



Volume 8

Jagadguru Speaks

News and Events

From the President

From the Editorial Board

Gita Mahatmyam

Hanumat Pancharatnam

Stories from Skanda Puranam - III

Measurement of Time

New Sharadamba Temple

Jagadguru Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Nrisimha Bharati Swamigal

New Temple Sponsorship Form

**Jagadguru
Speaks...**



**ANUGRAHA
SANDESA**

Ego is Your Enemy

Many are the reasons for man's ego. Often it is his wealth or scholarship or power that makes him proud.

But man should realize that this ego is, in fact, his enemy. For it disturbs him as much.

What is more, because of the ego, man engages in wrong actions. He even falsely thinks that none can resist him. But it definitely happens that he undergoes suffering for his bad karma. And all this can be avoided if only he dropped his ego.

Bhagavadpada Sankara has said:

मा कुरु धनजनयौवनगर्वम् ।
हरति निमौत् कालः सर्वम् ॥

Man, according to him, should never be proud because of wealth, youth or scholarship, as time will take away all in a trice. Admittedly, they are never permanent.

Sages like the Bhagavadpada, however, erudite they were, were without the least trace of ego. That is why people have praised them as *mahapurush*. It hence follows that man, under no pretext, should entertain ego, but lead a humble life.

तस्मादहंकारमिमं स्वशत्रुं
भोक्तुर्गलि कण्टकवत् प्रतीतम् ।
विच्छिद्य विज्ञानमहासिना स्फुटं
भुङ्क्वात्मसाम्राज्यसुखं येथेष्टम् ॥

News & Events

Ratha Saptami was observed on Saturday, Feb 4th, 2006. After the morning Nitya puja and Ganapati homa, Sri Suryanarayana puja was performed by Sri Yegnasubramanian, followed by Surya Namaskaram with Aruna Prasna chanting. About 75 to 80 devotees took part in doing Surya Namaskaram, including ladies and children.

Shivaratri Celebrations Feb 2006

Shivaratri was celebrated on Sunday, Feb 26th and Monday, Feb 27th, 2006, including an all night series of events. Besides the regular Nitya puja, Ganapati homam and Rudra homam were conducted in the morning followed by Kalasa Sthapanam, Avahanam, Archana and Arati. In the evening Mahanyasam was chanted followed by the Prathama Kala Abhisekam and Rudra Trisati archana. Bilva Ashtothara Sata nama archana was done after the Dwiteeya Kala Abhisekam, Sri Rudra Kramarchana after the Triteeya Kala Abhisekam and Sri Siva Ashtotharam after the Chaturtha Kala Abhisekam. The Shivaratri puja concluded with Sri Lalita Sahasranama puja and Nandikeshwara Abhisekam

Vardhanti of Jagadguru Sri Sri Bharati Teertha Mahaswamigal, April '06

Acharya's Varadanti was conducted in the traditional way on Monday, April 3rd, 2006.

On Sunday, April 9th, celebrations were held for the benefit of all devotees. Our priest Sri Venugopal started the function with Maha Ganapati puja followed by Rudrabhisekam and Kramarchana. Ayushya homam, Mrutyunjaya

homam and Avahanti homam were performed. Guru Paduka panchakam and Thotakashtakam were recited by all the gathered devotees. A procession was taken around the temple with the chanting of Upanishads.



Vardhanti: procession of Padukas

Special puja to commence the new temple construction : April 2006

A special puja to commence the new temple construction was held on Sunday, April 16th, 2006. After the nitya puja, holy padukas of Sharadamba and Acharyas were taken in a procession to the construction site. Our priest Sri. Venugopal commenced the function with Maha Ganapati puja followed by Ganapati homa. He then conducted the Bhoomi puja which was performed by Sri. Yegnasubramanian and Smt. Raji Yegnasubramanian. Puja was done to all the construction equipments. First digging was done by Smt. & Sri. Yegnasubramanian followed by all the trustees. Every one who attended got the

opportunity to dig. The holy padukas were taken back to the temple and mangla arati was performed, followed by prasadam distribution and lunch.



New temple construction – Special puja

Sankara Jayanthi Celebrations: May '06

Sankara Jayanthi was conducted in the traditional way on Tuesday, May 2nd, 2006. For the benefit of all devotees, celebrations were held on Saturday, May 6th, 2006. Our priest, Sri Venugopal started the function with Maha Ganapati puja followed by Rudrabhisekam, Ashtotra archana, Avahanti homam and Astavadana seva to Sri Adi Sankara. All gathered devotees recited Thotakashtakam and Guru Paduka panchakam. A procession was taken around the temple to the Adi Sankara shrine with the chanting of Upanishads.

Maha Rudram : May '06

The annual Maharudram was conducted from Friday, May 26th, 2006 to Sunday, May 28th, 2006. Eight priests from different temples took part in the event this year along with 80 ritwicks.

On Friday, the event started with Guru Vandanam, Maha Ganapati puja and Sankalpam. After the nitya puja, Ganapati homam and Navagraha

homam were performed. In the evening Chandi Parayanam was done followed by Sandhya kala puja.

On Saturday, the event started with Guru Vandanam, Maha Ganapati puja and Ganapati homam. Vastra danam was done by Sri Yegnasubramanian to all the assembled ritwicks. After the ritwicks changed to deeksha vastram, Mahanyasa parayanam commenced. Kalasa Avahanam was done during the parayanam. Abhishekam to Lord Rudra was performed amidst chanting of Sri Rudram and Chamakam by the assembled ritwicks. This was followed by Trisati Archana, Deeparadhana, Mantra Pushpam and Mangala Arati.

80 ritwicks took part on both days, 12 of them were brahmachari children/youth. Lunch was served to all the ritwicks in the traditional manner. In the evening, Veda Parayana was done by the Vedic pundits, followed by Rudra Kramarchana, Ghana Parayanam, Sandhya kala puja, Ashtavadhana Seva and Mangala Arati.

On Sunday, the function started with Guru Vandanam, Ganapati homam and Kalasha puja followed by Rudra japam and abhishekam. Sri Rudra homam was then performed by the ritwicks followed by Vasordhara, Poornahuti and Uttaranga puja. Finally Kalasabhisekam was done to Lord Rudra, followed by Mantra Pushpam, Astavadana seva, Mangala Arati and prasadam distribution. Vaidika sabha was conducted to honor the priests. Sri Yegnasubramanian gave an update on the temple construction project. The lady volunteers

did a great job cooking and serving food to all who attended. Ritwiks were served lunch in the traditional way. The function was very well attended. Ritwiks from many neighboring states participated in the event.

Vyasa Poornima July 2006

Vyasa puja was celebrated in the traditional manner on Monday, July 10th, 2006. On Saturday, July 15th, celebrations were conducted for the benefit of all devotees. Our priest Shri.Venugopal performed Ganapati homam in the morning followed by Avahanti homam, Rudrabhisekam and a special puja to Bhagavan Shri. Veda Vyasa. Ashtotara archana was performed to the holy Padukas of His Holiness Sri Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamigal. Upanishad parayanam was done by the Veda class students of Dr. Yegnasubramanian, led by Shri. Venugopal followed by Arati, prasadam distribution and lunch.

Gayatri Yajna 2006

The annual Gayatri Yajna was conducted on Saturday, Sept 2nd, 2006. Nitya puja to the deities was performed by our priest Sri.Venugopal Devdhar. About 60 Ritwiks for the Gayatri Yajna assembled around 8:45 am. New yajnopaveetam (sacred thread) was given to the ritwiks while chanting of Vedas continued. The priest conducted Yajnopaveeta Dharana followed by Maha Sankalpam to perform 1000 Gayatri japa and Gayatri homa for 1/10th of the count. While the ritwiks were doing the Gayatri japa, Ganapati homa, Varuna puja and Avahanti homa were performed by the priest in the Yajna Sala. On

completion of Gayatri japa, the ritwiks assembled in the Yajna Sala to perform Gayatri homa. The priest led the Gayatri homa followed by Purnahuti. The function concluded with Maha Deeparadhana and Prasadam distribution.

Navaratri - Chandi Homa 2006

The annual Chandi Homa was conducted on Sunday, Sept 24th, 2006 as part of Navaratri celebrations. Our priest, Shri.Venugopal performed Nitya puja to the deities in the temple. At 9:00 am Ganapati puja, Kalasa sthapana, and Varuna puja were performed , followed by the commencement of Chandi Homa with recitation of Sri Durga Sapthasati in the Yajnasala. The homa concluded with Purnahuti. Kanya puja, Suvasini puja and Dampati puja were performed. The function concluded with Maha Deeparadhana and Prasadam distribution.

Deepavali Celebrations 2006

Deepavali was celebrated at SVBF on Saturday, Oct 21st, 2006. Ganapathi puja, Rudrabhisekam, Archana and Arati were done by the priest as part of the Nitya puja. Ladies gathered around 10:00 am and started preparing for the Deepa puja by setting up the lamps and other puja samagri. Pairs of ladies were seated in rows on either side of several lamps. 75 ladies took part in the puja. Soundrya Lahari slokas were sung by the ladies during the preparations. At 10:30 am the priest led the puja with Maha Ganapathi prarthana and recitation of Sri Lalitha Sahasranamavali. The devotees repeated the namavali and did archana to the Deepa. This was followed by Maha

Deeparadhana. All the ladies were offered Sharadambal's prasadam. It was a very colorful event

Samasti Satyanarayana puja

Samasti Satyanarayana puja for the general welfare of the society was held on Saturday, Nov 4th, 2006 at Stroudsburg. Large number of devotees took part in the function and received the blessings of Lord Satyanarayana, Ambal and Acharyals. Smt. Sujata Rau and Sri Gopal Rau did the puja on behalf of all the devotees. During the archana, all the devotees repeated the namavali after the priest. The puja concluded with Maha Deeparadhana

Ekadasa Vara Rudrabhisekam

Ekadasa Vara Rudrabhisekam was held on Sunday, Dec 31st, 2006 at Stroudsburg as it was Pradosham and New year eve. The event started in the evening at 4:15 pm with purvanga puja and kalasa sthapanam followed by Mahanyasa parayanam and ekadasa vara rudrabhisekam. The puja concluded with Maha Deeparadhana and prasadam was offered to all gathered devotees. Many of the devotees stayed back singing bhajans till the arrival of the New Year 2007. Mangala Arati was performed at 00:00 hours to welcome the New Year 2007.



From the President and Chairman, SVBF.....

Dear friend:

Greetings

On behalf of all our fellow devotees, SVBF offers their anantakoti namaskarams at the lotus feet of His Holiness Sri Sri Bharati Teertha Mahaswamigal. May the grace of Sri Sharadamba and the blessings of His Holiness be with us always and guide us in the right direction.

We are happy to share with our fellow devotees, that construction activities have started in Stroudsburg. All the necessary permits from the Township have been obtained. Land development activities are going in full swing. As phase I, we plan to build the priest quarters for four priests. These are town houses of 2400 sq.ft each with an attached single car garage. We encourage our devotees visiting the temple, to take a walk to the site of the new temple and enjoy watching the construction activities !

Concurrently, renovation activity of the pavilion area of the existing building is under way, which will be used as a nice dining hall.

We are also happy to report that one more priest has joined SVBF. Sri Shringeswara comes from Sringeri, India and had his Patasala education and training in Sringeri. He is a Rig-vedi and is well versed in pujas and samskaras. His rangoli skills are very impressive that we can spend hours watching his rangolis!!

SVBF celebrated several events during the last several months, such as the Shivaratri, Vardhanti, Sankara Jayanti, Maharudram, Vyasa Puja, Gayatri yajnam, Navaratri and Diwali function, etc. Details of the events are captured under the News and Events column of this issue of the Journal.

Please contribute generously and participate in building the new temple.

With regards.

S. S. Iyer
President, SVBF

S. Yegnasubramanian
Chairman, SVBF

From the Editorial Board.....✍

Greetings

We are happy to bring to you this issue of Paramartha Tattvam – Volume 8. We apologize for not being able to keep up with the regular schedule of publication of the journal. A sudden acceleration in the construction activities of the new temple and priest quarters, renovation of the dining hall and guest house etc. were too time-intensive, that publication of the journal suffered very significantly. That is the main reason that we merged all four issues of Vol. 8 in to one.

This issue features the life and teachings of Jagadguru Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Nrsimha Bharati Mahaswamigal, the 33rd pontiff of Sri Sharada Peetham, Sringeri. In addition, a new series of articles on Gita Mahatmyam is started with this issue.

We also invite contributions from children on a topic of their choice related to our religion, culture and values. Selected contributions will be published in the Journal.

Jaya Jaya Shankara.

Editorial Board

Lectures by

Dr. S. Yegnasubramanian

Saturdays

SRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA

3: PM to 4:30 PM

Venue:

**Arsha Bodha Center, 84 Cortelyou Lane,
Somerset, NJ 08873 (732-940-4008)**

DIRECTIONS FROM US 287

1. Easton Ave exit towards New Brunswick
2. After 2 miles, right on JFK Blvd.
3. After 2.5 miles, road bends left
4. After 1 mile, right on to Hwy 27 (s)
5. After two miles, right on Cortelyou Lane
6. After 3/4 mile, right at 84 Cortelyou (Arsha Bodha Center)

DIRECTIONS FROM NJ TPK

1. Take exit 9 of the tpk (routes 1 and 18)
2. Take route 18 towards New Brunswick south on to route 1 (south)
3. After 5 miles on route 1 south, take right onto Cozzens's Lane
4. After 1 mile on Cozzens Lane, make left onto Route 27 south.
5. After 1 mile on route 27, make right onto Cortelyou Lane
6. After 3/4 miles make right into 84 Cortelyou (Arsha Bodha Center)

GItA mahAtmyam

The Glory of Srimad Bhagavad Gita

Satish Karandikar

Starting with the present issue of the journal we will be publishing the Gita Mahatmyam [the glory of Srimad Bhagavad Gita] in an abridged form based on the Padma Puranam.

The Puranas contain narratives describing the glory of many scriptures. But when it comes to the Gita the Padma Puranam actually gives the greatness of each Adhyaya [chapter] of the Gita. This uniqueness highlights the exceptional status of the Bhagavad Gita in our Sastras. Thus there are eighteen stories which each describe the benefit of studying or even reading each chapter.

In this issue we will take the first episode describing the glory of the first Adhyaya of the Gita. We will cover the other Adhyayas in following issues.

Once, Goddess Laxmi inquired from Lord Vishnu about the greatness of the Gita. In reply the Lord first described how the Gita is a manifestation of His own Self.

शृणु सुश्रोणि वक्ष्यामि गीतासु स्थितिमात्मनः ।
वक्राणि पञ्च जानीहि पञ्चाध्यायाननुक्रमात् ।
दशाध्यायान्भुजांश्चैकमुदरं द्वौ पदांबुजे ।
एवमष्टादशाध्यायी वाङ्मयीमूर्तिरिश्वरी ।
अतोऽध्यायं तदर्धं वा श्लोकमर्धं तदर्धकम् ।
अभ्यस्यति सुमेधा यः सुशर्मैव स मुच्यते ।

The Lord said "O Beautiful One listen, I shall describe the structure of the Gita which is a

form of Myself. Know the first five chapters in order, to be my five faces, the next ten to be my arms, then one to be my stomach and two to be my two lotus feet. Thus the eighteen chapters are a verbal form of the Lord. Hence a wise person who studies one chapter or half of that or a Sloka [verse] or half a verse or even half of that, he is liberated like Susarma."

