

North American GBC Policy Letter Regarding Tripurari Swami
June 12th, 2012

Dear North American leaders and fellow ISKCON devotees,
Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Introduction

Having received reports of a long pattern of troubling actions and comments by H. H. Tripurari Swami, the North American GBC has been obliged to draw up this position paper. The purpose is to establish a policy for ISKCON North America leaders and members. We hope that clarifying the relevant issues and establishing clear guidelines will reduce any tensions between Tripurari Swami and ISKCON.

To help understand the need for this position paper, we here present a list of those actions and comments by Tripurari Swami that have brought us to this point.

1. Leaving ISKCON

Tripurari Maharaja has left ISKCON. This is his own declaration.
(See appendix A)

2. Rejecting Srila Prabhupada as his preeminent instructing spiritual master

The members of ISKCON accept and revere Srila Prabhupada as the Society's Founder-*Acharya*. This means that for us, he is the link with the *Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya sampradaya*, and that his *siddhanta*, standards, and practices remain the permanent and irreplaceable basis for all subsequent teachings and activities of ISKCON. Srila Prabhupada must always remain the preeminent instructing spiritual master for all devotees in ISKCON. His position is unique.

Tripurari Swami does not accept this standard. Rather, he presents Srila Prabhupada as one among a number of Gaudiya authorities, among whom he can pick and choose to follow on a particular principle or practice. (See appendix B)

3. Violation of Vaisnava etiquette regarding re-initiations

It is a well-established principle of Vaisnava etiquette that one does not "re-initiate" disciples of a Vaisnava guru who is in good standing. If beseeched by an aspiring initiate, one must at a bare minimum first receive the permission and blessing of the disciple's guru. (See appendices C and D)

Tripurari Swami has violated this principle of Vaisnava etiquette.
(See appendix E)

4. Standards and practices different from those of Srila Prabhupada

Tripurari Swami requires a different, less strict standard for initiation vows. (See appendix F)

SUMMARY: Position and Policy

Srila Prabhupada labored long and hard to design ISKCON as a great transcendental boat. He believed that it was fully able to carry those who take shelter of it across the ocean of the material world to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord. The planks, the sails, the rigging, and the charts of Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON boat are his standards, his mood of devotion, his instructions, and his system of organization. Thus, out of duty, to help assure that the elements set in place by Srila Prabhupada remain intact, the North American GBC is obliged to establish the following policy.

1. Temple presidents and congregational leaders are directed to not promote or host Tripurari Swami.
2. ISKCON devotees in general are requested to not promote or host Tripurari Swami.
3. Tripurari Swami has his own society. As per international GBC resolutions, those who want to hear from, follow, and promote Tripurari Swami are advised to serve in his society, not ISKCON. (See appendix G)
4. Likewise, ISKCON's policy regarding those initiated by a spiritual master outside ISKCON—including those initiated by Tripuri Swami—is that they should serve in the mission of their initiating spiritual master. (See appendix G)

5. Conclusion

The North American GBC does not like being in this position. There is no short-age of conditioned souls eager to hear Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's message, and the world is full of ripe fields to spread that message. Lord Gauranga has given all of us His sweeping mandate:

*pr̥thivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma
sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*

“In every town and village, the chanting of My name will be heard.”

As fellow followers of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and our previous *acharyas*, we pray that the *seva* of ISKCON and of Tripurari Swami may continue to bring benediction to the forgetful *jivas* of this age. At the same time, experience tells us that it will benefit us all, help us all avoid Vaisnava *aparadha*, and protect Srila Prabhupada's position in and standards for his Society, if ISKCON and Tripurari Swami spread Krishna consciousness each in our own specific and separate ways.

Your servants,

The North America GBC Executive committee

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Appendix A

From Tripurari Swami's postings on the "Srila Prabhupada disciples' Conference" (July – November 2011)

"...I have encouraged devotees to leave ISKCON at times. But I have also encouraged devotees to remain in ISKCON at times. For some it may be better to leave, and if they wish to follow their particular conscience they should do so. I did, and it was good for me. So naturally I think it may also be good for others..."

