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Ford heir wed in Krishna rite

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SYDNEY, Australia (UPI) — Alfred Ford, great-grandson of auto magnate Henry Ford, today married Sharmilla Bhattacharya, a Sydney doctor, in a colorful Hare Krishna "fire sacrifice" ceremony.

The couple, both devout Hare Krishnas, exchanged vows in front of 500 people at the Hare Krishnas' Bhaktivedanta Asram settlement, about 40 miles west of Sydney.

The fire sacrifice is a 5,000-year-old ceremony in which the couple solemnify their marriage vows by offering grains to the fire, which represents the deities of Lord Krishna.

Ford, 34, one of the heirs to the vast Ford fortune, has been a Hare Krishna adherent for 10 years.

He met his bride two years ago while on a visit to Australia to oversee the development of a Krishna cultural center.

He said he had been looking for a new way of life before joining the Hare Krishnas.

"The Hare Krishna movement seemed the only one to offer a God and a good lifestyle," Ford said. "Everything is used to serve God."

Ford has become a vegetarian and does not drink alcohol, smoke or gamble. He regularly studies 200 volumes of Krishna texts, both retires and rises early and chants a mantra two hours a day.

Ford serves as cultural affairs minister for the Hare Krishnas and has no connection with the Ford Motor Co.

No members of the Ford family were at the wedding.

Sharmilla Bhattacharya, 29, was born in India and is a Ph.D. honors student in medicine at the University of New South Wales.

After a honeymoon in Australia, Ford and his bride will fly to the United States.



Associated Press
Alfred Ford, the great-grandson of auto magnate Henry Ford, weds Sharmilla Bhattacharya in a Hare Krishna ceremony.