Yogaswami's World Tour
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RELIGION

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The 125th birth anniversary of Satguru Siva Yogaswami (1872-1964), the 161st Jagadacharya of the Nandinatha Sampradaya and satguru to the Tamil Hindus of war-torn Sri Lanka, was celebrated in grand fashion in Kauai, Hawaii, on May 29, 1997. The current preceptor of the lineage, Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami (publisher of Hinduism Today), performed the culminating puja of that event (see photo right) to a small, solid, bronze statue of Yogaswami, beautifully gilded in 23-carat Italian gold leaf. After this powerful puja, Subramuniyaswami inaugurated and blessed a world tour for the Yogaswami murti (icon). He sent the great sage on a mission tracing the diaspora of Sri Lankan Tamils throughout the world. That pilgrimage is now under way, and in February of 2001, the murti just arrived in Germany. Subramuniyaswami instructed that no plans or schedules be devised for the spiritual odyssey. Everything is to happen by inspiration in the moment, motivated and manifested by devotion of devotees along the way. And that's exactly what has happened for nearly three years, and will continue to

happen until Yogaswami finally comes to rest in his humble Sri Lankan hut--whenever that may be. So far, the tour has traversed half the globe, moving from Kauai, Hawaii, through Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver in Canada; then on to Maryland, New York and Los Angeles in the USA before crossing the Atlantic for Europe. Wonderful pujas (worship ceremonies) and cultural events have greeted the sage at every port of call.

Thambimuttoo Sivagnanam, a Tamil elder in Canada, enthusiastically reports that all of the local Sri Lankan Tamils rallied together as for a homecoming when Yogaswami traveled to the Hindu temples in Calgary and St. Albert, and from there on to the Maha Ganapati Temple in Edmonton. "Swami was paraded outside, the men carrying him on their shoulders, surrounded by the entire Hindu community singing bhajanas and throwing flowers all the way to the temple."

Loganathan Shivam, a Yoga-swami devotee who owns a prestigious art gallery and oriental artifacts store in Los Angeles, kept Yogaswami in an exquisite shrine attached to his boutique. "He helped me in my meditations, and touched the heart of many clients as well. Once a lady burst into tears at his sight. A young man sat by the shrine for two hours," Loganthan reports. One person was so galvanized in the presence

of Yogaswami that he called a popular TV station that eventually filmed and featured both the store and Yogaswami on national television.

Yatra or pilgrimage, was an important component of Yoga-swami's life. After his first samadhi, God realization, he circled on foot the thickly jungled island of Sri Lanka. As he grew older, he daily walked 10 to 20 miles to personally visit devotees. And in his last years, he organized formal yatras for devotees scattered around the island of Lanka to converge at Nallur Temple in the North. What better way to commemorate the greatness of this sage than through a world tour to his hundreds of thousands of devotees spread around the Earth?