"...I chose to leave ISKCON for Sridhar Maharaja's siksa (1984-1985)...."

Statement by Tripurari Swami during a taped discussion in 1995

"People criticize me for leaving ISKCON, but I tell you, if I had to do it again, I would have left before. Knowing what I learned leaving. I'm telling you, leaving I learned more than I learned the whole time I was in."

(end)

Appendix B

Statement by Tripurari Swami during a taped discussion in 1995

"Prabhupada said things according to time and circumstance, Sridhara Maharaja saying this way according to time and circumstance and I, another way according to time and circumstance. I can draw from Prabhupada how he applied in certain circumstances and I can see how Sridhara Maharaja did and I can come up with a synthesis, a third idea, based on scripture and what they had done."

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- GBC Resolutions

Srila Prabhupada, the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON

2.1 Definition

To fulfill the previous acarya's desire for a united worldwide preaching organization to expand Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's mission, Srila Prabhupada founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness as a distinct branch of the *Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya-Vaisnava-sampradaya*. Therefore he is the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON.

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada is the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON. This means that he is ISKCON's link with the *Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya sampradaya*, that his writings, oral teachings, and exemplary actions remain the permanent and irreplaceable basis for all subsequent teachings and activities of ISKCON. He is and will remain always the instructing spiritual master of all devotees in ISKCON.

2.2 Principles

2.2.1 The Significance of Srila Prabhupada to ISKCON

1. Srila Prabhupada is the foundational *siksa-guru* for all ISKCON devotees because he has realized and presented the teachings of the previous *acaryas* of the *Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya-sampradaya* appropriately for the modern age.
2. Srila Prabhupada's instructions are the essential teachings for every ISKCON devotee.
3. Srila Prabhupada's books are the embodiment of his teachings and should be accepted as the standard by all future generations of ISKCON.
4. Srila Prabhupada should be worshipped daily by every ISKCON member.

5. Every ISKCON spiritual master is responsible to guide his disciples to follow Srila Prabhupada's instructions.
6. As Founder-Acarya, Srila Prabhupada gave directions for management, principles of cooperation, and other practical guidelines which form the basis and inspiration for ISKCON's policies.
7. Srila Prabhupada established the Governing Body Commission to execute his will, following the order of the previous acaryas.(94)

8.2.1 Loyalty to ISKCON and Srila Prabhupada

8.2.1.1 Seeking Instruction Outside ISKCON Improperly

Since all the spiritual knowledge and instruction required is available in Srila Prabhupad's books and from ISKCON, no ISKCON member shall be allowed to seek spiritual instruction from any other person or institution outside of ISKCON without approval of the GBC Body. Any member of ISKCON who willfully disobeys the above order will thereby sever his connection with ISKCON. (82)

8.2.1.1 Although all respects should be shown to senior Vaisnavas of the Gaudiya Math or other non-ISKCON Vaisnavas, no one should independently approach these respected personalities with the intention of begging advice or opinions regarding management or any controversial matters pertaining to ISKCON. The GBC is the ultimate authority for resolving such matters, and its decisions should be accepted.(79)

8.2.1.2 Prohibition to Lead Anyone Away from ISKCON

As ISKCON is spiritually non-different from His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, no one has the right to lead anyone away from ISKCON.(82)

8.2.1.4 To avoid offenses to Srila Prabhupad and to avoid offenses to his godbrothers, the GBC reminds all ISKCON devotees of Srila Prabhupad's instruction that in general we should avoid the association of his godbrothers and members of other spiritual groups unless one has permission from a GBC member for some specific purpose. Intimate siksa association is prohibited from non-ISKCON spiritual masters.(87)

8.2.1.7 Association with Non-ISKCON Vaisnavas and sadhus

1. In obedience to the instruction of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupad, the GBC directs that the members of ISKCON should respect all senior Gaudiya Vaisnavas outside ISKCON, but should not intimately associate with them, personally or through printed or recorded media, for guidance, teaching, instruction, or initiation as their presentation of Krsna consciousness often differs from that of Srila Prabhupada in emphasis, balance and other aspects of both teaching and practice.

