

Yamuna and I both felt that although Srila Prabhupada had requested us to worship Deities, we needed his special permission to worship Radha and Krishna Deities. Yamuna wrote on October 11, 1975, informing Srila Prabhupada of the larger *ashram*, our ideas for a women's *ashram*, and requesting his permission to worship Radha and Krishna Deities. Srila Prabhupada replied on October 22:

You have my consent to go ahead with your plan for *pratistha* for Sri Sri Radha-Krishna *archa vigraha*. You may call them Radha-Banabehari.

—LETTER TO YAMUNA, OCT. 22, 1975

Srila Prabhupada also addressed the idea of creating a women's *ashram*:

The idea of a woman's *ashram* is good. Those not married, if there is not provision for separate living quarters for them in the temples, they can go there.

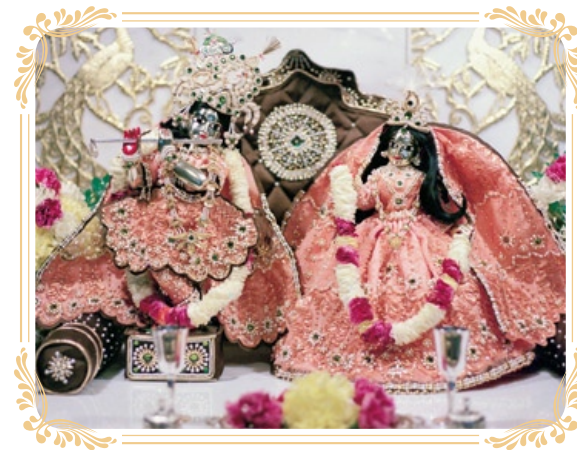
—LETTER TO YAMUNA, OCT. 22, 1975

## The Installation Ceremony of Sri Sri Radha-Banabehari

It was important to Yamuna and myself that all of the proper Vedic sacrifices and ceremonies be carried out for the installation of Sri Sri Radha-Banabehari. With little building experience, we constructed an elaborate altar with locally purchased moldings and fretwork. The date for Their installation, December 22, 1975, also marked the Disappearance of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur. Again, Jayatirtha das made all of the arrangements to bring devotees and articles for the installation sacrifice and festivities. Revatinandana Swami performed the fire sacrifice, and Dinabandhu das and his wife Akuti from the Portland ISKCON temple participated in a variety of services. Jayatirtha performed the bathing ceremony on the veranda elaborately decorated with jasmine vines and waterfalls of flowers. We tethered our cow Bimala near the Deity bathing tank and were amazed to see her staring at the Deities for hours, her head gently resting on the porch. Yamuna made an elaborate feast of 108 preparations as Their first offering. It was an unforgettable day.



Sri Sri Radha-Banabehari's installation *abhisheka*



Sri Sri Radha-Banabehari in Their first four outfits