

GBC EC Uses Knowledge Filters and Loaded Dice to push FDG

BY: SHATRUGHNA DASA

Feb 10, 2015 – INDIA (SUN) –

In 2013 the GBC resolved that a four-man committee comprising of Badrinarayana Swami, Bhanu Swami, Bir Krishna Goswami, and Praghosa Prabhu would write a paper on the FDG issue in time for the October 2013 interim GBC meeting. No such paper came forward but instead the SAC was secretly tasked to do this. The SAC paper was presented in October 2013. But it was not well received and generally lambasted as a "hack job" of incompetents and corrupt persons with a conflict of interest, so much so that out of embarrassment its availability to the public was delayed for a year. For reasons why the SAC paper of 2013 is deeply flawed see "[Politically Motivated Wrongdoings of the Sastric Advisory Committee](#)".

Because the 2013 SAC paper was obviously written with the pre-determined objective of sanctioning Female Diksha Gurus it was clearly biased and not acceptable to any fair minded lover of the truth. It was rejected by many especially the Indian Yatra. To deal with this debacle the GBC passed the following resolution in 2014 at the AGM in Mayapura. (Please note the parts I have put in **bold**.)

321. Female Diksa Gurus

The subject of Vaisnavis initiating in ISKCON is further tabled until additional discussion at the 2014 GBC Midterm Meeting. In the meantime the **GBC Executive Committee**[Anuttama, Pragosha and Sesa Prabhus] will work on the following process:

1. Creating a committee of devotees **who have no pre-determined view on this topic** who will gather documents from **all sources** on the subject of female diksa-gurus.
2. The committee will sort, summarize, and categorize all documentation. Categories could include Srila Prabhupada's quotations, varnasrama-dharma, history within our sampradaya and other Vaisnava sampradayas, etc.
3. **As far as possible all documentation will be verified for accuracy, authenticity, etc.**
4. As far as possible this committee will do whatever other research may be required.
5. The committee will then provide all those documents to the GBC members prior to the Midterm meeting. Thus all GBC members will come to the Midterm Meeting well aware of **all the arguments, information, and evidences available**. This will

then enable the GBC to make either informed progress or an informed decision on this matter.

We had extreme doubts about this when we first read this. How, for instance, were they going to find "devotees who have no pre-determined view on this topic?" That is simply impossible and ridiculous; unless they have been living in a cave in the Himalayas for last 15 years without seeing anyone or having Internet access. We simply **do not believe** that it is possible nor do we believe (as we shall demonstrate) that the committee that was put together fit this description.

But there is more, there was no transparency, who was this group of devotees? We don't find out until it is a *fait accompli* thus no one can question if they are in fact qualified for the job or actually fit the description of having "no pre-determined view on this topic." This secrecy and lack of transparency puts a lot of doubt regarding whether this committee applied a knowledge filter of [confirmation bias](#) in collecting evidence and presenting the GBC with "[loaded dice](#)" that came up "pro-FDG" no matter how many times you rolled them.

Though the leaders of the Indian Yatra asked the GBC EC for copies of the documents that this so called non-partisan committee gave to the GBC they refused to give it even after repeated requests. Why was the GBC EC not forth coming with these documents if it was just evidence? Finally after two months the [GBC EC said](#) it was now ready to share their database of evidence which was available at the following [link](#). [This site is designed in such a way that it is extremely difficult to give a link to a specific discussed section, hence the absence of such links. We try our best to point you in the right direction using nested ">" along with the name of the field.]

Most Important Documents Missing

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Finally I had a chance to see what the GBC EC had refused to let us see for so long. I took a cursory look using the "one grain of rice test to see if the pot is cooked" method to gauge if this was an honest and fair endeavor. So the first thing I did was look for the paper sponsored by the Indian Yatra to counter the pro-FDG paper of 2005 and which the GBC action order 305 (2009) is based on.

