nitai, and often the padayatra oxen who are always a hit with them. Needless to say, this is an ideal – and cheap – vacation programme for devotee children and teenagers.

The example of eleven-year-old Narottama shows that padayatra also offers a solid devotional foundation for younger devotees. During the walk through France in the summer and fall of 1991, Ravi dasa, one of the padayatra organizers, brought his son, who was away from his mother for the first time.

*Ravi dasa: Narottama would go with the advance party and fulfil a vital role in erecting the tents and gathering the wood to make the fire to cook the food. Before that he did not really have purpose to his life, except being looked after by his parents, but when he got into a situation where his contribution was as valuable as anyone else's he became more mature. Responsibility made the man, it made him into the devotee that he is today, chanting Hare Krsna and happy to tell people he is a Hare Krsna devotee. This experience on padayatra was like the seed of the devotional creeper he has been watering by chanting. Narottama once told me that the best time he spent in his life was on padayatra.*

Devarshi dasa, another padayatri and father, makes another valuable comment: "Padayatra is very good for children, they like to walk and they are well engaged, it's also very important for outsiders to see devotee children happy." As the saying goes, example is better than precept.

## Never too young to travel with padayatra





Amsterdam 1991



USA 1989: Kamala



Philippines 1992



Australia 1992



Czech Republic : Palika Dasi



Czech Republic : School visit



Czech Republic : Tasting the nectar



Czech Republic : Baratnatyam



Guatemala 1992



Guyana 1989



# The perfect field trip or summer vacation for Gurukula children



At different times and in several countries gurukula teachers brought their students on the road. A major factor of the success of the 1990 walk in Ireland was the support of the British yatra which included the gurukula children from England and even those from France. Their trip on padayatra was the holiday of a lifetime, and their first preaching experience – a huge treat despite the difficulties.

*Moksalaksmi dasi:* The children experienced real enjoyment in good clean Krsna consciousness; they could see that Krsna consciousness was actually fun. Srila Prabhupada wanted us to be happy, and padayatra made us happy.

*Daruka dasa:* One day we were in a shop and Kardama had offered the lady behind the counter a book and was preaching to her nicely. Suddenly, she said to him, "Aren't you a little young to be a monk?" to which Kardama

promptly replied, "Hey, my brother's only three and he's a monk." Tears of laughter were rolling down my cheeks and the lady in the shop thought it was so funny. She immediately surrendered and took the mercy in the form of a book.

In December 1986 Padayatra India visited Jhansi, the place where Prabhupada founded his League of Devotees and from where he went on his first padayatra to nearby Chirgaon in 1953. Many leaders and devotees joined padayatra for the first large public event. Dhanurdhar Swami, Vyasapada dasa, Kurmarupa dasa and fifty boys of the Vrndavana gurukula also took advantage of the short December break to join padayatra, which greatly enhanced the spirit of the padayatris.

*Dhanurdhar Swami:* December is the winter season and is the most austere time on padayatra because bathing is usually done outside. We were doubtful about how the boys would react to the situation. After two days there was a unanimous request by the students to stay longer. There was so much enthusiasm that after a couple of days we sent one of the older boys back to the school with a message requesting that the school semester be put back so that we could stay longer on padayatra. Srila Prabhupada said that if children were trained properly they would think that austerity is fun, and our students did not seem to mind the austerities on padayatra. In the morning on padayatra when it's dark sometimes there is no electricity and sometimes you have to walk half a kilometre to find a bathing place.

Once you find it you have to pull the water out of the well, carry the bucket or find a pump in the field. The boys found this simple atmosphere to be fun and they were not distressed at all. It was very exciting for them and they were most enthusiastic to stay.

All there was on padayatra was one big room where all the boys would fit. Then the next day we would just pack our things and move on. Everyone could see that by simple living we were saving a lot of time. The school children experienced just how nice Lord Caitanya's movement is in its pure form, which is simply going from village to village delivering the holy name, chanting and taking prasadam. The padayatra was extremely well organized, prasadam was always at regular times and there was a feast at least once a day, and generally twice a day. They were naturally fully engaged from early morning to the end of the evening programme. When padayatra left at 7am they had three groups of boys alternating between the kirtana for an hour, chanting japa or sitting on the different carts. By 10am all the walkers stopped for breakfast. When padayatra would arrive in a village the boys would immediately find a place to wash their clothes and bathe. They would have some free time before prasadam and after prasadam would go for the sobhayatra through the village. The boys were very happy there.

Devotees were hosted by Dr Sastri with whom Srila Prabhupada lived for a portion of the four years he spent in Jhansi. Dr Sastri had organized a grand reception for padayatra where he garlanded Srila Prabhupada, personally offered arati to him and shared his many memories of him. The gurukula boys said that it was the best lecture about Srila Prabhu-





Holland 2011: Children Competition



India : Kid's Favorite Time



Ireland 1990 : Friendly Welcome



India : Rajaram Das in Himalayas



Holland 2011: Varshana



Spain 2011: Pilgrims to Santiago



Mexico 1989: Muchachos



France 1991: Narottama with bow



New Zealand 1991



New Zealand 1992: Sadhana Dasi



New Zealand 1992



pada they had ever heard. Dr Sastri also took the devotees, along with the deities and Srila Prabhupada's murti, to all the sites of Prabhupada's pastimes. The children felt very enthusiastic meeting the people Srila Prabhupada had met and seeing the different places where he had been. The following spring, instead of travelling with the gurukula bus as usual, Kurmarupa took six elder boys from the Vrndavan gurukula asrama on a trek in the Himalayas. In the ideal summer weather the children enjoyed walking all day long by the Ganga and sleep outside on its bank at night.

The 1984 students of Lake Huntington's gurukula were not as fortunate as those of Vrndavana, for they did not get to go on padayatra despite their intense desire. They had heard about padayatra through the newsletters that one of their teachers, Krsnakumari dasi, was sharing with them.

*Lokanath Swami: Krsnakumari dasi wrote me a wonderful letter describing the enthusiastic response of the young boys in her class after reading the padayatra stories in our newsletter. All of the boys intensely desired to go and join the walk, but when she told them they probably would not be able to go some of them began to cry and one boy even threw himself on the floor. I was overwhelmed with pleasure when I received several inquisitive letters from the gurukulis. Some students wanted to hear about our encounters with lions, tigers and snakes along the way, whereas others wanted some photographs sent to them. One eight year old child named Yudhisthira wrote me a very touching letter in which he inquired about the swimming and preaching on padayatra.*

*As is natural for six-to-eight-year-olds, the boys were interested in the fun, excitement and adventures padayatra was offering. But they were also concerned about the preaching and the visits to holy places, which made me hopeful that some of them may participate in and organize padayatra in the future.*

They didn't know what to do, what to take with them. They learned everything on the road, and very actively participated in the evening programmes with Bharata-natyam dance, bhajanas, comical plays, and Bollywood-style dance. Needless to say they really loved the whole padayatra experience.

*Kumari dasi: We danced and danced as many of us had never done before.*

## Solid engagement for teenagers

On padayatra, teenage devotees can find unlimited engagements and get the opportunity to use their talents and develop new skills in many fields: fundraising, cooking, reporting, taking photos, making films, preaching, distributing books, taking care of oxen, singing, leading kirtanas, playing musical instruments, Bharata-natyam dancing, getting a taste for padayatra and learning how to organize one themselves.

At the end of June 2010, Rajarama and a team of sankirtana devotees from the Czech Republic, all experienced padayatris, came to Holland to assist Gauravani dasi and her husband, a young Czech couple living in Radhadesh, to organise their four-day padayatra in neighbouring Holland. Even though it was a short walk, Rajarama's main concern was for these young devotees to experience the sweet taste of padayatra so they would want to organize it in the future. A lot of the young devotees from Radhadesh who participated – residents and students of Bhaktivedanta College – for the most part had no experience of padayatra. Some had never even heard about padayatra.

*It was like the streets would never cease yet our feet were made to dance this escalator of bliss. We didn't want anyone who passed, either by foot, bicycle or car, to miss this opportunity for infinite love! Smiling was never so natural for us. It was pure freedom: freedom to twirl in the streets, to stop passers-by without restrictions, without cares of rejection. It was completely enrapturing. And the books were flying from the distributors hands, sometimes causing traffic jams, but it was as if the drivers were not so bothered by us. Or maybe it was that we just couldn't see those things anymore.*

The Holy Walk that took place twice in Spain along the Camino De Santiago was another opportunity for young devotees not used to the austerity of such a trip to display great effort and put into practice the value of working together and cooperating in a common goal. "The real situation, in which we all somehow depended on each other, made helping one another very natural. It is clear that not all members were so spontaneous at first, however, as the days passed by this situation of adventure and 'survival' made them see that they were part of a group that needed them. This created a very strong connection between all of us," explains one of them. On one occasion, they were staying in a sports centre where there were hundreds of pilgrims,





New Zealand 1992: Radha



Slovakia 1994: Prasadam for gypsy kids



UK 1991: Parasurama & Family



Slovenia 2011



England 1991



Malaysia 1991 : Young bhakta in Penang



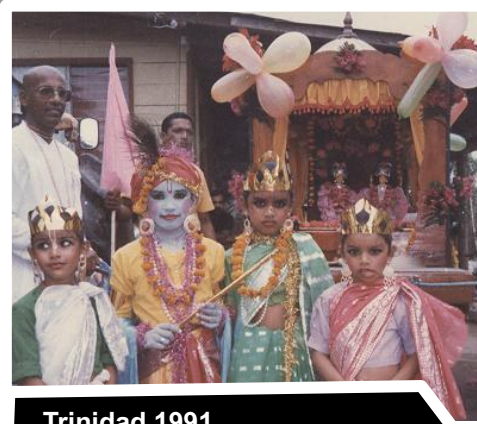
Slovenia: The magic basket



Slovenia: with Haridas the Horse



Slovenia: What's next?



