

[Hare Rama!](#)

Category : [October/November/December 2004](#)

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SCULPTURE

Hare Rama!

Honoring saintliness with awesome art

On February 22, 2004, five twelve-foot-tall, three-ton sculptural masterpieces were installed for worship in the International Society for Krishna consciousness (ISKCON) temple at Mayapur in West Bengal. These temple icons were crafted by the highly skilled sthapatis (artisans) of Swamimalai in the Thanjavur district of India. They are made of panchaloka, an alloy of five metals--zinc, copper, tin, silver and gold--heated at 1,400 degrees in an open pit, as in ancient, Vedic times.

The five murtis (temple statues for worship) are of Lord Krishna's devotees: Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (with his hands raised), Gadadara Prabhu (with his right hand raised), Srivas Prabhu (with folded hands), Nityananda Prabhu and Advaita Prabhu.

According to the three master craftsmen in charge of the project--D. Radhakrishna Stapathi, D. Srikanta Stapathi and D. Swaminatha Stapathi--it took a year to complete the works. The design was submitted by Bharath Maharaj, an ISKCON architect from Australia who followed guidelines from a Hindu scripture named Silpashastra. In describing the work, one of the sthapatis said, "We have ornamented the idols in the early Chola style." These five saints--Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and four of his disciples--lived 500 years ago in Mayapur. Together they are credited with popularizing a devotional practice of singing the names of Lord Krishna called "Sankirtan."

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