GBC resolutions of 2009

305. Female Diksa Gurus [Action Order]

Whereas there is a factual need for more diksa-gurus in ISKCON to accommodate the worldwide preaching; Whereas there are mature female preachers qualified to take on diksa-guru responsibilities; Whereas there are a number of such qualified

women who already have siksa disciples; Whereas the GBC Body previously issued the following statement in 2005, which has now been given further consideration:

425. Female Diksa Guru The GBC accepts the basic philosophical conclusion presented in the **SAC's Female Diksa Guru Paper**, i.e. that a mature, qualified, female devotee may accept the role of an initiating spiritual master. The implementation thereof is pending further GBC consideration.

RESOLVED:

1. That resolution 425/2005 "Female Diksa Guru" is amended to read as follows: "The GBC accepts the philosophical conclusion presented in the **SAC's Female Diksa Guru Paper** that a mature, qualified, female devotee may accept the role of an initiating spiritual master."

2. The GBC Body authorizes local area committees to put forward for approval as initiating guru any devotee in their area, male or female, who is qualified according to existing GBC Law.

It must be remembered that the whole reason this conflict is going on is the Indian Yatra has requested the GBC to rescind Action Order 305 (2009). And, as part of its efforts the IIAC (formerly IRGB) commissioned some papers that can only be described as demolishing the SAC paper of 2005, the foundation for GBC Action order 305 (2009).

I looked everywhere in the "[Full Articles](#)" section but this paper is missing. This immediately sent the sirens wailing and the red lights flashing. **The papers sponsored by the Indian Yatra, the main opponents of FDG, which demolish the 2005 SAC FGD paper are not included** even though they were [widely circulated and discussed](#).

["A Reply to the GBC Action Order 305, 2009" (in three parts) [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#) It can also be [downloaded as a pdf](#).

The "unbiased researchers" have many obscure pro-FDG papers of very limited circulation (see "[Full Articles](#)"). This suggests that they reached out to the pro-FDG side or scoured the internet really looking for such evidence. But they didn't reach out to the main stakeholder on the opposing side -- ISKCON India, who was purposely kept in the dark. **This unbiased committee with "no pre-determined view on this topic" can spot the pro-FDG fleas but somehow miss the anti-FDG elephants.**

More Bias -- Bashing the Manu Samhita

I also took a brief look at the "[Compilations](#)" section and peeped into the "What should be the hierarchy of evidences?" section. "How authoritative is *Manu Samhita* as an evidence?" caught my eye and I clicked on it. This section was almost exclusively anti-*Manu Samhita* with the six *Manu Samhita* bashing quotes all derived from an essay by Bhakta Rupa Prabhu and Madhavananda Prabhu called "*Some Evidence Regarding Education and Guruship for Vaishnavis.*" These researchers made no attempt to look for exculpatory texts that countered the negative texts. (Or, they were purposely suppressing them.) If they had

made even a feeble attempt they would have found plenty. For example one of the texts that Bhakta Rupa and Madhavananda quote is:

"According to the Manu-samhitā you are all mlecchas and yavanas. You cannot touch the Manu-samhitā, what to speak of translating it. So if you try to follow the Manu-samhitā then you become a mleccha and yavana and your career is finished. (Secretary's letter to Madhusudana, 19 May 1977.)"

But Shyamasundara Prabhu specifically countered this quote by providing the [back story](#) explaining Prabhupada's response in a post on Dandavatas.

In order to promote their heterodox position, Bhaktarupa Prabhu and Madhavananda Prabhu have in their paper, "Some Evidence Regarding Education and Guruship for Vaishnavis", sought to undermine the authority and applicability of the *Manu Samhitaby* quoting the following letter by Srila Prabhupada:

"According to the Manu-samhita you are all mlecchas and yavanas. You cannot touch the Manu-samhita, what to speak of translating it. So if you try to follow the Manu-samhita then you become a mleccha and yavana and your career is finished." (Secretary's Letter to Madhusudana, 19 May, 1977)

The following is the actual explanation of this statement by His Grace Madhusudana Prabhu, the person it was addressed to.

dasa dasa anu dasa

Shyamasundara Dasa

From: Shyamasundara Dasa
Sent: Monday, October 13, 2003 12:26 PM
Subject: Manu-samhita

Dear Madhusudana Prabhu,

PAMHO AGTSP

Recently there has been a bit of controversy regarding Srila Prabhupada, Vedic culture and Manu-samhita. Considering that every time SP mentions the Manu-samhita he has done so in glowing terms the following text seems contradictory. Could you please explain the context surrounding this text. What did you ask SP and why did he answer like this?