Trinidad 1991



who on hearing the kirtana outside slowly began joining the devotees, dancing and singing with much joy. Among these pilgrims were more than 140 young people listening, singing and dancing spontaneously to the names of Kṛṣṇa. After all, the essence of padayatra is sharing the holy names with as many people as possible and getting them to chant and dance, which children usually do without too much coaxing, especially in Third World countries.

## When children are happy, so are the parents

In India especially, the kirtana party is always followed by groups of kids. Padayatris witnessed the same enthusiasm in Central and South America, where people are more pious and religious. It was while passing through remote villages of Guatemala in 1992 that Radhakunda dasa experienced the amazing potency of the holy names, thanks to a group of local kids.

*Radhakunda dasa:* One night while walking through a village of orange grove workers many kids gathered to hear us chant. It was our practice to stop for a while in the villages to make sure that everyone could at least repeat the maha-mantra a few times. These kids quickly learnt it, as well as Govinda jaya jaya, and Nitai-Gauranga. We wanted to go to bed but they would not let us stop. Finally I walked away, giving the excuse that I was thirsty. The kids got me water and wanted us to keep chanting. This surprised me. I felt ashamed that I had so little faith in the holy name. A few days later in Dandriga, a small village with one main road, we gathered more kids. They followed us, singing and dancing with us. At the end of the street I noticed there were only half the kids. What had happened to the

*others? Then some military jeeps pulled up to use the only public phone in town. As we approached the centre of town we saw the other half of our kids' kirtana party standing on the military jeeps. They were shouting in competition the only half of the maha-mantra they had learned. I just stood there looking at those kids jumping up and down on the jeeps and our kids shouting back at them. The holy name has more potency than I could ever imagine.*

The festive aspect of padayatra, in particular the chanting and dancing is very attractive to the young public. And usually, when the kids are present, the parents are not too far away. In general parents are happy to see their children having some clean fun, far from drugs and degrading activities. Through their offspring's joyful participation in padayatra programmes, they are thus developing some degree of appreciation for the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, and maybe buying a book or two. The present organizers of padayatra in the Czech Republic have understood this principle,

and they have devised specific kinds of entertainments and activities for devotees' and visitors' children.

*Munipriya dasa:* Every night there was an Indian-style cultural programme. The stars of the festival were the children dancing Bharata-natyam like professionals. This time devotees distributed simple musical instruments so that people could play and sing with them. They really liked that. Children loved the gopi dots. Another innovation, which was the favourite: a dancing and singing contest for people. Mostly children took part, trying their best to do the swami step with raised arms while chanting the maha-mantra.



Devotees had prepared small prizes like maha-garlands, incense, colouring books and pictures of Kṛṣṇa. Everyone went home with a present. The whole focus of the programme was to attract and please the children, because when children are happy, their parents will also be happy, and they will better appreciate the devotees and the spiritual culture they are presenting.

The powerful impact of making children and people participate could be seen in the reaction of one lady. She stood up during the cultural programme and addressed the devotees, "Thank you for coming. You have truly brought joy to our hearts."



# Bhaktimarga Swami's fourth trek across Canada

by Bhaktimarg Swami

## Time to say “hello and goodbye” and become more detached from the world

This trek, the fourth across Canada, was perfectly in time for me. Since the walk of 2007, I had flown frequently, been driven in cars, hopped on buses and trains, sat endlessly in an office with a phone and other devices, and had patience tested in marathon meetings (all in the service of guru and Gauranga, of course). It had been five years of this service. It was time for a break-time to get grounded again. I was compelled by my “itchy feet” to hit the trail.

Here's more in regard to timely pursuits: the year 2012 was promising to be a significant one. It coincided with the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812, which was a major conflict between Canada as a British colony and America. Tourism would be stirring along the St Lawrence/Great Lakes route where many of the battles took place. It was the obvious route to choose. The timing was right for meeting people. The trail would be Highway 2 in southern Ontario. There was also a personal drive behind this route. I grew up in this area. I felt obliged to see family and friends, particularly the generation before me, to say “hello” to them, but more accurately to say “goodbye,” because they are now at the brink of passing. I wanted to thank them in person for helping shape my life. I felt it my duty. After all, family is important.

My last rationale behind going on the road again was to reaffirm my sannyasa mode of life: the simple living and high thinking and put it into the world of action. I wanted to legitimize the ashram I'm in, and to see Krishna in His various forms of manifestation: in the form of nature (the countryside), in the form of the urban monster (the city), and finally in the form of diverse entities, especially the humans. After all, where do we not find Him? Until someone actually takes to pilgrimage, that good old-fashioned trekking, it is fairly hard to comprehend that all-pervasive concept, in as much as it is difficult to see the Divinity in the elements when exposed to them. When a person goes for that long walk, he or she is bound to change, to become more detached from the world.

## Patience and tolerance, the constant team members

There's a saying about not being too anxious to reach one's destination; rather, enjoy the journey. This can be analogous to our devotional service. Do not press so hard for results but be satisfied with the service, or as we have the verse from the Gita 2.47 which addresses being committed to dharma, duty. It takes patience to achieve results. As many people say, “enjoy living in the moment.” I hate to say that it sometimes takes a while to develop this patience. Now on the fourth trek, with about 20,000km under my feet, I'm beginning to embrace this message. The personal gain of even a small dose of patience is a big accomplishment, at least in Krishna's eyes.

Patience and its companion, tolerance, played like team members on this trek because of record-breaking highs in temperature. Many days were 30°C, which is quite something for Canada. I found myself needing to wake from rest at 3am when it was dark and cool. It was necessary to be smart, and to be tolerant “like the tree” when the heat escalated. Walking in the dark in the early hours became routine. It is a simple and yet amazing technique to walk while chanting. There are few distractions at that time. Basically it's you and the mantra. If it was a country road I would put my footing right in the middle of the road and keep my eyes on the headlights approaching before moving over. And if I might add, it's not the legs that are moving me. It's the maha-mantra that fuels it all. Chanting makes the walk distinct. It makes it introspective.

# "MORE WALKING, LESS SQUAWKING"

by Bhaktimarga Swami



## "You're a real head-turner"

Shebandawan, Ontario (Sept 7, 2012): A local television broadcaster came to interview me. She expressed off-camera how she really believes in the meditative walk. She runs every day to have time for herself. I gave her a mantra card, letting her know that this is the mantra that I chant while stepping across this vast land. At an isolated convenience store where they sell salt and sugar goods, I popped in to meet Daruka who was parked there. The store owner mentioned she saw me earlier on the road. "You're a real head-turner. I was driving and I couldn't believe that I saw a monk." She was friendly, and I guess you could say eligible to receive our complimentary book Chant and Be Happy by BBT books.

## Forty people at an impromptu kirtana

Kashabowie, Ontario (Sept 8): Helen has a yoga studio, wherein forty people came for kirtana chanting. That's impressive because it was publicised at the last minute. And while the One to whom we offered these mantras, enjoyed, we (the chanters) also enjoyed singing Hare Krishna. People offered donations.



## "You are all spirits, not Ojibwees, Crees or Mowhawks"

Mine Centre, Ontario (Sept 13): A motorist pulled over inviting me to a Mennonite church service. The group was totally gracious dealing with Daruka and me, and reciprocated by wanting to know about our pilgrimage. ... At 1.10pm I had a presentation to students at Mine Centre School, grades 5 to 8. They were all indigenous kids. They liked chanting. I relayed to them how you might think of yourself as Ojibwa or Cree or Mohawk, but ultimately we are none of these, "We are spirits." The kids had lots of questions. As a gift from the school Daruka and I received a harvest of fresh veggies and fruits set in an ornamented box. Nothing is better, especially when it comes from the garden.

## The three legs of the walking monk's trek

On this fourth trip the walking monk decided to split the journey into a few separate legs, travelling about 30 kilometres each day on highways, secondary roads and trails.

**First leg: Sept 2011;** beginning of the walk in Cape Spear, Newfoundland. -Walked through the city of Saint Johns on an eastern section of the Trans-Canada Trail, then in Nova Scotia to Amherst with the local brahmacarīs as his support team.

**Second leg: May 22 to September 23, 2012 :** walked Prince Edward Island on the Confederation Trail; along the Saint John River (New Brunswick); along the Saint Lawrence River (Quebec); along Highway 2 by the Great Lakes, Ontario, Eerie, and Lake Saint Claire ( Southern Ontario), Highway 11 on the tip of Lake Superior to the Manitoba border Northern Ontario) with Daruka and Billy Jane the parrot as travelling companions.

