

# **SIVAGANGA MATH**

(SRINGERI SIVAGANGA MATH)

**A Brief Descriptive & Historical Sketch**

BY

*Gurubhaktaratnam*

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## FOREWORD

Sri K. R. Venkataraman has honoured me with a request for a brief Foreword for his brochure entitled 'Sivaganga Math' which he proposes to offer as Vyasa Puja 'kanike' to His Holiness the Jagadguru of the Math, a branch of the great Sankar Math of Sringeri.

As the distinguished author puts it, Sivaganga is situated within about 40 miles from Bangalore, at the foot of the picturesque and sacred hill so well described by him. The various interesting and inspiring places and historical events are exhaustively described and evoke respect for the holy place and the Math.

As a boy I had the good fortune of having *darsan* of the late Guru Sri Subrahmanya Abhinava Satchidananda Bharati. He was an inspiring personality, and during his time the Math and its resources vastly improved. Later there was retrogression which has been set right now, i. e., since the present Guru H. H. Sri Satchidananda Abhinava Subrahmanya Bharati, succeeded to the sacred Pitha. A good Sanskrit scholar, well versed in the religious, spiritual and cultural love, he is commanding the respect and devotion of the general public and has advanced the cause of the Math remarkably. This is clear from

the fact that his auspicious presence and blessings are coveted by the public for important functions, as narrated towards the end of the booklet.

An interesting fact may with advantage be mentioned here. His Holiness Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Swami, the late Jagadguru and one of the most eminent and respected Acharyas of the Sringeri Math, on his way back to Sringeri from a tour of South India in 1927- or it may be 1928 of which I am not sure-was camping at Sivaganga for a couple of days. One morning a staunch devotee of the Math, the late S. Parameswara Bhatt, Mirasdar of Siranhalli of Shimoga, came to me and suggested going for the Jagadguru's *darsan*. We motored at once to Sivaganga and had his *darsan*, His Holiness remarking smilingly, 'The lawyer and the client have come together'. In the afternoon in his talks His Holiness said that Sivaganga was a holy and sacred place of pilgrimage and people in these parts would be immensely benefited spiritually by constant sojourns there. These inspiring words are still fresh in my mind and show the importance and worth of the sacred place.

If the old Math, mantaps and the surroundings are renovated by some philanthropists like Sri Sivaswami whom the author mentions, it would greatly benefit the public.

32, Ranga Rao Road,  
Shankarapuram,  
Bangalore - 4,  
11 July 1969.

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## PREFACE

A place of scenic beauty, Sivaganga offers attractions to the tourist; its temples attract pilgrims and the celebrated Advaita math draws earnest seekers of spiritual knowledge. The history of such a place deserves to be written, however sketchy and meagre it may be.

The reader of these pages is likely to carry the impression that the story of the math is nothing more than an enumeration of acts of royal patronage consisting of land grants and issue of rahadaris. What lie beyond these grants deserves study. They represent the piety and sense of gratitude that the rulers entertained for the Acharyas of the math. In some cases the gratitude is for spiritual guidance. There was another factor. In the past the Acharyas exercised some sort of control over the morals of their flock and inflicted several kinds of admonition and punishment for moral and social lapses. This was known as the right of *achara vichara*. To the extent they helped in the proper maintenance of the social order, the rulers were grateful to them.

The Acharyas, being celebates, needed little for their personal comforts, and the grants made to them were in the nature of a trust for the propagation of religion, the maintenance of charities and the advancement of learning and culture,

Like many others in South India, the Sivaganga math flourished in the midst of others professing different creeds. Their rivalries were exhibited more on the intellectual and academic plane in the form of polemics, not often free from bitter sarcasm; but on the social level, there seldom was any cantankerous rivalry, and they united in fostering the simple faith and morality of the people. Considerations such as these influenced the rulers to foster the maths. In the case of the Sivaganga math the benefactors were Karnataka chiefs, Maratha princes, Moghul and other Muslim administrators and the representatives of the English East India Company.

In the face of the challenges of the present times, the Sivaganga math, like its parent math at Sringeri, stands as sentinel to guard the tradition of Faith that, from the days it was adumbrated by the Upanishadic sages and other seers, has preserved the vigour and splendour of the religion. By no means an obscurantist, the Acharya helps the disciples to face life today without violently drifting away from the traditional moorings of Faith. In this difficult and delicate task he has before him the glorious example of Adi Samkara, the great harmonizer and purifier.

Modern conditions of life and society have not dimmed the influence of the math over thousands of people who are helped to meet life's problems with a certain amount of devotion, selflessness and discipline. This is something which is in the nature of an asset to any State or community, on whom it is incumbent

to preserve and foster the rights and privileges of the math.

I deem it a blessing to be able to offer this book as a homage of respect to the adorable Sage who now presides over the math. I shall feel rewarded if the book will induce astikas to approach the Acharya in large numbers and profit by his ministrations and benediction.

I was much encouraged and flattered by a letter that I received from Rajamantrapravina A. V. Ramanathan, formerly First Member of Council in Mysore and sometime Diwan of Bharatpur, saying that 'it (this book) is most comprehensive and beautifully written and is a masterpiece'. Equally valuable is the brief Foreword contributed by Rajadharmaprasakta A. R. Nagesvara Iyer. The sentiments of reverence and devotion to the Acharyas that he has expressed add to the value of the Foreword.

To Gurusevaparayana S. G. Narasimhaiya, my esteem for whom has grown from long years of friendship and common quest for *Guruseva*, and to Sri B. Subba Rao, the ever affable and obliging Agent of the math, my sincere thanks are due for all the help received.

As is characteristic of them, the authorities of the Sri Vani Vilas Syndicate Press have brought out this book in a spirit of service.

Madras, }  
15-July 1969. }

*K. R. Venkataraman.*



**SRI SARADA ( Sivaganga )**



His Holiness the Mahasvamigal performing puja

## SIVAGANGA

Sivaganga is 34 miles northwest of Bangalore. A short road, which takes off from the trunk road a few miles south of Tumkur, leads to the village. The nearest railway station, Dobbspet, on the Bangalore-Poona main line is 4 miles from the village, and Nidavanda is  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles.

