

VEDIC VILLAGE REVIEW # 24

June 16, 2013

Prabhupadanuga Farm in Fiji

KALIYA SERPENT

Overlooking the ocean from the dharmashalla (main guest building), one is able to watch the constant fluctuation and interaction of the elements of nature: day, night, sky, clouds, sunlight, rain, wind, mist, rainbows, waves, sea-haze, and the distant islands of Namena, Taveuni, Koro, and Kumbalau peninsula. It is always beautiful, spectacular actually, and we often remember the local legend of a giant many-headed snake that resides in the ocean bay that lies before us, sheltered by the barrier reef some 8 kilometers out. It is also supposedly resident in mountain



Kaliya's Waters

caves near Rakiraki. The serpent is called *Dengey* by the locals, and in 1975 Srila Prabhupada told Vasudeva and Bhagavati Prabhus that he must be Kaliya, banished by Lord Krishna from the Yamuna, coming to Ramanik Island, which is Fiji. Inquiring if there were any indigenous animals in Fiji (there are none very significant other than birds), Prabhupada saw their absence as evidence of Kaliya's presence. Kaliya Nag is a great devotee of Krishna- would he someday be seen by Prabhupada's followers here, perhaps while swimming on the shore, or watching from the dharmashalla veranda? Will he be attracted by the Krishna nama kirtans that can be heard far out on the quiet waters of Yanawai Bay? (***see photo***)

Thus Srila Prabhupada instructed that the principal deity in the first ISKCON temple in Fiji, built and opened in 1977, should be Krishna dancing on Kaliya's heads. Yasodanandan Prabhu conducted the installation and temple opening after receiving detailed instructions from Prabhupada. This temple is on the main island of Viti Levu in the town of Lautoka, and any devotee visiting Fiji should definitely make a pilgrimage to take the darshan of this very unusual deity of Krishna-Kaliya. While in Lautoka, also pay a visit to the waterfront where Prabhupada took some morning walks- and offer obeisances to him on the very ground that he tread with his lotus feet. Fiji was blessed twice by Prabhupada's visits. He liked Fiji, and remarked that Fiji could become the first Krishna conscious country in the world.

FIJI WATER

In contrast to many parts of this planet, Fiji has plenty of delicious, pure, crystal clear water. It is even bottled and exported to many countries (Fiji Water, Island Chill, AquaSafe). There is little industry in Fiji to pollute the environment, and we are insulated all around by vast reaches of the South Pacific. Fiji is very much free from pollution, and its air, land, and water remain very pure. Our farm/village project is on the windward side of our island, or the wet side, and we get rain regularly. The summer (November-April) is wetter, and it will rain almost every day, sometimes quite a bit. The winter (May-October) is cooler, dryer, but still

it rains at least every few days. Watering the garden is hardly ever required. Sometimes we get ocean storms (called bangiwalu) that can last for a week or more, with gusty winds and intermittent rains. The typical weather here is sunny until some clouds and rain later in the day.

The hills and valleys of our property are thus well-watered, the streams and creeks running year-round. Far up a stream that feeds the river, we constructed a concrete dam/reservoir with gravity flow water delivered via pipe over a kilometer long to the main building. The pipeline passes the waterfall by the worker camphouse, crosses the river (suspended above, between trees), passes by the koronivia pasture, and runs back uphill to 160 feet above sea level. No pumps are needed, and two reserve tanks supply the main building by gravity from above. It is auspicious to have gravity flow water supplied from a spring high up in the forest. Someone wrote to say how fortunate we were to have abundant, pure water year-round- no wells are required (most of the world), no seawater distillation plants needed (like in Saudi Arabia), no water trucks required (Yemen, Africa, even Hawaii), no dry season (in Panama it was 5 months of NO rain), etc. In New Jayapur, even rainwater collected from the roof could suffice for a family home.

Our little water cress tract which thrives in a branch of our river is just downstream from a major spring that bubbles and gurgles forth a thousand gallons a minute. Every chance I get, I love to sip that purest of water as I exclaim, Jaya Sri Vishnu! and feel the bracing potency of *really* clean water (*I am the taste of water*). The water cress that grows in this stream is of course surcharged with so many essential mineral micronutrients that filter out of the rich volcanic landscape, contributing to a long healthy island life... In simple living, pure and plentiful water is an opulence.

FIJI FLORA AND FAUNA

Fiji has little indigenous wildlife except birds. It is a rather benign environment- no land snakes, no scorpions, few thorns, no biting ants (except one that lives in stumps), and no sandflies. The ocean breezes counteract mosquitoes, and no indigenous mammals besides bats- these “flying foxes” (fruit eaters) are seen at dawn and dusk, flying up or down the coast; sometimes a few will spend the night in a nearby breadfruit tree, squeaking and quarrelling quite loudly. Beautiful red-breasted musk parrots abound in our forests, in five various color arrangements. We have one favorite pet parrot that came from Taveuni, named Hari. She chants Hari!, and whenever fed, she whistles approval of the prasadam.

