

[Gurudeva and Two Saiva Swamis Return From East](#)

Category : [June 1980](#)

Published by Anonymous on Jun. 02, 1980

Gurudeva and Two Saiva Swamis Return From East Pilgrimage to Japan, India, Sri Lanka and Malayasia Highlighted by Diksha on the Ganges

Gurudeva and two monastics returned to Sivashram on June first after a pilgrimage through Japan, India, Sri Lanka and Malaysia. This was the first visit to India for the two disciples, Muni Natarajan and Selva Tinnan. The purpose of their pilgrimage was to receive Sannyas Diksha, the tradition vows of Hindu monasticism. They left for Tokyo on May 5th. A day was spent at the famous Nikko Temple north of Tokyo. May 9th saw their arrival in New Delhi late at night. The following day they drove from there to the Ganges at Hardwar, where the ceremony was held. From Hardwar they drove upstream to Rishikesh where they visited Sivananda Ashram and talked with Swami Vishnu premananda who hosted them through the facilities. He also welcomed the two new young Swamis, Selva and Muni, into the great brotherhood of Sannyasins.

Their next stop was Agra and the Taj Mahal, and then Varanasi, the sacred city of Lord Siva. They reported that this was one of the high-points of their trip. At Varanasi they took a boat ride on the Ganges to view the ghats, and visited the Golden Temple of Lord Viswanath, an experience all said could never be forgotten.

They arrived a second time in Delhi on May 17, then flew to Madras the morning of the 18th then on to Trichy where a car was hired and the long drive to Palani Hills temple made. There they met K.R. Hariharan and his father. The two young swamis climbed the 697 steps to the temple for the Puja and festival parade that evening. Gurudeva had been invited to visit another Muruga Temple in Palani Town where he gave an inspired talk through loudspeakers to a crowd of about 200. He had an excellent translator and was very well received.

The following morning they attended the morning puja at Palani Temple together after walking around the base of the hill before dawn. It was a festival day and there were many thousands of devotees on every side. In spite of the huge crowd

Gurudeva and his two disciples received the great blessing of a seat on the floor just outside the Sanctum Sanctorum's silver entrance doors and were given garlands and sandal paste from the Deity afterwards. It was a very special day for them, they felt.

That afternoon they drove to Ooty, a popular hill resort town north of Palani. There they met with Dr. B. Natarajan, the renowned Indian economist. At Gurudeva's request, Dr. Natarajan has devoted much of his time in the last several years to translating classic Tamil scriptures into English. His first project was the complete English translation of the Tirumantiram, the foremost Tamil scripture on Saiva Siddhanta theology. This had been typeset at Gurudeva's ashram in Kauai and was now ready for final editing. Two complete galleys were presented to Dr. Natarajan.

From Mysore they drove to Bangalore and flew that night to Madras.

Swami Veerabhagu from Tiruchendur came to meet with Gurudeva early the next morning. Swami Veerabhagu had just been given an Ashram only 600 yards from the famous Tiruchendur Muruga Temple. The Ashram was founded by Sathru Sankara Moorthy and contains his samadhi or burial crypt. The ashram management recently offered it to the Swami for his activities. Later, Mr. N.K. Murthi, who is the regional business representative for Saiva Siddhanta Church in South India, joined the group. At 1:00 P.M. Mr. Nachiappan, owner of Kalakshetra Press in Madras which will be printing the English edition of the Tirumantiram by Dr. Natarajan, joined them as did Mr. Nellaiappan, Sales Manager for Tamil Nadu Handicrafts Corporation. They had a fine lunch meeting together and many positive plans were unfolded.

Gurudeva and Swami Natarajan were warmly greeted at the ashram of Swami Chinmayananda by a group of smiling faces. Swamiji's entrance was announced by the clop, clop, clop of his wooden sandals and a booming, "Om Om Om Hari Om Om Om Hari Om." Swamiji was radiant with energy, hands outstretched in greeting to Gurudeva. They shared a moment together, with the gentleness of a friendship which was now some twenty years old. He congratulated Gurudeva on his work: "Such a fine work - no, such a great work you are doing. Yes, a great work," Swami invited Gurudeva and his disciples to a large gathering being held that evening, which they accepted. Over 2000 people had come to hear the Swami speak. After the lecture, Gurudeva requested Swamiji to give his two young swamis advice. He

told them: "Before you realize the Self you are but a child crawling. After you have realized the Self you begin to walk. Then it starts. Realize the Self, young boy. Realize. Realize." "Always think of Siva in your heart. Don't think of flesh or mind. Don't even think of your thoughts. Think of Siva."

The following morning, the 24th, Gurudeva and the two young Swamis departed for Colombo where they met with Dr. S. Sanmugasundaran, editor and publisher of Sivaneri, and planned a drive north to the Jaffna peninsula. Dr. Sanmugasundaran had just spent several months supervising arrangements for the marriage of his daughter, Sundari to Easan Katri of Carmel, California, a long-time devotee of Gurudeva. They were married in April in Colombo. Easan will be returning to America with his bride in a few weeks. They were hosted to a newlyweds' dinner by Gurudeva, and they in turn hosted the pilgrims at their home in Colombo the following night.

From Colombo, Gurudeva, the two young swamis, Dr. Sanmugasundaran, and Easan set out in a hired van to drive north to Jaffna. They stopped overnight in Anuradhapura and arrived at Sri Subramuniya Ashram in Alaveddy just after noon on the 27th. They were met by all ten members of the Ashram's managing committee and a score of devotees and friends. The managing committee consists of: Mr. S. Arunasalam, President; Mr. V. Canaganavagam, Secretary; Mr. E. Nadesan, Treasurer; Mr. S. Ponnampalam; Mr. A. Visvanathan; Mr. V. Nalliah; Mr. K. Arulanandam; Mr. T. Ponnampalam; Mr. T. Navaratnam and Mr. E. Mayilvaganam. Gurudeva spoke to all present on the future of Sri Subramuniya Ashram, telling them it is dedicated to the children of the community. He called for the keys of the newly-acquired building and requested all the young boys present to come sit before him. Gurudeva then presented the keys to the Subramuniya Ashram to the youth, thus giving it to the next generation. The children in turn handed the keys to the President of the Ashram Committee, Mr. S. Arunasalam, signifying that the Committee will be managing the Ashram on behalf of the children and of all future generations of Saivites.

After a welcoming lunch Gurudeva spoke at length to individuals and groups in the downstairs hall until well after 8:00 P.M. The following morning was spent with visitors and at the Alaveddy Ganesha Temple, Nallur Temple and Paramaguru Siva Yogaswami's Samadhi in Columbutur. They visited the home of Tiru and Ma Navaratnam, long time devotees of Siva Yogaswami. Ma has translated many of Yogaswami's Natchintanai songs in her book on him, Testament of Truth. A short visit to see Markanduswami, a venerable octogenarian devotee of Paramaguru Siva Yogaswami living in perfect simplicity in an unadorned hut, ended their stay in

Jaffna. They drove back to Anuradhapura late that night and to Colombo the next day. From Colombo they flew to Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia. The evening of the 30th and part of the next day was spent with Mr. S.K.. Thiruvassagam, who has written often to the Church in Hawaii. Gurudeva thoroughly enjoyed his stay in Kuala Lumpur. It is a very lively country and the spirit of the Hindu youth in Malaysia is strong. In a nation half the size of California there are over 1,500 Hindu temples. On June 1st the three pilgrims flew without break the long route home to Kauai. They arrived unannounced by taxi at noon and had a great many stories to share from their lengthy diary. They described the trip overall as "magical, spontaneous and perfectly timed."

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