**-Sept 23:** Flew from Winnipeg to Toronto. While taking care of GBC duties, he still walks daily, about 10 kms, which he also does when he travels abroad

**Third leg: Spring 2013:** Canada: Manitoba border to British Columbia

## His Future Plans

Maharaja has serious thoughts about walking from Boston to New York in 2015, which is the 50th anniversary of Prabhupada's arrival to America, and from San Francisco to Los Angeles, which is also the 50th anniversary of ISKCON's birth



## A monk at Confederation College

Rainy River, Ontario (Sept 18): Temperatures were dropping to near freezing at night, and my fingers felt it as I was walking during the sun's rising. Cathy Caul of Confederation College arranged for Daruka and me to speak to her students at lunch hour. They are studying social services. I guess from her perspective the idea was to expose the students to a monk who's walking for the well being of others, and that might add a little extra depth to their studies. She graciously arranged lunch for all during my presentation, which included mantra meditation. Of course, Billy the Parrot was a hit with the young adults there.

## Interfaith session at Our Lady of Perpetual Help church

Wildness Piney, Manitoba (Sept 20): As the day passed and night slipped in our venue, Our Lady of Perpetual Help church conducted an interfaith session in Winnipeg. Many faiths participated and presented their various moods and approaches to the Absolute. One song was presented, "May the Good Lord Bless and Keep You," and one stanza goes like this: "May you walk with sunlight shining, And a bluebird in every tree. May there be a silver lining Back of every cloud you see. "As guest of honour I was asked to come forward with a blessing for the group. I led all in a bhajana meant for protection from worldliness, greed, anger and excessive lust. We appealed to God in the form of a divine magnanimous lion, Narasimha. The session was very participatory. All presenters at the occasion did splendid. The dialogue and the listening to each other are most healing and reassuring.



Being interviewed in Perth, Andover, New Brunswick, with Daruka's pet, Billy.



"Better have physical strain and a relaxed mind than physical comfort & an agitated mind."



Chatting with a lively police officer in Trois Rivières, Quebec



Trekking on in the Prairies, Saskatchewan

## "We need to pump up the pilgrim culture"

Winnipeg airport (Sept 23): In his friendly tone the young fellow arranging my boarding pass asked, "Are you from Toronto?" I answered. Then he asked, "What brought you to Winnipeg?" "I'm in the progress of walking across Canada and just finished the midway point. "The guy was fascinated and then asked, "What's it for?"

"To encourage pilgrimage and walking culture, like the Camino in Spain. I wish we could have trails and an infrastructure like that in Canada," I said. He continued, "Well, do you have any designated routes in mind for Canada where pilgrimage could take place?" "Hmm! You've given me something serious to think about."

And think I did. I recall talking to my dear Godsisters Yamuna (before she passed away) and Dina Tarine on this point of identifying some locations that might be pilgrimage-friendly and start talking up some possibilities with people. What immediately came to mind are our indigenous people and the great communication I had with them on this summer's walk and in particular the last stretch. They have shown so much enthusiasm.

When I returned to Brampton/Toronto area after landing, I spoke with a young chap who works at the Chrysler plant. The figure he gave me is that each working day 500 cars are produced at the rate of one a minute. If that's true for one factory in Canada then what of the cumulative impact that has on the globe? To me it's a case of wheels versus feet. Which will win out?

We need to pump up the pilgrim culture. I say it emphatically



# HIMALAYAN YATRA 2012: May 20 to July 3



## Comments and realizations by those who participated

**Acharya (Padayatra leader)** We are leaving behind the impact of Harinam. We distributed about Rs 343, 000 worth of books.

**Abhiram Gaur (from Puri)** It was my desire since childhood to visit the Himalaya and it was fulfilled by padayatra. Before this padayatra I was thinking that I was a good devotee and others were bad, but now I think the opposite.



**Chaitanya Chandra** Only our spiritual master can reveal the dham to us. The association of devotees gives the real pleasure.

**Bri Vijay (from Mayapur)** I was always planning to visit the Himalayas but due to low blood pressure everybody was discouraging me. So I prayed to Lord Siva. Early one morning during this trek I got a dream that Radha Madhava, the deities from Mayapur, were merging into Nitai Gaurasundar, the Padayatra deities. Then I got the energy to walk.

**Shursen (from Mayapur)** I am an old padayatri, and I always want to stay attached to padayatra

**Bhakta Pankaj (from Haryana)** I did this Himalayan yatra without spending a single rupee. If we collect all the wealth in the whole world we cannot get such an experience. I distributed lots of books, remembering that Prabhupada spent his food money for printing books.

**Bhakta Yogesh** We need at least one active ISKCON center in the Himalyan range. Many people are coming there from all over the world and they end up being misguided by unqualified so-called yogis.

**HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA  
KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE,  
HARE RAMA HARE RAMA  
RAMA RAMA HARE HARE**



# LETTER TO VYASADEVA

## by Yasodadulal Das

**Dear Dvaipayana Vyasa,**

During a time of your despondency your Gurudev, Narada Muni, came by just in time. He revealed the fact that you had written everything, except the most important treatise. He turned your heart to expounding the cream of Vedic literatures, the Srimad-Bhagavatam, the cream of the cream being the stories you told of Krsna's most intimate lilas. To uncover these, you yourself went on pilgrimage to Vraj Vrndavana. When your son, Sukadev, retold these he did not once mention the name of Srimati Radharani. At that time the secrets of Radha-Krishna Bhav (Goloka-prem) were locked in the private realms of a very few exalted Vaisnavas. Access was limited to those accomplished yogis, mystics and babajis who were tuned to the yuga-dharma of the time. You revealed:

*krsne sva-dhamopagate  
dharma-jnanadibhih saha  
kalau nasta-drsam esa  
puranarko 'dhunoditah*

"This Bhagavata Purana is as brilliant as the sun, and it has arisen just after the departure of Lord Krsna to His own abode, accompanied by religion, knowledge, etc. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the age of Kali shall get light from this Purana." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.3.43)

The Puranas also reveal how it was that Narada Muni was the first in the line of Jiva-tattva to receive the personal darshana of Gauranga Mahaprabhu. While visiting Dvaraka he opened his heart to Krishna: "When I can't hear your names being chanted and when I see the conditioned souls intoxicated by pride, absorbed in materialistic activities and devoid of Krishna consciousness, it gives me great pain. I don't see any means of deliverance for these people." Krishna replied by describing the form He would take in the coming age: "Narada, My transcendental body will be tall, molten gold in color, and My arms will be long and beautiful."

Krishna then went into ecstasy and suddenly displayed His form as Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu. Narada Muni fainted.

At the summit of our Himalayan pilgrimage we visited your holy cave (gumpa). I could feel you sitting up in full transcendental focus. It was as if you had been waiting for our report. You will know that every few years this is the small but dedicated band of boys that come chanting and dancing to the doorstep of your ashram. Each time they come by they have successfully completed another circumambulation of Bharata-varsa on foot. They are always excited to meet with you and you reciprocate by empowering them to continue with their exalted mission. Their mission is the mission of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. His mission is non-different from your mission. Your mission is coming from the heart of your Gurudev, Narada Muni Ji. The mission to deliver the fallen souls in the age of Kali is emanating from the heart of Krsna. Inside the heart of Krishna is Srimati Radharani, who radiates the most softhearted compassion of Jiva daya.

Ganga Devi originates from the left foot of Krsna in Goloka Vrndavana and lands in this world, caught in the locks of Lord Siva, the original guru. So it is that we Vaisnavas of this age find our way back to the source of Ganga Mayi where we reveal the success of our preaching.

When Lokanath Swami presented to Srila Prabhupada the report that the padayatra had visited the cave of Srila Vyasadev and presented a selection of his books including the Bhagavat Purana, Prabhupada was very enthused and enlivened.

The most significant samskar of this 2012 Himalayan Char Dham pilgrimage was that many hundreds of books were distributed during the six-week journey on foot. When our party reached your cave, the mood was thick with reciprocation. The astounding fact was laid at your lotus feet, that now the knowledge that emanated from your lotus mouth has been translated into 80 different languages. We were all huddled in your gumpa, and it seemed like your granite murti form had melted into animation. Tears had come to your eyes and your lips poised in gravity had softened into a smile. Ganesh, whose cave is nearby, could continue scribing the present pastimes of your devotees as they spread the message of Gauranga Mahaprabhu in this age of Kali.

Over the many hundreds of kilometers we chanted joyfully all the way. The soft-heartedness of Radharani in the form of the maha-mantra entered people's hearts through their ears like Krsna's flute calling all jivas to enter the Rasa. By the inconceivable grace of Nitai-Gaurasundara, we entered like the needle and came out like a plough.

The philosophy distributed in Srila Prabhupada books acts like the plough of Balarama, bringing a strong spiritual message. In this way we delivered the medicine covered in the sugar candy of the holy name.



Nara and Narayan Rishis in Badarikasrama are a form of Krishna and Arjuna. Arjuna is the calf, Krishna is the cow. When Arjuna becomes submissive to the desire of Krishna, then just as when a calf is placed before the mother Krishna lets down the milk of Bhagavad-gita. For the duration of our pilgrimage that milk flooded the land and the people of the Char Dham.

In all the significant tirtha-sthanas surrounding Badarik, Kedarnath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri our party chanted danced and distributed books and prasadam. The treasure that was available only to those who performed immense tapasya in the mood of Nara and Narayan Rishis has been plundered by Lord Nityananda and is now being given out freely. As we passed by and stopped to pay homage to many holy sites, the personalities connected to such places bestowed great blessings on the devotees.

