ISKCON Central Office of Child Protection
P.O. BOX 1438 ALACHUA, FLORIDA 32616-1438
904-418-0882 • FAX: 904-418-0982
EMAIL: dgovinda@aol.com

CONFIDENTIAL: ATTORNEY CLIENT PRIVILEGE AND WORK PRODUCT

Official Decision on the case of Ananta Rupa dasa

This judgment, decided on July 10, 2000, was rendered in accordance with the guidelines for adjudicating cases of alleged child abuse established by the ISKCON Child Protection Task Force Report and ratified by the ISKCON Governing Body Commission. This judgment is the Official Decision of the ISKCON Central Office of Child Protection (ICOCP) on the child abuse case of Ananta Rupa dasa.

This decision defines the parameters of the relationship of Ananta Rupa dasa with ISKCON. The ICOCP advises child abuse victims, their parents, and all members of the ISKCON organization to report allegations of child abuse to governmental social service and law enforcement authorities. Also, the ICOCP advises all members of ISKCON to learn and follow their local laws regarding child abuse and mandated reporting of child abuse.

Ananta Rupa dasa is a white-bodied person who joined ISKCON in Miami in 1973 and received initiation from Srila Prabhupada. He is over six feet tall. In the late 1970s and early 1980s he was on the staff of the gurukulas in Mayapur and Vrndavana. He also was on the staff of a school in Manipur. For some time in the 1980s he worked in the life membership department in ISKCON Bombay. Recently he has resided in Andhra Pradesh. The ICOCP has heard that Ananta Rupa dasa is involved in an orphanage in India.

Ananta Rupa dasa has not responded to efforts of the ICOCP to contact him. The ICOCP has provided him full opportunity to respond to all allegations against him, but he has not replied.

Below are sections of the ISKCON Child Protection Task Force Report concerning definitions of child abuse.

"I. Child Maltreatment

A. Definition- A broad range of mistreatment of children including neglect, physical, abuse, sexual abuse, and psychological abuse.

1. Child- a child is defined as 0-18 years of age OR whatever the legal definition for a child is in the particular country where the alleged maltreatment occurred.

B. Types of Child Maltreatment

B.2. Physical Abuse- An act of commission (perpetration) by the parent or caretaker where the child is physically injured and/ or marks such as bruises, welts, lacerations, or burns, etc. are visible. Although the injury is not an accident, the parent or caretaker may not have intended to hurt the child. The injury may have resulted from over-punishment that is inappropriate to the child's age.

a) Forms of physical abuse include: punching, beating, shaking, whipping, caning, burning, slapping, biting, kicking, ear twisting, throwing.

Example: a student is whipped with a cane and red welts are visible, a parent slaps a child so hard across the face that black and blue marks appear in the shape of a hand; an infant is shaken so hard that brain damage occurs ; a mother spanks an 11-month-old.

b) Corporeal punishment can also be considered abusive if, although no single incident leaves a mark or results in an injury , the frequent and chronic use of such has a deleterious cumulative effect. (In a recently published study on spanking, researchers found that the more frequently spanking was used as a method of punishment (three or more times per week) the more antisocial behaviors the child developed.

Example: A child is spanked for every minor infraction, several times a week

B.3. Sexual Abuse- An act of commission (perpetration) where a child is coerced, induced, persuaded, enticed, seduced, or entrapped into sexual acts with another person. The coercion can be either physical or verbal. The other person could be either an adult, an adolescent (12-18 years of age), or even in extreme cases, another child (less than 12 years of age) The abuser uses his/her position of authority or power (size, age, social position, cognitive differential) to exert control over the victim.

a) Forms of sexual abuse include:

(1) voyeurism ("Peeping Tom") (2) exhibitionism (flashing) (3) taking pornographic pictures of the child (4) having the child watch while the perpetrator masturbates (5) forced masturbation (6) kissing (7) fondling (8) digital/object penetration of vagina and/or anus (9) oral sex (10) sodomy (11) intercourse

Examples: A 14-year-old boy badgers (verbally coerces) his 13-year-old male friend into anal sodomy by repeatedly calling him a sissy; an ashram teacher fondles a boy's genital while tucking him in; a father engages in
any sexual activity with his daughter; an aunt has a 9-year-old nephew suckle her breast

B. 4. Sexual Harassment- Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and/ or other inappropriate oral, written or physical contact of a sexual nature. Such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, and offensive environment.