2. This resolution is intended to apply categorically to all ISKCON members. ISKCON Leaders' first responsibility is to give considerate direction, guidance, and counseling to any ISKCON devotees personally affected by this resolution so as to bring them back to the path set by Srila Prabhupad.

In any case, those who continue to act in violation of this resolution are subject to sanctions by Temple Presidents and GBC Zonal Secretaries, who may exercise their discretion to prohibit any such devotees from living on ISKCON properties or participating in ISKCON functions.

(end)

Appendix C

Vaisnava Etiquette Regarding Initiating Disciples
Who Already Have Dikṣā-Gurus
North American GBC / Drutakarma prabhu
January 2012

May a member of ISKCON who has accepted initiation from an ISKCON *guru* who remains in good standing accept initiation from another *guru*?

The standard Vaiṣṇava etiquette is that this should not be done.

There are two kinds of spiritual masters: initiating spiritual masters (*dikṣā-gurus*) and instructing spiritual masters (*śikṣā-gurus*). According to spiritual authorities, one can have many instructing spiritual masters but only one initiating spiritual master.

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Ādi 1.35), Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja says:

mantra-guru āra yata śikṣā-guru-gaṇa
tānhāra caraṇa āge kariye vandana

SYNONYMS

mantra-guru—the initiating spiritual master; *āra*—and also; *yata*—as many (as there are); *śikṣā-guru-gaṇa*—all the instructing spiritual masters; *tānhāra*—of all of them; *carāṇa*—unto the lotus feet; *āge*—at first; *kariye*—I offer; *vandana*—respectful obeisances.

TRANSLATION

I first offer my respectful obeisances at the lotus feet of my initiating spiritual master and all my instructing spiritual masters.

In his purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda says:

A devotee must have only one initiating spiritual master because in the scriptures acceptance of more than one is always forbidden. There is no limit, however, to the number of instructing spiritual masters one may accept.

If the initiating spiritual master becomes addicted to sinful activities or becomes permanently deviated from Vaiṣṇava philosophy, the disciple may take initiation again

from another spiritual master. This is established in ISKCON law, as explained in the GBC-approved paper “Guru Āśraya”:

The GBC resolutions provide that one should abandon or reject a spiritual master who has the following symptoms:

1. His attachment to sense gratification is serious, prolonged, or hopeless.
2. He takes on demoniac qualities and becomes inimical to ISKCON.

In the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, these determinations about a *guru*'s status are to be confirmed by the Governing Body Commission. If these disqualifications are confirmed by the GBC, then a devotee is advised to eventually seek reinitiation, as explained in the GBC paper “Guru Āśraya”:

When the *ācāryas* advise a disciple to reject his spiritual master, they also direct us as to what to do next: accept the shelter of another spiritual master. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says:

“What should one do if by bad association one’s spiritual master loses his spiritual qualifications? He was prominent as a bona fide spiritual master, but later, by offenses against the holy name, he lost his spiritual discrimination. Becoming offensive and envious toward Vaiṣṇavas, he gave up his taste for the nectar of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa. Thus he gradually came more and more under the control of material desires for profit, sense gratification, and illicit sex. The disciple gives up this *guru* and by the causeless mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa accepts a bona fide spiritual master again and goes on chanting the pure names of Kṛṣṇa.” (*Harināma-cintāmaṇi*, Chapter 6, translated from Bengali original)

There are GBC rules governing taking reinitiation from ISKCON-approved *gurus*:

7.2.6 Reinitiation

A devotee whose *guru* has fallen and who seeks re-initiation from an approved *guru* must observe the following requirements:

1. a six-month period of formally taking shelter,
2. a formal letter of recommendation from the appropriate local authority, and
3. acceptance by the initiating *guru*.