Hearing this, Goddess Laxmi inquired as to who Susarma was and how he was liberated.

The Lord then related to Her the historical account about Susarma. The Lord said "Once upon a time, there was a foolish Brahmin by name Susarma who had a very sinful disposition. He did not perform any pious activities like Japa [muttering prayers] Homa [pouring oblations into the fire] etc. He was solely addicted to enjoying sense pleasures. A long time passed by as he was engaged in sinful activities like drinking alcohol and eating meat. Once as he was wandering in a grove he was bitten by a black snake.

"After death he suffered in many hells and was then born again in the world of mortals as a bull. He was bought by a lame person and passed seven to eight years in hardship. One day he was speedily driven a long distance and due to exhaustion he fell on the ground and fainted. A number of people gathered around him out of

curiosity. Among them a saint gave him some of his merit in order to help him. Others also followed. There, in that crowd was an unchaste woman who also bestowed on him her merit even though she wasn't sure of her ability to do so. Upon death he was taken by the servants of Yama [God of death], but he was released by them and declared to be a pious person on account of the merit given by the unchaste woman.

"He again returned to earth, this time in a good family of Brahmins. He remembered his past birth and was curious to find out what that merit was which had dispelled his ignorance. He approached that woman and asked her which merit she had given him. The woman replied that she had a parrot who would always chant to her. By that she had become pure and was thus able to bestow merit on him. The two of them asked the parrot, who then narrated his account.

The parrot said 'In a prior birth I was a scholar but I was proud of my learning and always found faults even with other good people. After death I entered horrible worlds and was then born

again as a parrot. There during the hot summer I was taken by some excellent sages and was placed in a cage in their Ashram [hermitage.] There I heard the first Adhyaya of the Bhagawad Gita being chanted respectfully by the sons of the sages. After hearing it I also chanted it many times. In the meantime, I was stolen by a thief and sold. This is my story."

The Lord then concluded "Thus the two of them, Susarma and the woman extolled the first Adhyaya and chanted it constantly. As a result they were liberated."

तस्मादध्यायमाद्यं यः पठते शृणुतेस्मरेत् ।
अभ्यसेत्तस्य न भवेद्भवांभोधिर्दुर्हतरः ॥

"Hence anyone who reads, listens to, remembers, or studies the first Adhyaya of the Gita does not have to suffer in the world."

In the next issue we will take up the glory of the second Adhyaya of Gita. ■

Hanumat Pancharatnam

वीताखिलविषयेच्छं
जातानन्दाश्रुपुलकमत्यच्छम् ।
सीतापतिदूताद्यं वातात्मजमद्य
भावये हृद्यम् ॥ १ ॥

vItAkhila-vishayeccham
jAtAnandASrupulamatyamaccham /
sItApatidUtAdyam vAtAtmajamadya
bhAvaye hridyam // 1

I now meditate of HanumAn, the son of vAyu, who is free from all desires for the enjoyment of objects, in whom the tears of joy rolled down coupled with horripilation, who is pure in heart, who is foremost among the messengers of rAma, and who is dear to the heart. (1)

तरुणारुणमुखकमलं
करुणारसपूजितापाङ्गम् ।
संजीवनमाशासे
मञ्जुलमहिमानमञ्जनाभाग्यम् ॥२॥

taruNaruNamukhakamalam
karuNarasapUjitApAngam /
samjIvanamASase
manjulamahimAnamanjanAbhAgyam // 2

I desire to see HamumAn, the fortune of anjanA, whose lotus-face is red, whose side glances are filled with the waters of compassion, who brought back to life all those who were dead in the battle, and whose greatness is praiseworthy. (2)

शम्बरवैरिशरातिग-
मम्बुजदलविपुललोचनोदारम् ।
कम्बुगलमनिलदिष्टं
बिम्बज्वलितोष्ठमेकमवम्बे ॥ ३ ॥

SambaravairiSarAtiga-
mambhujdalavipulalocanodAram /
kambugalam-aniladishTam
bimbajvalitostham ekam avalambe //3

I take refuge only in HanumAn, who is the fortune of vAyu, who is above the shafts of Manmatha (the god of love), whose beautiful eyes are like the large petals of a lotus, whose neck resembles a conch and whose lips shine like the bimba fruit. (3)

दूतीकृतसीतार्तिः
प्रकटीकृत रामवैभवस्फूर्तिः ।
दारितदशमुखकीर्तिः
पुरतो मम भातु हनुमतो मूर्तिः ॥ ४ ॥

dUrIkritasItArti:
prakaTIkrita rAmavaibhavasphUrti: /
dAritadaSamukhakIrti:
purato mama bhAtu hanumato mUrti: //4

May the figure of HanumAn shine before me – the figure which dispelled the agonies of sItA, which manifested the might and glory of rAma, and which destroyed the fame of the ten-headed rAvaNa. (4)

वानरनिकराध्यक्षं
दानवकुलकुमुदरविकरसदृक्षम् ।
दीनजनावनदीक्षं
पवनतपः पाकपुञ्जमद्राक्षम् ॥ ५ ॥

*vAnaranikarAdhyaksham
dAnavakulakumudaravikarasadriksham /
dInajanAvanadIksham
pavanatapa: pAkapunjamdRaksham // 5*

I saw HanumAn, the result of the fully developed austerity of vAyu, who was the leader of the multitude of monkeys, who was to the race of the rAkshasas, like the rays of the sun to the water-lily, and who is dedicated to the protection of the distressed. (5)

एतत्पवनसुतस्य स्तोत्रं
यः पठन्ति पञ्चरत्नाख्यम् ।
चिरमिह निखिलान् भोगान्
भुक्त्वा श्रीरामभक्तिभागभवति ॥ ६ ॥

*etatpavanasutasya stotram
ya: paThanti pancharatnAkhyam /
ciramiha nikhilAn bhogAn
bhuktvA SrIrAmabhaktibhAgbhavati //6*

One who reads the pancharatnastotra of HanumAn, becomes a devotee of SrI rAmA, after having enjoyed all objects for a long time in this world.

New Priest joins SVBF - M.S. Sringeshwara Bhat (33)



SVBF is happy to announce the addition of its second priest during the month of November, 2006. Sri. Sringeshwara Bhat joined SVBF with the Blessings of His Holiness. He underwent training in the Sringeri Pathasala and is extremely knowledgeable in our pujas/rituals and samskaras. It is a delight to watch him perform the pujas and homas. He is a Rig Veda priest, with adequate training in yajur vedic ritualistic practices also.

He hails from a family of vedic scholars from the village of Sringeri. He completed the Rig Veda Samhita from Shree Sadvidya Sanjeevani Pathashala run by Sri Sharda Peetham, Sringeri. He also obtained the degree of Sahithya from the Samskrita Examination conducted by the Government of Karnataka.

In addition to his outstanding puja services at the temple and at devotee's homes, he is highly skilled in decorating the idols and in the "Rangoli" art. He is well experienced in conducting various rituals like, marriage, Namakarana, Upanayana, grihapravesa, various homas, 60th & 80th birthday functions etc).

His other unique talent is the proficiency in cooking south Indian dishes for large groups. He can prepare sweet snack dishes and arrange it in a very decorative manner!

Stories from Skanda-Puranam – Part III

Translation by **Satish Karandikar**

श्रीगुरुभ्यो नमः

In the last issue of the journal we had presented a story about the glory of Lord Siva from the Brahmottara Khandam of the Sri Skanda Puranam. Here is another episode from the same section. This one is divided into two chapters. The first one is covered in this issue. The second half will be given in the next issue.

सूत उवाच ॥

त्रयोदश्यां तिथौ सायं प्रदोषः परिकीर्तितः ।
प्रदोषसमये देवः कैलासे रजतालये ।
करोति नृत्यं विबुधैरभिष्टुतगुणोदयः ॥
अतः पूजा जपो होमस्तत्कथास्तद्गुणस्तवः ।
कर्तव्यो नियतं मर्त्यैश्चर्वर्गफलार्थिभिः ॥

Sri Suta said "On the evening of the thirteenth day of the moon is said to be the Pradosa time. At this time Lord Siva dances on Mt. Kailasa which is an abode of silver. The Gods praise the excellence of His qualities. Hence [at the Pradosa time] worship, Japa [muttering prayers] , Homa [pouring oblations into the fire] , [narrating] the Lord's stories, extolling His virtues should always be done by mortals who wish to attain the four-fold objectives of life [which are righteousness, wealth, sense pleasures and liberation.]

दारिद्र्यं मरणं दुःखमृणभारं नगोपमम् ।
सद्यो विधूयसम्पद्भिः पूज्यते शिवपूजनात् ।

"By worshipping Lord Siva, a person is quickly graced with opulence having washed away poverty, death, sorrow, and a huge burden of debt."

In this context Suta related an episode to bring out the importance of Lord Siva's worship.

"There was a king of the Vidarbha country by name Satyaratha. He was wise and engaged in practice of pious activities. He was of good conduct and true to his promise. O best of sages! A long time passed by happily as the very intelligent king was protecting his land by the code of ethics. Then the very powerful Salva kings headed by Durmarshana became his enemies. Once those Salva kings, desirous of victory, laid a siege on Vidarbha's capital with well prepared large armies. Having seen that city coming under siege the king of Vidarbha protected by a huge army came to fight. There was a war between him and the Salva kings who were haughty on account of their strength. Then having fought an intense combat that king of Vidarbha was killed in the van of battle by the Salvass, a large part of whose armies was destroyed.

On his being killed the remaining soldiers fled the battlefield along with the ministers. The king Satyaratha had a chaste wife who was pregnant at that time. At nighttime she was very

worried, but somehow managed to escape. Then in the morning she was proceeding slowly on the way and having traveled a long distance she saw a clear lake. She rested by a shady tree on the bank of the lake. As fate would have it; there in a secluded spot at the base of the tree, the queen gave birth to a baby boy at an auspicious time. Being very thirsty she went to the lake. There the beautiful queen was swallowed by a large crocodile.

The newborn baby boy was helpless and cried loudly. Luckily at that time a certain Brahmin woman quickly came there. She also had with her, her own one year old boy. She was a poor widow and lived on alms. Her name was Uma. She saw the newborn prince crying and thought 'Oh! What a wonder! Where has this baby's mother or father gone? This poor boy is lying on the bare ground.' As she was thinking thus a saint came there. He looked like Lord Siva himself.

तामाह भिक्षुर्व्योऽथ त्रिभामिनि मा खिदः ।
रक्षैनं बालकं सुभूर्विसृज्य हृदि संशयम् ।
अनेन परमं श्रेयः प्राप्यसे ह्यचिरादिह ॥
एतावदुत्तवा त्वरितो भिक्षुः कारुणिको ययौ ॥

Then that excellent Sannyasi said, "Oh Brahmin lady! Don't worry. Oh beautiful one! With no doubt at heart, protect this baby. With him you shall quickly attain excellent fortune here." Having said this much, the kind mendicant quickly left.

The lady was then reassured and took the baby to her home. She nurtured the boy just like her own and raised both of them living on alms. By chance one day in the course of begging alms that woman along with the two boys came to a temple. There was the great sage Sandilya who spotted the two boys and remarked "Oh! How powerful is fate! This boy [the prince] is living on alms depending on another mother."

Having heard the sage's words the Brahmin lady bowed to him and asked him out of curiosity "Oh sage! This child was taken by me according to the advice of a mendicant. I still don't know about his family background but I take care of him like my own son. Since you have the eye of knowledge, please tell me about his parents and family." Requested thus by her, the sage Sandilya narrated the details of the boy's birth. He told her about his father's death on the battle field and his mother being seized by a crocodile.

Then that lady was surprised and again asked him as to why the king was killed in battle and why this boy had been reduced to poverty. She also asked him the means by which the prince as well as her son who were both living on alms could come out of poverty.

The sage Sandilya said "This boy's father, the king of Vidharbha, was the king of the state of Pandya in his prior birth. Once he was performing the worship of Lord Siva at Pradosha time. During the time of his worship he heard a great commotion in the capital. He went out,

suspecting trouble. After quelling the rebellion, he came back and without finishing the worship he had his meals. His son also foolishly ate and slept without worshipping Lord Siva at the auspicious Pradosha time. In the following birth he was born as the king of Vidarbha, but on account of his neglecting Lord Siva's worship he was killed in the midst of enjoying his kingdom. His son from the prior birth became his son again in this birth and was reduced to poverty due to forgetting Lord Siva's worship. This boy's mother in her prior birth deceitfully killed a co-wife. Due to that great sin she was devoured by the crocodile in this birth.

सत्यं ब्रवीमि परलोकहितं ब्रवीमि
सारं ब्रवीम्युपनिषद्दृढदयं ब्रवीमि ।
संसारमुल्वणमसारमवाप्य जन्तोः
सारोऽयमीश्वरपदाम्बुरुहस्य सेवा ॥

ये वै प्रदोषसमये परमेश्वरस्य
कुर्वन्त्यनन्यमनसोऽङ्घ्रिसरोजपूजाम् ।
नित्यं प्रवृद्धधनधान्यकलत्रपुत्र-
सौभाग्यसम्पदधिकास्त इहैव लोके ॥

"Here is the essential truth, which is the heart of the Upanishads, conducive to welfare, (here and) hereafter: 'having attained this terrible and worthless Samsara [worldly life], the only worthy thing is to worship the lotus feet of the Lord. Those who worship Lord Siva's lotus feet at the time of Pradosha, with a one pointed mind are always blessed in this very world with plenty of wealth, food, family welfare and prosperity.'

"This son of yours was a good Brahmin in his prior birth but he did not perform any pious activities like sacrifices, etc. Instead he lived by accepting charity only. Therefore he has become poor in this life. To remove that fault he should take refuge of Lord Sankara."

[To be continued in the next issue.]

॥ कालमापनम् ॥

Measurement of Time

Dr. M. R. Dwarakanath

This article is an attempt at understanding time and its units of measurement according to our Scriptures. As a layman, not steeped in the study of Shastras, I draw my thoughts from the miniscule amount of literature familiar to me. My earnest hope is this article will spark an interest in the more erudite among us who will write a much more detailed and scholarly article on this subject.

