Maha Sivaratri Celebrated at Kadavul Temple
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Eight Swamis Meet in Conclave at Lord Siva's Feet on Most Sacred Night

Maha Sivaratri, Lord Siva's Great Night, fell on February 14th this year. Saivites observe this sacred night by fasting and then holding a devotional vigil until dawn in their home shrine room or in Siva's temples throughout the world - a vigil of prayers, chanting, pujas and worship. Our Maha Sivaratri vigil in Kadavul Hindu Temple was enhanced by the visit of Swami Atmananda, a Hindu monk and disciple of the renowned Swami Sivananda. Swami Atmananda is from Rishikesh in North India.

Swami called from Colorado toward the end of his annual vacation from his temple duties. The timing of his call was perfect, and he was spontaneously invited by Gurudeva. Master Subramuniya, to visit the various missions of the Church in Nevada, California and on the Kona Coast of the Big Island. Arriving at Sivashram on the Garden Island, he observed. "This is just like Rishikesh, a remote ashram filled with sadhus" and his days were given to being with his brothers in orange, to classes in Sanskrit and to philosophical discussions on the restoration of the Hindu dharma in the Western world in outlining a refutation to Christian propaganda against Hinduism. Swami Atmananda serves as the head pujari at the Mahaganapati Temple in Flushing, and as a token of their esteem and appreciation for his fine example the trip to Hawaii was paid for by the few Church families living in the immediate Flushing area.

The Temple's Sivalingam was placed in the center of the Golden Hall leading out from the main sanctum where Lord Kadavul Nataraja presides. The eight sanyasins in their kavi robes encircled the Lingam, chanting ceaselessly in unison, especially Swami Atmananda, who chanted the sacred Sri Rudram, a long Sanskrit hymn of praise to God Siva, 11 times over during the night. It was an electrifying sight, two pujas at once in fact, for three pujaris were also in attendance upon Lord Kadavul Nataraja and as the sanyasins below bathed the Sivalingam hour after hour with over 20 gallons of milk and with rosewater, sandal paste, yogurt, juice, etc., the pujaris in the sanctum above them would simultaneously bathe the image of

Nataraja with the same offerings. Sitting in the main hall, the devotees could look first at Siva's formless form - the Sivalingam - as shimmering cascades of milk, oil and water flowed over it without pause and then a moment later raise their eyes to the inner sanctum and see the embodied form of God - Lord Kadavul Nataraja - bathed from larger pots with the same offerings, a sight that could never be forgotten. Back and forth it went, first the Lingam, then Nataraja, first the Lingam, then Nataraja, first the milk, then the rosewater, and all the while Swami Atmananda's resonant voice echoing ancient Sanskrit verses mellifluously off every wall. It was simply indescribable to sit in Kadavul Hindu Temple that night.

We were honored also by two special Indian guests from Honolulu. Dr. K.S. Sripada Raju and Miss Jagadeswari. As a supreme blessing, Dr. Raju brought for Lord Siva a lead-sealed pot of Ganges water from India, and it was included in Lord Siva's abhishekam.

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