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**The Sampradaya Sun – Independent Vaisnava News – Editorials – August 2006**

# Conspiracy of Silence

BY: ROCANA DASA

**Aug 1, CANADA (SUN) —** Following the recent weeks of controversy surrounding Dhanurdhara's history and status in the society, attention is again being focused on other perpetrators of abuse in ISKCON's past. The names of Satadhanya dasa and Nitai Chand are again coming to the fore, particularly in the context of what investigations have been conducted by ISKCON and what sanctions have been imposed, or not.

Having just urged Laksmi Nrsimha prabhu to make the CPO case history on Dhanurdhara available for all to read, we could only conclude that **the Satadhanya report** should also be made public. While the document has been circulating for some time, we are not aware of its having been published online up to now.

Aside from the shocking nature of the charges leveled against Satadhanya by his victims, we also found it difficult to accept how the early investigations of Satadhanya were handled. When confronted with reports of Satadhanya's sex abuse, as the report states, "the ISKCON Board of Education (IBE) met in Mayapur and decided that Satadhanya must comply with the GBC directive that a child abuser desiring to live in an ISKCON community must have the approval of 3/4 of the community grhastas." There followed numerous rounds of discussions, meetings and votes. It is hard to image that 25% of the Mayapur grhasta community would have been expected to acquiesce to having a known child sex abuser living among their children simply because the majority thought it was OK. We can only hope that 1992 policy has been replaced with a sensible one.

In my recent article, **Justice Delayed Is Justice Denied**, I suggested that the issue of whether or not Dhanurdhara got a fair shake from the CPO is far less important than the fact that Bhavananda is still at large, in Mayapur and presumably elsewhere, and the CPO and GBC have not yet seen fit to deal with him and give justice to his many victims. In fact, the CPO report shows that Satadhanya is also protecting Bhavananda. In my mind, this fact alone warrants making the Satadhanya report public.

Behind the lurid stories of both Dhanurdara and Satadhanya, we find Bhavananda. The GBC and CPO have seen fit to investigate and sanction both Dhanurdara and Satadhanya, and we have heard that an investigation of Nitai Chand was conducted, although we have heard nothing of the results. The real mystery is why no action has been taken with regards to investigating and sanctioning Bhavananda, whose is a main source of contamination.

ISKCON history is rife with many, many stores about Bhavananda, and we know that Dhanurdara, Satadhanya and Nitai Chand have many more stories that could be added to the mix. For whatever reasons, they have chosen to protect him, as have the GBC members themselves.

*[Photograph of Bhavananda, not preserved in the archived copy.]*

Bhavananda was a co-GBC in Vrindavan at the time when Dhanurdara was running the Gurukula there during the 1980's. Anyone following the recent Sun articles will have been introduced to Bhavananda's history. A quick Google will result in many of the allegations made by his victims and stories of observers of his pastimes in Mayapur. In the days ahead, I'll tell some of the stories of my experiences with Bhavananda in Mayapur.

It was actually Bhavananda that finally brought down the Zonal Acarya system. His outrageous activities made it impossible for the Zonal Acaryas to defy the groundswell of demand for them to give up their absolute grip on the reins of power. But that is also another story…

What we should focus on is why Dhanurdara and Satadhanya have gotten into so much hot water on the child abuse issue, while the GBC and ISKCON elite are all welcoming Bhavananda back to Mayapur. What is it that Bhavananda has on these people that causes them to look aside, ignoring the history of his flagrant abuse.