So under the conditions outlined above, reinitiation is allowed. But according to ISKCON law, one who wants to remain within ISKCON must accept an ISKCON-approved spiritual master. Here is the relevant law:

7.2.4 Initiation Only from Approved Gurus

Devotees who live or serve in ISKCON may take initiation only from ISKCON-approved *gurus*.

7.2.4.1 Violators

7.2.4.1.1 First Initiation Outside

ISKCON members who in violation of ISKCON law take initiation from *gurus* who have not been approved to initiate in ISKCON shall not be permitted to serve within ISKCON. If the nonapproved *guru* has an institution or *āśrama* outside ISKCON, then according to standard etiquette his disciples should serve within the institution of their *guru* and should not serve within ISKCON. (This rule does not apply to persons who were already initiated before they became ISKCON members.)

7.2.4.1.2 Other Initiations Outside

Anyone initiated in ISKCON who has taken any further initiation, or reinitiation, from a nonapproved *guru* must renounce their initiation from the nonapproved *guru* in order to work within ISKCON. Their ISKCON spiritual master (or if their spiritual master is beyond mortal vision, the local GBC) shall decide the proper procedure for reinstating them in ISKCON, including the need for taking any further initiation.

There is no allowance for a disciple's rejecting a spiritual master in good standing and accepting another initiating spiritual master. If the initiating spiritual master is not irretrievably fallen or deviated, the disciple should not accept another initiating spiritual master. Conversely, a spiritual master should not give initiation to a disciple who already has an initiating spiritual master in good standing. To give such an initiation is contrary to Vaiṣṇava etiquette. Therefore both the disciple who accepts another initiating *guru* and the *guru* who gives the disciple such an initiation are committing a grave offense.

Even if one thinks another *guru* is more learned than one's own *dīkṣā-guru*, one should not reject or disrespect one's own *guru*.

There is this story from *Bhakti-ratnākara* (14.180–83):

In Rāḍhadeśa is a village named Kandra. . . . Jaya Gopāla was born in a family of *kāyasthas* in that village. Out of false ego due to having obtained a high education, he became proud and evil-minded. His spiritual master was a pure devotee of the Lord, but because his spiritual master was illiterate Jaya Gopāla was ashamed of him. If someone inquired as to who his *guru* was, Jaya Gopāla would say that his grand-spiritual master (*parama-guru*) was his *guru*. Śrīla Vīrabhadra Prabhu brought this up and ostracized him for having transgressed the mercy given to him.

In such cases a disciple may be allowed to take permission from his *dikṣā-guru* to accept instruction from another ISKCON-approved *guru*. In Chapter 20 of *Jaiva-dharma*, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says:

“However, if the *guru* is not inimical toward Vaiṣṇavas, is not a Māyāvādī, and is not addicted to sinful activities but is lacking in knowledge of the scriptures, then his meager scriptural understanding should not be a cause for the disciple’s disowning him. In this case the disciple must approach his *guru* with due deference to procure permission for receiving spiritual knowledge and instructions from an advanced, pure Vaiṣṇava and for serving him.”

So the general rule is that a disciple who has accepted initiation from a *guru* in good standing should not accept reinitiation, or a second initiation, from another *guru*.

