

New Bhakta Training

Brief History

It was Srila Prabhupada's (SP) desire to effectively train devotees so that every temple could be self-sufficient. It is important to invest 1 year, in order to yield greater returns for the society in the future. New Bhakta Training program was started in 2012, but devotees were trained only for a few months. 2016 onwards, devotees have been getting trained for a whole year.

Structure and Schedule

- Training is divided into 3 parts:
 - ✓ Knowledge- Philosophy from scriptures, learning Vaishnava songs, slokas, etc.
 - ✓ Values- Submission, importance of morning program, valuing Vaishnava relationships, etc.
 - ✓ Skills- Cooking, musical instruments (kartala, mridanga, etc.) painting, public speaking skills.
- Training happens on all days except for the month of December which is exclusively for Book Distribution.
- Schedule for the devotees during the training period is as follows:
 - Devotees wake up at 3 am.
 - 3:45 am to 4:10 am- On alternate days, lecture of SP morning walks, to get an idea of how SP related to philosophy with different people with different understandings. On other days, sloka recitation and learning.
 - 4:10 am to 4:30 am- Cleaning service and Deity Service- Cleaning temple hall and alters.
 - 4:30 am to 9:30 am- Regular morning program.
 - 9:30 am to 10:30 am- Rest
 - 10:30 am to 12:30 pm- Skill learning class viz. musical instruments, language learning class, etc. English and Bengali are the main languages that are taught. Advantages of learning Bengali are that they can deal with local people and can also understand literature in a better manner.
More than 30 items, mainly Gaudiya dishes, were taught to devotees last year. They also cook for the Brahmacharis.
On other days, devotees serve cows.
 - 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm- Cleaning slot- cleaning temple area, residential area, etc.
 - 1:30 pm- Lunch time. Break till 3:30 pm.
 - 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm- SP book reading.
 - 4:30 pm to 6 30 pm- 3 days in a week, PDC Classes are held in which they are taught Krishna Conscious philosophy and various etiquettes through skits. Interactive classes are conducted by senior devotees on how to deal with each other, how to serve prasadam, importance of cleanliness, etc.
2 days they go for harinam and book distribution and the other 1 day there is evening kirtan in the temple hall.
 - 7 pm to 8 pm- Dinner
 - 8 pm to 8:30 pm- Chaitanya Bhagwat reading
 - 8:30 pm- Rest.

- Yearly Schedule:
 - A yearly camp called Sadhu Bhushan Camp is held in Pune.
 - Monthly yatras to local places, like Pani Hati, birthplace of Isvara Puri, with senior devotees who explain the importance of the Dham. In this way, they get well acquainted Gaudiya Vaishnava lecture.

Challenges

- There are devotees who come from vastly different backgrounds such as, on one hand who don't speak English and IIT students on the other. It is a challenge to integrate them. Effective training makes it possible. By performing service and participating in activities, they form a strong relationship.
- Earlier the temple lacked devotees well-versed in playing musical instruments. The skill learning sessions have helped many learn new instruments for kirtans.