There is a mountain ridge where Lord Siva burned Kamadev's form to ashes. The greatest Vaisnava among yogis, Mahadev greeted us as Gopeshwar Mahadev (Gopinath). This ancient form of Sada-Siva is in fact the guardian of the Rasa-lila. He stands at this place, as the dik-pala marking the border between his abode and that of Lord Krishna. Here we entered the pastimes of this Himalaya-yatra in the correct mood of leaving lust, greed and anger behind. I am convinced he opened the way for the Vaisnavas, even though it was that little blue boy who stole his original asrama in Badarik.

In Kedarnath the Siva-lingam form is understood to be the back end of Nandi, his carrier, as if carrying his master away from the Pandavas who came to seek forgiveness for killing so many at Kuruksetra. His consort, Parvati, had to join with her husband as Audaneshwara to give them shelter. Here in the ancient shrine of Kedar Ashutosha, Siva Ji drew us in for close personal darsana in the inner sanctum, where we received a rich smearing of ghee and turmeric on our heads.

At Gangotri the most merciful form of Ganga Devi, enthroned in a mandir set in the mountains, listened to our singing as if Siva himself was leading the bhajana and Ganesh was playing mrdanga. The Puranas tell that Ganga Devi herself is the melted form of Radha and Krsna as they listened to Mahadeva's sweet voice. Many of our party pushed on to bathe at Gomukh (the cow's mouth) where she gushes from the ice. At Topaban close by the sages gather every millennium to select the next group of Sapta Rishis who will govern for a Manvantara.

Perhaps the sweetest of all experiences was our blissful amble up the steep gorge of Yamunotri, with its sylvan glades of celestial beauty with deep pools and waterfalls of liquid prema, dark as she is compared with Ganges whiteness, cascading her dance from out of the high mountains over boulders tossed like dice of the gods.

Through the mist shafts of morning sunlight spot our party, every step a dance every word a song, with heartfelt remembrance of our eternal connection with Vrindavana to where she is bound, daughter of the Sun God, black like her brother, Yamaraja. And a white form also as Visakha Devi or Vidura - black in the pools, white in the waterfalls. Her father, Suryadev, manifests in a hot spring (Surya-kunda), the most soothing to pilgrims who soak their weary bodies.

Gazing through the curtain of ever-changing clouds are glimpses of the dear mountains beyond Sapta-Rishi-kunda; to go somewhere up there beyond the common men may mean not to come back. The heart yearns. One day we will all leave this material world. Some may even trace the route up the Ganga to the hole kicked in the universe by Lord Vamana across the Viraja River and into the eternal abode.

For us the road has been long and sometimes narrow. The devotees, like transcendental highway thieves with strong determination, would surround and stop the never-ending lines of vehicles, including buses, trucks, private cars, and taxis waking up the sleeping souls, and receive a good response for their efforts. The local pujaris, brahmanas and temple panditas welcomed our ISKCON yatra. Despite their long-established tradition of worship in the mood of awe and reverence, they were excited to receive the sweet spontaneity of Gauranga Mahaprabhu, who thrives on the predominance of Srimati Radharani. Such a dynamic had us entertaining and involving large crowds of pilgrims from all over India. Gaura-Nitai entered right inside the temple mandaps and Garba Griha's activating revolution (viplavo). Long quest awaiting darsana were thrilled and picked up in the kirtana-rasa of Krsna's holy name. I could feel that what was once in previous epochs kept hidden from the general masses was now an open secret that all could participate freely.

When I was a young devotee visiting Varshana, the town where Radharani grew up in Vrindavana, there was one moment when I was wondering who would be my spiritual master. Right at that time a servant of Lokanath Swami came from Maharaja's room and handed me what I thought was prasadam. When I opened the brown paper bag I was startled to see that it was a granite stone. Later I asked Maharaja about the stone. He exclaimed, "Oh, you got that!" Thinking it may have been given by mistake, I offered it back. He said, "No, take it as the arrangement of Krishna; it is a fragment from Srila Vyasadeva's cave in the Himalayas." At that moment I requested him to accept me as his disciple and exactly one year later I received diksa initiation in the sacred village of Varshana. For this transcendental incident, I feel most indebted to you and my service will always be directed through my spiritual master to the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani.

**Your aspiring servant,  
Yasodadulal Das**



# PADAYATRA QUIZZ

Based on the "Padayatra Story" book

**1- For how many years did Madhvacarya and his followers go on padayatra?**

- a- Five years
- b- Ten years
- c- Twenty years

**2- Who developed the Vrndavana-dhama Parikrama?**

- a- Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura
- b- Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura
- c- The Six Goswamis

**3- How many kilometres did Lord Ramacandra walk accompanied by Laksman and Sita?**

- a- About 3000km
- b- About 2000km
- c- About 1500km

**4- From where did the original Dindi-yatra in Maharashtra, India, start?**

- a- Alandi
- b- Dehu
- c- Pune

**5- Which year did Lord Caitanya return to Puri to stay after His travels through India?**

- a- In 1512
- b- In 1515
- c- In 1517

**6- Who accompanied Abhay Caranaravindam on his padayatra from Jhansi to Chirgaon in 1953?**

- a- Jhansi's League of Devotees members
- b- Acarya Prabhakar
- c- The poet Maithili Saran Gupta

**7- To which devotees did Srila Prabhupada first present the idea of bullock cart sankirtana?**

- a- Bhagavat dasa and Tribhuvanath dasa
- b- Lokanath Swami and Atma-tattva dasa
- c- Dhananjaya dasa and Kulasekhara dasa

**8- 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 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.

**9- Which route did the first bullock cart walking party in India take?**

- a- Vrndavana to Mayapur
- b- Bhubaneswar to Mayapur
- c- Hyderabad to Mayapur.

**10- Since 1984 how many tours of India has Padayatra India completed?**

- a- Seven tours
- b- Six tours
- c- Five tours

**11- Which year did Padayatra India organize the first ISKCON Vraja Mandala Parikrama?**

- a- 1987
- b- 1988
- c- 1889

**12- Which is the first country where padayatra was organized (outside India)?**

- a- USA
- b- Guyana
- c- Mauritius

**13- Which is the smallest country padayatra went through?**

- a- Monaco
- b- San Marino
- c- Andorra

**14- Which was the longest padayatra (besides India)?**

- a- Boston (USA) to Panama
- b- Pennsylvania (USA) to Ecuador
- c- Belfast (Ireland) to Moscow

**15- Who served as padayatra leader for the longest time?**

- a- Saunaka dasa
- b- Ekanath dasa
- c- Jaya Vijaya dasa

**16- In how many countries did Parasurama dasa organize or participate in padayatra?**

- a- 22
- b- 32
- c- 37

**17 - In which countries were mayors best received (besides India)?**

- a- New Zealand
- b- Italy
- c- Australia

**18- Which country was at war when padayatra walked through?**

- a- Northern Ireland
- b- Georgia
- c- Sierra Leone



**19- Which country used socks and shoes for oxen for the first time?**

- a- USA
- b- England
- c- New Zealand

**20- Which country inaugurated a Srila Prabhupada Square during padayatra?**

- a- Brazil
- b- Mexico
- c- Panama

**21- How many pairs of shoes did Bhaktimarga Swami use during his five-and-a-half month, 7194km cross-Canada trek in 2003?**

- a- Three
- b- Four
- c- Six



## PADAYATRA INDIA 2012



**PADAYATRA QUIZ ANSWERS**

1- c :: 2- b :: 3- a :: 4- b :: 5- b :: 6- b  
7- a :: 8- a, b and c :: 9- c :: 10- c  
11- a - During Gaura-purnima festival  
12- c :: 13- a :: 14- a :: 15- c :: 16- b  
17- a :: 18- a- b- c- :: 19- c :: 20- a  
21- b



# CARAVAN OF SONG AND DANCE IN SLOVENIA

By Bhagavat Dharma dasa

During the first two weeks of July 2012 devotees walked from Notranjske to Dolenjske Toplice in the central part of Slovenia for the eleventh Slovenian padayatra. In this area the hilly land is forested, with several small villages and only a few towns. Different places, different people, different moods, different problems. Because of Kali-yuga people are atheistic and increasingly materially engrossed and frustrated. Those among them who know they are miserable are the most fortunate, because they are more open for possible solutions to their difficulties – solutions offered by the padayatris and Srila Prabhupada's books.

The padayatra motto remained the same: From pure consciousness to a pure heart and pure living – which leads to a pure environment and more congenial relationships. The innovation for this year, which explains padayatra's new name, Caravan of Song and Dance, was the fact that afternoons were kept free for kirtana, Krishna-katha, association between devotees and, of course, preaching. Excellent, simple and abundant prasadam prepared by padayatra's culinary team was served at least twice a day. Italian kirtana leader Hare Krishna prabhu came with his accordion, for the pleasure of all. There was also Bhakta Jakob the juggler and Shuka, Bhakta Michel's big parrot. When people saw our horse cart, devotees in dhotis and saris, a juggler and a parrot many of them thought we were a kind of circus.

Like previous years, Haridas the horse pulled the cart carrying the beautiful murtis of Sri Sri Nitai-Gaura-natharaja, Srila Prabhupada, and Tulasi devi.

