

Krishna Janmashtami



An image of Bala Krishna displayed during Janmashtami

Krishna Janmashtami (Devanagari कृष्ण जन्माष्टमी *kr̥ṣṇa janmāṣṭami*), also known as Krishnashtami, Saatam Aatham, Gokulashtami, Ashtami Rohini, Srikrishna Jayanti, Sree Jayanti or sometimes merely as Janmashtami, is an annual commemoration of the birth of Krishna, the eighth avatar of Vishnu.

The festival is celebrated on the eighth day (Ashtami) day of the dark fortnight of the month of Bhadra (August–September) in the Hindu calendar. Rasa lila, dramatic enactments of the life of Krishna, are a special feature in regions of Mathura and Vrindavan, and regions following Vaishnavism in Manipur. While the Rasa lila re-creates the flirtatious aspects of Krishna's youthful days, the Dahi Handi celebrate God's playful and mischievous side, where teams of young men form human pyramids to reach a high-hanging pot of butter and break it. This tradition, also known as uriadi, is a major event in Tamil Nadu on Gokulashtami.

Birth (mythology)

Krishna was the eighth son of Devaki and Vasudeva. Based on scriptural details and astrological calculations the date of Krishna's birth, known as **Janmashtami**, is 19 July 3228 BCE and departed on 3102 BCE. Krishna belonged to the Vrishni clan of Yadavas from Mathura, and was the eighth son born to the princess Devaki, and her husband Vasudeva.

Mathura (in present day Mathura district, Uttar Pradesh) was the capital of the Yadavas, to which Krishna's parents Vasudeva and Devaki belonged. King Kansa, Devaki's brother, had ascended the throne by imprisoning his father, King Ugrasena. Afraid of a prophecy that predicted his death at the hands of Devaki's eighth son, Kansa had the couple locked into a prison cell. After Kansa killed the first six children, and Devaki's apparent miscarriage of the seventh (which was actually a secret transfer of the infant to Rohini as Balarama), Krishna was born.

Since Vasudeva knew Krishna's life was in danger, Krishna was secretly taken out of the prison cell to be raised by his foster parents, Yasoda and Nanda, in Gokula (in present day Mathura district). Two of his other siblings also

survived, Balarama (Devaki's seventh child, transferred to the womb of Rohini, Vasudeva's first wife) and Subhadra (daughter of Vasudeva and Rohini, born much later than Balarama and Krishna).

Celebrations:

Hindus celebrate Janmashtami by fasting and staying up until midnight, the time when Krishna is believed to have been born. Images of Krishna's infancy are placed in swings and cradles in temples and homes. At midnight devotees gather around for devotional songs, dance and exchange gifts. Some temples also conduct reading of the Hindu religious scripture Bhagavad Gita.