

# Spreading the Taste of the Most Wonderful Thing Near and Far

## Africa Festival Tour 2006 - Update

By: Kirti Butkovic

On the 21st January a group of around eight devotees from the UK, including HH Mahavisnu Swami, touched down at Nairobi airport, eager and ready for the African adventure. We were met by devotees from the UK, Finland and Nigeria who had already arrived and of course the local East African devotees. From Nairobi we travelled down to Kisumu in the newly refurbished Mercedes truck (it even has bunk beds!), but just an hour away from Kisumu we broke down! Over the next few days whilst some urgent mechanical work was being carried out on the truck, the devotees used the opportunity to carry on with the preparations. Advertising banners were painted, finishing touches were made to the mobile stage, bhoga and cooking paraphernalia for the road was arranged - it was a flurry of ecstatic activity!

### African Streets

Kisumu is the home of Little Gokul, a gurukula for AIDS-orphaned kids, which is run by Krishna Mayi devi dasi, inspired by Tribhuvannatha prabhu. Every year on the tour for the past five years around 10-15 of these kids are given the opportunity to travel with the festival crew and help with all aspects of the festivals. In particular they are very talented actors and rap artists, as anyone who has heard the Rising Moon CD will testify to!

***As we pulled up outside the Hare Krishna Temple, we were greeted by a rousing kirtan!***

### Journey to Kampala

Some of the devotees travelled to Kampala (capital of Uganda) whilst the truck was still being fixed to hold those festivals there that had already been booked. As soon as the truck was fixed everyone was ready to leave, but we just needed one thing - gearbox oil. A couple of devotees went to the shop in town that sold it, only to find that the owner was "out to lunch", and that was the only place you could get it! As 4pm came and went, we realised that even if we got the oil then we still wouldn't make it to the Kenya-Uganda border in time before it closes at 6pm, so we decided to leave early the next morning.

So the next day at 6am we all bundled into the truck and made our way to Kampala. As we pulled up outside the Hare Krishna Temple in Kampala at 4pm, we were greeted by a rousing kirtan led by HH Mahavisnu Swami! The next morning the entire group faced another long journey, this time to Mbarara, where the next few festivals were to be held. That same day we held a festival at Mbarara University and the next day at Mbarara Public Grounds. Both were very well attended, and many plates of prasadam, as well as

transcendental literature were distributed. African people love to sing and dance so the kirtan always goes down a treat, with attendees enthusiastically singing and dancing away to the Holy Names, and tapping their feet in time with the raps. People there are also generally very inquisitive and like to speak with devotees, asking questions and so on.

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Some of us came back to the UK whilst the rest of the team moved onto Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Most people have heard of these countries adversely in the news, but in terms of preaching it is uncharted territory, and therefore very exciting and pleasing to Their Lordships Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai. Indeed very aptly, a few days after the appearance day of Lord Nityananda, a very successful festival was held at Butare University in Rwanda, with over 800 students attending. Lord Nityananda's mercy! Since then the team have moved onto Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, before returning to the UK to start the summer festival tour...

## UK Festival Tour 2006

By: Mohan Luthra

The UK tour will kick off in the beginning of May with a packed schedule of events in town halls, arts centres and public festivals in and around London (keep an eye out for dates coming soon).

This will carry on til the beginning of July, after which the festivals will devote their energies towards Rathayatras and outdoor events. There is also a proposed mini tour of Sweden, Norway and Denmark with Parasurama Prabhu. By mid-September the festivals will return their attention to the London area, and in particular university programs, where there is a potential festival to be held with HH Hrdayananda Goswami. There will also be the annual festival to mark the disappearance of HG Tribhuvannatha prabhu, which will be held in October.

The summer is sure to be packed with adventure. For devotees who want to take a walk on the wild side, there are always plenty of opportunities to engage your talents and even learn new ones with the festival tour.

Tribhuvannatha Prabhu's annual formula was to spend the spring/summer in the UK holding festivals here, with the remaining year (i.e. the long winter months!) spent preaching in East and Central Africa. This has been continued since his departure, headed up by Giridhari prabhu, and this year was no exception.

**If you would like any further info about the Festival Program (Africa or UK), or would like to support it, please contact Giridhari prabhu on [Giridhari.SRS@pamho.net](mailto:Giridhari.SRS@pamho.net)**