The team of organisers still consisted of Lalita-Govinda dasa, Ananta dasa, Pusta-Nitai dasa and Urukrama dasa. Among the improvements there was the introduction of a registration form for all participants – only mentally healthy and health-insured ISKCON devotees and children accompanied by their parents or their representatives with written authorisation could participate in the padayatra. In order to allow as many devotees as possible to join the padayatra participation was free, but appeals were made for contributions, which along with profits from book ales covered all the expenses – such as rent for three halls, bhoga, vehicles, the horse, the printing of brochures and T-shirts. To make everyone's life on the road easier organisers also circulated in advance a list of items padayatris needed, such as appropriate clothing and footwear and waterproof gear for rainy weather, umbrella, swimsuit, sleeping bag, mosquito repellent, flashlight, a plate, a glass and clothes pegs. Those who walked for the whole two weeks received two complimentary Eco-Caravan Padayatra Slovenia T-shirts.

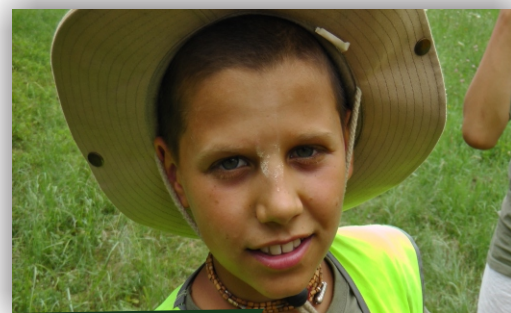
The number of padayatris fluctuated, but there were up to 100 at times. Among the new generation of devotees, some young children took part for a day or two at a time as well as a few older children who were regular padayatra participants.

The service of eleven-year-old Bhakta Nitai was to lead Haridas the horse, which he had done regularly since he was four – one year he also led Bhima the ox. After a few days Nitai led Haridas by riding him. Thirteen-year-old Bhakta Gopal was in charge of the padayatra cart. Both of them did their service under the supervision of padayatra leader Lalita-Govinda prabhu.



1700 books and 10,000 biscuits distributed

This year the padayatris were blessed with three special guests. Bir Krishna Goswami and Prahladananda Swami each gave a festival-opening lecture and the latter also participated for several days in walking, singing and lecturing. Bhakti Visramba-Madhava Swami walked with us and held questions-and-answers sessions. An amusing incident took place when two devotees escorted Maharaja to the train in Austria. They were helping him to put his luggage into his carriage when at that moment the train began to move. The devotees pulled the emergency cord and the train stopped. They got out and the railway officials wanted them to pay 180 euros for each minute of delay. So they just looked at each other and ran away as fast as they could. Because they were slim they easily escaped the overweight stationmaster.



Bhakta Nitai

**PADAYATRA**  
**worldwide**  
**ki Jaya!**



# CZECH PADAYATRA

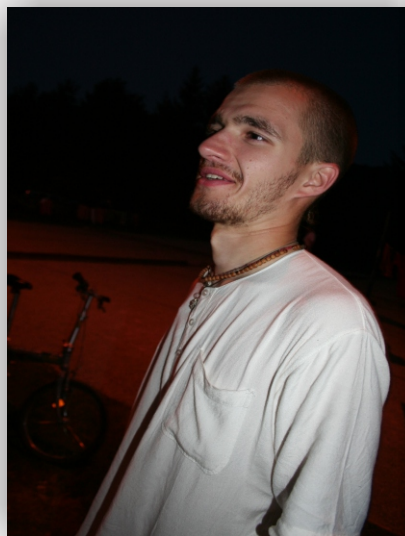
## The young generation walking for Krishna in the Czech Republic

By Bhakta Prahlad

Once again we had padayatra in our country and once again I was asked to write about it. It is as if every year is the same. We struggle to get the advance party done, we try to cover all the services, and a few days before the whole show starts we even think about cancelling it. But hey, then we finally set off and it's two weeks of unadulterated, transcendental adventure where you are never really sure what ecstasy will come the next second.

This year we answered the calls of devotees from the Czech part of the country (last year we did padayatra in the province of Moravia) and made the advance party around the new Luzce temple, maintained by devotees from the Prague area. As a starting day we chose the Wednesday after Ratha-yatra in Prague, which had become something of a tradition the past few years. As a coincidence, it happened that Kadamba Kanana Swami had an airline transfer so he stayed overnight in the temple and in the morning gave a nice lecture about padayatra. And then it started. We went for two weeks and did two circles throughout the countryside around the temple. Among other places we visited and did a program was Beroun (a city with a population of 19,000), Karlstejn Castle (one of the most prominent tourist destinations in Czech), and Tetin (a village of distinction thanks to its role in Czech mythology). At the end another festival was ahead of us, Balarama Jayanti, which we celebrated back in the temple with Bhaktivaibhava Swami. It was a well-deserved finale to our seventeen-day marathon.

At this point I would like to elaborate on an interesting phenomenon which has become prominent on padayatra in recent years: that of the second generation and young devotees taking on responsibility on padayatra. While we are a relatively young yatra (ISKCON was legalized in Czech after the 1989 revolution), it is not so common to see the younger generation partaking in projects and organizing. However, we can see the first examples of this happening on padayatra. I made a short interview of the young devotees and gurukulis who has appeared on padayatra during the past few years. The questions I asked: When was your first time on padayatra? What kind of service did you do? What does padayatra means for you? What does padayatra bring to your Krishna consciousness?



**Bhakta Prahlad**



**Lila Mohini Dasi**

### Gaura Hari Das

I do not even remember the first time I was on padayatra, something around eight years back, maybe nine. Unfortunately, I am not able to attend the whole padayatra, but as soon as I come I get the mrdanga and the microphone and a whole day of harinam is certain. Later I also play mrdanga during the cultural program. I always try to help with whatever is needed. From time to time we make an ice-cream or pancake party in the kitchen for the devotees. The whole padayatra is one big Krishna conscious party for me, a lot of holy name, good prasadam, fun and wonderful association of devotees and preaching. It is amazing to observe kids looking from behind a fence, grandparents waving from windows, and people running out of their houses and swaying to the rhythm of an ecstatic kirtan. Padayatra is an amazing preaching project and I am very happy that I can participate at least a little bit.

## Lila Mohini devi dasi

I've known padayatra since my childhood, but I attended for the first time when I was thirteen. Although I was not a grown-up and my parents could not come with me, there were always devotees who took care of me. From that time on I came for padayatra every year, even for a few days.

I study Bharata-natyam, so I fill up a small part of every evening program. Of course, I also have a place during the whole day for harinam with all the others. In time I started to help with the deities, first with garlands then with turbans and today the deity worship is my main service.

For me padayatra is certainly a challenge every year. One never knows what awaits them, who they will meet and what will happen during such a short period of fourteen days. It is thrilling, vital and full of energy! To my Krishna consciousness it brings mainly a big enthusiasm for preaching. It forces me to participate really actively in Srila Prabhupada's mission and it moves me always a bit further. For me padayatra is a sweet revolution for the present time.



which pleases Srila Prabhupada. More or less I help with everything that is needed, but I am attracted the most by services related to kitchen and cooking, so mostly my services are pot washing, cutting veggies or assistance during cooking.

Padayatra is the incomparable festival of the year, when I can have the association of sincere devotees for such a long uninterrupted time and when I am able to render some service to them. By this I get inspiration and strength for taking up Krishna consciousness again a little bit more seriously.

## Bhakta Honza

I first met padayatra in 2009 when I was invited on it by elder devotees. I took part only for the first week. For me padayatra is an opportunity to engage in a really unique way of preaching. I say unique mainly because the manner in which it is done in our country is evoking interest and taste for the congregational chanting of the Hare Krishna maha-mantra. It can



find a way to attract people despite cultural differences. I value this the most.

Since I am not a practical man and can't do much, I'm happy when somebody lets me do something. Either I wash pots or help in the kitchen with vegetables and what is needed. I am not much of a sentimental nature, but when I see that a person who just ate a pork steak is chanting with happiness and joy Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare it really moves me, while simultaneously giving me immense inspiration. At times like this I realize that if I would leave Krishna consciousness I would loose this opportunity to help others (or to help devotees who help those people). During the year, when the hard times come and I am not inspired, it is this thought that gives me strength to continue.

## Syama Kisori devi dasi

I got to know padayatra through Facebook. I saw pictures from last year and was very inspired to attend. Then I contacted one devotee who gave me more detailed information and also gave me a variety of services which I could do.

I help with deity worship. I like it very much. We have Gaura-Nitai deities at home but here it is so much different, mainly because we have to get up earlier and there is this whole schedule. Also there are other devotees, mainly Lila Mohini who is already experienced in this. I dress the big Gaura-Nitai and Lord Nrsimhadeva while Lila takes care of her silas and chota Gaura-Nitai. I like to dress all of them but Lord Nrsimhadeva is different. He has a different style. He is special. Compared with practicing at home, I like padayatra more because there are a lot of enthusiastic devotees. There is also a greater freedom. Also, with the other kids we were looking forward to seeing

## Bhakta Martin

I was first introduced to padayatra three years ago when they went around Krisnub Dvur (the Czech farm community). It was just after Ratha-yatra in Prague, after which I had an inspiration to join another festival and hence to have more association with devotees. Also I was curious how this festival proceeds, because I already heard about padayatra but did not know much about it really. For me Padayatra means to have constant association with devotees and a chance to take part in the incessant preaching services,





each other after a very longtime. The relationships were changing and we got to know each other better, which was also due to the difficult conditions we were all experiencing on padayatra. I am looking forward for the next year! Hopefully I can attend the whole festival this time.