My first contact with this topic comes from श्रीमहानारायनोपनिषत् ।

सर्वे निमेषा जज्ञिरे विद्युतः पुरुषादधि ।
कला मुहूर्ताः काष्ठाश्चाहोरात्राश्च सर्वशः ॥
अर्धमासा मासा ऋतवः संवत्सरश्च कल्पन्ताम् ।
स आपः प्रदुधे उभे इमे अन्तरीक्षमथो सुवः ॥

One should realize [pt,3p,s] (अधिजज्ञिरे) that all [m,N,pl] (सर्वे) (units of time) Nimeshas [m,N,pl] (निमेषाः) Kashtas [[f,N,pl] (काष्ठाः) Kalas [f,N,pl] (कलाः) Muhurtas [f,N,pl] (मुहूर्ताः) days and nights [m,N,pl] (अहोरात्राः) entirely [I] (सर्वशः) were enabled [Im,3p,pl] (कल्पन्ताम्) from the effulgent [m,Ab,s] (विद्युतः) Purusha [m,Ab,s] (पुरुषात्) । And [I] (च) the fortnights [m,N,pl] (अर्धमासाः) months [m,N,pl] (मासाः) seasons [m,N,pl] (ऋतवः) and year [m,N,s] (संवत्सरः) were also thus enabled. (In Vedas one often finds the उपसर्ग separated a long way from धातु as in अधि and जज्ञिरे । Note the उपसर्ग follows the धातु)

Here we only see the names of the various units of time mentioned as created by the Lord. The next tidbit is from श्रीअरुणप्रश्नः ।

ववेदमब्रं निविशते । क्वायगं संवत्सरो मिथः ।
क्वाहः क्वेयं देवरात्री । क्व मासा ऋतवश्चिताः ।
अर्धमासा मुहूर्ताः । तनिमेषास्तुटिभिस्सह ।
क्वेमा आपो निविशन्ते । यदीतो यान्ति संप्रति ॥

This passage wonders about the origin of the clouds, the year, the day, the night, the month, the seasons, the fortnight, the Muhurta, the Nimesha along with Trutis! The Shruti goes on to answer the question it posed as they all resolve into water. We will not dwell on the mystic nature of this answer but just note the units of time referred to here.

To learn about the relationship among these units we will seek help from Amarasimha's अमरकोशः ।

अष्टादश निमेषास्तु काष्ठा त्रिंशत्तु ताः कला ।
तास्तु त्रिंशत्क्षणः ते तु मुहूर्तो द्वादशास्त्रियाम् ॥

Eighteen [m,N,s] (अष्टादशः) Nimeshas [m,N,s] (निमेषाः) (equal) a Kashtha [f,N,s] (काष्ठा) । However [I] (तु) thirty [f,N,s] (त्रिंशत्) of them [f,N,pl] (ताः) (equal) a Kala [f,N,s] (कला) । But [I] (तु) thirty [f,N,s] (त्रिंशत्) of them [f,N,pl] (ताः) (equal) a Kshana [f,N,s] (क्षण)। And now [I] (तु) twelve [f,N,pl] (द्वादश) of them [f,N,pl]

(ताः) (equal) a Muhurta [m/n,N,s] (मुहूर्तः) in non-feminine gender [f,L,s] (अस्त्रियाम्) ।

ते तु त्रिंशदहोरात्रः पक्षस्ते दश पञ्च च ।

पक्षौ पूर्वापरौ शुक्लकृष्णौ मासस्तु तावुभौ ॥

However [I] (तु) thirty [m,N,s] (त्रिंशत्) of them [m,N,pl] (ते) (make) a day and night [f,N,s] (अहोरात्रः) । Fifteen [m,N,s] (दशपञ्च) of them [m,N,pl] (ते) (make) a fortnight (पक्षः) । The prior and latter [m,N,d] (पूर्वापरौ) fortnights [m,N,d] (पक्षौ) (are) Shukla and Krishna [m,N,d] (शुक्लकृष्णौ) Those two [m,N,d] (तौ उभौ) (make) a month [m,N,s] (मासः) ।

द्वौ द्वौ मार्गादिमासौ स्यादृतुः तैरयनं त्रिभिः ।

अयने द्वे गतिरुदग्दक्षिणार्कस्य वत्सरः ॥

Every two [m,N,d] (द्वौ द्वौ) months [m,N,d] (मासौ) would be [pm,3p,s] (स्यात्) a season [m,N,s] (ऋतुः) । With three [m,I,pl] (त्रिभिः) of them [m,I,pl] (तैः) (constitutes) a passage of sun [n,N,s] (अयनम्) । Two [n,N,d] (द्वे) passages [n,N,d] (अयने) (are) the sun's [M,G,s] (अर्कस्य) northward [I] (उदक्) (and) southward [I] (दक्षिणा) paths [f,N,s] (गतिः) (गतिः) - a year [m,N,s] (वत्सरः) ।

मासेन स्यादहोरात्रः पैत्रः वर्षेण दैवतः ।

दैवे युगसहस्रे द्वे ब्राह्मः कल्पौ तु तौ नृणाम् ॥

With a month [m,I,s] (मासेन) of humans [m,G,pl] (नृणाम्) one would have [pm,3p,s] (स्यात्) the day and night [m,N,s] (अहोरात्रः) of the ancestors [m,N,s] (पैत्रः) । A year [n,I,s] (वर्षेण) (of humans would be a day) of the gods

[m,N,s] (दैवतः) । While two [n,N,d] (द्वे) thousand Yugas [n,N,d] (युगसहस्रे) of gods [n,N,d] (दैवे) (are) two [m,N,d] (तौ) Kalpas [m,N,d] (कल्पौ) relating two Brahma [m,N,s] (ब्राह्मः) ।

मन्वन्तरं तु दिर्वेयज्ञाशनाळं युगानामेकसप्ततिः ।

संवर्तः प्रलयः कल्पः क्षयः कल्यान्त इत्यपि ॥

Seventyone [f,N,s] (एकसप्ततिः) Yugas [n,G,pl] (युगानाम्) of the gods [n,G,pl] (दिव्यानाम्) is but [I] (तु) a reign of the Manus [n,N,s] (मन्वन्तरम्) । Kalpa [m,N,s] (कल्पः) also [I] (अपि) known as [I] (इति) Samvarta [m,N,s] (संवर्तः) Pralaya [m,N,s] (प्रलयः) Kshaya [m,N,s] (क्षयः) (or) the end of a Kalpa [m,N,s] (कल्पान्तः) ।

A grammatical point about numbers: The numbers from twenty (विंशति) to ninety-nine (नवनवति) are used in feminine, singular when modifying plural nouns. They are often used in (प्रातिपदिक) form.

The life of Brahma as an extension of units of time is described in (मार्कण्डेयपुराण) as follows:

निमेषैर्दशभिः काष्ठा तथा पञ्चभिरुच्यते ।

कलात्रिंशच्च वै काष्ठा मुहूर्तं त्रिंशदेव ताः ॥

Fifteen Nimeshas, it is said make a Kashta. Thirty Kashtas a Kala. Again, thirty Kalas make a Muhurta.

अहोरात्रं मुहूर्तानां नृणां त्रिंशत् वै स्मृतम् ।

अहोरात्रैश्च त्रिंशद्भिः पक्षौ द्वौ मास उच्यते ॥

Thirty Muhurtas are widely known as a day and night of humans. Thirty days and nights, it is said make two fortnights or a month.

तैः षड्भिरयनं वर्षं द्वेऽयने दक्षिणोत्तरे ।
तद्देवानामहोरात्रं दिनं तत्रोत्तरायणम् ॥

With six of them (months) a solar transit and two such transits, southward and northward, comprise a year. That is a day for the Gods.

दिव्यैर्वर्षसहस्रैस्तु कृतत्रेतादिसंज्ञितम् ।
चतुर्युगं द्वादशाभिस्तद्विभागं शृणुश्च मे ॥

Twelve thousand years of the gods is known as a caturyuga – Krta, Treta etc. Now hear from me their division.

चत्वारि तु सहस्राणि वर्षाणां कृतमुच्यते ।
शतानि सन्ध्या चत्वारि सन्धरंशश्च तथाविधः ॥

Four thousand years are supposed to comprise Krtayuga. Four hundred years each is dawn and dusk (of Krtayuga.)

त्रेता त्रीणि सहस्राणि दिव्याब्दानां शतत्रयम् ।
तस्य सन्ध्या समाख्याता सन्ध्यांशश्च तथाविधः ॥

Three thousand years of gods is Tretayuga. Three hundred years each are known as its dawn and dusk.

द्वापरं द्वे सहस्रे तु वर्षाणां द्वे शते तथा ।
तस्य सन्ध्या समाख्याता द्वे शताब्दे तदंशकः ॥

Two thousand years of gods is Dwapara-yuga. Two hundred years each are known as its dawn and dusk.

कलिः सहस्रं दिव्यानामब्दानां द्विसत्तम् ।
सन्ध्या सन्ध्यांशकश्चैव शतकौ समुदाहृतौ ॥

Oh Brahmin, the age of Kali is one thousand years of the gods. Two hundred years are said to constitute together its dawn and dusk.

एषा द्वादशसाहस्री युगाख्या कविभिः कृता ।
एतत्सहस्रगुणितमहो ब्राह्ममुदाहरतम् ॥

This time of twelve thousand divine years has been termed a Yuga by poets. Oh! A thousand of these is known as a day of Brahma.

ब्रह्मणो दिवसे ब्रह्मन्मनवः स्युश्चतुर्दश ।
भवन्ति भागशास्त्रेषां सहस्रं तद्विभज्यते ॥

Oh Brahmin, in a day of Brahma there would be 14 Manus. The thousand (Yugas) are divided among them. Each lasts for his share.

देवाः सप्तर्षयः सेन्द्रा मनुस्तत्सूनवः नृपाः ।
मनुना सह सृज्यन्ते संहियन्ते च पूर्ववत् ॥

The Gods, the seven sages, Indra, Manu and his sons, the kings are all created with Manu and are dissolved with him as before.

चतुर्युगानां संख्याता साधिका ह्येकसप्ततिः ।
मन्वन्तरं तस्य संख्यां मानुषाब्दैर्निबोध मे ॥

71 Chaturyugas by count and an excess fraction (3/7) is a Manvantara. Hear from me its count in human years.

त्रिंशत्कोट्यस्तु संपूर्णाः संख्याता संख्यया द्विज ।
सप्तषष्टिस्तथान्यानि नियुतानि च संख्यया ॥
विंशतिश्च सहस्राणि कालोऽयं साधिकं विना ।
एतन्मन्वन्तरं प्रोक्तं दिव्यैर्वर्षैर्निबोध ॥

Oh! Brahmin, a period of 30 crores, 67 lakhs and 20 thousand years of the gods without the excess fraction, is termed a Manvantara.

अष्टौ वर्ष सहस्राणि दिव्यया संख्यया युतम् ।
द्विपञ्चाशत्तथान्यानि सहस्राण्यधिकानि तु ॥
चतुर्दशगुणो ह्येष कालो ब्राह्ममहः समृतम् ।
तस्यान्ते प्रलयः प्रोक्तो ब्राह्मो नैमित्तिको बुधैः ॥

It is remembered that a day in the life of Brahma is 14 times 852 thousand divine years. At the end of this period it is said, by the wise, to be the expected dissolution.

Summary		
निमेष	तुटि	~15msec
काष्ठ	१८ निमेषाः	~267msec
कला	३० काष्ठाः	8 seconds
क्षण	३० कलाः	4 minutes

मुहूर्त	१२ क्षणाः	48 minutes
अहोरात्रि	३० मुहूर्ताः	24 hours
पक्ष	१५ अहोरात्रयः	15 days
मास	२ पक्षौ	30 days
ऋतु	२ मासौ	60 days
अयन	३ ऋतवः	180 days
वत्सर	२ अयने	360 days
चतुर्युग	१२०० दिव्यवत्स्राः	4,320,000 years

1 day of the manes	1 month of humans
1 day of the gods	1 year of humans
1 Manvantara	71+3/7 caturyugas = 857,142.86 divine years
1 day of Brahma	14 Manvantaras = 12,000,000 years of the gods = 4,320,000,000 years

A Temple for Sharadamba, Chandramouleeswara and Adi Sankara in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania

Dr. S. Yegnasubramanian

Introduction

As SVBF is building the authentic temple for Sharadamba, Chandra-mouleeswara, and Adi Sankara at the lush green Pocono Mountains in Stroudsburg, PA, it is only appropriate to understand the elements of the architecture of a traditional Hindu temple and the consecration rituals.

The Hindu Temple is not a building. It is a conception of Divinity; it represents a combination of religion and art. Its roots go back to the very remote past, to the earliest stages of human's career! Though the rays of the sun illumine everywhere, the placement of a mirror focuses the light and can even burn a paper! Similarly, the glory of the Lord is seen in all of creations, and the temples play the role of mirrors where the prayers by the community together strengthens the community and enhances the "sAnnidhyam". So temple worship became a tradition that helped to bring the communities together. Depending on the desires of the community, installation (*pratishthapana*) and worship of the image(s) of the *ishTa devata(s)* became popular and reinforced the deep rooted religious sentiments. In this context, our scriptures recommend building of a temple as one of the highest of *dharmas!*

The temple architecture:

The science and details of temple architecture are seen in the vastu sastra. The sacred image of the

deity to whom the temple is dedicated, is housed in a small sanctuary within the temple known as *garbhagriha* (womb-chamber), indicating the location of the kernel or essence of the temple. Precise scriptural injunctions regulate the production of these sacred images. The incidence of divine presence in the form of the image occurs upon completion of the *praTishThApana* ceremony, which will be discussed later. The sacredness of the image in the *garbhagriha* expresses itself as a powerful force whose influence expands outwards in all directions; hence the potency of the other images that are aligned with these forces, especially those positioned in the centers of north, west and south sanctum walls. These considerations require enormous skills on the part of the temple designer (*sthapati*) to position the other deities in appropriate places. Especially in a temple that houses several deities, this becomes a very complex design.

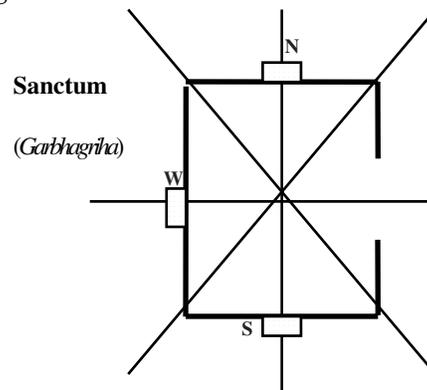


Fig. 1 Outward radiation of energy from center of sanctum¹

The cosmology of temple plan

Great importance is given to the establishment of the ground plan because it functions as a geometric sketch (*mandala*) of the structure of Universe. It is usually a square divided into a number of grids which is taken to be a microscopic image of the universe. By constructing this diagram to regulate the form of the temple, a symbolic connection is created, binding together the world of the *devatas* - the Universe - and its miniature construction through the work of man - the temple. The central and largest square is occupied by *Brahma* or some other prominent God-head, associated with creation. Arranged around this are the planets, the directional guardian deities and other astronomical deities. It may also contain an image of the cosmic “man” - *vAstu purusha* - arranged diagonally, each square connected with the process of creation of the Universe and its underlying structure. (Fig. 2) In the *Rig Veda* (7.54.1) *vAstu purusha* is identified

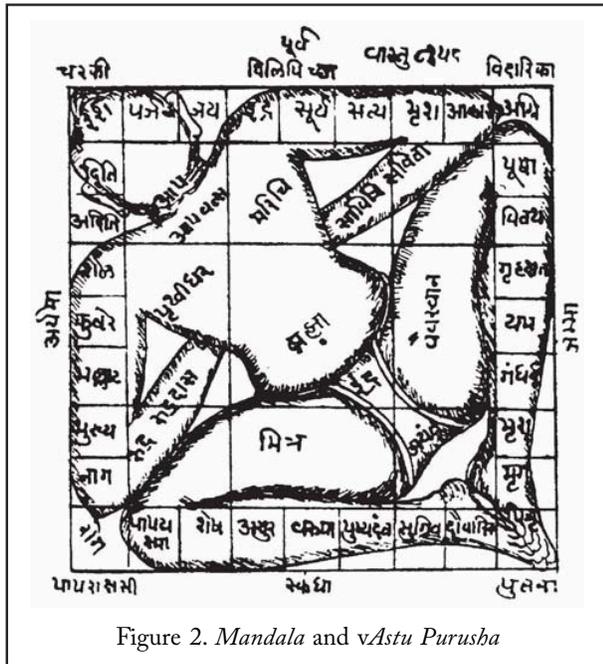


Figure 2. Mandala and *vAstu Purusha*

with *Indra* (*vAstoshpati*) . However, in the later lore, *vAstu purusha* is regarded as a demon (or at best a demi-god) whose permission is necessary before beginning any construction on the site!