During the lifetime of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, one of his initiated disciples, Hṛṣīkeśānanda Dāsa, accepted reinitiation from one of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s godbrothers, Bon Mahārāja. Śrīla Prabhupāda regarded the actions of Bon Mahārāja as offensive. In a letter to Mukunda Mahārāja (from San Francisco, March 26, 1968), Śrīla prabhupāda wrote:

In meantime, I have also received one letter which is very depressing from Hrsikesa. I understand that he has been induced by Bon Maharaja to be initiated by him for giving him shelter, and this foolish boy has accepted his inducement. This isn’t very happy news, and I have replied Hrsikesa’s letter in the following words, which please take note, and in the future, we shall be very cautious about them. “My Dear Hrsikesa, Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter of March 14, 1968, and I am greatly surprised. I am greatly surprised for Bon Maharaja’s initiating you in spite of his knowing that you are already initiated by me. So it is deliberate transgression of Vaisnava etiquettes and otherwise a deliberate insult to me. I do not know why he has done like this but no Vaisnava will approve of this offensive action. I very much appreciate your acknowledgement of my service unto you and you will always have my blessings, but you must know that you have committed a great blunder. I do not wish to discuss on this point more elaborately now, but if you are desirous to know further about it, I shall be glad to give you more enlightenment. Mukunda is not here. He has gone to L.A. Hope you are well.” If Hrsikesa writes you letter I think you may avoid reply. I do not approve both Hrsikesa’s and Bon Maharaja’s this offensive action.

In another letter to Mukunda Mahārāja (April 9, 1968) Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote:

Achyutananda and Harivilas have informed me that Hrishikesh has taken the step as a matter of diplomacy, but he will come back again when I come back to India. I am not astonished for his behaviour, but I am sorry for my God-brother’s behaviour. He is a

neophyte and so he may commit so many mistakes, but Bon Maharaj should not have committed such mistake. It is not approved by Vaishnava etiquettes.

During the time of Lord Caitanya, one of His followers, Gadādhara Paṇḍita, asked the Lord to give him reinitiation. Initiation involves the spiritual master's giving the disciple a *mantra*. So Gadādhara Paṇḍita wanted Lord Caitanya to give him his *mantra* again. Lord Caitanya refused to do this. The story is told in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* (*Antya* 10.22–26):

One day Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita asked the Lord about the initiation *mantra* he had been given. “I have given someone my initiation *mantra*, and now I am not getting realization from chanting it. Please give that *mantra* to me again, and then my mind will be joyful.” The Lord said, “You already have a spiritual master, so be careful. Don't become an offender. What to speak of a *mantra*, I can give even My life to you. But it would not be proper to give you an initiation *mantra* while you have a spiritual master.”

So it is a grave offense for a disciple to take his *mantra*, or *mantras*, again from another *guru*. In the modern Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, one receives the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* and later the Gāyatrī *mantra* from one's initiating spiritual master. If the spiritual master is not irretrievably fallen or deviated, one should not take the *mantras* again from another spiritual master.

Later a similar incident occurred. Duḥkhī Kṛṣṇadāsa took initiation from Hṛdaya Caitanya, who later sent him to Jīva Gosvāmī in Vṛndāvana to take instruction. A transcendental situation occurred in which it appeared to Hṛdaya Caitanya that his disciple had been reinitiated by Jīva Gosvāmī. There were reports that Jīva Gosvāmī had given him a new name, Śyāmānanda. When a *guru* initiates a disciple, he usually gives the disciple a new name. The long transcendental history of this incident, told in such works as the *Bhakti-ratnākara* and *Śyāmānanda Prakāśa*, is summarized by Satyarāja Prabhu in his book *Lives of the Vaiṣṇava Saints*. It turned out that Jīva Gosvāmī was not guilty of the offense he had been accused of. But it is clear from the accounts that the Vaiṣṇava community regarded reinitiation as a grave offense. Hṛdaya Caitanya sent five of his most trusted disciples to Jīva Gosvāmī with a letter accusing him of the offense. After reading the letter, Jīva Gosvāmī replied: “Although Hṛdaya Caitanya has written this accusing letter, I assure you that I have not taken Kṛṣṇadāsa as my disciple. I would never even consider such a thing.”

It would be good if no Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *guru* would ever even consider giving initiation to someone who had already been initiated by another Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *guru* who is not fallen.