Your humble servant

Shyamasundara Dasa

From: Michael Blumert
Sent: Monday, October 13, 2003 4:27 PM
To: Shyamasundara Dasa
Subject: RE: Manu-samhita

At the time, my wife and I were having trouble conceiving a child for many years. Various sanskritists were beginning to recommend following the many rituals for auspicious conception etc. So I had asked Prabhupada if I should do those things and that was his response. Of course, Prabhupad's instruction was to simply chant 50 rounds before trying to conceive.

My understanding is that the 50 rounds of chanting should not be minimized as being less effective than the Manu-samhita rituals. Also, it's clear that I and many others were (I still am) mlecchas and yavanas (which became all too obvious when we screwed up the movement as we did), so how could we know how and when to apply the Manu-samhita. I think Prabhupada answered based on the time, place, and recipient.

That probably clears it up for you.

ys

Madhusudan

Shyamasundara Prabhu also countered many other attacks on the veracity and applicability of the Manu Samhita in a long series of comments to an article called "[Manu Samhita/Smriti with Six Commentaries](#)" that would be too lengthy to post here.

So we are wondering how it is that this research team comes up with so many negative quotes about Manu Samhita but practically no positive quotes (one out of seven)? And why didn't they approach HH Bhakti Vidya Purna Swami who is the most knowledgeable person regarding Manu Samhita in ISKCON having given many lectures and seminars on *Manu Samhita*?

Correct Siddhanta Suppressed

As I continued looking through the "unbiased presentation" I noticed many points taken from the essay "*Some Evidence Regarding Education and Guruship for Vaishnavis*" by Bhakta Rupa Prabhu and Madhavananda Prabhu and presented as evidence. However this particular essay had been completely eviscerated and proved wrong point for point in a scholarly paper by [Gokula-ranjana dasa](#), which can be [found here](#).

Considering that GBC resolution (2014) 321 (3) stipulated:

"As far as possible all documentation will be verified for accuracy, authenticity, etc."

And considering that Bhakta Rupa and Madhavananda Prabhu's paper had been proved wrong on every issue how could points derived from it be presented as evidence? And why was the opposing view not presented but instead suppressed?

So here again just by a cursory examination we found a major discrepancy -- that they presented a pro-FDG essay full of errors and wrong conclusions as evidence but ignored essays that presented the correct siddhanta.

We also noticed a lot of reliance on Kaunteya Prabhu's highly controversial book "*Did Srila Prabhupada Want Women Diksa-gurus?*" when I stumbled across:

Compilations: Historical Precedents in Vaishnava Parampara & Vedic History>Sacred thread ceremony- principles & precedents>Pictutres [sic] of demigoddesses wearing Brahmin thread.

This section allegedly shows pictures of various female icons wearing what appear to be Brahmin threads thus "proving" that women wore them. But this had already **been proven false** in a comment posted on [Dandavats](#) that discussed Kaunteya's book.

"I roughly went through the book "Did Srila Prabhupada Want Women Diksa-gurus?"

I just want to share a point that might be useful. Kaunteya prabhu had depicted some images of Goddesses' statues from Tamilnadu and says that women in the past had threads. I read somewhere an argument that we cannot compare the goddesses with ordinary women. That's fine. However, I had a doubt about those strands.

Thus I contacted a Tamil stapati who makes this kind of sculptures. As per his statement, **these three strands have nothing to do with upavita. [Brahmin thread] It is called "sannaviram."** It is a designed ornament made with pearls or similar material and worn by women for decoration. Women in traditional Indian culture used to wear so many ornaments and this is just one another ornament.

It is funny that our devotees decide something just by seeing some image without doing even cursory research about it.

The comment thread for this book shows that it is highly controversial, intellectually dishonest and unreliable yet this did not stop this book from being used as a major source of evidence by the "unbiased committee." Here are a few comments from the discussion that indicate how other thoughtful devotees assessed this book.