A landmark for miles around is the rock overlooking the village. It is an outcrop amidst the surrounding rugged plains and rises above them to a height of 1,600 feet. Its summit is 4,600 feet above mean sea level. It strikes one as something mysterious; viewed from the north it appears like a huge Sivalingam, from the east like a bull, from the south like a huge serpent and from the west like a colossal image of Ganapati. The presence of several springs and ponds and large caverns to house shrines of considerable dimensions adds to the awesome

mystery of the place, and legends, later collected in a *sthalapurana*, grew round it. In Puranic literature the hill is named *Kakudgiri* (*Kakud*=the hump of a bull).

Sri Adi-Samkaracharya established two of his four pithas, those at Dwaraka and at Puri, on the seashore; the third on the Himalayas on the banks of the Alakananda, and the fourth at Sringeri on the banks of the Tunga on the Sahyadri range (the Western Ghats). The vast expanse of the sea, hills pointing towards the heavens, and rivers meandering among scenes of sylvan beauty are intimations to Immortality. And rightly did a successor of Sri Samkara on the Sringeri pontifical line choose Sivaganga to establish a branch math, which is now the Sringeri-Sivaganga math ministering to the spiritual needs of thousands of devotees for now more than three and a half centuries. In Sivaganga, as in the four centres of Sri Samkara's great monastic institutions, a beneficent nature lavishes its gifts of beauty and peace which fill our souls with joy and inner peace.

The place is auspicious (*Sivam*) and richly endowed with purifying springs (*Ganga*), and rightly therefore it is called Sivaganga, and the presiding deity Gangadharesvara. The Goddess radiates a golden lustre illumining the recesses of the heart and dispelling the darkness of ignorance and sin; hence she is Svarna-Ambika — 'the Mother of the golden hue',

## THE VILLAGE AND ITS TEMPLES

At the entrance to the village is a gateway surmounted by a lofty tower. The principal temple in the village is the Santesvara temple named after Santala Devi, a versatile queen of the Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana. Even after her husband's conversion by Sri Ramanuja to the Vaishnava faith, Santala continued to be a Jain, but assisted the king in building temples to Vishnu and in the promotion of his charities to Brahmins and learned men. Praised as the supporter of the four faiths, Saiva, Vaishnava, Bauddha and Jaina, she died in Sivaganga in 1131 and the grateful Saivas of the place named the temple after her.<sup>1</sup> In front of the temple is a pillar provided with bells. It is believed that formerly there were sixty-four Lingayat maths in Sivaganga, and to the west of the Santesvara temple are the

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1. *E. C. Sravanabelgola* 53; *M. A. R.* 1915 para 20.

remains of one of them, known as the Mahantina math. One of the pillars in the math has a portrait sculpture of Kempe Gauda. The importance of this village as a centre of the Lingayat cult for several centuries will be apparent from the fact that 12,000 Lingayat jangamas gathered here during the reign of the Kalachuri Bijjala (12th century). Kumbhisvara is another temple in the village.

Approaching the hill one goes up a well preserved flight of steps. A colossal Ganapati carved out of a boulder, then a Nandi mantapa, and to its right the shrine of Padekal Virabhadra, so called because of its situation at the base of the flight of steps, come into view. Then appears a Subrahmanya shrine. From here the passage of steps branches into two, and that to the left leads to the summit. On the way are the huge bull (emmebasava), the statue of Ganji Virabhadra, a hall known as Kempe Gauda's hajara, Gare Basavanna's gate, so called because of the figure of the bull in mortar over it, another nandi, a well called Kanvatirtha dug in 1652 when Shaji, father of Sivaji was leading the Maratha troops in an invasion of the South Karnataka country, and then a steep ascent leading to a Nandi put up in 1388; and finally the summit is reached. Here is a shrine to Virabhadra, and to the north of it are two pillars, one of them a dipastambha with bells suspended to iron hooks, put up in the time of Hoysala Narasimha (12th century). The view from here of the countryside all around is fascinating, with a panorama of hillocks, cultivated fields, groves and reservoirs and

hamlets thrown in at short distances. On top of this tor is a cup-like depression, and here a wonderful phenomenon occurs on the day when the sun enters the sign of Capricorn in January. The day may be clear, but at the particular moment of the sun's entry, a cloud from somewhere hovers over the depression which in a trice is filled with clear cool water, which is considered as holy as Ganga water.

The other passage leads to the main temple complex. Two large caverns have been turned into temples, one to Siva and the other to the principal Goddess, each containing the principal shrine, halls and circumambulatory passages. The Siva temple faces east and both the entrances to it are surmounted by gopuras. That in the east is of the Hoysala period and the other, in the north, of the Vijayanagar period. Entering from the east, two small shrines come into view, and to their west is the Girija-Kalyana mantapa. The navaranga is supported by carved pillars. On the walls and on the pillars are sculptures in relief, Saivite and Vaishnavite deities including the Saptamatrika group, and two others representing probably Kempe Gauda and his queen. Within the hall are some mantapas containing sculptures, one of which is the nandi mantapa.

The navaranga leads in the South to the cave which contains the principal shrine. Over the entrance and on the sides are sculptures in relief or free standing — including dvarapalakas, and princely votaries, representing perhaps Kempe Gauda and his family. The sukhanasi leads to the interior of the

cell which enshrines the principal Linga called Gangadharesvara.

A small chamber to the east is believed to have served as a treasury for Kempe Gauda, and to the north is the cave enshrining Parvati. This shrine has a large collection of sculptures—both in stone and in metal, including Ganesa in different poses, dancing and seated, Siva in the forms of Tandavesvara, Chandrasekhara, Somaskanda, Kalyanasundara, Uma-mahesvara, Bhairava and Virabhadra, Shanmukha, Durga, the Saptamatrikas, Chandesvara, Narayana and Surya. The portrait sculptures represent Kempe Gauda and his brothers, Uligada Basavayya and Kempe Somanna. The principal utsava murti of Gangadharesvara has two consorts—Parvati and Ganga,—flanking him. There are several inscribed bells that, when rung, add to the solemnity of the place.