## Bhakta Prahlad

Syama Kisor (17) is a fresh newcomer to Padayatra. She came from Slovakia with her family but unfortunately her brother had to leave after a few days due to some health problems. Although she left with her mother after one week, in that time Syama Kisor proved herself by adapting very quickly to the Padayatra program and fitting in the team instantly.

Since I also count among the young generation -I'm 22 years old- I should mention something about me. My father, Munipriya prabhu, is the leader of Padayatra Czech Republic, therefore it is natural for me to help him. Also I practically grew up on padayatra, although more in a spiritual sense than in a physical one since padayatra went on only during summer. But ever since I first came there with my parents I fell in love with it. It was mainly due to Rajaram Prabhu, who was generating a profound atmosphere of appreciation and fatherly love.

If my counting is correct I already did every possible service, except driving the bulls, cooking and moderating the cultural program. Practically every year my responsibilities differ slightly, although by now I am already established as a kind of commander and the person who knows the answers to all practical questions. I owe who I am now to padayatra. Somehow all the blocks and obstacles disappear as soon as something needs to be done for it. I hope this tendency endures all odds and that I still will be blessed with any possible service for Sri Sri Nitai-Gaurasundara next year, when the carousel starts again. And again, and again.



Sarasvati peeling tomatoes



Dance Competition



## Facts and Figures

Two weeks: July 18 till August 2, 2012  
Walked 110km. 12 public programs  
611 prasadam packages, 782 small books, 330 big books and six maha-big books distributed. Average number of padayatris: 15 (eight at lowest point and 20 to 30 during weekends)



# The First Padayatra in Czech Republic

by Alalanatha Das

## 2013: Celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Czech Padayatra

The year 2013 will be a special landmark for the Czech Padayatra: every summer since 1993 the Padayatra team has walked through many villages and towns of the Czech Republic. The crew even went to some other countries like Kavkaz, Ukraine, Poland and Holland. The grand celebration will be held during the summer padayatra which will take place at the end of July and the beginning of August 2013. We cordially invite anyone and everyone to join us in an ecstatic festival of kirtan, sadhu sanga and prasadam for the pleasure of Srila Prabhupada and Sri Sri Nitai Gaurasundara!

In 1993 devotees from Krishna's Yard (Krisnuv Dvur, the name of our farm near Prague) decided to arrange a Padayatra walk with the goal of advertising their farm and propagating Krishna consciousness in their neighborhood and at the "Earth, the provider" fair in the town of Ceske Budejovice. The name of the walk "Steps towards Peace" suggests the content of the message: we will attain peace when we revive our lost Krishna consciousness. The main organizer was Rajarama Prabhu, guided by Lokanatha Maharaja.

We started with cart construction. The rather small cart was an adapted four-wheel cart of 1 x 2 meters. In between the double floor that could be opened from above, there were personal belongings stored together with the kitchen equipment. The cart had a roof and sides of grey tarp, and the side was a yellow picture of Srila Prabhupada with "Padayatra Steps Towards Peace" written on it. The cart was pulled by beautiful ox called Jiva. It was not possible to have Deities. For walking on the road, the ox had to be shod, which is quite a demanding



thing. You have to lay the animal down on its side, tie its legs and then you fix the shoes on the hoof in such a way that the nails go through the non-sensitive part of the hoof only. We chose the easier way - sticking pieces of rubber with glue. After finishing all the preparations we finally set out for our 200 Km journey. We set out with a good number of bhaktas, Krishna's friends and a few sankirtan devotees, who went by car and distributed books the whole day in neighboring villages. Jiva pulled the cart (at first just unwillingly) with smiling and waving Rajaram. Sometimes Jiva was playing "dead", laying on his back and digging his horns into the ground, but later on he grew wise and flawlessly pulled the cart, except for the moments when he smelled ripe plums or apples.

While we distributed books, flyers, invitations and prasadam, cars were slowing down and the villagers were getting out of the houses to have a good look at what was happening. We had never seen such a thing before. Jiva was most enchanting to everybody and the kids often rode on the drivers seat. When people asked what we were doing, we could speak about Krishna, the peace formula, and our farm.

The whole action was spontaneous - although we knew more or less which direction to go, we had no idea what place we were going to reach that day and where we would sleep. That was the absolute uniqueness of the first Padayatra. It was just for the brave ones. We had to completely depend on Krishna's protection and be satisfied with anything He would send us. Sometimes it was a nice house, a hotel, a hayloft, sometimes a meadow by a pond (it had one advantage - being near for the morning bath). With the passing of time I can see it was great mercy and a wonderful opportunity to learn to be really and completely dependent on Krishna. You don't know where you're going to sleep, what you're going to eat, you simply walk through the land, sing Hare Krishna, talk about Krishna and the only thing you know is that Krishna as the Supreme Lord resides in the hearts of all, and that He knows everything and controls everything. He says: "In all activities just depend upon Me and work always under My protection. In such devotional service, be fully conscious of Me. If you become conscious of Me, you will pass over all the obstacles of conditioned life by My grace. If, however, you do not work in such consciousness but act through false ego, not hearing Me, you will be lost."



**"In all activities just depend upon Me and work always under My protection."**

Krishna is taking care of all the living beings, why then would He not take care of those who are trying to serve Him? Of course it wasn't always easy. Sometimes it rained, it was cold, evening was approaching and there was no place to stay... but finally everything ended up well and it was nectar. Krishna was simply testing us a little bit sometimes. He doesn't say: "If you become My devotee there will be no obstacles," but "You'll surpass them by My mercy if you are conscious of Me." And these different moments of doubts and difficulties are at the same time moments when we remember Krishna the most, as queen Kunti says.

Every morning we got up early, took our bath, and chanted our japa. At seven, in front of our traveling altar, we were singing the whole morning program and reading from Srimad Bhagavatam. After breakfast we packed the camp and set out for the next journey. The highlight at the end of Padayatra was a visit of Lokanath Maharaja, who is known worldwide for his ecstatic kirtans and giving support to these walks. It was his first visit to Czech Republic. He viewed the cart, greeted the devotees, appreciated our effort, and he designated our first padayatra "the smallest in the world". In the evenings we were usually cooking and resting, but in some nice places we managed to make a little cultural program with chanting of Hare Krishna, talking some philosophy and some prasadam tasting.

At that time hardly anyone knew about our movement, and for many people this was their first, and maybe also their last, contact with Krishna consciousness. That's why it was -and still is - necessary to take any opportunity to give out Krishna's mercy. And Padayatra is one of the most wonderful and pleasant ways to present our culture and philosophy in public. At the same time it is a good opportunity for the devotees to be in the open air, change their environment for some time, relax and get inspiration for their spiritual efforts. Lord Caitanya said that His Holy Name will be sung in every town and every village. Padayatra is the right means for fulfillment of this prophecy and everyone who takes part in it will be astonished by the mercy of Lord Caitanya.



**Rajaram Das**





# SPECIAL STORIES

FROM "THE PADAYATRA STORY" BOOK

## "They came here to change my life"

by Avadhuta Siromani dasa

This happened in 2005 in Mexico. Once we stopped in a sorgo plant and met Cesar, a typical Mexican with a big smile on his face, a moustache, leather boots, a big belly, a large sombrero (the traditional large hat for men) and a good heart. He invited us to rest for a few days at his place. I started to meditate on one verse of the Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta: "Sri Nityananda Prabhu, having blessed Jagai and Madhai with His causeless mercy quickly left that place, but He let them taste the nectar of the holy name."

Over the course of these few days I saw how Cesar's heart got transformed, certainly by the causeless mercy of Sri Nityananda prabhu. After the initial stage of curiosity, gradually Cesar started to ask for personal advice and counselling, he began to read from the sastras, and every night he took prasadam. He liked it so much he always came for a second plate. Once I saw him slowly approaching the deities, after first glancing at Them. One day he came over to me at the deity wagon and inquired, "Are They saints?"

I replied, "Yes, something similar. They are divine personalities distributing a message of love for God for the welfare of the world."

Cesar asked, "Do They perform miracles?"

"Oh yes," I laughed. "Just look at us. We have changed so much since we became devotees. It's been a revolution in consciousness. If you knew where we came from!"

He smiled and remarked "Yes, that's a miracle."

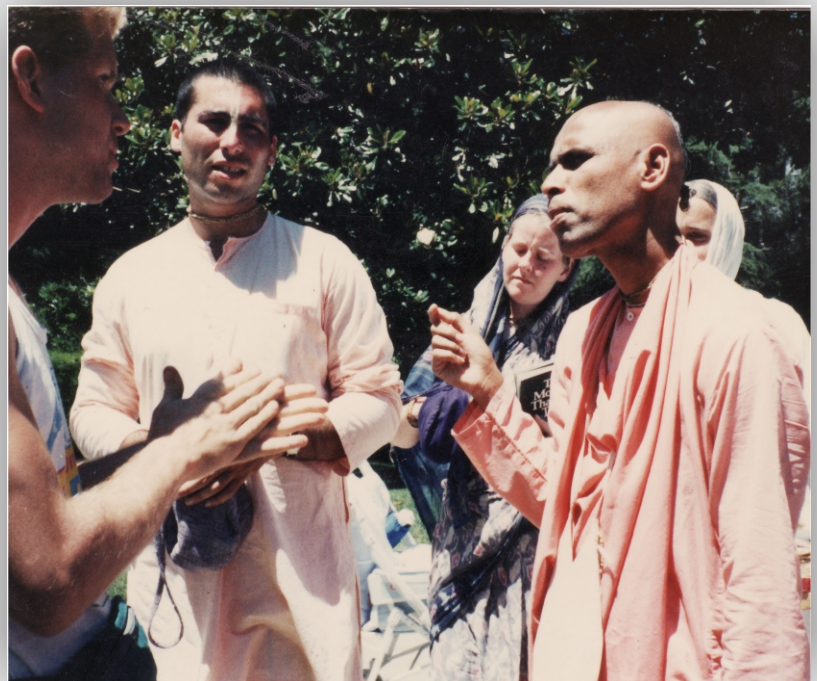
The next day he approached me in a very personal mood and revealed his mind to me. "I know you are just passing by, but I'm sure that They (the deities) came here to change my life. They are performing a miracle with me and my almost-broken family." He went on to explain that because he was learning the maha-mantra and trying to chant, he was seeing life in a different perspective. I listened and fanned his spark of devotion towards the deities.