The *mandala* is drawn on the ground before even starting the building construction and the details are outlined in *brihatsambhitA*, one of the early treatises on astrology (& astronomy) including details of temple construction. The term *mandala* symbolizes the totality of existence. Associated with this is the belief that the center of the Universe is the mythical Mount Meru around which all the continents, islands etc. are arranged. In the temple, the square sanctum is the outer *mandala*, the *vimAna* on top symbolizes Mount Meru. The central point of the square *mandala* is the position of the Icon. When a devotee enters a temple, he actually enters into a *mandala*, and therefore into a power field!

Temple and Human Constitution

Scriptures say that “the human body is the temple and the soul is the God within”. Interestingly the architectural terminology used in the texts are the names of parts of the human body; for example, feet (*pAda*), knee (*jAnu*), belly (*kukshi*), neck (*grIva*), face (*mukha*), nose (*nAsika*), head (*sIrsha*) etc. As a temple is laid, it is believed to picture a man in the lying posture. His feet denote the entrance tower (*rAja Gopuram*), his waist portion, the hall; his heart, the porch; his head, the sanctum; the point where the eye brows meet, the seat of the *vigraha*. In another version, the neck represents the sanctum, the head represents the tower and the heart represents the porch from where the devotee looks at the *vigraha*.

Bali PeeTham (Altar)

The altar (*bali-peeTha*) is an indispensable associate of the sanctum. It is a stylized stone seat on which food offerings to the attendant divinities are placed after the main offering in the sanctum. Several such seats are placed in several parts of the temple as determined by the canonical texts.

Dhwaja-stamba: Flag Staff

The flag-staff (*dhvaja-shamba*) is often erected close to the bali-peetha. The early purpose was only to indicate the position of the sanctum. In some practices it was not intended as a permanent structure and putting it up marked the commencement of occasional festivals in the temple. In some parts of India, particularly in the North, long and flowing banners are flown from the tower of the temple itself. In course of time, the flag-staff became a permanent fixture in temples. The wooden pole, covered with copper, brass or silver is installed on a raised stone platform, often square in shape, in front of the sanctum. At the top, there are three horizontal perches (indicating righteousness, reputation and prosperity or the Trnity), pointing towards the sanctum. Hoisting a flag on the *dhvajastamba* marks the beginning of festivals. It is also customary to decorate the flag-staff with a cloth. Hoisting the flag also symbolizes setting out for victory. The devotee coming into the temple would resolve to conquer his own baser nature and mean disposition. Also the term *dhvaja* also means whatever is raised with connotations of hope, desire, pride, will etc. Whatever raises man to a higher level of understanding is symbolized by the *dhvaja*.

Rituals

To enable our understanding of the aesthetic and religious aspects of the temple symbol, our tradition has formulated a doctrinal approach which encompasses the concept, the procedure and the purpose of temple building. The temple is also a medium of rituals. The rituals serve to provide for us a shelter between our inherent limitations and the perfection that we strive to seek, which is a divine quality !

Over the yugas!

In our scriptures, we divide time into *yugas*, *satya* (or *krita*), *treta*, *dwApara* and *kali*. *Kali* is the time domain where we live. To give an idea of the time domains, *satya yuga* has a span of 1,728,000 years; *treta*, 1,296,000 years; *dwApara*, 864,000 years and *kali*, 432,000 years. In *satya yuga*, when *dharma* was reigning supreme, people were engrossed only in *dhyAna* (meditation); In *treta yuga*, as *dharma* started to decline, sacrifices etc. started to take shape. In *dwapara*, when *dharma* started to deteriorate even further, other rituals and shrines at the house level were popular. In *kali*, devotion (*bhakti*) and community worship are emphasised as the easiest means of attaining salvation. Two kinds of shrines started to be recognized,: a) a 'private' shrine in one's own home, meant for the individual devotee and for the family (*AtmArtha*) and b) a 'public' shrine, meant for the community (*parArtha*) to gather and worship which has several other service oriented objectives also. To accomplish the later purpose, temples began to be erected and icons (*vigrahas*) installed in them. The presence of Divinity was felt when the images were properly installed and the temples were correctly built. In early periods, the sages

merely installed the images and the divine presence was with them ever after. However, in the later, decadent phases, the presence of the divinity in the temples could be secured only by continuous worship and periodical festivals.

Sthapati and *Shilpi* : the architect and sculptor of temples and *vigrahas*

The first architect of the stylized temples is believed to be the divine creator-sculptor, Visvakarma (the all-maker!). According to mythology, he had five sons: 1) Manu, the first “man”, the contemplative (man) man; 2) Maya, the architect or designer, who is reputed to have built the assembly of Dharmaraja; 3) Tvashtar, the carpenter, who fashioned the trident of Siva and the discus of Vishnu; 4) Shilpin, the sculptor who is proficient in all the above three crafts in addition to metal work, clay-modelling, weaving etc., and 5) Arka or Visvaja, the master artisan or smith who worked with gold and silver. The temple was the craft of these five craft-progenitors!

As was mentioned earlier, the art and science of temple building and carving of images of the divinities are exhaustively given in the scriptures. The *sthapati* takes into account all the aspects of the objective of the shrine when he designs the temple; for example, the design of the *mandapas*, the relative positions of the deities in a temple in relation to the presiding deity of the temple, the structure of the *vimAna*, *rAja gopuram* and every other detail pertaining to the temple. He should be proficient in the *SAstras*, in the engineering of the concept, in the aesthetics, the fine arts (music,

dance etc.) and above all in the transcription of the devotee’s emotional (devotional) objective to generate a physical form and meaning! He also directs and coordinates the activities of the others.

The *shilpi* carves the image in stone or wood. He also makes moulds if other materials such as plaster of paris, metals, alloys etc. are used to create the icon. He is acquainted with canonical prescriptions and descriptions of the images, and sculptural ornamentation etc. and extremely creative in his art. In addition to images, he makes the other structural components also. Figure 3 gives the vertical section of the *vimAna* and Figure 4 gives the details of one of the components of the *vimAna*, namely, *adhishtana* to give an idea of the nature and extent of sculptural work involved and no attempt is made here to give the other structural aspects of the temple such as *rAja gopuram* or the icons etc.

The Hindu temple is a magnificent work of art and sculpture portraying our tradition and the finer aspects of an ancient and sophisticated society. The *Shilpis* have kept this science and technology alive against many odds and set backs over the centuries.

PrANa PatishThApana

The *prANa patishThApana* and *kumbhAbhishekam* rituals of today are generally accomplished in a span of five days with several rites in an order as prescribed in the *Agamas*. These rites start with MahAgaNapati *pUjA* and include several preparatory rituals such as *punyAbhavAchanam* (a purificatory rite), *ritwik AchArya varanam* (offering of special garments to the priests performing the ritual), *kalasa sthApana* (where the

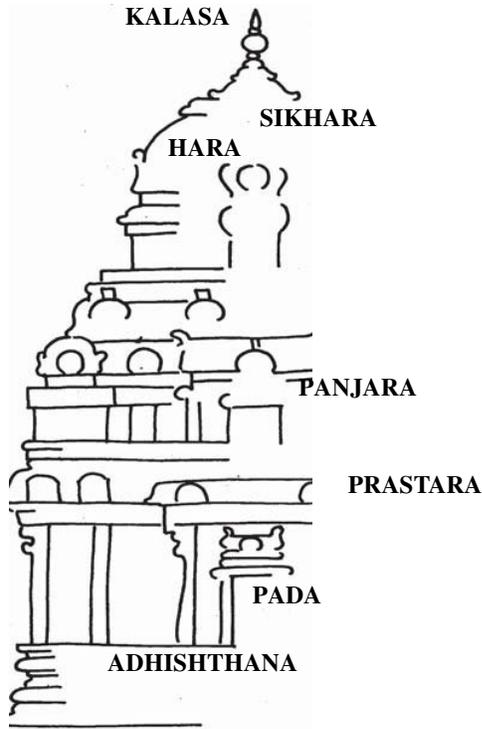


Fig. 3: Vertical section of Vimana².

power of the divinities are invoked in the waters kept in several *kalasas* (pots); *agni pratisTha* (establishing the fire for performing the fire oblations - homams), *vAstu pUjA* and homam to worship the *vAstu purusha*; *ankuraarpaNam* (seeding of the soil; the growth of plants from these seeds symbolize the prosperity of the temple); the purificatory rites of the images through *AdhivAsam* where the images are kept in *dhaanyam* (grains - paddy); *jalam* (water); *ksheeram* (milk); *dhanam* (gold, silver etc.); *sayyAdhivasam*, resting of the image, clad in new clothes, in bed. The *moola mantra homas* (oblations reciting the *moola mantra* (*bIja mantra*) of each divinity) are performed on several days to invoke the power of the deity in the image. *nayanonmeelanam* is another ritual in which the *sthapati*/Priests open

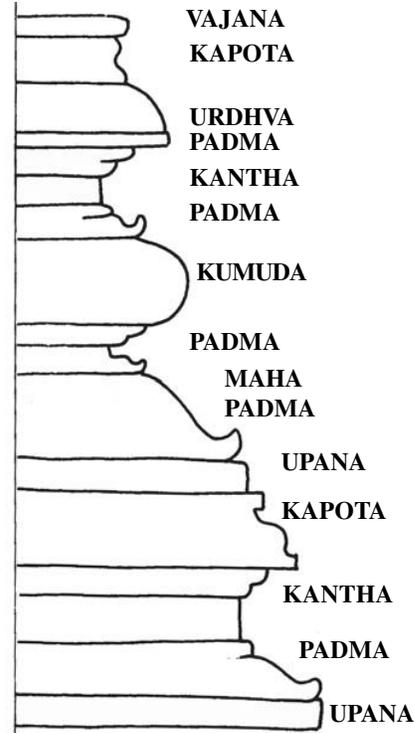


Fig. 4 Components of *adhishThAna*²

the eyes of the *mUrti*. The ritual aims at bringing the unmanifest *nirguNa brhman* to a manifest form in the *mUrti*, giving energy and attributes, fit for worship and endowed with divine powers. This is accomplished by the power of the *mantras* recited by the competent priest with the conduct of the rituals as per the *Agamas*. Before the *pratisThApana* of the deity, the *yantra*, which is a geometrical representation of the power of the deity, is installed in the place where the *mUrti* is installed subsequently. This is followed by elaborate *abbishekams* with the sanctified waters from the *kalasas* with the recitation of appropriate mantras. Along with the *yantra*, precious metals, precious stones etc. are placed as per the desires of the community. After the installation ceremony thus performed, the regular rituals such as

abhishekam, homam, alankaram, archana etc. are performed routinely.

KumbhAbhishekam

After the installation of the *moola vighraha*, the *maha kumbhAbhishekam* ceremony is performed which marks the consecration of the temple. As the *vAstu purusha* is supposed to lie at the base of the temple, the *prasAda purusha* is installed in the *kalasa* above the sanctum, on the *vimanam* and also on the *rAja gopuram*. If *vAstu* symbolizes “existence”, the *prasAda purusha* symbolizes, “essence” ! That is why we believe that *kalasa darSanam* of the *vimanam* or *gopuram* is so important. Every thing that pertains to the temple

is divine; the temple is not just a building; it is Divinity personified !

Om SAnTi: SAnTi: SAnTi;

References:

1. The Hindu Temple: An Introduction to Its Meaning and Forms, George Michell, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1988.
2. Art and Architecture of Indian Temples, Vol. 1, S.K. Ramachandra Rao, Kalpatharu Research Academy, Bangalore, India, 1993.
3. Hindu Temples: Sankusthapana to Prana Pratishtapana, Prof. Anand Mohan, Souenir of the Bharatiya Temple of Lansing , 1992.

His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Nrisimha Bharati

Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Nrisimha Bharati Swamigal was the 33rd Jagadguru in the Dakshinamnaya Sharada Peetham established by Adi Sankara. With an extraordinary mastery of, this great personage shone as a great tapasvin and yogi.

The Swamiji was responsible for starting the celebration of Sankara Jayanti festival in India. It is due to him that the collected works of Adi Sankara were published under the title, Sankara Granthavali.

Establishing beyond doubt Kalady as the birth place of Sankara and as a pilgrim centre, he determined the actual sites and consecrated his temple as well as that of Sri Sharadamba.

It is worth mentioning that many people who, like Charuvakas, had no belief in Vedas and Sastras, were totally reformed into astikas by his teachings.

He set up pathasalas (schools) for Vedas and Sastras in Bangalore and other places and also provided for their growth.

Famed as a reincarnation of Adi Sankara who established Sanatana Dharma in the land, he initiated all works designed to spread the Dharma.

His Holiness Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati, the 34th pontiff of Sringeri Sharada Peetham and widely acclaimed as a jivanmukta, was his devotee and successor.

Just by remembering the great Sri Nrisimha Bharati, one can obtain all sreyas, welfare and happiness.

श्रीसच्चिदानन्दशिवाभिनव्य
नूसिंहभारत्यभिधान् यतीन्द्रान् ।
विद्यानिधीन् मन्त्रनिधीन् सदात्म निष्ठान्
भजे मानवशम्भुरूपान् ॥

Ancestry, Parentage and Early Life

Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Nrisimha Bharati Swami, who adorned the Sringeri Sharada Peetham as its 33rd pontiff, was a descendant of a very orthodox Telugu family of the Mulaga Nadu sect in Edathurai village on the bank of the Cauvery.

His grandfather, Nrisimha Sastri, was the first to leave the village and seek his fortune in the court of the Maharaja of Mysore. He settled with his family in the old *agrahara* of Mysore town.

His second son, Rama Sastri, was a man of towering intelligence, who studied the Vedas, the Kavyas and the rudiments of *Nyaya*, Indian dialectics, under his father and Tirupati Srinivasacharya, then a pandit renowned for his skill in Tarka. He wrote a splendid book on *Nyaya Sastra*, named *Satakoti*, which was held in great esteem by renowned pandits.

Rama Sastri's great erudition was equalled only by his piety. Three or four children were born to him; but they died in their infancy. He and his wife, a model of chastity, love and patience, observed fast and worshipped Dakshinamurti, an aspect of Paramasiva, and prayed for long living children; and in his 34th year in the year Sarvari (A.D. 1840-41) a son was born to him. It was *Nrisimha Jayanti*, a festive day in honour of God Nrisimha. For this reason and following the family precedent of naming the first son after their tutelary deity, Nrisimha, the new-born infant was named Lakshmi Nrisimha.