The principal deity within the cavern may claim considerable antiquity, but the temple structure belongs to the Hoysala period and the presence of several Hoysala inscriptions attests to this conclusion. An inscription<sup>2</sup> of Vishnu Samanta, a feudatory of king Vishnuvardhana, mentions that he built a fine Siva temple on the Sivaganga hill. This obviously refers to the Gangadharesvara temple. The linga of Gangadharesvara is very holy and a strange phenomenon is observed here; the ghee that is smeared over the linga turns into butter which is collected for its medical properties.

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2. E. C. 9. Nelamangala 84; M. A. R. 1915 para 18.

To the north of the Gangadhariesvara cavern is a smaller one in which is enshrined Honna Devi (Kannada from Svarnambika). There is a front hall and a doorway from it opens into the shrine. The image of the Devi, set on a pedestal is about 5 feet high with eight hands, in six of which she holds a bell, conch, chakra, kapala, battle-axe and sword. One other hand is in the chinmudra and the eighth is svargahasta. She is represented as trampling over the asura Raktabhija. The Devi's countenance is awe-inspiring and Her terrific mien covers a promise of grace to the devotee. To Her left on a niche stands a Bhairavi, called Kamakshi, a two-armed sculpture holding a sword in the right hand and kapala (skull) in the left and wearing an *yajnopavita* of skulls, and to Her right a niche contains two metal images of Honnadevi, one old and strikingly beautiful and the other modern. In another cave there is another Bhairavi.

The demon Raktabhija is so called because from every drop of his blood shed on the ground, another Raktabhija would issue. The Devi sucked up his blood while wounding him and then killed him. For every wave of thought which is controlled, the mind of man creates numerous other waves of thought and this flow can be stopped only through the grace of the Devi, who endows man with the weapon of Discrimination and Vairagya. The Devi's encounter with Raktabhija and slaying him is an allegorical representation of the Divine energy in man which controls the mind and consequently all the external

activities of the senses which are under the control of the mind and turns them inward towards the contemplation of the Atman.

The sanctity of Honnadevi is enhanced by the Sri Chakra which Sri Adi Samkaracharya is said to have installed behind the image.

A little to the west of the Honna Devi shrine is the large pool called Pātāla Ganga full of deliciously cool water, and near it is an image of Virabhadra in relief.

The Devi attended by Bhairavis, an Yantra, a Bhairava and a sanctified pool, all these complete the requirements of Tantrik worship, which must have been prevalent among a section of the people here in the past.

The melgavi (north cave) matha on the northern slope is an old Lingayat institution, the gurus of which trace descent from Rudramuni a son of Renukacharya, one of the five Vira Saiva Acharyas — all founders of the cult. There is a sculpture representing him.

The Kelaganagavi (south cave) math is a branch of the Parvata math. It is close to the Pātāla Ganga.

The other sacred pools on the hill include the Chakratirtha to the east of Kempe Gauda's hajara, the Kapila tirtha, high up on the hill, the Kadamba tirtha on the western slope, the Maudgalya tirtha in the south, Parasara tirtha in the east, the Maitra tirtha at the eastern foot of the hill, and the Ganga

tirtha in a rock cleft on the western slope. The Dasarajaiya pond was dug in the reign of Chikka Deva Raja Wadeyar, and adjoining it are two footprints worshipped as those of Siva and Honna Devi. Of special interest is the Samkaracharya (or Kamandala) tirtha, which is resorted to for ablutions by ascetics. Several Sringeri Acharyas, while on a visit to Sivaganga, are said to have sat for meditation near this tirtha which is only a streak of water from the drippings from the rock. The Samkara guha is a fairly big sized cave with a small door opening into another but smaller cave which contains footprints revered as those of Samkara.

A little before the approach to the foot of the steps leading up the hill, there is a stone structure within the village which is the old matha of the Sivaganga Svamis, built early in the 18th century. It contains several sculptures including Prasanna Gangadharesvara, Parvati, Ganapati and Vitthala standing with two hands akimbo and in the others, holding the Sankha and Chakra. The tank in this math, which is called Agastya Tirtha, with a cloistered verandah running around, is divided into 108 cells each containing a Sivalinga. The principal linga represents Prasanna Nanjundesvara. There are also the images of Parvati and Nandi. Agastyesvara, the presiding deity, has a separate shrine. The steps are adorned with friezes depicting animals, reptiles and birds.

Outside the village is the new matha, in front of which, at a distance, is a large tank, called Kamala

of Kalyani Tirtha. The stone parapet has friezes illustrating incidents from the Rama and Krishna cycles. The figure of Rishyasringa, deserves special attention.

The new matha is a fine two-storeyed building constructed in 1910. The central hall is the puja hall which can accommodate a large gathering of disciples. The front rooms are the guest room and the office room. The Acharya lives on the first floor. Adjoining it is the temple of Sri Sarada which was consecrated in 1910 by Sri Subrahmanya Abhinava Satchidananda Bharati Svami. The *murti* of Sri Sarada which is of shining marble is very charming. Repairs were made to the shrine, and it was reconsecrated on January 26, 1964 by the performance of *Kumbhabhishekam* by the present Acharya. Between the math and the Sarada temple, the Acharya has built a small shrine for Sri Adi Samkara, and the installation was made on the same day. His Holiness Sri Abhinava Vidya Tirtha Svami of Sringeri sent a *Siva Panchakshari Yantra* in silver for the *murti* of Sri Adi Samkara. The *Kumbhabhishekam* was a great event when thousands of devotees gathered. The officials of the Mysore Government rendered all possible help. Special honours were sent from Sringeri, and numerous offerings were received from far and near. His Holiness entertained the guests lavishly and everyone received His blessings. To mark the occasion, the math issued a souvenir.

