



### **Festival of Universal brotherhood**

Ratha Yatra, the Festival of The Chariots, originated thousands of years ago in Jagannatha Puri in Orissa on the North Eastern coast of India, where it is still observed by the entire population. Over 5 million people attend the event and it is also celebrated in many towns across India. The main event is the enthronement of three large deities – Jagannatha (Krishna), His brother Balarama and Their sister Subhadra – each onto Their own wooden chariot. These three huge chariots are then hauled by ropes held by hundreds of Their devotees along a parade route lined by admirers, worshippers and spectators.

The carved and colourfully-painted chariots, liberally bedecked with flowers and garlands are accompanied by enthusiastic kirtan (congregational chanting) sung by tens of thousands of devotees.

The deities who grace the chariots are kept throughout the year within temples where They are worshipped daily in a regulative way. But once a year They emerge in order that the public may see Them. Krishna thus presents Himself as Jagannatha, the Lord of the Universe

Over the last thirty five years Ratha Yatra has been introduced into many cities around the world such as New York, London and Sydney by ISKCON's founder His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada and his followers. As an outdoor street festival it never fails to attract the attention of the public and media and has become a much loved and appreciated event all over the world.

Gopal's Garden High School too, celebrated this colourful chariot festival on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2018 with much pomp and enthusiasm. Following the tradition of Puri, the students celebrated the famous 'Gundicha Marjanam' the annual cleaning to welcome the Lord a day prior to the Rathayatra Festival. Every class cleaned and decorated their classroom for the next day.

The day of the Rathayatra began with an introduction on the importance of the day by the hosts of the ceremony i.e students from class 5 and 8. This was followed by cultural presentations by various classes. HG Sachi Mataji and HG Jagannathiswari Mataji graced this occasion with their kind presence and inspired the children with pearls of wisdom instilling faith and love for the Lord.

All the school students brought dry bhoga as their loving offering to the Lord.

This was followed by Maha-aarti and the celestial Rath pulling. Every class took turns to pull the Rath along with their classteachers around the auditorium.

Their Lordships then visited every room of the school to the accompaniment of melodious kirtan to shower their blessings on every soul in the school.

The students returned back home after enjoying their sumptuous lunch prasadam.

Following are the photo links of the festival:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/1jeu9VzSovT4riYa9>

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/zMKfG1tmkrxi1ioX6>

Thank You  
Principal