After intense prayers another son was born to Rama Sastri and Lakshmi Amma at 9 p.m. on Tuesday, the 11th day of the dark fortnight in the month of Phalguna in the year Pingala (*March 1858*).

Sivaswami—so the child was named—grew up a winsome child. He delighted his parents with his playfulness, lisping words of divine praise, in imitation of his father when he performed his daily *Siva puja*. He lost his father before he completed two years and his mother in his fifth year.

Lakshmi Nrisimha Sastri was now 19, and had completed his studies under his father, and the responsibility of looking after the family was on his young but competent shoulders.

The Greatness of His Guru

During the greater part of the 19th century the Sringeri Sharada Peetham was presided over by Sri Nrisimha Bharati VIII (1817-1879). A native of Sringeri, he was born in 1798.

On the sixth day after initiating him his guru had passed away.

He became a great yogi through intense meditation and perseverance. He conquered sleep and spent 20 out of the 24 hours of the day in divine service (*puja*) and practice of yoga.

To cite an instance: In 1858 the Swami was halting at Bangalore. The State of Mysore was then in charge of a British Chief Commissioner, Col. Bowring. (It was only in 1881 that the State was handed over to the Maharaja's adopted son,

Chamarajendra Wodayar, who ruled till 1894.) Col. Bowring wished to see for himself whether all that was represented of the Swami was true.

Accordingly, one night he went incognito to the residence of the Swami at 1 a.m. and asked the sentinels at the gate what the Swami was doing. He was told that the Swami was engaged in divine service. The Commissioner requested the attendants to draw the curtain behind which the Swami was seated. They did so and he saw the Swami from a distance with his head bent down and offering flowers to the deity, oblivious of his surroundings. The Chief Commissioner took off his hat in reverence and returned with the conviction that the Swami was, indeed, a holy personage. Some of his letters to the Swami attest to the sincere esteem he had for the sage.

When he was barely 40 years of age, the Swami gave up his normal food, subsisting on the bitter fruits of *Momardica charantia* (bitter gourd) for the rest of his life. He never showed any impatience with anything that displeased him, but quietly set to work and never stopped till the obstacle was overcome.

The then Maharaja of Mysore, Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodayar, pithily gave expression to this characteristic feature of the Swami in the *Ashtottara-sata-namavali* which he composed in honour of the Swami, describing him as *pratignata-artha-sadhaka*, the accomplisher of whatever he once decides upon.

Telugu was his mother-tongue, Kannada was the language of his native land, Tamil of the neighbouring districts, Marathi and Hindustani he acquired during his trip to the north. All these languages he spoke as if to the manner born, needless to mention his proficiency in Sanskrit.

He spent over 40 years in his *Vijaya Yatras*. His own personal wants were very few, but he saw to it that those who followed him never felt any of the privations of travel.

Chosen Successor

The guru was in his 60th year and he had graced the *Peetham* for 40 years. One day, while engaged in contemplation, it appeared to him that a voice arose saying, "make room". He interpreted it to mean, that he should nominate a successor and bring him up properly in a manner suited to the position he was to occupy, so that when the time came he might not be taken unawares. The guru sent for several horoscopes and had them scrutinized. The search for a suitable nominee took eight years. At last he found a horoscope to his satisfaction.

Sivaswami, son of Rama Sastri, was seven years old at this time. He was being brought up and educated by his elder brother Lakshmi Nrisimha Sastri. Accompanied by his brother, he came to pay his respects to the Swami. The guru seated the boy by his side and asked him what he wanted. The boy quoted a Sanskrit verse.

This was a prayer to Siva, peculiarly appropriate to the occasion and in harmony with the *Upanishadic* doctrine that the guru was God Himself in human form. The boy wanted nothing but steadfast devotion to the guru.

This prompt reply greatly pleased the Swami, who had repeatedly prayed to God for a worthy disciple and he now thought that prayer had been heard.

The guru then intimated his wish to the Maharaja, Krishna Raja Wodayar III, who sent for Lakshmi Nrisimha Sastri, a pandit in his court, and told him that his father, who had also been a great court *sadasya*, had at his death, entrusted his boys to the care and guardianship of the Maharaja himself. Lakshmi Nrisimha Sastri had to yield.

Next morning, an auspicious day selected for the *sannyasa grabhana* of the boy--it was the sixth *tithi* of *Ashada* light of *Akshaya* (1865)-- the ceremonials connected with it were duly performed, the guru himself initiating the boy.

The rites were exacting and took up the whole day. The boy was fatigued but he bravely put up with everything. The guru taught him the *Mahavakya* and named him Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Nrisimha Bharati.

It was a long compound name; but the guru wanted that the name of his guru Sacchidananda, who was a great Yogi, should be given to the initiate; the boy's name as determined by his father was originally Sivaswami and the pandits

assembled there were of the opinion that Siva, the first part of the name given by the father, should be added, the Maharaja, who was present throughout the ceremonies, thought his guru's name—Nrisimha Bharati--should also be added. The result of all this was a long name, rather inconvenient for everyday use, but people were content to call him the younger Swami and when he became the sole occupant of the *Peetham*, he was generally known as Abhinava Nrisimha Bharati, after his predecessor.

Master's Care

At dark, the guru put him through the evening rites, made him have a light meal of fried grains and ordered him to lie down beside him on a deer-skin and take rest. The guru himself then went on with his usual *puja* and *japa*. The boy soon fell asleep and was heard to murmur in his sleep *sarvoham, sarvoham*, "I am all, I am all."

It was not enough that the guru should be deeply versed in the *Sastras*. His eloquence had to be persuasive and convincing and his personality should be an inspiration to those who came in contact with him. So the guru, intent on taking the young Swami on an extended tour, started for the banks of the Cauveri, near Srirangapatnam, and, after completing the *chaturmasya* ceremonies there, proceeded on a prolonged tour through the Tamil districts of Madras Presidency.

The old guru's watchfulness in providing for the education of his young charge and his proper upbringing, in the midst of a protracted tour, was indicative of his foresight, solicitude and love.

When he found that the boy had outgrown the teaching of the first teacher, he arranged that the elder brother of the young Swami, who was a great scholar, should be in charge of his higher *Sastraic* studies. When his secular studies for the day were over, the boy was given instruction, by the Swami himself, in the niceties of *Vedic dharma*, the grandeur of piety and love for Isvara, the duties of a *sannyasi* and incumbent of the Peetham. He initiated the novice in the several mantras needed for the upasana of the deities and in due time took him through a course of *prasthanatraya* with Sankara's *bhashyas*; and he also taught him the secrets of yoga practice.

How great was the old master's love for his young pupil was seen once when the young Swami fell ill, during a visit to the shrine of Srikanthesvara of Nanjangud.

The master intensely prayed for the recovery of his charge, offered divine service himself to the deity there and when the boy recovered in response, as the master believed, to his devout prayer, the master ordered a gold image of the young Swami's likeness and had it placed in front of the *Peetham* of the *Utsava-murti* (the procession image) of the deity of the temple, as a sign that the boy was now entrusted to the care of a greater being than himself.

The young Swami's devotion and affection for the master were equally great, as can be seen from the fine hymns sung by him on several occasions. These hymns have been published in a handsome volume of over 500 pages under the

title *Bhakti-sudha-tarangini*, by Sri. T.K. Balasubrahmanya Aiyer, one of the most devoted of the Swami's *sishyas*.

This tour lasted 12 years. The master returned to Sringeri in 1887 and he was now 80 years old while the pupil was nearing 20.

After return to Sringeri, the pupil's heart turned towards yoga practice and he became intent on going to the forest to practise *tapas*.

The master sent for and questioned the pupil. He replied that he wished to go to the forest and practise *tapas*. The guru sternly told him: "You have a great duty, a grave responsibility lying just before you. In a short time I shall be called away; and the whole burden of the Peetham will devolve on you and it will be upto you whether the prestige of the Peetham, which has been handed down untarnished through a succession of great souls, should be kept by you in increasing splendour or the spiritual ministry of the *Matha* should wane in influence.

"When you have seen to it that the spiritual glories of the *Peetham* shine more brilliantly than ever before--and I see with my mind's eye that it will be so--then it will be time for you to rest on your oars, occasionally go to the woods that adjoin this picturesque village and practise penance undisturbed.

"I see it visioned before me that the highest spiritual experiences are before you and that you will become a second Sadasiva Brahmendra; but I also see that they will not be realised during my

lifetime. Note also that nothing undertaken against the wishes of your guru will come to good."

These words impressed the young Swami and he resumed his duties as of old. The master was now 82 and nearing his end. It was Friday morning about 9a.m. Jyeshtha light 2, Pramadi (1879) when the master's soul left for eternal bliss.

Early Years of Ministry

The young Swami keenly felt the separation of his guru. On the day of the obsequies of the master, he had no food or sleep and fell into a doze, when a voice seemed to thunder in his ears, "Why all this fasting and waking, this weeping and wailing like women? Where have I gone? I am here." These words comforted him and restored his peace of mind.

In December 1885, Chamaraja Wodayar, the youthful ruler of Mysore, came to Sringeri with his Dewan (afterwards Sir) K. Seshadri Aiyar, the British Resident and other officials to pay his respects to the Swami. Six years of quiet, secluded life thus went by--a period of studying and teaching, of spiritual communion in his guru's shrine and yoga practices.

Now came a Jaghirdar from north India--Anna Saheb, a wealthy nobleman esteemed greatly for his goodness of heart and liberality to pay his homage to the Swami. He requested the Swamy to visit north India, offering to look after all the camp requirements.

This was in tune with the Swami's wishes, but he was loath to part from the shrine of his

master. One day, while trying to ascertain the will of his guru, he found a small *salagrama* on the seat of the *linga* placed over his *samadhi*. Taking this as a sign of approval, he started his tour in February 1886.

First Independent Tour

The Jagadguru first went to Gokarna, on the west coast, a place sanctified by the visit of Adi Sankara and which was in the last thoughts of the Swami's guru.

He was put up in the Sringeri *matha* branch during which time occurred the festival of Maha Sivaratri.

He was then invited to his capital by the Raja of Jamkhandi, who received the Swami right royally on September 16, 1887. He presented the Swami with a costly diamond necklace and offered to conduct the eighth day festivities of Maha Navaratri at Sringeri at his expense. This is still in force.

The Swami then reached Kolhapur, where there was a branch of the *matha*. The Swami, whose knowledge of Marathi was meagre, was glad to find that a great many people here could understand Sanskrit and he gave several lectures in Sanskrit, which drew large audiences.

At Bellary, he performed the *Chaturmasya*. Here K. Seshadri Aiyar, Dewan of Mysore, came to visit the Swami. Sri Aiyar, a brilliant graduate of Madras University, like many others, was initially indifferent to questions of religion,

blinded by the glamour of the new education; but his two day visit to the Swami earlier at Sringeri along with his master, the Maharaja, was enough to convert him. He now spared some time out of his heavy and varied duties to the study of and cogitation on the sacred Sastras.

Pell-mell in Camp

On way from Bellary to Sringeri the Swami had to camp at a small village called Belaguppe. Here the accommodation consisted of two small houses.

It was his habit when he retired at night to have the Chandramoulisvara *linga* and the image of Ratnagarbha Ganapati safely locked in a copper cabinet and placed within a bigger wooden box, also under lock and key.

That night thieves broke into the house and walked away with the valuables including the wooden box containing the puja items. The personal attendants of the Swami, coming at five in the morning, found the dress-box of the Swami opened and the contents lying pell-mell; they rushed to the resting-place of the Swami and found the wooden box also missing. The Swami was struck dumb.

The *linga* and the icon of Ganapati were his very life. He rose for his bath uttering not a word and, with his wet clothes on, sat down in meditation. Not a word of anger or impatience escaped his lips. He sat for hours, mute and absorbed in prayer.

Wires were flashed to the British authorities and an Inspector of Police, noted for his deductive ability, came next morning. On the fifth day after the theft, word came from him that the copper cabinet had been found by a peasant ploughing the ground. The camp, which had appeared as if sunk in a magic sleep, came back to life; in a grand procession, with all the paraphernalia of the *matha*, the cabinet was brought back.

A shower, least expected at this time of the year, accompanied the procession and ceased only when the palanquin reached the camp of the Swami.

The Swami fell on the ground almost in unconscious ecstasy at the sight of the cabinet and the *linga* and the icon, which were his very life breath, as it were. Tears flowed down his cheeks; his hair was on end and he hardly spoke a word for half an hour. Then he looked at the Police Inspector who had been instrumental in the recovery, laid his hands on his head and blessed him from the very depths of his heart.

At seven in the evening the Swami went for his bath and the puja to the recovered gods lasted the whole night.

Tradition has it that the *linga*, along with the Ratnagarbha Ganapati had been worshipped by Adi Sankara and were handed over to his disciple Suresvaracharya, from whom they had descended in unbroken succession.

The first thing he did on his return to Sringeri was to place them before the altar of his

master's shrine and receive them back with his unseen blessings.

This tour lasted about four years; the Swami was now 32 years old. It had been forecast that he would pass through a very critical period at this age and he felt thankful to the higher powers that it was over, without loss to the world or the *Peetham*, though to himself nothing could have caused greater anxiety than what he had to suffer till the moment of recovery of the most valuable possessions, of which he regarded himself now as the sole trustee.

The Second Tour

For two years after this the Swami stayed at Sringeri, studying the sacred scriptures and teaching the disciples who came to him for instruction in Vedanta. It was a quiet life divided between self-improvement and instruction, after the time required for meditation and puja. It was a life after his own heart. But his mission was not to do what was most congenial to his temperament but to go about preaching the truths of Vedic dharma to the vast multitude of people that owed allegiance to the *matha*.

So he resolved once again to go on a tour, to the southern districts this time. The Maharaja of Mysore, Chamarajendra Wodeyar, now sent a request that the Swami should pay a visit to his capital, Mysore, and bless his family and children. He visited Mysore in 1891 and was received by the Maharaja with due honours. The Swami stayed

in Mysore for four months, and observed the *Chaturmasya* there.

About September, corresponding to the lunar month of Bhadrapada, the festival of Ganapati Puja is held, with which is also held the Ganapati *sadas*. The Swami himself presided over the *sadas*, which was attended by famous scholars such as Panditaratna Sitarama Sastri, Panditaratna Kasturi Rangacharya, Dharmadhikari Rama Sastri, Dharmadhikari Seshacharya, Pazhamaneri Sundara Sastri, Syama Sastri and Srikantha Sastri.

The Swami then left for Nanjangud, where the shrine of Srikanthesvara is credited with effecting miraculous cures. The place is charmingly situated between two sacred rivers, the Kapila and the Kaundini. It is only 22 km from Mysore. The *linga* in the shrine is said to have been discovered and worshipped by Parasurama.

The Swami stayed here for three weeks and then went along the course of the Cauveri right up to the very source in Coorg. He then returned and camped at Paschimavahini, close to Srirangapatnam.

Tour of South

The Swami then came to Satyamangalam in Coimbatore district, where there is a spacious *matha* belonging to Sringeri Peetham. Here he performed the *Chaturmasya* and then proceeded to Gobichettipalayam.

A wealthy Mudaliar wished to install the image of Lord Subramanya in the shrine he had

built and prayed that the consecration of the deity be conducted under the guidance of the Swami.