Recently His Holiness the present Acharya realised in a psychical vision the presence, in the

vicinity of the math, of the Divine Sakti of Sri Subrahmanya, and in one of His walks, in a trance as it were, He discovered on the rock face of a hillock closeby, the outline in fresco of a huge naga the symbol of Sri Subrahmanya, and a pair of foot-prints near it. Here has grown a shrine which attracts pilgrims, and the Jagadgurus of Sringeri and Dwaraka also visited it. The vimanam is shortly to be provided with a superstructure, which a devotee, Sri Sivasvami, is arranging to put up. He is providing the shrine with the murtis of Velayudhapani Balasubrahmanya and Dakshinamurti and also the appropriate utsava murtis. All these add to the high sanctity of Sivaganga.

## THE MATH-ITS HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

Raja Wadeyar, who ascended the throne of Mysore in 1578, requested Sri Abhinava Narasimha Bharati, the twenty fourth pontiff of the Sringeri Sarada pitha, to establish a matha within his dominions, as it was rather difficult for him and his subjects to benefit by the spiritual ministrations of the Guru, whose matha was situated in the kingdom of Keladi, the ruler of which was none too friendly with the growing kingdom of Mysore. The Acharya deputed one of his disciples, Sri Samkara Bharati, to establish the new branch math. The ideal location of Sivaganga at the foot of a picturesque hill, with its caves, temples and natural springs surrounded by groves, must have influenced the choice of the place for the site of the new math. Sri Samkara Bharati found it a suitable place for a life of tapasya.

Ordained in 1615, *Sri Samkara Bharati* who had toured extensively in North and South India was an eminent scholar<sup>1</sup>. The Raja gave every help to the Svami to establish the new math. Dalavai Kumara Appaji bestowed on the math the village of Varadanayakanahalli as inam. The Svami passed away in 1656.

*Sri Vidya Samkara Bharati* presided over the math till 1692, and after him reigned *Sri Gangadhara Bharati*, familiarly known as *Omkaresvara svami*, who reigned till 1739. The inam village of Varadanayakanahalli was made a *sarvamanyam* village in the enjoyment of the math. In the course of his Chitaldurg and Srirangapatnam campaigns, Peshwa Baji Rao happened to camp at Sivaganga, where his soldiers molested the inhabitants of the village. A tapasvi and siddha (adept) of a high order, Sri Omkaresvara dipped into a tank and went into meditation. The effect was miraculous; the army to a man suffered from pain. The Peshwa approached the Svami and prayed for pardon, and his men recovered from the pain. The Peshwa gave the Svami a *rahadari* (1727), to travel in his dominions in comfort and safety and well attended. The Svami started the construction of a commodious math (now known as the old math) which was completed by his successor.

*Sri Abhinava Gangadhara Bharati*, who succeeded Sri Omkaresvara, was in the gaddi from 1738 to 1784. Krishna Raja Wadeyar II gave a grant of eleven

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1. One of his grhasta disciples is mentioned in a grant (Mac, Mss. Madras Oriental Mss. Library. S. No. 1505.)

villages. Murari Rao, the Maratha general, who administered the South from Gutti, honoured the Svami with a *sanad* and *rahadari* (1772) affording protection during his travels. Haidar Ali gave several *rahadaris* between 1760 and 1781, and Gorpade of Hindupur gave the math a village. The Svami made several pilgrimages, one of which was to Tiruvannamalai. In 1783 he visited Srirangapatnam at the invitation of Tipu Sultan. There he fell ill and ordained Lakshmana Bhatta as his successor with the diksha name of Uddanda Gangadhara Bharati. Meanwhile the authorities of the math, who had stayed behind at Sivaganga, had consecrated Dharmavaram Krishna Sastri under the name of Samkara Bharati. Tipu who was aware of the consecration of Uddanda Gangadhara Bharati upheld his succession. The rival claimant was placed in charge of a small math near Srirangapatnam and later, on the death of his successor, the estates of this small math were handed over to the Sivaganga math.

*Sri Uddananda Gangadhara Bharati* (1784-1799) won the gratitude of Tipu by curing a favourite wife of his of her blindness. The Sultan gave *rahadaris* to the Svami enjoining on his officers to show the Svami every respect and provide him and his party with all comforts during his travels. The income from the estates of the Amaragiri math was transferred to the Sivaganga math.

The eight-year-reign (1799-1807) of *Sri Satchidananda Bharati* coincided with the first half of the Regency of Purniah who gave the Svami a

*rahadari* in 1804, but the Svami preferred a quiet life in his math. Purniah had arranged for special pujas by the Svami to God Gangadharesvara in Sivaganga, and expressed in a letter to the Svami his great satisfaction that, as a result of the pujas, there were timely and widespread rains. He expressed his great pleasure that the Svami had shown due honours and courtesies to Sri Satchidananda Bharati III, the Sringeri Jagadguru, when the latter visited Sivaganga. An interesting document, which is an order of the Regent dated 1806 (*Jyeshtha* of the year *Akshaya*), to Madhva Raya, Subhedar of Bangalore, relates to the relative claim of the Sringeri and Sivaganga maths for *agrapuja*,—precedence in the matter of offerings by disciples. The order was issued after consulting the Sringeri Jagadguru. It was decided that on all auspicious occasions such as the celebration of *upanayanam*, wedding etc. by disciples, a *tambula* (offering of betel, nuts, cash etc.) as a token of respect must first be offered to the Sringeri Jagadguru, and immediately after that to the Sivaganga Svami. Within the area claimed by him the Sivaganga Svami continued to exercise control over *achara vyavahara* (questions relating to socio-religious affairs), and *prayaschitta* or prescribing expiatory rites for undesirable acts of commission or omission. This is a very satisfactory arrangement as it upheld the primacy of the Sringeri math, while conferring on the Sivaganga math the privileges it wanted.<sup>2</sup> The Regent extended an invitation to the Svami to visit Srirangapatnam.

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2. See also *Sg. R 97*.