What is it that Bhavananda has to offer ISKCON, that the leaders of Mayapur should welcome him back so warmly? He's not a good manager, not a good preacher, and not a motivator. He is a famous sense gratifier and a bad example, and he has caused so much suffering to so many people. Of course, he's convinced that he's quite wonderful and apparently gets plenty of feedback that helps to keep him in that illusion. Following is a letter Bhavananda wrote in approximately 2005. It's been widely circulated as an example of his very recognizable mood:

> Subject: from: Bhavananda (das) ACBSP
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> Dear ...., How are you? I am leaving for Bombay on Jan. 22 to help with arrangements for the Prabhupada festival [sic] there. Shyamasundar has asked me to be the emcee with Nathji for the festival itself and to help organise before. Chowpatty has paid for the ticket so it is all go, go, go! It is nice to feel wanted again and to have some recognition from ones godbrothers. Apparently most everyone felt I would be perfect for that service including all of the India Regional Board. To those who don't like it I will quote Indradyumna Maharaja who said "They just better get used to it. You are back whether they like it or not" My trip to Mayapur was very successful.
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> I gave class twice and gave em the sauce. They loved it. I had devotees thanking me the entire week for telling them what Prabhupada wanted at Mayapur. I also had a good relationship established with Naru Gopal who I saw every day and who was always asking me for advice about different issues at Mayapur. And there sure are a lot of issues but that is for discussion between you and I face to face. I also spoke at a LM meeting that Ambarish held at Gurusaday Rd. and I was fabulous. So everything is looking good. Will you come to Bombay for the festival? Please! It is going to be quite something and I am sure it will inspire you. Love Bhavs

Bhavananda was billed as one of the attractions at the 2005 Mumbai Festival, where he was scheduled to give class, and was included in the promotional video clips. This festival attracted many other ISKCON luminaries including Radhanath Swami, Bhakti Caru Swami, Jayadvaita Swami, Niranjan Swami, Bhakti Swarup Damodar Swami, Lokanath Swami,

Bhakti Vikasa Swami, and Ambarisa dasa. Regardless of his well known history as a flagrant homosexual, and the many allegations that he is also a pedophile, our ISKCON leaders apparently had no qualms about sharing the stage with him last year.

By and large, Bhavananda has always been the most blatant of all known sex abusers in ISKCON's history. Laksmi Nrsimha prabhu spelled it out very articulately in saying that according to law, sexual abuse is far more serious than physical abuse and should be considered as such, and punishment should be meted out accordingly.

I'm not aware of any evidence that Dhanurdhara committed acts of sexual abuse, although sex abuse was certainly going on right under his nose in the Gurukula, perpetrated primarily by the contaminated students who had been abused in Mayapur. The authorities then were Bhavananda, Satadhanya, Nitai Chand, and the headmaster of the Gurukula at the time.

These abused students from Mayapur were later transferred to Vrindavan, as were other sex abuse victims from Kirtanananda's New Vrindaban. It was common knowledge among the older boys there, who were too old or big to be abused, that these child sex victims transferred into Vrindaban from Mayapur and New Vrindaban were sexually abusing the younger five to seven-year old boys. [redacted] has told these stories in detail, and he reported them to [redacted] Jagadisa, who was then the Minister of Education.

Dhanurdhara had to deal with this difficult situation, which was undoubtedly a contributing factor to his abusive acts. These students had been personally sent by the 'big gurus' who were also GBC's, one of whom was a pedophile, the other a sexual deviant, at best. Dhanurdhara kept quiet about what was really happening behind the scenes. His protection of Bhavananda and Kirtanananda exemplifies some of the worst abuse he meted out.

While we have not yet read the CPO's investigation report on Dhanurdhara, we're told that he did, in fact, 'name names'. This is very likely one of the reasons the report has not been circulated - not to protect the names of the innocent, but to protect the names of the GBC, who were Zonal Acaryas at the time. The name that comes up like fireworks is Bhavananda, who was co-GBC of Mayapur at the time along with Jayapataka Swami. It is easy to understand why there might be a cover-up of these case files when we consider the consequences of it becoming public knowledge that the officials in Mayapur knew about the child sexual abuse for years, and didn't make it known to the Society.