The night before we left Cesar came in front of Nitai-Gaurasundara to offer prayers. Afterwards, without any trace of shyness, he asked if he could have a picture of Them. When we gave him a picture he said happily, "I'm going to put Them on an altar and pray to Them." He took his picture, thanked us, looked a last time at the murtis of Sri Sri Nitai-Gaurasundara and left, asking us to keep in touch with him through the internet

## "Protected by the Master of my Mysticism"

by Abhay dasa

Even though Padayatra America 1989 was a great struggle in many ways, we experienced a kind of mysticism as everything seemed to come at the right time under the direction of a higher power, not only at the time of preparations but also on the walk itself. One time the group was walking through Malibu, outside Los Angeles, and had lost contact with the support vehicle. It was a very hot day and everyone in the party was very, very thirsty. There was nowhere to obtain water. One sannyasi on the walk spontaneously pointed to a grove of trees, suggesting we should rest there. When we got there, lo and behold a case of Arrowhead Mountain Spring water was sitting under a tree, holding just enough water to satisfy everyone. We still have no idea where that water came from.





# HOW TO Organize YOUR PADAYATRA

In this new feature we'll present some summaries, tips and excerpts from the Padayatra Manual to help organisers deal with the many practical aspects of padayatra. In this issue we'll present the office and the general organisation, along with a sample of a mass distribution pamphlet. In the next issue we'll present the feasibility study, fundraising, legalities and the route. We invite our readers to let us know which topics interest them the most or those where they need more information. Now you can download the entire contents of the Padayatra Manual on the padayatra website.

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED AN OFFICE FOR

Depending on the duration and frequency of your padaystras, it would be good to have some kind of office, the temple's, someone's home or a special place for the following activities:

### 1) Communication:

- An address to receive donations and important mail, and do your own mailing
- A place for padayatra leaders to meet, think, brainstorm and organize things
- An information board or center for participants and interested devotees
- A location for media people to meet padayatra organizers

### 2) Production of printed materials:

- Letters to officials, invitations to devotees and VIPs for fundraising dinners, festivals, inaugural functions and closing ceremonies
- Posters announcing festivals, the arrival of padayatra in town, fundraising events, benefit concerts.
- Padayatra fundraising brochure
- Padayatra magazine for promotion and fundraising or/and padayatra souvenir magazine
- Local Padayatra Newsletter
- Pamphlets for mass distribution: don't miss your chance to spread the message widely
- Padayatra clipboard (or a more complete presentation folder) for book distributors, advance party work, fundraisers, and padayatris contacting officials and the media. Contents: short statement on the purpose of padayatra, letters of recommendation from hosts and officials, favorable newspaper clippings, photos of the main aspects of padayatra,
- Devotees' information sheet and registration form
- Legal waiver stating that padayatra will not be held legally responsible for accidents and serious illness during the walk
- News package for the media (details and samples will be given in further issues)



## GENERAL ORGANIZATION

### 1) Identify the goals you want to achieve

- Decide the style of padayatra you want: A single walker, harinama procession, a padayatra week, a walk-and-drive, walk-and-fly or walk-and-take-a-boat padayatra?
- Identify the organizers: temple devotees, congregational members, etc, from one or several countries, another group not related to ISKCON
- Clarify your main objectives: preach as much as possible, cultivate friends and congregation, focus on intensive book distribution, have many festivals, make it a spiritual retreat, promote cow protection and ox power, unite a temple or yatra, or get a specific message across to the public through your theme
- Decide on the duration and pace of your padayatra

## 2) Organize your manpower

- Evaluate the number and categories of participants
- Make the list of departments you'll need and find a devotee in charge of each one: managing devotee or committee, secretary, kirtana and procession leader, advance party team, fundraisers, treasurer, communication people, cart construction, animals, kitchen, Food for Life, deities, festivals, vehicles, camping equipment, security and travelling store

## 3- Get the devotees ready for the road

- Post the list of personal items to bring
- Get a First Aid kit and check on mandatory vaccinations
- Educate the devotees about possible dangers: hazardous swimming, poisonous plants, dangerous insects, animals, and humans, possible landmines, etc

## 4- How to manage the party on the road

- Regular communication through short daily istagosthis  
What all padayatris should know before the daily walk starts: itinerary, number of kilometres for the walk (think of children), location of parades, home programs, prasadam service, festival, accommodations, and of course their service for the day.
- Have an information board where you will daily post the above information, plus newspaper clippings, reports of encounters with the media, book scores, photos, list of items lost and found
- The advance party team could make a daily travel report that could be used in future walks, with date, location, number of kilometres walked, condition of road, receptions, names and addresses of hosts, description of media coverage, list of VIPs met, etc
- Have a vehicle always available to transport sick or seriously injured walkers to the nearest medical facility.





# SLOVENIA'S MASS DISTRIBUTION PAMPHLET

The following text is part of a four-language (English, Slovenian, German and Italian) pamphlet produced in 2002 by the leaders of Padayatra Slovenia. It has been slightly edited.

## ECO-CARAVAN PADAYATRA SLOVENIA

### Alert! Planet Earth is in trouble!

"The environment is burning in a hundred, in a thousand places worldwide. But there is no fire escape, no 'out', no other solution than a shift in knowing who we are." (Jim Nollman, *Spiritual Environment*, 1990, p56)

### LIVING ENVIRONMENT OF HUMAN AND OTHER BEINGS IS POLLUTED!

A polluted environment grows out of polluted consciousness. Gandhi said, "There's enough on earth for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed." Therefore there is a need to accept a simpler and more natural way of life. One of the greatest challenges to contemporary religions is how to respond to the ecological crisis perpetuated by the enormous inroads of materialism and secularization in contemporary societies, especially those societies arising in or influenced by the modern West." (Dr Mary Evelyn Tucker)

Members of ISKCON (the International Society for Krishna Consciousness) try to cope with the eco-problems from the spiritual point of view. Greed, reckless and irresponsible behaviour as the causes of pollution are easy to be recognized, therefore the solution is at hand: experience higher inner peace, take delight in spiritual satisfaction, and reduce addiction to material desires that are beyond reach. Let our contribution to the pure environment in all respects be from the level of pure consciousness.

### NATURE WILL BE PURE WHEN OUR CONSCIOUSNESS IS PURE

An environmental crisis has its basis in the crisis of consciousness; therefore we speak in favour of universal spiritual vision as a key that can help solve or diminish this problem and bring our planet in healthier condition. Those who appreciate the spiritual wisdom that guided civilizations in the past desire such changes; living in harmony with nature means knowing the laws of nature. One of the most powerful laws of nature is the law of karma – the law of action and reaction. What we sowed yesterday we reap today, and what we sow today we shall reap tomorrow.

### LET'S FREE OURSELVES FROM OUR KARMIC REACTIONS (OR THE RESULTS OF OUR IGNORANT ACTIVITIES IN THE PAST) BY MANTRA MEDITATION

The force of karma keeps people trapped in the destructive patterns of consciousness responsible for our planetary crisis. Under the control of karma, people instinctively pursue material gratifications and possessions, thus fuelling the over-consuming economy that overwhelms the environment with all kinds of pollution. The subtle, destructive energies of karma can however be overcome. The law of karma acts most powerfully on those who identify the self totally as the material body and mind instead of the soul. By becoming free from such identification, people can become free from the control of karma. This requires a change of behaviour. Originally, the conscious self has its origin in the supreme conscious self. Great spiritual teachers in the Vedic tradition therefore advise that we reconnect ourselves with that supreme person to be completely free from karma. This can be done through devotional spiritual practices. The Vedas explain that powerful spiritual energies can be generated by yoga, meditation and the chanting of mantras. In the present age, the chanting of mantras is particularly effective. When properly chanted, the combinations of sounds in mantras release their energies. The most powerful mantras, according to the Vedas, are those composed of the names of God, such as the Hare Krishna mantra: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare. The Vedas teach that God's name, being non-different from God Himself, is supremely potent. Therefore, by properly chanting the Hare Krishna mantra, we can reduce karmic reactions, which is one of the underlying causes of our environmental crisis. The chanting of the Hare Krishna maha-mantra is especially effective when people chant it aloud together.

Please chant with us: HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA  
KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE,  
HARE RAMA HARE RAMA  
RAMA RAMA HARE HARE  
and become happy!

Experience higher inner peace, take delight in spiritual satisfaction and reduce addiction to material desires that are beyond reach. Let our contribution to the pure environment in all respects be from the level of pure consciousness.