*Sri Abhinava Satchidananda Bharati* (1807-25). In 1811 Krishna Raja Wodeyar III was invested with ruling powers and the Regency was terminated. He invited the Sivaganga Svami to Srirangapatnam. A *rahadari* dated 1813 relates to the Svami's pilgrimage to Nanjangud where a consecration took place, and another in 1815 to a pilgrimage to Sri Narasimha Kshetra at Kadiri near Penukonda and then to Bellary etc. The temple at Narasimhakshetra and the choultry attached to it had been built by the Svami. The *rahadari* was an order to all officials to accord a respectful reception to the Svami with due honours, to supply provisions for his attendants and for feeding the elephants, camels, bullocks and horses and to arrange for the offerings in the puja and for the *bhiksha* of the Acharya. All these expenses were met from the palace funds. In 1815 the Maharaja sent the Svami an offering of a thousand rupees and costly shawls.

The next guru *Sri Gangadhara Bharati II* reigned for four years (1825-9), and his successor, *Sri Abhinavoddanda Gangadhara Bharati I* presided over the math from 1831-1847. On October 19, 1831, the Maharaja was deprived of ruling powers and retired on a pension. The British Commissioner continued the Maharaja's policy of fostering the maths. Sir Mark Cubbon gave the Svami a *rahadari* in 1839 to travel in the state. The Svami seems to have had troubles in the math. Three letters of his dated in 1841, 1843, and 1847<sup>3</sup> to Sri Narasimha Bharati of

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3. M. A. R. 1916. Para 169.

Sringeri express his keen frustration at his inability to manage the math on account of old age, his dissatisfaction with the behaviour of the disciple whom he had appointed as his successor and his desire that the Sringeri Acharya should nominate a suitable person to succeed him.

The next three Svamis were *Sri Samkara Bharati* (1847-69), *Sri Abhinavoddanda Gangadhara Bharati II* (1869-76) and *Mahadeva Satchidananda Bharati* (for a few months till January 1877).

*Sri Gangadhara Bharati III* (1877-86) strove to retrieve the waning prestige of the math.

*Sri Subrahmanya Abhinava Satchidananda Bharati* (1886-1918) assumed the headship of the math in his sixteenth year. He was an assiduous scholar and soon attained proficiency in Vedanta and other Sastras. He was also an ardent Sri Vidya-upasaka. Under him the math regained its reputation as a centre of learning, and its finances were augmented. The Svami paid three visits to Mysore and won the esteem of the Maharani Regent and Maharaja Krishna Raja Wodeyar IV. The Svami made extensive tours in north and south India.

In the course of a tour in the South, the Svami reached Kalady and attended the consecration, on February 21, 1910, of the temples of Sri Samkara and Sri Sarada by Sri Satchidananda Siva Abhinava Narasimha Bharati of Sringeri, who had renovated the birth place of Adi Samkaracharya and constructed two temples there, one to the Adi Acharya and the

other to Sri Sarada. The Sringeri Jagadguru made a brief halt at Sivaganga while returning to his headquarters, and it is reported that he spent several hours in meditation at the Samkaracharya Tirtha on the hill. The Sivaganga Svami constructed a new math, and adjoining it, a temple to Sri Sarada, the consecration of which was performed on August 12, 1910, before a large concourse of devotees from different parts of the country and the officials of the Mysore State.

The Svami went on another tour and attained *videha mukti* at Pondicherry on October 12, 1918, and his disciples constructed an *adhishtanam* over his *samadhi* at Ellaipillay Chavadi, at the outskirts of the city and made ample provision for the daily puja and the annual *aradhana*. The Svami was a real mahatma, a striking spiritual personality, whose sacred memory is cherished by numerous disciples. The Svami's relations with the Jagadguru of Sringeri were very cordial, and with the approval of Jagadguru Chandrasekhara Bharati of Sringeri, he ordained a successor under the *diksha* name of *Abhinava Gangadhara Subrahmanya Bharati*.

*Sri Satchidananda Abhinava Subrahmanya Bharati*. Kankanhalli Rama Sastri is one of the four sons of Vedamurti Srikantha Bhatta of the Kausika gotra, belonging to a Mulakanadu Brahmin family of Kanakapura in Bangalore District. The family has a reputation for deep learning. Sri Rama Sastri had his early education in the local Middle and Secondary schools and all these years he studied the Rig and

Yajur Vedas, Sahitya and Jyotisha under his brother Vedamurti Subbaraya Sastri. He joined the Maharaja's Sanskrit College at Mysore for higher studies. A well known *mantrajna* and *upasaka* of Narasimha gave him *mantradiksha*, the *purashcharana* of which he did on the banks of the Hemavati. In his eighteenth year he visited Sivaganga. It was a great event in his life when on November 16, 1910, during the lunar eclipse, the Acharya of Sivaganga, Sri Subrahmanya Abhinava Satchidananda Bharati initiated him into the *Sri Vidya mantras* and arranged for him a brief course in *Brahma Sutras* in the matha under Tarka-Mimamsa-Vedanta Vidwan Anjaneya Sastri. In his twenty-second year he went to Varanasi to study Vyakarana etc., and there became a yogic adept. Again joining the Mysore Sanskrit College, he passed the Vidwat examinations in the subjects he presented. His mother's demise necessitated his return to his village, but there was no discontinuity in his search for knowledge. He taught Sanskrit in several high schools, including those at Bangalore, Shimoga and Tumkur and retired in 1948, after which he took up an intensive study of the *bhashyas*.

He again visited Sivaganga in February 1953, and while meditating in the *adhishtanam* of Sri Omkaresvara, the second guru of the math, saw the great guru in a vision and even received a mantra. Such visions accompanied with fresh initiations have occurred to Sri Rama Sastri rather frequently at Pondicherry, Sivaganga, Sringeri and elsewhere, at which he had *darsan* of either Sri Subrahmanya

**Abhinava Satchidananda Bharati of Sivaganga or the great saint Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati of Sringeri.**

With all his intellectual and spiritual attainment it was easy for him to win the affection and regard of Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha, the present Head of the Sringeri matha, who cheerfully recommended his being ordained as the Head of the Sringeri-Sivaganga math. In 1955 Sri Rama Sastri completed the age of sixty, and on July 13 of that year, he was ordained guru with the *yogapattam* or *diksha name* of Sri Satchidananda Abhinava Subrahmanya Bharati Svami.