The practice in the southern districts is to conduct the consecration and the daily service in the shrines in accordance with *Agama*, and not *Vaidika* methods. The Swami wished to make a departure from this and had the consecration performed according to *Vaidika* prescriptions (vide *Baudhaana-Grihya-sutra* for the details of *vaidika pratishtha*). After the consecration, he himself went to the shrine and infused special efficacy in the image by his own prayers and offerings and arranged that worship in the shrine should be performed in the Vaidic style.

At Aiyampalayam, at the request of a wealthy landlord, he laid the foundation stone for a Dandayudhapani shrine.

He then proceeded to Kozhumam, where he observed the *Chathurmasya* and conducted the Navaratri festival at Kadathur.

Thence he proceeded to Palani, famed for its Subramanya shrine on a hill. In Madurai, he was received and entertained by Raja Setupati of Ramanathapuram.

The Raja requested that the Swami should halt at Ramanathapuram, his capital, on his return from Ramesvaram.

After a bath at Dhanushkodi, and worship of the Ramanatha *linga* at Ramesvaram he came to Ramanathapuram, where he celebrated Navaratri.

During this festival a thousand sheep used to be offered to the Goddess attached to the palace of the Raja. The idea of offering such a sacrifice was repugnant to the Swami; he was thinking over the matter, when the Raja himself came to consult him about the propriety of such a mode of worship; but it was not the habit of the Swami to make a pronouncement off-hand in a matter established by general practice and he said he would reply the next day.

That day he fervently prayed for divine guidance. He dreamt that night was as simple as that a woman, in soiled clothing, holding a cup of drink in one hand and a broomstick in the other appeared before him and said, "I leave this place" and immediately after, a Brahmin lady, with graceful adornments, appeared and said, "I have come to stay."

This dream the Swami interpreted to mean that the gods favoured the worship of the Goddess in *vaidik* or right-handed mode of worship. By his advice and under his guidance, a new shrine outside the palace precincts was built, Sri Chakra, the most efficacious of all *yantras*, was consecrated there and the *murti* of the Goddess was shifted to this shrine.

The Raja arranged for the daily puja here in *vaidik* style, for which the Swami deputed two brahmins from his *matha*. A village yielding an annual revenue of Rs.12,000 was set apart for the maintenance of the shrine.

At the earnest entreaty of the prince, the Swami accepted five villages of the zamin for the *matha* at Sringeri.

While the Swami was at Ramanathapuram, the Nattukkottai Chettis, a wealthy community who by long tradition, have their permanent residence only between the rivers, the Vaigai in Madurai District and the Vellar in Pudukkottai territory, entreated the Swami to pay a visit to Chettinad and bless them in their homes. The Swami accordingly started for Chettinad and was everywhere received in a manner suited to the wealth of the district. The Chettis placed Rs.30,000 (a very huge sum in those days) at the disposal of the Swami for the renovation of the Sharada shrine at Sringeri, which was undertaken and completed satisfactorily.

Winsome Manners

Wherever the Swami stopped he gave daily lectures on *vaidika dharma*, which was listened to by large crowds with rapt attention.

His very presence was an education. In the words of the editor of the Swami's work, *Bhakti-sudha-tarangini*, "No one was ushered into his holy presence who did not go back full of noble resolve to lead thenceforward a purer and a more exalted life. To see him was a privilege; to speak to him was a real blessing. The magnetic force of his wonderful personality was such that one word, nay, one smile or even one look was quite enough to convert even the most indifferent of persons into his most ardent and obedient of disciples."

His learning was colossal; yet, he was as simple as a child.

While he was at Koilur, the Raja of Ramanathapuram wired to him that Chamarajendra Wodayar, the Maharaja of Mysore, had unexpectedly died in Calcutta. The Swami wanted to give up all further touring and wished to go back to Sringeri but he was committed to a visit to Tirunelveli. At Tirunelveli the Brahmins themselves carried in procession the palanquin in which the Swami was seated.

He proceeded to *Banatirtha*, the source of the Tamiraparani river, and stopped there for three days. The zamindar of Singampatti, within whose jurisdiction the *tirtha* was situated, received him and the Swami bestowed on him the title of *Tirthapati* and blessed him that he may have progeny.

After 40 days' stay in the district, he began his return journey. He halted for a time at Ayyampalayam in Tiruchirapalli district, where Tandavaraya Pillai, a wealthy and pious landlord, had completed a shrine. The Swami installed the *murtis* of Sri Dandapani, Sri Prasanna Parvati and Sri Srinivasa after due consecration and infused special energy in the devatas by worshipping them himself and arranged for the conduct of daily service in the shrine according to the *vaidik* mode.

The Swami reached Mysore in the month of Jyeshtha of Manmatha(1895). He blessed the two young princes, consoled the Maharani-regent and initiated her into the sacred mantras and Siva-puja and thence proceeded to Sringeri.

At Sringeri--First 12 years

For some days after his return to Sringeri the Swami always seemed deep in reflection and indifferent to his surroundings. He forgot even his daily physical requirements and his attention had to be drawn to these by his faithful attendants.

As for the Swami himself, nothing touched his heart so much as the unexpected and premature demise of a devoted ruler. Ever since the dismemberment of the Vijayanagar empire, the fortunes of the Sringeri matha were carefully looked after by the rulers of Mysore and by none so much as by the late Maharaja. His being taken away suddenly in the prime and bloom of life; much more than this, the sight of the boy-princes, removed from the strong hand of paternal control, had contributed to the distraction of his mind.

The Swami was intensely emotional; pity and sympathy welled up from his heart at the least sign of distress; he would walk gently on earth, looking carefully about him, lest he should by chance tread on any ant or worm; he could never bear to see others suffering, though it might be due to their own fault. The Ramayana was his favourite and he never tired of reading the epic.

Once, when the Swami was being taken in a procession in Mysore, he saw an old woman looking at him intently and with tears in her eyes; the Swami noticed this in the huge throng of enthusiastic spectators and devotees, recognised in her his old nurse who had taken him about on her shoulders when he was a child of two or three and fondled him on her knees.

He sent for her, loaded her with presents and sent her home more pleased with the simple, kind words he spoke and the reminiscences of his childhood and her tender care of him than by the presents.

He never failed to enquire about the comforts of one and all who came as visitors to the *matha*, though his confidence in his Agent and the attendants was unbounded; he saw to it that his pandits lived in comfort.

One of these, though learned like the other pandits, had a failing; he was very short-tempered and the servant employed by the *matha* to cook for him and otherwise look after his wants was so much put out by the treatment of the pandit that he left without notice and returned to the *matha*.

The Sastri waited till five in the evening, fasting and gnashing his teeth; but nobody turned up; he then staggered to the presence of the Swami and told him his tale of woe, hinting that he was dying of hunger. The Swami at once left his seat, went to the kitchen to see if the run-away servant was there.

The Agent who was inside the kitchen, supervising the preparations, noticed this unusual proceeding in alarm, caused the servant concerned, who was there, to get out of the sight of the Swami, who returned to his seat and sent for the Agent.

Was not the Swami aware of the failing of this pandit? Could he not have easily surmised that the man had brought the trouble on himself

by his own short temper? Could not the Swami have sent for his Agent by a nod of his head and should he have walked to the kitchen himself, when hundreds of attendants were waiting to readily execute his slightest command? It only showed how tender-hearted he was.

The first thing he did on his return to Sringeri was to compose a hymn to Sharada, appealing to her to protect the princes of Mysore from peril and make them wise and pious. This hymn he caused to be sung every night before the Goddess, at the close of the evening service. This brought him some peace of mind.

Another matter that contributed to his pensiveness was the great change he observed in the spirit of the people wherever he went, their greed to become rich at any cost, and their indifference to hoary traditions.

For himself he felt that all he could do was to pray to the Mother of the Universe to bring about a change of heart in the people this land. He had unshaken faith in the efficacy of sincere prayer. He also started a *pathasala* named Sadvidya-Sanjivini at Sringeri in the very year he returned to Sringeri and ordered that Rs.12,000 a year should be spent on this and other institutions for the resuscitation of Sanskrit studies.

Turn of Mind

A portion of the forest to the south of the Tunga river in Sringeri had been cleared for *tapas* and was named Narasimhavana after the old guru. The Swami ordered the Agent to put up a

temporary shed on this spot and he moved to it on an auspicious day in 1898 with the Chandramaulisvara *linga* and the *utsava-murti* of Sharadamba. He performed the puja of the day in the shed, followed by the feeding of brahmins on a small scale.

In the evening he sent back the *utsava-murti* of Sharadamba to the shrine on the northern bank and slept in Narasimhavana with a few attendants.

One by one, the gold and silver plates and valuable things used in the daily service of the deities were given up and the Swami was content to offer his daily worship with the pure water of the Tunga and the flowers and sacred leaves that were to be had in the woods.

He himself eschewed salt, acidic and pungent things, subsisting on *sattvika* food. Every day after his daily puja, he would, like the first great master before him, give lessons to his pupils on the *bhashyas* till 11 or 12.

Visit of the Prince

Towards the close of 1898, the Dewan of Mysore wrote to the Agent of the *matha* that the prince of Mysore was on a visit to all parts of the State along with his tutor, Mr. Fraser, as a preparation for taking over the reins of administration and the Sringeri *matha* would be the first stop.

When this was made known to the Swami, and the Agent solicited instructions in the matter, the Swami said: "You are there to receive the

prince and his tutor in a manner befitting the prince's exalted rank. Make all suitable arrangements and receive the prince according to the precedent of the *matha*. I shall myself stay in my hermitage and send the prince my greetings and blessings."

On December 7, 1898 the prince came to Sringeri, was received with due honours, and stayed in the building set apart for his accommodation. With the European gentlemen who accompanied him, he crossed the river and came to the hermitage of the Swami and paid his respects to him.

In the evening, Mr. Fraser sought a private interview with the Swami and conversed with him through an interpreter for over four hours. The simple habits of the gentle-mannered Swami, the genial smile that ever hovered about his lips, the melody of his words, rich with holy thoughts, bewitched the tutor and he forgot the passing of time. He expressed his great admiration for the guru in his subsequent letters to him wherein he touched on the guru's simplicity of manner equalled only by the immensity of his learning.

Great princes used to come to him, wealthy noblemen with large sums of money for the *matha*, which they respectfully laid at his feet; poor people also came to him in great numbers for help; also people who, or whose children, were suffering from maladies sought his aid, as well as those who came to showcase their learning and get rewards.

All alike he received with the same smile and kindness, showed equal solicitude for the proper entertainment of the rich or the relief of the distressed; not one went away without feeling that it was he who had been foremost in the thoughts of the guru. To little children, especially, who approached him, he had a more than ordinary fondness, like another great teacher who had said "suffer little children to come unto me." With great scholars, *yogis* and *jnanis* he could speak on the most abstruse questions of ontology with ease. With children, he became a little child himself delighting in their ingenious prattle and pleasing them with fruits and things they valued most.

At Sringeri—Later Years

For full 12 years from 1895 to 1907 the Swami stayed at Sringeri, all the while thinking of what should be done to drifting away of the people of the land from their old moorings

The first and greatest master of this line, Sankara, had found the land torn asunder by conflicting creeds and abominable practices in the name of religion; and he had established peace, tolerance and a broad outlook in Bharatavarsha.

The Swami now sought the great master's help in prayer. Sankara's *murti* in the *matha* was placed in a conspicuous shrine and he arranged for an annual festival in his honour, commencing on the *sukla pratipad* of *Vaisakha* and ending on the fifth day—the anniversary of the master's birth. In the mornings, all these five days, there was a

special adoration and *archanas* to the *murti* of the master, recitation of his great *bhashyas*, lectures by the Swami himself in the evenings in simple, easy style on the teachings of the master. The programme concluded at night with a procession on the streets of Sringeri and musical recitals. This movement has since spread to other parts of the land.

Once during this period, a friend was deputed by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya to invite the Swami to Benares to lay the foundation stone of the Benares Hindu University. The Swami regretfully declined the invitation, the date chosen for the function being near and the time of traveling such a long way being insufficient.

It was suggested that special trains or motor cars could be arranged for speedy travel and return. The Swami said that the long established procedures of the *matha* had to be respected, that walking had been at first the only method of travel adopted by his predecessors, that it was only during the time of Vidyananya, the king-maker of the 14th century A.D., that the use of palanquin and other symbols of regal pomp and show had been substituted, that these signs of dignity had their own use in influencing people and that he could not bring himself to break the tradition which had sanction of centuries behind it.

Instead, he sent a pair of his guru's sandals, which had greater power he could ever possess, to ensure the prosperity of the great institution which was to be established in the most sacred

city of Bharatavarsha for the resuscitation of the culture of India.

Venerable Symbols of Worship

The hymns he composed in praise of his guru are sincere outpourings of his heart. The first thing he did after bath every morning was to take the pair of sandals which had been used by his guru in his life-time, clean them with the clothes he had on, then place them on his own head, uttering the prayer that his guru's sandals were his greatest refuge in life.

He would talk for hours on his guru's greatness: and he never spoke what did come from the very depths of his heart. His attachment to the several *murtis* of the deities in the *Peetham* was as if they were living representatives of the gods themselves. The idea never seemed to have entered his mind that they were mere symbols; he carefully looked into the milk and sugar before he offered them to the gods, he examined the fresh flowers brought by his attendants before placing them at the feet of the gods, lest there should be withered or otherwise unworthy ones. It was not merely to set an example to the thousands who came to witness the puja, but this feeling of reverence and attachment was instinctive with him.

It was only those select few who were admitted to the privacy of his intimate puja who could understand the sincerity of his feelings of devotion to the simple emblems of his worship, when, late at night he would, at the close of the worship, stand and dance in joy before his gods,

beating time with his hands to the melodious songs of praise which flowed from his lips almost unbidden.

His childlike trust in the symbols of godhead coexisted with his capacity for abstract meditation. For days together, he gave up the external forms of worship and devoted himself to contemplation. He used to spend a month almost every year, at this time, on the hills not far from Sringeri, known as Nrisimha-parvata.

Here he lived in a hermitage, a little removed from the quarters of his attendants, and spent forenoons in prayer and meditation. In the evenings he would walk on the hills two or three miles, alone; *sannyasis* and other who came to pay their respects to him would stand a little aloof and follow him a little distance behind, after their prostrations. He did not speak to any one on these occasions but communed with himself and nature. Only, his bright smile irradiated the atmosphere around him and brought peace of mind to those who beheld him even from distance.

That famous poem of Sadasiva-Brahman, *Atma-vidya-vilasa*, was his favorite work, which he used to repeat to himself. Oftentimes, when he was seated among his pupils, he would ask one of them to sing the verses of this poem in a sweet voice. For five or six minutes he would be listening; but after that would forget himself in the rapture of Self-communion induced by the poem; his head would bend down and he would be in a trance. This had been noticed several times.

Once he was seated in contemplation under a tree on this hill; a wild hill-fly on his thigh and sucked his blood. The blood streamed down; but the Swami was not aware of it. The Agent, who was standing by, dared not to disturb him. It was only after he came to himself that he noticed a feeling of cold in the thigh and saw the mischief of the wild fly.