Of course, there are rumours galore concerning Bhavananda's relationships with certain key GBC members. He and Jayaptaka spent a few years together, virtually alone in Mayapur while the property was in the pioneer stages. Gopala Krishna Goswami was a co-GBC of Vrindavan during the era of serious child abuse in the 1980's. Jagadish, the Minister of Education, said the reason he couldn't do anything about Dhanurdhara was because he was being protected by Bhavananda, so you couldn't accuse him, let alone remove him. Gopala Krishna Goswami was a straight management man, and he obviously never took on the Gurukula abuse issue. Besides, Bhavananda was such a terrible manager they had to have a co-GBC with him, and Gopala Krishna Goswami was kept busy handling the details. Bhavananda just played all day, flittering away his time. No one ever saw him chant his rounds, and he seldom went to a morning program. Even then, it was a mystery why the other GBC put up with his shenanigans.

Tamal Krishna Goswami was also very close to Bhavananda, and protected him on many occasions. I was personally in the room at New Vrindavan around 1985, at the big international gathering to deal with the Zonal Acarya issue, when Tamal Krishna Goswami got the phone call from Atlanta that derailed the Zonal train. When Tamal Krishna Goswami picked up the phone, the Temple President of Atlanta was on the other end. He had just taken delivery of a notarized statement from a young brahmacari who had returned from India, where he had been forcibly induced into a homosexual relationship with Bhavananda at the Holy Dhama. Tamal Krishna Goswami tried to make light of it at the time. I don't recall his exact words, but I remember that it came as a big blow to him and badly damaged his strategy for salvaging the Zonal Acarya system. Bhavananda was the weakest link at the time, as Hansadutta and Jayatirtha had already met their inauspicious ends.

We must also keep in mind that Jayapataka Maharaja was in Mayapur for a majority of the time the Gurukula abuse was going on there. There was a lot of time when Bhavananda himself wasn't in Mayapur, especially when he was managing in Australia. Jayapataka Swami was there and was in charge while Satadhanya, Nitai Chand and the other schoolteachers were overseeing the Gurukula. All of them had previously been contaminated by Bhavananda. All of Jayapataka Swami's right-hand men were right there, and it's simply inconceivable that Jayapataka Swami did not know what was going on.

So why have all these people chosen to protect Bhavananda, to cover up for him, to befriend him, to provide him with kingly opulence? What is it, exactly? Bhavananda didn't have charisma or shakti, but he's been like Teflon all these years. He's like the Ganges. You're made to believe that he's always pure, regardless of the fact you can feel, hear and see such filth in front of your eyes. Yet on the authority of the higher echelons of ISKCON, we're supposed to believe that it's just our own material contamination that causes us to see him as being impure, regardless of all the evidence. We can only conclude that Bhavananda is holding something over them, and they well know he's ruthless enough to use it if he doesn't get his way.

Of course, we also haven't heard a peep out of anyone else who was at Mayapur at the time. There was Bhagavan, Rameswar, Harikesha, Tamal Krishna Goswami, and Hridayananda dasa Goswami. You can assume with near certainty that they all knew about Bhavananda, just as all of them knew, in detail, about Kirtanananda. They knew Kirtanananda was a pedophile and they knew Bhavananda was a flagrant homosexual, if not also a pedophile. These men knew pretty much everything that was going on in the movement, in everyone else's zone. The pact they had amongst themselves was unbelievably strong. Their club membership trumped all the absolute principles of guru, sastra and sadhu, the spiritual master, common sense, and morals. The level of their camaraderie was so great it exceeded the laws of any land, whether India or the western countries. I've never personally experienced that degree of loyalty, nor have I seen it exhibited in any other circumstance throughout my life.

**Bhav's Back!**

As we see in the Mayapur online photo album, Bhav Is Back. Over the last few years, he has again been made very welcome at the Holy Dhama. The photos below, from 2004 - 2005, indicate that everyone is embracing him like it's the return of the prodigal son.