# Let's all get on the road to Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of ISKCON in 2016

## Countries that will participate

**India, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Mauritius, Rodriguez, La Réunion (France) and Madagascar**

**Bhaktimarga Swami has serious thoughts about walking from Boston to New York in 2015, and from San Francisco to Los Angeles**

**ALL THE COUNTRIES PLANNING TO ORGANISE PADAYATRA by the end of 2016 are invited to contact us so we can update the list for the next newsletter. Thank you.**

## Padayatra Schedules

**India:** Walking in UP after the Kumbha Mela in Allahabad in February 2013.

Contact: Suryavanshi Das. Email : [suryavanshi.lok@gmail.com](mailto:suryavanshi.lok@gmail.com)

Prahlad Das, ISKCON Pandharpur, +91-7874749998

Gaura Krishna Das, +91 8600448071. Email - [Gaura.Krishna.lok@pamho.net](mailto:Gaura.Krishna.lok@pamho.net)

**Mauritius, Rodriguez, La Réunion and Madagascar**

**(Islands in the Indian Ocean)**

Contact Premarnava das: [prema\\_lok@yahoo.com](mailto:prema_lok@yahoo.com)

**Slovenia:** July 7th to 18th 2013

Contact Urukrama das: [Urukrama.RNS@pamho.net](mailto:Urukrama.RNS@pamho.net)

Ananta das: [ananta.RNS@pamho.net](mailto:ananta.RNS@pamho.net)

**Czech Republic:** Last 2 weeks of July 2013

Contact Bhakta Prahlad [bh.prahlad@gmail.com](mailto:bh.prahlad@gmail.com)

**Please send any articles, photos, reports, questions and suggestions on how to improve this newsletter to Gaurangi Dasi : [gaurangi.lok@pamho.net](mailto:gaurangi.lok@pamho.net) AND Yadukulesvara Das: [iskcon@padayatra.com](mailto:iskcon@padayatra.com)**



## Appeal for photos for the Padayatra book's DVD

LOOKING FOR THE BEST PHOTOS OF ALL THE PADAYATRAS WORLDWIDE  
(for the DVD that will go along with the Padayatra Story book)

We especially need photos of India Padayatra from 1984 to 1986

Please contact Gaurangi dasi : gaurangi.lok@pamho.net before sending anything

## Weblinks

**Official ISKCON Padayatra Website**

**[www.padayatra.com](http://www.padayatra.com)**

Recently updated, it now contains the entire Padayatra Manual. In the near future, we will also post many new photos, as well as the most important articles of the latest Padayatra Worldwide Newsletters.

**Bhaktimarga Swami**

[www.thewalkingmonk.org/Home.html](http://www.thewalkingmonk.org/Home.html)

[www.myspace.com/bhaktimargaswami/photos/1903273](http://www.myspace.com/bhaktimargaswami/photos/1903273)

[www.thewalkingmonk.blogspot.fr/2012/06/pix-of-canwalk-bms-is-taking-time-off.html](http://www.thewalkingmonk.blogspot.fr/2012/06/pix-of-canwalk-bms-is-taking-time-off.html)

Interview of Bhaktimarga Swami by Abhidheya dasi on her new blog: [www.sandalwoodandsage.wordpress.com](http://www.sandalwoodandsage.wordpress.com)

**Czech Republic** (in Czech language) [www.padayatra.cz](http://www.padayatra.cz)

**Slovenia** (in Slovenian) [www.ekokaravana.si](http://www.ekokaravana.si)

### **WANTED COOK for Czech Padayatra**

-Last 2 weeks of July 2013

-Benefits:

Free stay on padayatra,  
First-class abundant prasadam and  
The bliss of serving Sri Sri Gaura Nitai  
and the devotees.

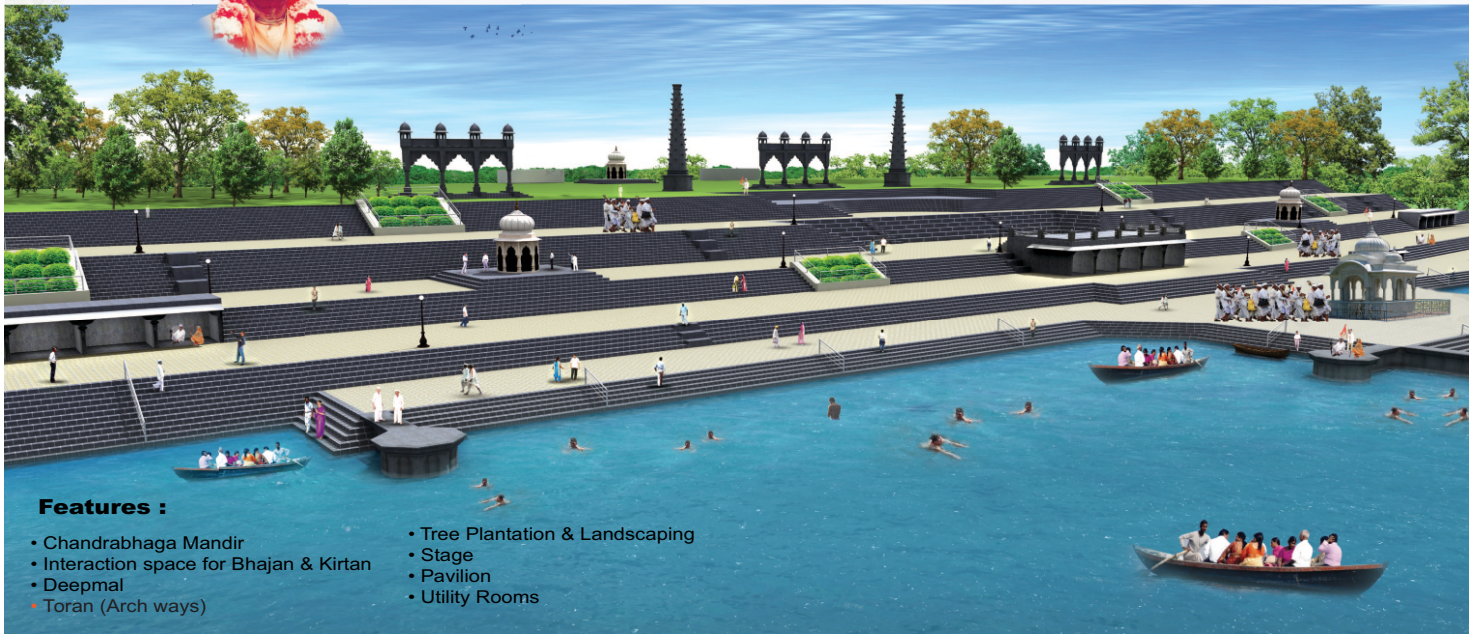
Contact: Bhakta Prahlad

Email: [bh.prahlad@gmail.com](mailto:bh.prahlad@gmail.com)





## Srila Prabhupada Ghat An ISKCON initiative in Pandharpur



### Features :

- Chandrabhaga Mandir
- Interaction space for Bhajan & Kirtan
- Deepmal
- Toran (Arch ways)
- Tree Plantation & Landscaping
- Stage
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## Krishna Jewellers



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Kesava das: 09422568259

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Karnataka INDIA

Jaya Tirtha: 09448125523

Paras T. Rathod: 09448455041

Lalit T. Rathod: 09243234814

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Sponsors**

Keshava Das, Jaya Tirtha Das,  
Prahlaad Das (Pandharpur TP) & Gaura  
Krishna Das (Nagpur TP).



# THE PADAYATRA STORY

by Lokanath Swami

Books to be  
released in  
**2013**

Go on an amazing learning tour of this planet by reading the narrations of devotees of many nationalities who have gathered first-hand experience by walking hundreds, and sometimes thousands of kilometres, on the roads and highways of more than one hundred countries through diverse cultures and religious traditions. Besides being history for future generations of devotees on all continents, this book will thrill you with hundreds of stories, adventures and even miracles.

#### Contents:

- The tradition of padayatra -Lord Caitanya's foot travels in India
- Srla Prabhupada's instructions on padayatra
- Sept 1976- March 1977: the first Bhaktivedanta bullock cart travelling sankirtana party from Vrndavana to Mayapur (first-time released)
- 1984-1986: Lord Caitanya's 500th anniversary phenomenal padayatra from Dvaraka to Mayapur
- 1986 to 1996: Worldwide Padayatra explosion during the Centennial years
- 1996 to now: Continuous, regular and occasional walks
- The best padayatra stories



# FOLLOWING A PROPHECY

by Avadhuta Siromani Dasa

*Following a Prophecy* takes us through Avadhuta Siromani Prabhu and his wife Chandrabhaga's awe inspiring journey of four years on padayatra, beginning in Pennsylvania, America, and ending near the border of Peru, with nothing else but a moving temple-wagon pulled by horses, deities of Nitai Gaurasundar and sometimes a few devotees. Their journey and life experiences are evidence that Krsna Consciousness and the preaching thereof is worth our every endeavour.

For more information contact Avadhuta Siromani Das:  
[avadhutasromani@hotmail.com](mailto:avadhutasromani@hotmail.com)



# VRAJA MANDALA PARIKRAMA

by Lokanath Swami

Padayatra India team organized the first parikrama around Vraja in 1987 at Gaura Purnima time. From 1988 onwards the parikrama has taken place during Kartik. 2013 will mark the 26th anniversary of the ultimate pilgrimage in the land of Krishna.