The pesky mynah and bulbul, imported from India, have not yet reached our farm, and we are careful not to make food scraps available in the grounds, lest some move in. They co-habitate with humans mostly in populated areas. We have seen the orange dove here, and kula birds flitting around in their green and red. Kingfishers and two hawks are common as well. Fiji has 60 native bird species, geckos and skinks, some frogs, and the very rare harmless Pacific boa. Overall, anyone, children included, have nothing to fear in the Fiji outdoors or forests. Part of the year, wasps build their nests in the forest, so at that time caution must be taken while moving about in the bush.

The forests have many hardwood species very useful for construction, such as vesi and buabua. Damanu and the majestic raintree (see photo) are semi-hardwood with luscious grain and color excellent for interior finishing. The dharmashalla is largely finished with

raintree T&G walling. A few weeks ago I took the three children on a field trip to study forest trees and how the hardwood trees were milled into timber. In New Talavan, Prabhupada saw the forest during his walking tour of the farm, and told us to cut the trees to make homes for the devotees. We have cut about 150 hardwoods, and replanted at each location one or two mahogany trees. Our property was never commercially logged, so we will have plenty of hardwoods well into the future as the village grows.

FIJI COWS

One day this week, I drove across the island (Vanua Levu) to Labasa to look at some cows, with high hopes, and stopped to look at a rainbow in the mountains capped with clouds (*see photo*). The cows were supposed to be half Zebu, half Jersey, which would make them about 80% likely to be A2 (the healthier type of milk). Just



below the looming rock towers of the Three Sisters (*see photo*), I was

led up into a scrubby paddock to inspect four animals, and I was disappointed. They were from a variety of mixed bloodlines (mostly “beefers”). I recognized some Limousin and Hereford in their features; only one had any hint of Jersey, and one looked half Zebu. Nearby was another

animal (cannot really call it a cow), with a huge square Limousin body, a tiny Jersey head, and a misplaced milk bag- it looked like either from the movie *Island of Dr. Moreau* (where a crazy surgeon joins body parts of different species), or a creature from Lord Shiva’s hordes. I stared until the owner said “she” was not for sale. I was relieved.



I thought of the Kali Yuga melting pot- Fiji cows are 99% mixed breeds. The large Fiji dairies also had entirely mixed herds (although dairy breeds). They would never want to sell any of their few, better quality cows to us, and the Agriculture Department proved of no help either. Was there any hope of finding any A2 quality milk cows in Fiji? After hunting for several years, we had only a few possibilities- two different nearby dairy farmers were on my list to visit soon. Otherwise, we will need to resort to our last option (*to be revealed when exercised...*)

TEMPLE SITE CLEARING

Praying for some bit of vision as to where to build a temple for our village Lordships Sri Sri Radha Govinda (*see photo*), I decided to clear the high ground behind the dharmashalla, a ridge covered in small and medium common trees, a little at a time. It was the only logical place- above the dharmashalla with broad views to three sides. We detoured the entrance road to make more space for the temple. The clearing process is time-consuming. First, the boys clean the underbrush with machetes, flush to the ground including



Sri Sri Radha Govinda

numerous vines (like ropes and wires, everywhere), and pile them for burning after a few weeks of drying. Next, the chainsaw cuts down the trees and into pieces short enough to pick up by hand (**see photo**). This area has no hardwoods or really serious trees, so I am guessing it was cleared in the old days when Isaac Driver bought the land from the chief Tamai Nai in 1860.



Temple Site

The temple will be the focus of the village, situated on the high ground, and symbolically all residents will climb up the hill to see their Lordships daily. There are no designs or plans yet. Before I quit this body, I must complete this temple. For all the inconvenience I have given to Radha Govinda, it is the least I should do, to give Them a fitting and permanent residence where They can be properly worshipped. Does anyone have any design suggestions as for Their temple ? (not from timber). I had thought of bringing skilled concrete workers or a prefab granite block temple from India, but is that even practical?

SOME NICE PRABHUPADA QUOTES

"... live simple life, keeping cows, village life as it is exhibited by Krsna, Vrndavana. Krsna, if He liked, He could have lived in cities. How they were happy, the inhabitants of Vrndavana with Krsna and living and cows. That I want to introduce. At any cost do it and... Don't bother about big, big buildings." (???)



Shyamananda and deity plate

"Now, we must take to agricultural work -- produce food and give protection to the cows. And if we produce a surplus, we can trade. It is a simple thing that we must do. Our people should live peacefully in farming villages, produce grain and fruit and vegetables, protect the cows, and work hard. ... Krsna conscious people will never be losers by following the instructions of Krsna. They will live comfortably, without any material want, and tyaktva deham punar janma naiti [BG 4.9]: After leaving this body they will go directly to God. This is our way of life." (???)

"Stick to your own place and grow your food. There is no question of transport. Little transport is required, that bullock cart. Krsna was being carried on bullock cart. There is no use of petrol. Use simply the bull. They are already there. Utilize them." Morning Walk, Rome, 5/25/74

Yours in Prabhupada's service,

Nityananda das

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Hare Krishna! All Glories to Srila Prabhupada!