*The Acharya's Tours :—*

The great parivrajaka that he is, the Acharya lays much store on the tours and pilgrimages which help him in his spiritual ministration. Upto now <sup>4</sup> the Acharya has completed no less than ten tours, five of them somewhat extensive in nature. In the course of these tours he has covered the greater part of Tamil Nadu (including Madras city) and some parts of Andhra Pradesh. He visits Pondicherry almost every other year, the reason being that the *adhishtanam* of his Guru, the famous Sri Subrahmanya Abhinava Satchidananda Bharati Svami, is situate in that place. Among the other more important towns and cities visited are Cuddalore, Tiruvannamalai, Kanchipuram, Chidambaram, Tiruvayyar, Srirangam, Nerur, Mahadanapuram, Madurai, Rameswaram, Kalladaikuruchi, Nagercoil, Tuticorin, Cape Comorin, Tirunelveli, Palani, Salem, Chittoor,

Madanapalli, Penükonda, Anantapur, and Hindupur. The longest tour was the one that His Holiness made between 1960 and 1962, covering sacred places in South India. In all these places he made gifts, both in cash and in kind, to important temples, and charitable and educational institutions, gave generous *Sambhavanas*, shawls and (in a few cases) medals to learned Pandits and artistes and presented clothes to sadhus and sanyasins. At quite a few places he was pleased to award fitting titles to talented musicians and celebrated Vidvans.

Following are some of the places at which His Holiness performed Chaturmasya Vratams (including Vyasa Puja) and conducted special *archanas* connected with Navaratri (including *Nava-Chandi*, *Satha-Chandi* and other homas):— Pondicherry (1957, 1960 & 1963), Vellore (1958), Madurai (1961) and Anantapur (1964).

Among the more important functions and events connected with these tours may be mentioned the Kumbhabhishekam at Sri Subrahmanya Svami Temple in Pondicherry (11-9-1957), interview with the Jagadguru Samkaracharya of Sringeri at Madras (18-9-1960) when He performed *padapuja* to the Jagadguru, visit to Sri Samkara Gurukulam at Srirangam (24-4-1961), Kumbhabhishekam at Sri Murugan temple at Kamanayakanpalayam (28-4-1961), inauguration of Bala-Gurukulam at Polur (4-7-1961), Sikhara Pratishtha over Sri Ganapati Temple, Malleswaram, Bangalore (4-5-1962) inaugural address to Sri Samkara Seva Samiti at

Samkara Mutt, Bangalore (10-5-1962), Sri Samkara Pratishta at Vellore (10-5-1964—the murti was presented by His Holiness), Sri Kodanda-Rama Pratishta at Tiptur (21-5-1964) and at Vyalikaval, Bangalore, (3-2-1966), reception by several public institutions at Malleswaram, Bangalore (6-2-1966), laying the foundation for the Chitra-Gopuram over Sri Subrahmanya Svami Temple, Kumara Park, Bangalore (18-2-1966), presiding over Koti Gayatri Maha-Yajnam at Lalita Parameswari Sannidhanam, Gavipuram-Guttahalli, Bangalore (21-2-1966), participation in Sikhara Pratishta and Kumbhabhishekam at Sri Saradamba and Sri Samkaracharya shrines done by the Sringeri Jagadguru at the Samkara Mutt, Bangalore (6-3-1966), release of *Bala-Kanda* of *Srimad Ramayanam* in Kannada, at N. R. Colony, Bangalore (27-3-66), presiding over Sri Ramotsavam, Fort, Bangalore (12-4-1966), presiding over Andhra Maha Kavi Potana Amatya Day celebration at Sri Samkara Mutt, Bangalore (13-4-1966), public reception by the citizens of Mysore City and reception at the Maharaja's Palace, Mysore (16-4-1966) followed by a special reception and presents to His Holiness at the Palace by His Highness the Maharaja (17-4-1966), inauguration of the ceremonies connected with the installation of the Ramaparivara-murtis at Jayanagar (Bangalore) on 27-3-69 and the installation proper on 30-3-1969; another installation of similar murtis of Rama, Ganapati, Isvara, Chamundesvari etc., at Rajaji Nagar (Bangalore) on 27-3-1969; laying the foundation stone of a temple to Mahaganapati in Gokul near Bangalore (30-3-69), and the inaugura-

tion of the diamond jubilee of Sri Sitarama Mandiram at Ulsoorpet.

During this period, three memorable events stand out, one was the visit of Jagadguru Samkaracharya of Sri Sringeri Sarada Peetha, on 15-6-1962, another, the visit of Jagadguru Samkaracharya of Sri Dvaraka Mutt on 13th June, 1967, and the third, the sojourn of the Sringeri Jagadguru Mahasvamigal at Sivaganga (after His All-India tour) on 17th and 18th February 1968 and the archanas offered by Him in all the shrines of the Math including the newly found Sri Subrahmanyesva.

#### *Some Personal Traits:*

Easily accessible to all who seek his guidance, His Holiness listens with patience and obvious sympathy to the appeals for solace and relief from afflicted devotees and gives them proper directions and often holy prasadam that prove infallible in the remedies that they confer. An endearing smile that effortlessly sits on his lips, a glance that transports benediction and welcoming words of cheer put the visitor at his ease, and thereafter there is a flow of grace that engulfs the soul. There is no dialogue with Him that does not elevate the participant spiritually. Besides Samskrit of which he is a master, and Kannada, the language of the region, he speaks Telugu and Tamil, and all his public discourses, lucid and logical in their exposition, carry conviction, and one feels that one is listening to a mastermind. Needless to say that his visitors include men and

women from almost all the strata of society and they leave his presence with the satisfaction of having come into contact with a sage who is a *siddha purusha*. There can be nothing more inspiring than his daily puja, particularly the elaborate *Navavarana puja* for the Divine Mother in the Sriyantra — and he does it all for the welfare of humanity; all in the tradition of the sages and mahatmas of yore.