*[Four photographs of Bhavananda in Mayapur, 2004–2005, appeared here; they are not preserved in the archived copy.]*

In the Satadhanya report, we read that the following conclusions, directives and recommendations were unanimously accepted by the CPO panel as sanctions to be handed down against Satadhanya. They include:

> 5) Satadhanya dasa must not assume any leadership positions in ISKCON. This includes a prohibition from leading kirtana and giving class on ISKCON property or at an ISKCON function. This directive is effective for the duration of this lifetime.
>
> 6) Satadhanya dasa must not assume any position of influence that is connected with ISKCON. This stipulation also includes a prohibition from representing ISKCON...
>
> 10) Satadhanya must not be shown any special privilege or preference at an ISKCON temple or in an ISKCON project, or in a project or organization affiliated with ISKCON. For example, he should not be offered the special privilege of garlanding Srila Prabhupada at an ISKCON program.

So while Satadhanya is banned for life from giving class in the temple, Bhavananda, one of the most flagrant sexual abusers in ISKCON history, is again seen curled up and purring on the vyasasana at Mayapur.

While investigations have been concluded on both Dhanurdhara and Satadhanya and they have been punished by the CPO, Bhavananda has apparently never been seriously investigated. To our knowledge no case against him has been opened by the CPO. If an investigation were ongoing, why would Bhavananda be treated so richly in Mayapur to this very day?

To talk about justice under these circumstances is almost absurd. While there may be some justice for the victims of Dhanurdhara and Satadhanya, where is the justice for all of Bhavananda's victims? Not only is he apparently not being subjected to a rigorous investigation by the CPO, he is being courted by ISKCON luminaries, given a seat of honour on the vyasasana, and given facility that the average rank and file devotee only dreams of having, like the special privilege of applying candana to Srila Prabhupada's forehead and offering him garlands at the Holy Dhama.

While Bhavananda was "removed" numerous times from being an initiating guru or a GBC for his deviant sexual activities, that's all they did -- remove him, then let him back in. That happened in the 80's, and now it appears to be happening again. After letting him return in the 80's, they threw him out again when the taxi driver story surfaced.

While Dhanurdhara and Satadhanya committed serious crimes against children, the real bad apple in the barrel is Bhavananda. Dhanurdhara and Satadhanya were both contaminated as a result of their exposure to him, as were many, many others. A lot of apples got contaminated, including young children. Personally, I have no doubt that Satadhanya's sickness was exacerbated by his bad association with Bhavananda, and Dhanurdhara's situation was severely complicated due to Bhavananda's direct influence. Yet neither of these devotees have exposed Bhavananda's role in the affair. We are left to

wonder what power Bhavananda has over them that has kept them all quiet for so many years.

The big question in the minds of many devotees - particularly the ex-gurukula students - is why Srila Prabhupada tolerated Bhavananda and Kirtanananda during his ISKCON lila period. Why didn't he remove them? My answer to that question is found in my **Sampradaya Acarya** paper. I suggest that it's possible for the very advanced Sampradaya Acaryas to neutralize the effects of gross contamination and engage the un-engageable. That doesn't mean, however, that after the pure devotee departs, other personalities who are inconceivably less spiritually potent -- namely, the Zonal Acaryas and senior people in ISKCON at the time - can pick up where Srila Prabhupada left off and manage with the same potency and success. We had to follow a whole different set of rules than Srila Prabhupada followed. We couldn't just forgive and engage, and do exactly what Srila Prabhupada did. But this is exactly the mantra Bhavananda uses - 'Srila Prabhupada would let me back, Srila Prabhupada would engage me'. That's just what Srila Prabhupada had done, but the GBC collectively are not on the same level as Srila Prabhupada. They'd all like their disciples to think they are, but in reality, it's far from true.

While I want to see Dhanurdhara get justice, I don't have much sympathy for him given that he's chosen not to publicly disclose what he knows about how the abuse situation was handled - what to speak of perpetrated -- by the higher-up's. He remains silent to this very day and is protecting people who should themselves be exposed and brought to justice. No matter what personal price he would have to pay for exposing these individuals, it is his duty as a Vaisnava, a sannyasi and a preacher to expose demons, even though they may be in the disguise of devotees.