Sexual harassment, as defined above, may include, but is not limited to the following:

a) verbal harassment or abuse;
b) pressure for sexual activity;
c) repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications;
d) unwelcome or inappropriate touching;
e) suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats.

Example: a) A male devotee pats a young girl in an inappropriate place, or frequently puts his arm around the shoulder of a young teenage brahmacarini. b) a brahmacari repeatedly taunts and denigrates an young girl, calling her a "Maya devi', "prostitute", or worse.

Notes:

2. These guidelines do not exempt one from observing local laws. For example, in Sweden corporal punishment of any kind is against the law. Our parents, guardians, and care providers are expected to be aware of and observe local laws."

Cultural norms and/or poverty are to be taken into consideration when considering neglect, corporal punishment, and psychological abuse. Cultural norms refer to different perspectives on child-raising, discipline, education, etc., according to local custom and practice...There will naturally be variances in facilities and outlooks on child care, but at the same time there are basic and universal standards...Cultural norms...are not a loophole but a factor for consideration. They are never an excuse for child abuse...ISKCON is an international organization encompassing many countries and cultures. While recognizing these variations, there are universal and basic standards of decency and morals...

From section 3-D-20:

Rule 20. Degrees of offense:

Misdemeanors: ...

Definition:

4. precursors to sexual abuse, i.e., the 'private parts' were not touched but the child's body space was violated with the clear intent of being sexual if the progression had not ceased."

Section 1.I.B.5 defines child psychological abuse as "A repeated pattern of behavior that conveys to the child that they are worthless, flawed, unwanted, unloved, or only of value to meet another person's needs. This seriously erodes and damages the child's self-esteem

and sense of worth as a person." The report lists forms of psychological abuse as including spurning, terrorizing, corrupting, and denying emotional responsiveness.

The ICOCP has received a testimony, dated May 22, 1999, from a former gurukuli (claimant 1) who reported as follows:

He said that, when he was a child in the Vrndavana gurukula, Ananta Rupa (AR) told him that he (AR) is not attracted to adult men or women. He is attracted to boys between 7 and 12 (perhaps a little older). Also during conversations AR would admit to claimant 1 that he was interested in Man-boy groups. There was one incident when AR specifically referred to an article in Time magazine about such associations that promote sexual relations between men and boys. claimant 1 stated that AR always had at least one boy he was sexually involved with. He was always grooming and cultivating someone. claimant 1 stated that AR did many good things for the Vrndavana gurukula. He describes AR as very competent and intelligent. AR befriended claimant 1 when claimant 1 was 11 or 12 years old. claimant 1 felt respected and appreciated by AR. claimant 1 reports that AR would have boys massage him, often in groups of three boys, so nothing went on. Then sometimes he would have claimant 1 massage him alone. Then he asked claimant 1 to join him for morning yoga, which claimant 1 did. Then after a while during yoga AR would say that his gamsha is too restricting for yoga exercises and take it off. Then AR would say that the kaupins are too constricting, and that yoga should really be done naked. Then after some days of doing yoga naked with claimant 1 watching, AR would have claimant 1 massage his backside. Then AR asked claimant 1 to masturbate him. claimant 1 had no attraction to do this, and felt really unpleasant doing this, though he felt that he somehow owed it to AR to do this, because AR was his friend. So he did this about a dozen times from early 1982 through early 1983. At one point AR asked claimant 1 to perform oral sex on him, but claimant 1 refused. In early 1983 (claimant 1 stated it may have been late 1982) claimant 1 refused to masturbate AR any more. When he did this AR became very angry and struck claimant 1 hard. But when AR saw that by becoming angry claimant 1 did not acquiesce to his desires, AR then became apologetic and pleaded with claimant 1 not to tell anyone about their dealings. claimant 1 stated that AR was always very manipulative and coercive. For instance, he would tell claimant 1 that another boy was performing oral sex on him, to see if claimant 1 would do it out of a competitive mood. There was no other occasion (other than the time claimant 1 refused AR) that AR struck claimant 1. claimant 1 reported that, generally speaking, AR treated him especially good. claimant 1 feels that if he had submitted to AR's desires when AR got angry, then AR would have learned that intimidation worked, and would have continued to use this tactic to get claimant 1 to comply to his desires. claimant 1 didn't tell anyone about AR's deeds for quite a while. claimant 1 visited home in the United States during the summer of 1982, but he didn't tell anyone about the incidents. He returned to Vrndavana after the summer. He also returned home in the summer of 1983. During this summer claimant 1 received several letters from AR, pleading for claimant 1 to return to Vrndavana, which claimant 1 didn't do. In 1983 claimant 1 went to the New Mayapur gurukula in France. claimant 1 reported that AR told him about sexual relations AR had with two or three other boys. claimant 1 also reported that AR was good friends with [the name of another alleged child sexual abuse perpetrator], a Bengali who was in Vrndavana at the time. Based on the conversations between [name of the other alleged perpetrator] and AR, it was clear to claimant 1 that [name of alleged