His Holiness is never tired of expressing his deep reverence to the Jagadguru of Sringeri, and the identity of interest subsisting between his pitha and the parent pitha, the seat of Sri Sarada, the *Sarvajna-pitha* or *Vyakhyanapitha* at Sringeri, and one can hardly exaggerate the spiritual benefits that flow from this association of two great Advaita maths for the spiritual awakening of the land.

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# APPENDIX

## SOME DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE MATH

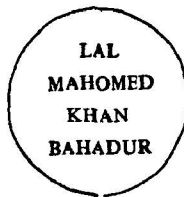
(Translated into English)

*Dated the year Sarvadhāri, Pushya, Krishna, 14th day.*

### CIRCULAR TO ALL LOCAL OFFICERS

in-charge of

Hāgalavādi, Būdikāl & Kadur Regions—



When Gangadhara Bharati Swamigal passes through your jurisdictions, you are hereby instructed to invite Him into the concerned towns and villages, to contribute your own mites and cause donations to be collected and paid to the Swamigal, and then help Him proceed to His next camp.

Hijiri 1180 }  
A. D. 1760 }

(Signature)

Nawab  
Hyder Ali  
Khan  
Bahadur

*Dated Plava, Māgha Sukla 10.*

To

**ALL KHILLEDARS & PARUPATHEGARS**  
in the Service of the Palace  
(which meant really the Maharaja's Govt.) —

Sri Gangadhara Bharati Swamigal of Sivaganga is proceeding from Seringapatam to Tiruvannamalai and back. You are hereby instructed to see that in all His camps within your jurisdictions, His Holiness experiences no difficulties or obstacles in the way of His renewing contacts with His *sishyas*, as usual, that all due Honours and courtesies are extended to the Svamigal and that He is given proper assistance to facilitate His proceeding from camp to camp.

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<p>Nija-Pūrṇa Sukha-Shree Lakshminarasimha</p>
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Submission to

Sri Abhinava Gangadhara Bharati Swami's Successor,  
Sri Sachchidananda Bharati Swamigal  
By Dewan Poorniah.

*Dated the 8th Day of Bhādrapada Krishna (year not noted)*

Up till now I have been quite well. I beg that you may be pleased to favour me with communications from time to time as to the uninterrupted progress of your Holiness's *tapasya*.

Consequent on the systematic conduct of all the prescribed Pujas and Services to Sri Gangadhareswara Swami (this is the name of the presiding Deity of Sivaganga) and on the daily feeding and other acts of charity that are being regularly done in the Sri Mutt, all parts of the State have received the required rains, crops are for the most part satisfactory, and subjects of the State are extremely happy.

I am delighted to learn that when His Holiness of Sri Sringeri Peetha recently visited your place, Your Holiness extended due Honours and courtesies to Him, and that your Holiness now intends visiting Seringapatam and blessing me personally, etc. I have also received the Prasadams graciously sent through selected Brahmins.

The contentment of subjects throughout the State, caused by the Grace of God in the form of timely and widespread rains, is altogether the fruit of your Holiness's *tapasya* and of nothing else. Pray, do not hesitate to visit Seringapatam, make a halt, and bless me. As to details connected with the visit, they have been explained to Vedamurthi Narasimha Bhattaru and to Kasi-Vasar, of the Sri Mutt, for submission to your Holiness.

*Signature.*

○      ☾

Krishnaraja Waderu  
son of  
Sri Chamaraja Waderu

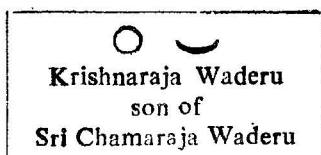
*Dated Angirasa Pushya Krishna Chaturthi.*

To

ALL AMILDARS AND KHILLEDARS  
in the territories of the Palace  
(meaning His Highness' Government) —

Sri Swamigalu of Sivagangay intends Visiting Nanjangud and en route will be passing through your jurisdictions. You are hereby instructed to post men for being on the look out for the movement of His Holiness and His entourage. When He arrives at the commencement of your jurisdiction you should proceed to meet Him, taking with you each and every Brahmin, the head of every sect or community and all merchants and traders, and a set of pipers. With all of them you should receive His Holiness and party, conduct them to a convenient spot, make arrangements for their camping there, supply for every day of halt, rice, dhal and other provisions sufficient for offering Naivedyam to God, offering Bhiksha to His Holiness and feeding of about 300 persons and get the camp supplied with the feed of elephants, camels, bullocks and horses, obtain receipts from the Parupathegar of the Mutt for the supplies made by you and pass on the bills of cost to the Palace. The party should be attended to with





*Dated the year Bhava, Vaisakha Sukla Saptami.*

Circular issued to  
**ALL AMILDARS AND KHILLEDARS**  
in the territories of the Palace —

Whereas His Holiness the Sri Swamigal of Sivaganga, with a view to inspecting the choultry and the temple He has built in Sri Narasimha Kshetra at Khadri near Penukonda, intends sojourning in Penukonda, Bellary etc., and in the course of doing so, is passing through your jurisdictions, you are hereby instructed to make arrangements in advance for getting information about His Holiness' arrival within the said jurisdictions, to meet His Holiness at the time of arrival and accord to Him a proper Reception taking with you all the local Brahmins, officials of all Departments of Govt., pipers, etc. You are further instructed to conduct His Holiness and party to a clean and tidy spot, arrange for His camp there, supply on the day of arrival for purposes of Naivedyam, Bhiksha and general feeding, one hundred pucca seers of rice and all other provisions in proportion to the said quantity of rice, obtain from the Mutt's Parupathegar a receipt for the said supplies, and forward to the Huzur Office a consolidated bill of

cost as well as a classified list of provisions—feed for the elephants, camels, bullocks and horses belonging to the Mutt should be got supplied. In addition, if any other articles are required by the camp you should also purchase them and get them paid for by the Parupathegar. Effective arrangements should be made to see that there is no scope for robbers, dacoits etc., to cause any kind of loss or damage to the camp. When His Holiness proceeds from one camp to another, you should give Him a respectful send-off and send four men of your own with the party upto the next camp.