There may, however, be some rare exceptions to the general rule. Let us consider the following case from the life of Śrīla Prabhupāda. One of his disciples, Asita Dāsa, apparently

wanted to take second initiation from one of Prabhupāda's godbrothers, Mādhava Mahārāja, and went to his *āśrama* in Purī. Prabhupāda wrote to Asita Dāsa:

“If you want to stay there I have no objection. For the time being you can perform your devotional service in Puri and when I return to Mayapur in mid-March, you can see me and we shall see what was the cause for your being asked to leave. It is a big establishment and sometimes disagreement happens and I am helpless. I am enquiring from Mayapur why you were asked to leave there. If you want to take initiation from Madhava Goswami Maharaja, I have no objection.” (Letter to Asita, 1/10/75).

Prabhupāda also wrote to Mādhava Mahārāja:

“I understand from the letter of Asita das that he has gone to your place in Jagannatha Puri. He has asked permission from me for taking initiation from you. I have given my permission and you can initiate him if you like so that he may increase his devotional service there.” (Letter to Mādhava Mahārāja, 1/14/75).

According to Vīrabāhu Prabhu, a devotee told him that Asita had first initiation (Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* initiation) from Prabhupāda and was going to take second initiation (Gāyatrī *mantra* initiation) from Mādhava Mahārāja. It is not clear that this actually happened. Bhakti Vikāsa Swami, who knew Asita, wrote (Nov. 30, 2011): “As far as I know, he did not accept *dīkṣā* from Mādhava Mahārāja and shortly after Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote that letter to him, Asita was back in ISKCON.” But the main point is that even if it did happen, it happened with the permission of Asita Dāsa's initiating *guru*, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

In conclusion, the general rule is that a disciple who has accepted initiation from a spiritual master who remains in good standing should not accept initiation from another spiritual master. Conversely, a spiritual master should not offer initiation to a disciple who already has taken initiation from another spiritual master who remains in good standing.

(end)

Appendix D / Letters from Srila Prabhupada

April 9, 1968 to Mukunda:

“In meantime, I have also received one letter which is very depressing from Hrsikesa. I understand that he has been induced by Bon Maharaja to be initiated by him for giving him shelter, and this foolish boy has accepted his inducement. This isn't very happy news, and I have replied Hrsikesa's letter in the following words, which please take note, and in the future, we shall be very cautious about them.

"My Dear Hrsikesa:

Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter of March 14, 1968, and I am greatly surprised. I am greatly surprised for Bon Maharaja's initiating you in spite of his knowing that you are already initiated by me. So it is deliberate transgression of Vaisnava etiquettes and otherwise a deliberate insult to me. I do not know why he has done like this but no Vaisnava will approve of this offensive action. I very much appreciate your acknowledgement of my service unto you and you will always have my blessings, but you must know that you have committed a great blunder. I do not wish to discuss on this point more elaborately now, but if you are desirous to know further about it, I shall be glad to give you more enlightenment. Mukunda is not here. He has gone to L.A. Hope you are well."

“If Hrsikesa writes you letter I think you may avoid reply. I do not approve both Hrsikesa's and Bon Maharaja's this offensive action. Hoping you are both well.

April 9, 1968 to Mukunda

“Acyutananda and Harivilasa have informed me that Hrsikesa has taken the step as a matter of diplomacy, but he will come back again when I come back to India. I am not astonished for his behavior, but I am sorry for my God-brother's behavior. He (Hrisikesa) is a neophyte and so he may commit so many mistakes, but Bon Maharaja should not have committed such mistake. It is not approved by Vaisnava etiquettes.”

Appendix E

- **Indradyumna Maharaja**

“Tripurari Swami "re-initiated" one of my female disciples about 6 or 7 years ago. He then informed me after the fact and gave a long reasoning why he thought it was OK.”

