Visions of Siva Dance In His Mind
Category : September 1990
Published by Anonymous on Sep. 01, 1990

# Visions of Siva Dance In His Mind

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Although I come from the northernmost part of India, which is thousands of miles away, I have always felt strongly attracted to the art and sculpture, music and temples of South India. In particular the great image of Siva Nataraja - Lord of the Cosmic Dance - has been a source of tremendous inspiration to me ever since my first visit to the South way back in the early fifties. Indeed, so powerful was this impact that about twenty years age I decided to build a Nataraja temple - the first in North India - within the complex of my family shrines in Jammu known as the Sri Raghunath Temple.

A few years later an inspiration came that I build an even more unique Nataraja temple, this time by placing the statue in a glass pyramid. Thus, for the first time in human history the two greatest symbols of the East - the Pyramid of combined in a single structure. For many years this thought was nurtured and meanwhile, apparently by chance, I acquired through the good offices of a friend, Mr. G.P. Birla, a magnificent seven-foot high image of Nataraja that was part of an exhibition of Tamil Nadu arts and culture.

Early in June 1985 I had occasion for the first time to visit Sivaya Subramuniyaswami at his beautiful ashram in Kauai, Hawaii, where I saw the Nataraja Temple that he has built there. It was after this visit that there was a fresh spurt of activity. Again through a mutual friend - Juliet Holister - founder of the Temple of Understanding, I got in touch with a talented young East Coast architect, Jonathan Islieb. At my instance he began designing the pyramid temple and within a few weeks has a model ready for us to see when we visited the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. The model itself was beautiful, and we were all greatly enthused. However, the problem regarding the location of the temple remained. For several years the matter appeared to be bogged down.

In the middle of last year I was appointed Indian Ambassador to the United States, and during my extensive travels in that country I happened to visit Swami Satchidananda's beautiful ashram in Yogaville, Virginia. When I mentioned the project to him, he immediately said that Lord Nataraja was his own Ishta Devata, chosen Deity, and that he would be delighted if the temple were to be located in his ashram. An auspicious location was agree upon and on March 10th, just five days before I left the USA, we performed the Bhoomi Puja ceremony at the site where the temple is now under construction.

Thus, in a series of apparent coincidences, which could be better described as synchronicities, this unique shrine is now taking shape. I look upon this as a very real and sacred manifestation of Lord Siva's grace and hope that when complete this will really become a center for the release of powerful spiritual vibrations. We have decided to call the hill Paschim Kailash - Kailash of the West - and the lake behind the Lotus Temple as Paschim Mansarovar - Mansarovar of the West. Thus another symbol of the all-pervasive divine power, so magnificently symbolized in the Nataraja, will, by His grace, shortly come into existence.

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