His self-forgetfulness in abstract meditation was succeeded in his wakeful state by intense love of God, induced by his veneration for such outward symbols as the sandals of his guru, the *murti* of his worship. It was a love born of no earthly consideration, a love that seeks no return, an intense and ethereal flame that baffles all analysis, that glorifies in self-prompted and unquestioning surrender. This *avyaja-bhakti* led to the light and the vision beatific in which the God in man and the God in the Universe are fused into one. [That great psychic powers flowed of their own accord from such divine love goes without saying.]

Outpouring Grace

Once in the course of his tour through the then Travancore state, a brahmin poet of a village called Asrama approached him with the prayer that his dumb boy should be cured. The Swami felt pity for the poor boy and asked the brahmin to visit him with the boy at Suchindram, his next camp. There he taught a certain *mantra* to the brahmin and ordered him to magnetise a vessel of water with the intense repetition of the *mantra* every day for three months and sprinkle it on the

boy and make him to drink a spoonful with faith. This the brahmin did; the boy's dumbness gradually decreased; he began to speak a few words and in course of time got cured.

The Swami himself gives expression to his feelings on such occasions in a hymn composed in praise of the Mother. It says:

"O Mother, people from long distances come to me for relief from deafness, dumbness, obsession, etc., in the belief that I can cure them. What shall I do? I know nothing of mantra, yantra or other methods of treatment—nothing except a particle of devotion to your lotus feet."

He had unbounded faith in the power of the Mother of the Universe and of his guru and he simply prayed to them and sent away those that came to him with holy ash or some consecrated water in the name of the Mother or guru.

Hanumantayya, an Amildar in Mysore Province, had no issues; he married a second time in the hope of progeny. But he got none. He now wished to bequeath what he had to the Sringeri *matha*, wrote a will to that effect and prayed to the Swami to accept his bequest for the *matha*.

The Swami sent him back saying, "Mother does not want your fortune; She prefers that you should bequeath your fortune to your children. So please take the will and go back to your place."

The gentleman, instead of taking back the will as directed, simply added a codicil that if he should get issues, his properties might go to them;

otherwise they should go to the *matha*, and it was for the authorities of the *matha* to do whatever was necessary with it.

The man afterwards got three sons and three daughters and died at 80, full of years and full of faith.

Preparations for the Kalady Consecration

The Swami was all the while painfully alive to the spread of materialism in the country over which his *matha* claimed to possess spiritual jurisdiction. The remedies he adopted, however inadequate in his own estimation, were the establishment of schools for the spread of *Vedic* and *Sastraic* learning wherever possible, and his attempt to create a generation of pandits who could go about the country and combat the tendencies of the age both by precept and example. He established two Sanskrit pathasalas at Sringeri.

One other remedy had been slowly maturing in his mind. He believed that unless the spirit of the great master, Sankara, again descended on earth righteousness could not be re-established in the land; he could only pray for its descent. Why not build a shrine at the birthplace of Sankara, and place his murti there, which would continue to be adored and prayed to by hosts of sincere devotees and from which a perennial stream of spiritual influence could flow and flood the land? But the very birthplace had become a dim memory; still it could be identified by the description given of it in Madhava's biography.

While these thoughts were revolving in his mind, Sir K. Seshadri Aiyar came on a visit to Sringeri to pay his respects to the Swami; the guru broached the subject to him. Sir Seshadri gladly accepted the command, went to Malabar and by enquiries found that Madhava's description fitted an uninhabited region in Travancore State.

The Swami resolved to clear the spot of the natural growth of centuries and build a shrine there; but this would take a long time and involve huge cost and labour. Meanwhile, a small patch of land where, according to local tradition, stood the village where Sankara was born, was cleared and a very eloquent and learned preacher of *Vedic dharma*, Pandit Nadukaveri Srinivasa Sastry was deputed every year to go there and conduct *Acharya Jayanti*, a five-day festival in honour of Sankara's birthday, giving lectures every day on the greatness and teachings of Sankara. This continued for some years.

In 1905-06, V. P. Madhava Rao was the Dewan of Travancore. This statesman had great reverence for the Swami ever since he, as Deputy Commissioner, received the Swami at Shimoga in 1885 while he was on his way to Gokarna. The Swami thought that this was a good opportunity for arranging to get possession of the land at Kalady. Accordingly he sent his Agent N. Srikantha Sastri and A. Ramachandra Aiyar to Travancore on his mission.

The two had an interview with Dewan V. P. Madhava Rao. They then went to Kalady and

inspected the place. The river Puma was flowing by in a clear limpid stream; the bathing ghat here was held sacred by the neighbouring villagers and people used to come and bathe here on sacred days like the new-moon, the tradition here being that Sankara bathed at this very ghat, when he came here for the last time to perform his mother's obsequies.

Nearby was a shrine of Krishna; as also a *matha* belonging to a Nambudri *sannyasi*. All the land about, known as Kalady Samketa, belonged to this *matha*; but the *sannyasi* of the *matha* had only *janmi* right--that of a landlord and was entitled to nothing more than a fixed small rent paid by the cultivating tenants who possessed permanent occupancy rights. It was not easy to oust these tenants or bring them to part with their rights.

Just at this juncture came the Act of the Governor-General India, Lord Curzon, for the preservation of antiquities conservation of ancient monuments. Similar enactments came into force in the Indian States and it was now easy for the Maharaja of Travancore to acquire all the land known as the Kalady Samketa place it at the disposal of the Sringeri Swami.

The Maharaja also sanctioned Rs. 10,000 for clearing the land of the growth of centuries and building a shrine there. The Agent reported all this to his master, who, seeing that the times propitious for carrying out his long cherished object, ordered that preparations be speedily made for a tour to Kalady.

He consulted Sharadamba for a sign, for he never undertook anything great without getting the Mother's permission. Two chits were placed, one in either palm of the deity; the Swami prostrations at the feet of the Mother and waited for drop. That in the right hand was the first to drop and it indicated wish of the Mother that the Swami should start at an early date.

Maghasukla 5, Prabhava, about February 1907, was the earliest auspicious date for the tour.

A. Ramachandra Aiyar, who had retired from the Judgeship of the Chief Court of Mysore, and E. R. Subraya Aiyar, an engineering expert who had been a high official of the Mysore Government and had since retired, were deputed in advance to Kalady to clear the limits of the Kalady Samketa and build the shrines for the *murtis* of Sankara and Sharadamba. It would take two or three years for the Swami to reach Kalady. So these two retired officials left Mysore in 1908, two years being considered sufficient for the work they had to do at Kalady.

On Way to Kalady

The Swami reached Bangalore in May 1907. V. P. Madhava Rao had left Travancore and was now Dewan of Mysore. At the request of the Dewan, the Swami stayed at his residence in Bangalore. Madhava Rao, A. Ramachandra Aiyar and other influential gentlemen of the place requested that a shrine for the great master Sankara and a *matha*, where the Swami could stay for a month or two every year and preach *vaidika*

dharma to the people, should be built in Bangalore.

Ramachandra Aiyar had offered to place his own mansion at the disposal of the Swami. He now backed up the request of the Dewan and offered Rs. 20,000 as his contribution.

Between Chamarajapura and Basavangudi lay an extensive plot, overgrown with trees and shrubs and harbouring reptiles. The plot was acquired and speedily cleared for the proposed shrine and *matha*. The installation was celebrated in due form.

The Swami now left for Mysore, where the Maharaja was awaiting his arrival. As he had already spent more time at Bangalore than he had originally arranged he had to leave Mysore within a fortnight.

He then came to Gobichettipalayam in Coimbatore district, where he had to stop for some months to celebrate that year's *Chaturmasya* and the Navaratri festivals.

Here came Chidambaram Chettiar of Kanadukathan, who was renovating the celebrated temple of Jambukesvara in Tiruchi on a grand scale and who requested the Swami to grace the occasion of the *Kumbhabhi-shekam*. To this the Swami agreed. Seeing how skillfully the temple had been renovated, the Swami asked Chidambaram Chettiar to supervise and complete the improvement which the Swami had inaugurated in the shrine of Sharadamba at

Sringeri, which commission Chettiar gladly accepted.

Then he stopped for a day in the adjoining town of Srirangam, putting up in the mansion of his devoted disciple, T. K. Balasubrahmanya Aiyar and worshipped at the shrine of Sri Ranganatha. After a short halt at Tiruchi the Swami left for Koilur, where the priest had rebuilt and renovated the Siva temple of the place at an enormous cost. The priest prayed that the Swami should bless the occasion of the consecration of the temple by his presence.

The Swami, agreeing to this prayer, proceeded to Koilur, stopping for a few days at Pudukkottai, the capital of the Tondamans, which as the Swami declared, had been sanctified by the footprints of Sadasiva Brahmam, who was the Swami's ideal of a perfect yogi.

Then he passed through some of the important villages, such as Karaikudi, Kanadukathan and Devakottai. As by this time the *Chaturmasya* had again approached, he stayed for this at Kunnakudi, where there is the celebrated shrine of Subrahmanya.

Then he proceeded to Madurai where he stayed for about a month. Next he proceeded to Rameswaram, stopping for two days at Ramnad. The Swami duly performed the religious baths at Dhanushkoti and after worshipping the Ramanata *linga* at Ramesvaram and staying there a fortnight, left for Tirunelveli district. The people of the district have a special attachment to the Sringeri

Peetham and on the present occasion, when the Swami was proceeding to Kalady to install the *murti* of the great master, they vied with one another in contributing towards the expenses of the installation.

A year had passed by this time and the next *Chaturmasya* was approaching. It being an intercalary year, three instead of the usual two months' stay at one place was necessary. The Swami chose Papavinasam for this ceremonial. Nearby is the famous waterfall of the Tamraparni, known as Kalyanatirtha. By the side of the stream is a holy temple of Siva. Here he stopped for the three months.

Then he spent three days at Banatirtha, the source of the Tamraparni, on the Western Ghats, where nature is at its loveliest. Then, pressured by the people of Tirunelveli town, he spent Navaratri there. Then he proceeded to Travancore and after a three-day stay at Kanyakumari, where he worshipped at the shrine of the Goddess, he arrived at Trivandrum, the capital, on the full- moon of Margasirsha.

The Maharaja in whose dominions lay the sacred birthplace of the great master, was noted for his simplicity and piety. He paid a visit one day for *pada puja*, laying Rs.10,000 at the Swami's feet. He paid three or four visits to the Swami at his quarters and was greatly edified by the Swami's discourses. The Maharaja said that he had already issued orders to the high officials of the State to do whatever was necessary for the

successful completion of the great undertaking at Kalady, placed another sum of Rs.10,000 as contribution and presented the *matha* with a big elephant.

Consecration at Kalady

The day fixed for the consecration of the shrines at Kalady was Magha Sukla 12 of Saumya (February 1910). Some of the influential gentlemen of Kallidaikurichi, the largest agrahara in Tirunelveli district, had come with 300 laborers, who worked day and night to clear the site, to lay smooth paths and put everything in order.

Two shrines, compact, strong and beautiful, were constructed, facing south, to the north of the Purna; that for Sharadamba was near the spot which, according to the local tradition, was the place where the great master Sankara's mother was cremated; and the shrine for Sankara, a little further to the west.

Kalady was a very small village in an isolated corner of the State of Travancore; and so, for the accommodation of the thousands of visitors to the shrine who were expected at the time of the consecration, 600 temporary lodgings were put up in rows, with paths in between.

The Swami camped at Perumbavur, a village eight km from Kalady. Here came Ramachandra Aiyar and Srikantha Sastri to report that the arrangements were all complete. In the course of the description, Sastri stated that near the shrine of Sharadamba, there was an Asoka tree, under

which, it was stated, mother had been cremated; that people from the surrounding parts used to circumambulate the tree and make prostrations and light lamps there at night.

When he heard this, the Swami was ecstatic; his eyes brimmed with tears; his body was tremulous. After a while, he came to himself and said that on the first night of his arrival at Perumbavur, an elderly widow, dressed in white, appeared before him in a dream and when questioned she stated that she was living under a tree at Kalady and with a winning smile added that she now appeared before him to bid him welcome to the place.

The Swami, not being able to make out what this meant, was disturbed by the thought that the vision of a widow in a dream was generally understood to prognosticate some evil. Now the description given by the agent made him see things in the true light. It must be the great master's mother who appeared in his dream to offer him welcome in the great work he had undertaken at Kalady.

The Swami came to Kalady 10 days before the date fixed for the consecration. The two *murtis* of Sharadamba and Sankara, which had been ordered to be executed by skilful sculptors at Karaikudi, came in time. A spacious shed was erected between the two shrines, for the sacrificial hall where the ceremonies were to be conducted; *ritviks*, the priests for officiating at the ceremonials, were chosen from the learned pandits

of Mysore and the Sringeri matha and they also came in time.

The Swami came to the sacrificial hall a week before the date of consecration, caused the ceremony of vow-taking to be performed by the chosen priests, and left for his quarters after giving instructions to the priests; the preliminary ceremonies, including the sanctification of the *murtis*, were gone through in regular course, as laid down in the Sastras; the *murtis* were installed on Magha Sukla, 12, the date originally fixed. The Swami then came to the shrines and by his own magnetic adorations infused the *murtis* with the 64 essences which constitute their life.

Honours Conferred

The crowd of devotees must have numbered 50,000 on a rough estimate. At four in the evening the Swami gave a discourse on *vaidika* dharma, the life of the great master Sankara and our duty to the great teacher.

V. P. Madhava Rao, former Dewan of Travancore and then Dewan of Mysore; P. Rajagopalachariar, Dewan of Travancore; and H. V. Nanjundayya, Member of Council, Mysore, were present on this occasion. The learned and cultured Swami of Sivaganga *matha*, a branch of the Sringeri Peetham, was also there. Others included Ramachandra Aiyar, who was conferred the title of *Guru-bhakta-kesari*, and Sri T. K. Balasubrahmanya Aiyar of the Sri Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam, who had spent a fortune on the *deluxe* edition of Sankara's works, had 10 volumes ready

on this occasion and placed them before the Swami.

The Swami stayed at Kalady for three months, spending his mornings in offering special prayers in the new shrines and giving discourses on dharma in the evenings. The Maharaja of Cochin came to Kalady during this period and paid his respects to the Swami and his adorations at the new shrines. He was a very great Sanskrit scholar, particularly in logic and Vedanta.

A school for advanced studies in Sanskrit was started; the atmosphere of the place breathed peace, fervour and culture, under the selfless devotion of learned disputations with the pandits of the *matha*; the Swami presided with glee and electrified the audience with his learned discussions and illuminating discourses. Then the Maharaja of Mysore came to Kalady with a select retinue and stayed as the Swami's guest for a couple of days and was honoured with the title of *Dharma-mula*.

At the end of three months, the Swami placed the Kalady shrines and all in charge of A. Ramachandra Aiyar and left for Sringeri.

The Swami returned via the State of Cochin. After passing through Coimbatore, Namakkal and other places, he came to Ayyampalayam, where a *murti* of Sankara, was installed in the big hall of the shrine under the Swami's auspices.

Now came the Swami's 51st birthday. With the Swami's permission, a *murti* of the Swami also

was installed on the right side of that of Sankara, by N. Srikantha Sastri. At the close of the *Chaturmasya*, the Swami honoured Tandavaraya Pillai with the title of *Bhakta-ratna* and left for Mysore.