perpetrator] was also engaged in sexual relations with some of the boys. AR and [name of alleged perpetrator] would discuss which boy belonged to whom. .."

Claimant 2 stated that he was physically abused by Ananta Rupa dasa in the Vrndavana gurukula. He wrote "From 1978-1983 I was in Vrndavan and was physically abused by the following: [Lists "Ananta Rupa" amongst the names of several staff members.]"

Notes from an interview with claimant 3 read as follows: "He states that sexual abuse was rampant in the Vrndavana school, and that Ananta Rupa would protect the boys who engaged in sexual activity. [name of claimant 3] reported that Ananta Rupa sexually abused many boys."

Claimant 4 stated to an interviewer in 1990, in Vrndavana, that Ananta Rupa dasa made claimant 4 fondle him, and that Ananta Rupa fondled claimant 4. The ICOCP has received notes from ISKCON's former Minister of Education, indicating several additional allegations of child sexual abuse perpetrated by Ananta Rupa dasa. In these notes it is stated that claimant 4 "directly states that Ananta Rupa engaged in illicit sex with him and other boys." At the time that claimant 4 made these statements he was a young adult, and was reporting on alleged incidents that occurred several years earlier.

In the notes from the Ministry of Education it is stated that Ananta Rupa dasa sexually perpetrated against claimant 5, claimant 6, claimant 7, and claimant 8. These alleged incidents allegedly occurred during the years 1983-1985 in Vrndavana, when Ananta Rupa dasa was a member of the staff of the school in Vrndavana, and the claimants were students in the asrama gurukula school.

The ICOCP has a letter dated July 30, 1985, from Ananta Rupa to Dhanurdhara Maharaja, wherein Ananta Rupa practically admits, although not specifically, to allegations of child abuse referred to in a letter from Dhanurdhara Maharaja to Ananta Rupa dasa dated March 20, 1985.

A letter dated October 20, 1986, from Dhanurdhara Swami to Bhanu Swami, states "I am writing concerning Ananta Rupa who was dismissed from our faculty for child molestation. His offenses were not only of the most perverted kind, and oft repeated, but premeditated as well...Ananta Rupa has proved unrepentant by not only trying to solicit boys after his expose and punishment, but by parading as an ISKCON Sannyasi as well...To protect our society I personally had him removed from Bombay and Padayatra...recently I received reports from devotees that had spoken to him, that he not only denies any involvement in such crime, but claims that actually it was the leaders here who were actually corrupt, and his removal were in response to his desire to expose us...Considering his offenses...We feel now that if he doesn't publicly admit his crimes and leave India, sufficient grounds are there to excommunicate him from ISKCON. We therefore at present, considering his bad character, recommend that he not be allowed residence in any ISKCON temple."