#1 A few points about this "scholarly" work. Kaunteya and his publishers have gone to great lengths to **misrepresent** the texts they quote. For example, they cut and pasted excerpts of my own texts in such a way as to produce statements I had never intended to utter, and then they ascribe them to me. They also argue for giving women the sacred thread at initiation and they also argue at length that the diksha-line of Bipin Bihari—a goswami line—is also a bona fide shiksha sampradaya. If anyone wants further information about this, they can contact me. [[See comment](#)]

#2 Actually, it's not so much about strength of the arguments, it's about intentions and integrity of the person presenting them. ... Krishna Kirti Prabhu, however, noticed some manipulation and misrepresentation of his quote that opens the

possibility that all other arguments could similarly be less than truthful to their origins.

There aren't many takers to read the whole 200+ page book and dissect each argument presented there, most people, including yourself, take only a sample. From my own sample it doesn't look good for the author so far. ... It's little snippets like this from my limited sample that make me, personally, dismiss this book as biased and subjective. Plus the allegation that BBT misrepresented Suniti sentence, plus the allegation that Prabhupada purport to Suniti verse is not meant for the present age, plus selective reading of Hamsaduta letter – points I addressed earlier.

There's more, practically everywhere I read there was something questionable in the way the author presents his side. [[See the whole comment.](#)]

#3 I agree with what Sitalatma prabhu states in regard to this book lacking credibility on the basis of misquoted and misappropriated information being found in it. As soon as I understood that from Krishna Kirti prabhu I knew I would not read it because it could be laden with doubtful evidence. ... [[See the whole comment.](#)]

#4 ... A reader of this book will not find an unbiased scholarly presentation of both sides of the issue meant to inform us of the relevant strengths or weaknesses of the opposing views despite Urmila mataji's glowing review that it does just that. ... Rather what we get is a political propaganda piece with all the apparatus in place to give a distorted and biased view as Sitalatma Prabhu has pointed out. The fact that Kaunteya has purposely manipulated quotations of other writers (as Krishna Kirti Prabhu has pointed out) to give meanings that they never intended is revealing. If Urmila dd, who endorsed this book, and the pro-FDG camp actually had strong, solid arguments they would not have to resort to such chicanery. That they do indicates that they cannot be trusted in giving us the truth because they consider their dearly held beliefs to be subservient to the truth. [[See the whole comment.](#)]

#5 Kaunteya Prabhu purposely kept everyone in the dark as to who or what he was quoting so that you could not check his sources to see if he did so correctly. We would not have known this if Krsna Kirti Prabhu had not pointed out what Kaunteya had done to his writing, slicing and dicing it to fit his needs. That is unethical. Who knows what else he has done. Such lack of transparency certainly makes it justifiable to doubt his motives, especially since this seems to be the *modus operandi* of the pro-FDG camp. [[See the whole comment.](#)]

There are other comments such as [this one](#) but I do not want to make this text any longer than it already is.

Considering that GBC resolution (2014) 321 (3) stipulated:

"As far as possible all documentation will be verified for accuracy, authenticity, etc."

The question then arises as to why a book that is so controversial because of its inaccuracies, distortions and general intellectual dishonesty is presented to the GBC as a main source of evidence for deciding the FDG issue?

In our "one grain of rice" test we quickly saw that while it cannot be denied that some anti-FDG texts and quotes were included it became very obvious by the exclusion of essays commissioned by ISKCON India, and the way *Manu Samhita* was dealt with, promoting the already deprecated works of Bhakta Rupa & Madhavananda Prabhu; and Kaunteya Prabhu's intellectually dishonest book that something is very wrong with this whole enterprise -- that the reader is being funneled to an already predetermined conclusion of pro-FDG.

We also note that the GBC EC members who over saw this project are: Anuttama das GBC Chairman, Praghosa das Vice Chairman and Sesa das 2nd Vice Chairman. The first two are well known **feminist partisans** and several attendees at the October 2014 GBC meeting in Tirupati described Anuttama Prabhu as being possessed with pushing FDG through no matter what. And, it seems from the way they have managed this committee that it includes loading the dice via a knowledge filter.

Conclusion

That the GBC EC appointed committee who compiled the evidence was prejudicially biased, that a knowledge filter has been used to suppress important anti-FDG arguments in order to obtain a predetermined pro-FDG conclusion.