In Bangalore, the matha, whose foundation had been laid in 190; was now complete and was a grand and imposing structure. On February 3, 1911, the Swami sent for the Mysore Maharaja and a few high officials and told them that his idea in building the *matha* was to make it a centre of advanced Sanskrit studies and establish a Sanskrit college under the title of Bharatiya Girvana Prauda Vidya Abhivardhani, where in course of time provision could be made for boarding and educating free 50 advanced students in *Purva* and *Uttara Mimamsa* and that a start would be soon made with eight advanced students and two teacher *Pandits*.

V. P. Madhava Rao, the Dewan, had built a row of seven houses for the students.

The Swami reached Sringeri on Phalguna, dark 2 (Krishna dvitiya), in the year Sadharana (March 1911), went to the shrine of Sharadamba and paid his adorations to the deity. The Swami soon left Nrisimhavana and resumed his quiet, meditative life there.

Bhakti-sudha-tarangini

His Holiness Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Nrisimha Bharati was not only a realised soul and a highly venerated saint, but also a profound scholar who took a keen interest in scholastic

debates, philosophic exposition and devotional writing. Thanks to Sri T. K. Balasubrahmanyam, a sufficient number of his devotional compositions were compiled and published in 1913 under the title *Bhakti-sudha-tarangini*.

There are, on the whole, 126 hymns. Of these 89 are on 11 deities, 19 on Sri Sankaracharya and the other gurus, and the remaining 18 are benedictory and other hymns. Sri Sharada has 23 hymns, Siva 19 and Parvati-.Paramesvara and Devi 11 each.

The poems are composed in a variety of metres and pulsate with deep devotion. They are characterised by felicity of expression, lucidity of thought and mellifluity of diction, strongly reminiscent of the compositions of Sri Sankaracharya. The *Bhujangaprayata* hymns on Vinayaka and Subrahmanya, and the *Panyavalambana* and *Padvalambana* hymns on Sharada and Sankaracharya recall to mind, in metres and phrase, similar works of Sri Sankara and do not suffer by comparison.

Simple words and short compounds are chosen and the syntax is rarely involved. Long compounds, resounding words and ornamental flourishes are avoided. The effect is achieved by the sincerity of feeling and the logic of the composition. They do not give the impression of being customary exercises in conventional genre but the natural expression of authentic experiences. They tell us as much about the devotee as about the deity.

The mode of presentation also shows variety. Description, narration, address, argument, prayer, complaint, confession—all are resorted to. Which is not considered to be out of tune with reverence; even a quiz can contribute. There are beautiful word-pictures which are concrete in detail and evocative in diction and imagery. Delightful flights of fancy are not infrequent.

Of all the hymns, the greatest and the most moving are those written on Goddess Sharada, Acharya Sankara and his guru, Sri Nrisimha Bharati. In these, His Holiness appears to be not writing on material objects or absent entities but addressing living persons.

The hymns on Sri Sankaracharya, Sri Vidyatirtha, Sri Sadasiva Brahmendra and Sri Nrisimha Bharati depict the character of the ideal guru, who is a man of God and a guide to man.

The Final days

The great master, Sankara's anniversary falls on Vaisakha, bright 5 (Sukla Panchami). The Swami deputed Rama Sastri, Dharmadhikari, to Bangalore to open the proposed Sanskrit college on that auspicious day. The college was opened under the presidency of P. N. Krishnamurti, V. P. Madhava Rao and a few high officials of the State being present.

The college opened with eight students for advanced studies in *Purva* and *Uttara Mimamsas*; each student was given a monthly stipend and free quarters. Two teachers selected by the Swami from

the pandits of the matha were appointed as professors; the course of studies was eight years.

Out of the first batch of students, seven came out successful in the final examination held in 1919 and were awarded the title of *pandita-pravara* and received shawls and gold chains and certificates in recognition of their proficiency. Three of them were entertained as pandits of the Sringeri *matha*; one as professor in the Sanskrit College, Mylapore (Chennai); one as professor in the Sanskrit school at Puducode (now in Kerala), established by the late Justice P. R. Sundara Aiyar; one as pandit in the Government Library, Mysore; and another as a teacher in a Sanskrit Pathasala, established at Chittur, Cochin State, by Dharmasila Krishna Aiyar.

Ever since his return after the Kalady tour the Swami was suffering from bronchial trouble during winter. On the full moon of Phalguna of Virodhikrit (February 1912), the Swami, as usual, had a bath in the Tunga. The cold plunge brought on a rheumatic attack and made him unable to walk straight. There were other things also to disturb his mind. The heterodox habits of life, against which he had been fighting outside, now invaded the very *agrahara* of Sringeri.

Chosen Successor

One thing remained to be done; a successor to the Sringeri Peetham had to be appointed before he could quit the world. For several years past he had his eye on a promising youth of Sringeri. The sole surviving son out of 13 children

of his parents, the boy was very intelligent and well-behaved; he had passed out of the elementary school and was a student of the government English school established at Sringeri. The boy was admitted to the Sanskrit school at Sringeri, which was maintained by the *matha*.

The Swami used to visit the school once a year and himself examine the boys and encourage the deserving among them. On one such occasion, the Swami marked the smartness, the prompt replies and the modest deportment of this lad, gave him presents and asked the Agent to monitor him and have him trained in Logic and other higher Sanskrit studies. The boy's name was Narasimha.

All this was before the Swami started on his Kalady tour. After his return to Sringeri he examined the youth and found that he had made great progress in his *Tarka* studies, that he was scrupulously observing the disciplines of Brahmacharya—the early ablutions and prayers and the daily homage to the sanctified fire. The Swami now sent the youth to the *matha* college at Bangalore-- *Girvana Prauda Vidya Abhivardhini* to study *Purva Mimamsa*, as a prelude to the study of Vedanta.

Now resolved to nominate a successor to the Peetham, the Swami deputed Dharmadhikari Rama Sastri to have an interview with the Maharaja of Mysore and bring Narasimha Sastri, studying at Bangalore, to the notice of His Highness in view of his nomination.

On Chaitra Shukla, the Swami, while seated in meditation after his morning bath, appeared to have fallen into a trance; the attendants were alarmed and rushed in haste to the Agent who was engaged in *puja*. The Swami had come out from the trance and said to the Agent, "They have unnecessarily disturbed you. I was merely plunged in the ecstatic bliss of Self-realisation."

But he had no relish for food the whole day and remained fasting. Next morning he had his bath as usual at six and seated in meditation till nine. Then came a violent fit of coughing; the Swami was still seated coughing, with his head bent down and at 11.30 a.m. his soul merged into the Supreme Light, leaving behind the bright smile alone which, as ever before, was irradiating his face. It was Chaitra Shukla 2, in the year Paritapi (March 1912).

The Swami had given orders that his body should be interred in his favourite retreat, Nrisimhavana, and that the Narmada *linga* which he had been worshipping every day before he retired for the night should be installed over the spot. This was accordingly done.

The Jagadguru: A Profile

An extraordinary spiritual leader, Jagadguru Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Nrisimha Bharati Swami had the right mix of humanity and intellect, thus making him one of the all-time great yogis.

- The Swamiji's erudition covered not only the traditional areas, such as *tarka* and *Vedanta*, but even somewhat unrelated

ones, such as *vaidya* and *nadi sastras*. Among epics, his favourite was the Ramayana which he studied with great involvement.

- His command over poetry, both in reciting *slokas* of ancient poets and composing new ones, often extempore, was truly extraordinary.
- His interpretative and dialectic skills were impressive, whether he was speaking to the novice or the scholar. As a conversationalist and debater, his presence of mind added beauty to his articulation.
- The Jagadguru's unshakeable faith in the traditional values of Hinduism coexisted with a rather unusually forward looking open mindedness, while dealing with people of different religious, geographic, linguistic or cultural persuasions.

- When it came to performing his duties, he was as meticulous as a modern day technocrat-cum-manager. He paid attention to the minutest detail of the job on hand, whether it was the performing of a *shodasopachara puja* (worship with 16 different services) to a series of *murtis* of the Hindu pantheon, or the offerings of *naiveyda* (eatables, including cooked items) to placate the gods, or any other religious or administrative matter that had to be seen through.
- The Swami had a truly simple living style. His wants were few and elementary, so he missed nothing. With such simple openness of manner he was easily the most accessible of all religious heads, even to the ordinary man on the street.

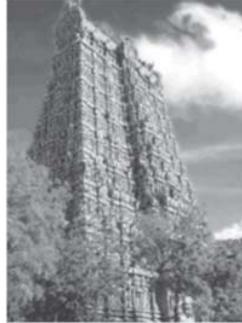
*Reproduced from
"Sages of Sringeri – Pages 131-167;
A Tattvaloka Publication, May 2005.*

Sringeri Vidya Bharati Foundation (SVBF) USA Inc.

RD 8 Box 8116, Cays Road, Stroudsburg, PA 18360 1-800-45HINDU/570-629-7881

Reg. Off. 5 Yates Drive, East Brunswick, NJ 08816 (732) 238 1119 www.svbf.org

ॐ I want to be a Temple Builder ॐ



YES !! I/We want to be a part of building Sri Sharada Temple

.....

(Sponsors can be Individual(s)/Group(s)/Corporation(s)/Organization(s)/other(s))

Item(s) _____

(See table in the reverse side for items still available to sponsor as of July 2005)

Total Amount: \$ _____

Paid as: Lump Sum Monthly Payment \$ _____ (max. 3 y, if >20K; other wise, 2 y)

I /We Can't decide yet, but want to make a general contribution

Amount: \$ _____

Paid as: Lump Sum Monthly Payment \$ _____ (max. 3 y, if >20K; other wise, 2 y)

Signature: _____

Name: _____

(First) _____ (Last) _____

Address : _____

(#, Street, City, State, Zip Code)

Phone No. _____ Email _____ Fax: _____

* Make check payable to: SVBF, and mail to: SVBF, 5 Yates Drive, East Brunswick, NJ 08816

Item	Description	Amount	# of Sponsors	Status	Available
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Square Foot of Temple Space	\$ 501.00	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Raja Gopuram	\$ 150,000.00	1	Sponsored	0
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Shri Sharadamba Vimanam	\$ 75,000.00	1	Sponsored	0
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Shri Chandramouleeswara Vimanam	\$ 75,000.00	1&	Sponsored	0
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Shri Adi Sankara Vimanam	\$ 75,000.00	1&	Sponsored	0
6	<input type="checkbox"/> Shri Sharadamba Sanctum	\$ 50,000.00	1&	Sponsored	0
7	<input type="checkbox"/> Shri Chandramouleeswara Sanctum	\$ 50,000.00	1	Sponsored	0
8	<input type="checkbox"/> Shri Adi Sankara Sanctum	\$ 50,000.00	1	Sponsored	0
9	<input type="checkbox"/> Shri Mahaganapati Sanctum	\$ 25,000.00	1	Sponsored	0
10	<input type="checkbox"/> Shri Ambika Sanctum	\$ 25,000.00	1	Sponsored	0
11	<input type="checkbox"/> Shri Subrahmanya Sanctum	\$ 25,000.00	1	Sponsored	0
12	<input type="checkbox"/> Shi Hanuman Sanctum	\$ 25,000.00	1	Sponsored	0
13	<input type="checkbox"/> Shri Krishna Sanctum	\$ 10,000.00	1	Sponsored	0
14	<input type="checkbox"/> Shri Navagraha Sanctum	\$ 25,000.00	1	Sponsored	0
15	<input type="checkbox"/> Shri Siva Sanctum - Northern Style	\$ 15,000.00	1		1 available
16	<input type="checkbox"/> Main Temple Hall	\$ 75,000.00	1		1 available
17	<input type="checkbox"/> Prakaram - any one wing	\$ 25,000.00	4	2 taken	2 available
18	<input type="checkbox"/> Annadanam * (Life sponsorship)	\$ 10,000.00		Multiple	
19	<input type="checkbox"/> Multipurpose Hall	\$ 100,000.00	1		1 available
20	<input type="checkbox"/> Library Room	\$ 30,000.00	1	Sponsored	0
21	<input type="checkbox"/> Bhojana Sala	\$ 100,000.00	1		available
22	<input type="checkbox"/> One Priest's quarters	\$ 100,000.00	4		4 available
23	<input type="checkbox"/> Great Grand Benefactorship	\$ 1,000,000.00	Multiple	One taken	More available
24	<input type="checkbox"/> Grand Benefactorship	\$ 500,000.00	Multiple		Multiple
25	<input type="checkbox"/> Grand Patronship	\$ 100,000.00	Multiple	One taken	More Available
26	<input type="checkbox"/> Patronship	\$ 50,000.00	Multiple	Two taken	More available
27	<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Kavacham for Ganapati	\$ 15,000.00	1		1 available
28	<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Kavacham for Subrahmanya	\$ 15,000.00	1		1 available
29	<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Kavacham for one Navagraha **	\$ 2,000.00	9	Sponsored	0
30	<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Kavacham for Siva	\$ 15,000.00	1		1 available
31	<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Snake Ornament for Siva	\$ 5,000.00	1	Sponsored	0
32	<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Kavacham for Ambika	\$ 15,000.00	1		1 available
33	<input type="checkbox"/> Dwajasthamba	\$ 5,000.00	1	Sponsored	0
34	<input type="checkbox"/> Gold Kalasa for main vimanams & raja gopuram	\$ 15,000.00	10		10 available
35	<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Rishabha Vahana for Siva	\$ 20,000.00	1		1 available
36	<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Hamsa Vahana for Sharadamba	\$ 20,000.00	1		1 available
37	<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Mooshika Vahana for Ganesha	\$ 20,000.00	1		1 available
38	<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Mayura Vahana for Subrahmanya	\$ 20,000.00	1		1 available
39	<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Simha Vahana for Sharadamba	\$ 20,000.00	1		1 available
40	<input type="checkbox"/> Any one Utsava vigraha (Specify Murti)**	\$ 5,000.00	8	Sponsored	0
41	<input type="checkbox"/> Swarna Ratha (golden chariot) for Sharadamba	\$ 200,000.00	1	Sponsored	0
42	<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Puja Vessels	\$ 15,000.00	1		1 available
43	<input type="checkbox"/> Furniture for Library Room	\$ 20,000.00	1		1 available
44	<input type="checkbox"/> 200 Chairs for Multipurpose Hall	\$ 20,000.00	1		1 available
45	<input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen Appliances for Bhojana Sala	\$ 20,000.00	1		1 available
46	<input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen/Bhojana Sala Furniture	\$ 20,000.00	1		1 available
47	<input type="checkbox"/> Office Furniture and computers	\$ 25,000.00	1		1 available
48	<input type="checkbox"/> Parking Lot	\$ 100,000.00	1		1 available
49	<input type="checkbox"/> Guest House	\$ 100,000.00	2	one taken	1 available
50	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape and Lighting	\$ 100,000.00	1		1 available
51	<input type="checkbox"/> Appliances for priest Quarters	\$ 12,000.00	4		4 available

* : Specify Day for Annadhanam;

** : Subrahmanya with Valli & Devasena, Hanuman, # (Note: S. Chityala); %: Navagraha Kavacha Mars, Mercury, Venus, Jupiter # (Note: S.Chityala);

& - Items already sponsored but can be released to other parties.