Based on the testimonies and documentation described above, this panel has determined that Ananta Rupa dasa committed physical, psychological, and sexual abuse of many children,

causing them tremendous harm and suffering. Due to these grievous transgressions, it is the determination of this panel that Ananta Rupa is not permitted to have any contact with ISKCON or ISKCON-affiliated organizations for ten years from the date of this Official Decision. This restriction includes a prohibition from visiting an ISKCON temple or participating in ISKCON functions. After ten years from the date of this Official Decision Ananta Rupa dasa may reapply to the ICOCP or the GBC Executive Committee for reinstatement into ISKCON. This application for reinstatement will be considered if Ananta Rupa complies with the following stipulations:

1) He must contribute at least $7,000 to an organization dedicated to serving Vaisnava youth, such as Children of Krishna, the ICOCP, or a gurukula approved by the ICOCP.

2) He must give at least $5,000 to the ICOCP grant fund, to be specifically used for victims of child abuse that he perpetrated.

3) He must write apology letters to all the victims described in this letter. In these letters he must fully acknowledge his transgressions of child abuse, and he must take full responsibility for those actions. Also, he must express appropriate remorse, and offer to make amends to the victims. These letters should be sent to the ICOCP, not directly to the victims.

4) He must undergo a psychological evaluation by a mental health professional pre-approved by the ICOCP, and he must comply with recommendations for ongoing therapy described in the evaluation report and by the ICOCP.

5) Ananta Rupa dasa must fully comply with all governmental investigations into misconduct on his part.

After Ananta Rupa complies with the five conditions above, his application for reinstatement will be considered. If Ananta Rupa dasa is readmitted as a member of ISKCON, then his participation in the activities of the organization must be constrained as follows:

6) Ananta Rupa dasa cannot reside overnight on ISKCON property or on the property of an organization affiliated with ISKCON.

7) Ananta Rupa dasa cannot lead kirtanas or give class at an ISKCON temple or at an ISKCON function, or at any function of an organization affiliated with ISKCON.

8) Ananta Rupa dasa cannot perform any service for ISKCON or an ISKCON-affiliated organization that involves association with children (A child is defined as a person under 18 years of age).

9) Ananta Rupa dasa must show this document to the temple president or facility manager of any ISKCON temple or project that he visits, and obtain a signed statement that the president or manager has read this decision. Ananta Rupa dasa must send the signed copy of the decision to the ICOCP.

10) Ananta Rupa dasa cannot visit ISKCON property or attend an ISKCON function if his child abuse victims or their family members are present, unless, uncoerced and without manipulation, they give their consent.

11) Ananta Rupa dasa is not permitted to hold any positions in the ISKCON organization, or in any organization affiliated with ISKCON.

12) If Ananta Rupa dasa violates any of the dictates of this Official Decision, then he can have no association with ISKCON temples or projects until his case is reviewed by the ICOCP. This ban means that he cannot enter ISKCON property or the property of any organization affiliated with ISKCON.

These judgments constitute the minimum restrictions that an ISKCON organization may place on Ananta Rupa dasa . Any specific ISKCON organization may choose to invoke more stringent restrictions.

While this Official Decision has delineated various restrictions and conditions, the panel members realize that engagement in devotional service to Sri Krsna is essential for purification. Though it is not the function of this panel to determine or suggest the type of devotional service that Ananta Rupa dasa should perform, we want to mention that, within the restrictions described herein, there are countless ways in which Ananta Rupa dasa may serve Srila Prabhupada's mission, and we encourage him to do so. Also, we wish to state that the directives described in this document, such as writing apology letters and donating for the betterment of the children of Srila Prabhupada's movement, are also forms of bhakti-yoga.

According to the ISKCON Child Protection Task Force Report, Section 5, in cases where an allegation(s) of child abuse are determined to be valid, the accused may appeal the Official Decision to the GBC Executive Committee and the ISKCON Minister of Justice within one month of the date of this decision. The Official Decision described in this document is effective immediately, and the perpetrator must abide by its guidelines during the appeal process, should he choose to appeal this decision.

Judges serving on this case were: Laxmimoni dasi, Mathuresa dasa, and Ijya dasa. The Case Manager for this case was Dhira Govinda dasa. The Director of ICOCP at the time of this Official Decision was Dhira Govinda dasa.