Many of us have a very clear picture of who is implicated at the top in covering up the sexual abuse that took place at the Holy Dhamas. We see them as demons because they had all the symptoms of demons. And what's more demoniac than abusing small children?

When comparing Dhanurdara and Satadhanya to the likes of Bhavananda, I'm reminded of King Kamsa. All the other demons were his subordinate friends, and he ordered them to go out and attack Krsna in Vrindavan. Putana, Kuvalayapida, and the wrestlers all were mini-demons compared to the chief demon, Kamsa. In the same way, Dhanurdara and Satadhanya were like mini-demons compared to Bhavananda and Kirtanananda, who were class A demons.

In Chapter 44 of Krsna Book, Srila Prabhupada describes the killing of Kamsa. This passage is reminiscent of the inequity represented by denying justice to those who were ultimately victimized by Bhavananda while the king demon himself goes unpunished.

> "But the audience in the wrestling arena was not very satisfied because the combatants did not appear to be equally matched. They considered Krsna and Balarama to be mere boys before the wrestlers Canura and Mustika, who were huge men, as solid as stone. Being compassionate and favoring Krsna and Balarama, many members of the audience began to talk as follows. "Dear friends, there is danger here." Another said, "Even in front of the King this wrestling is going on between incompatible sides." The audience had lost their sense of enjoyment. They could not encourage the fighting between the strong and the weak. "Mustika and

> Canura are just like thunderbolts, as strong as great mountains, and Krsna and Balarama are two delicate boys of very tender age. The principle of justice has already left this assembly. Persons who are aware of the civilized principles of justice will not remain to watch this unfair match. Those taking part in this wrestling match are not very much enlightened; therefore whether they speak or remain silent, they are being subjected to the reactions of sinful activities."

When we consider the injustice of Bhavananda's continued presence at Mayapur, we must sadly conclude that the principle of justice has already left the ISKCON assembly.

In their report on Satadhanya, the CPO writes:

> "If purity is the force, then the rectification of this abuse is at least as important an ingredient in the development of Mayapur as bricks, marble, and architectural drawings. This panel would like to emphasize that any restitution or apology is only a token, a small beginning. The victims associate Mayapur with suffering, exploitation and lust, and with neglect and callousness on the part of Mayapur's leaders. The actual restitution is to make the victims again, or perhaps for the first time, feel welcome, safe, honored and transcendentally blissful in Mayapur--something any resident or guest should be able to take for granted. Mayapur's supporters and donors should understand the necessity of making child protection a cornerstone of all future development in the holy dhama.
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> Regarding ISKCON Mayapur, the ICOCP hereby recognizes and appreciates that ISKCON Mayapur has established an active Child Protection Team (CPT). Although the history, prior to 1992, of child abuse in Mayapur is one of the worst in ISKCON, the Mayapur administration, especially during the past three years, has shown commitment to various aspects of child protection, including supporting a CPT, investigating and adjudicating allegations of child abuse, implementing child protection education programs for students, teachers, and managers, preventing child abusers from having access to children and the property, caring for and assisting victims of child abuse, and endeavoring to rectify child abusers as a condition for their continued connection with the organization. Since the establishment of the ICOCP in April, 1998, the Mayapur CPT and management have been very cooperative with the ICOCP in investigating and adjudicating cases and in furthering the other aspects of child protection."

In much the same way that the CPO very graciously pointed out in their report all of the good qualities displayed by Satadhanya over the years, they have pointed out above all of the good qualities the managers of Mayapur have displayed in recent years regarding the child abuse issue.

But while Satadhanya and Dhanurdhara have been punished, the management of Mayapur has not even been made to publicly disclose the details of what took place during their dark history. This disclosure must happen, and it must include a detailed public truth-telling as to the role played by ISKCON's most senior officials, who were ultimately responsible for all that took place on their watch.

To simply punish Satadhanya and Dhanurdhara while Bhavananda runs free and the GBC in charge evade confrontation is not unlike punishing two boys of tender age (the children

of Vrindavan) while Kamsa himself remains undeterred.



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