- **Trivikram Maharaja**

“Tripurari Swami has “re-initiated” several of my disciples”

Adikesava dasa and Rasananda das in 2002

Bhava Bhakti dd in 2006

Madhavendra Puri dasa and Tulasi dd in July of 2011

“Until now (April 2012) Tripurari Swami has not said spoken to me about this”

Note: Tripurari Swami claims that Trivikram Maharaja rejected these devotees and only then did he “re-initiate” them. However, Trivikram Maharaja states firmly that this is not the case. Trivikram Maharaja reports that he did not reject these disciples but, rather out of duty, warned them that Srila Prabhupada did not want his followers hearing regularly from non-ISKCON Gaudiya Math-linked speakers.

- **Bir Krishna Maharaja**

“Tripurari Swami gave 2nd initiation to one of my disciples, Gopal Nandini dd. It happened in the first few months of 2011.”

Bir Krishna Maharaja reports that Tripurari Swami did apologize for this afterwards.

(end)

Appendix F

Statements by Tripurari Swami posted to the "Srila Prabhupada disciples" e-mail conference:

"The guru has the prerogative to determine who he or she will initiate and what if anyone vows the disciples must commit to."

"I have a different system. But I really do not think it is about numbers per se. I was told that Bhaktivinoda asked his followers to start with one round and increase as taste increased. Bhaktisiddhanta's bottom line was "not to allow the mala to fast." So the number of rounds is a detail, and we know this because we see that it has been adjusted at different times under different circumstances. And in one sense each and every individual is a different circumstanceIt is not really a formula, and we see that previous acaryas have allowed their disciples to chant less than 16 rounds at the time of initiation"

"Yes, Prabhupada established a particular standard but in doing so he established his own standards...."

Trivikrama Swami:

"I have a disciple who is a friend of the Polish devotee who along with his wife was recently "re-initiated" by Tripurari Maharaja. He told me yesterday that in the initiation ceremony the candidate for initiation does not make a vow to follow the four regulative principles. The reason being that this is personal and private. Nor does he promise to chant 16 rounds. Instead they whisper into Maharaja's ear the number of rounds they plan on chanting."

(end)

Appendix G

GBC Resolution 7.2.4.1.1

“If the non-ISKCON guru has an institution or ashrama outside ISKCON, then according to standard etiquette, his disciples should serve within the institution of their guru and should not serve within ISKCON.”

International GBC executive committee’s letter on this topic:

April 11th, 2010

Dear Sri Radha Ballabha prabhu:

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada. All glories to Sri Sri Guru and Gauranga.

You asked: “I would like to know the Governing Body Commission's statement on active service in ISKCON performed by Gaudiya Matha initiated Vaisnavas.”

ISKCON’s policy is that it is best if those initiated outside of ISKCON serve in the mission of their initiating spiritual master. You pointed out the reason in your letter: “If devotees agree to respect their Gaudiya Matha initiating gurus *in private...*”

The key condition is “in private”. This dynamic of a disciple being required to keep their natural affection and allegiance to their initiating spiritual master suppressed is not healthy for the disciple’s spiritual life. It is better if the disciple can serve in an environment where he or she can express their genuine feelings and allegiance and have that supported by the devotees they are serving with.

Additionally, what is in the disciple’s heart will come out from time to time. When faced with such public expression, the local ISKCON authority is then in the awkward position of having to correct the disciple for quoting, glorifying, and or worshipping their initiating guru. After all, it is that local ISKCON authority’s duty to do so. As noted in the attached GBC resolutions, while offering respects to all bona fide Gaudiya gurus, ISKCON is dedicated to practicing and presenting the teachings of Srila Prabhupada.

Thus, in the best interest of the disciple’s spiritual growth, to avoid offenses, and to maintain ISKCON focus on exclusively and purely delivering the practices and teachings of

Srila Prabhupada, ISKCON's policy is that those who are initiated outside of ISKCON should serve in the mission of their initiating spiritual master.

Your servant,
Ananda Tirtha dasa
(on behalf of the GBC executive committee)

(end)