26th Apr. 1814.

(Sd.) *Thimmappa*  
Huzur Munshi.

(Sd ) *Sri Krishna*  
(Maharaja)



*Dated the 14th day of the dark half of Asweeja of the year Vikāri.*

Instructions issued to

**THE AMILDARS AND KHILLEDARS**  
in-charge of the border Units of Mysore State —

Whereas Sri Sachchidananda Bharati Swamigal of Sri Sringeri-Sivaganga is undertaking a tour of Serengapatam, Mysore, Nanjangud, Subrahmanya etc., you are hereby instructed to make proper arrangements for getting information about His Holiness' arrival in your respective jurisdictions, extend a fitting Reception and due honour in accordance with previous practice to His Holiness when He arrives, arrange for His camp in a desirable place, and make sure that the locality is free from robbers. In case the camp requires any articles you are instructed to purchase them and get them paid for. The party consists of Brahmins, Servants, two elephants, five camels, twenty bullocks, twenty horses, palanquins bearers, etc.; honorific equipment of His Holiness includes articles like two palanquins, umbrellas, chamaras, nowbat, drums, swords etc. Steps should be taken to see that when these pass through border-areas, they are not obstructed or detained or checked.

Dated 4th Nov. 1839  
Bangalore

(Signature)

Memo dated 13th day of the bright half of Jyeshtha of  
the year Akshaya (A. D. 1806-07)  
from Dewan Purniah to Madhwa Raya,  
Subedar of Bangalore.

Whereas a misunderstanding has arisen between the Sringeri Mutt and the Sivaganga Mutt as to the immediate jurisdiction over the settlement of matters pertaining to āchāra vyavahāra and prayaschitta in the Bangalore region, intimation is hereby given that the Sringeri Swamigal when He was here recently was pleased to instruct as follows:—

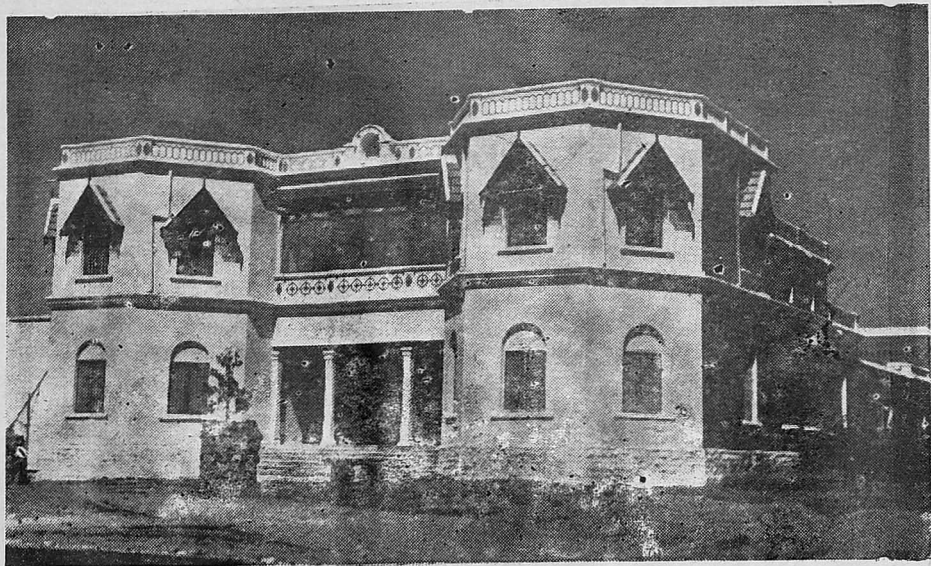
In accordance with the practice now obtaining let the Sivaganga Mutt exercise jurisdiction over matters pertaining to achara vyavahara and prayaschitta; with regard to the Agra-tamboolam to be offered on auspicious occasions like weddings, upanayanams and other celebrations, the Sringeri Swamigal has commanded that one tamboolam should first be offered and reserved in the name of the Sringeri Mutt and another tamboolam should afterwards be offered to Sivaganga Mutt, and thereafter the assembly should be given tamboolams.

Wherefore, on all auspicious occasions like weddings, upanayanams and other celebrations, let a tamboolam be offered and reserved first of all in the name of Sringeri Mutt and afterwards a second tamboolam be offered to Sivaganga Mutt, and tamboolams given to the Sabha thereafter.

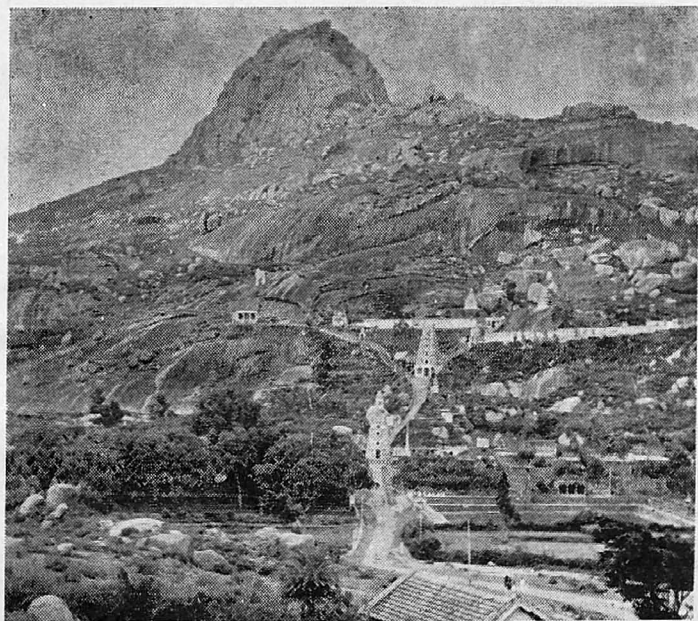
Necessary steps should be taken to enforce this arrangement.



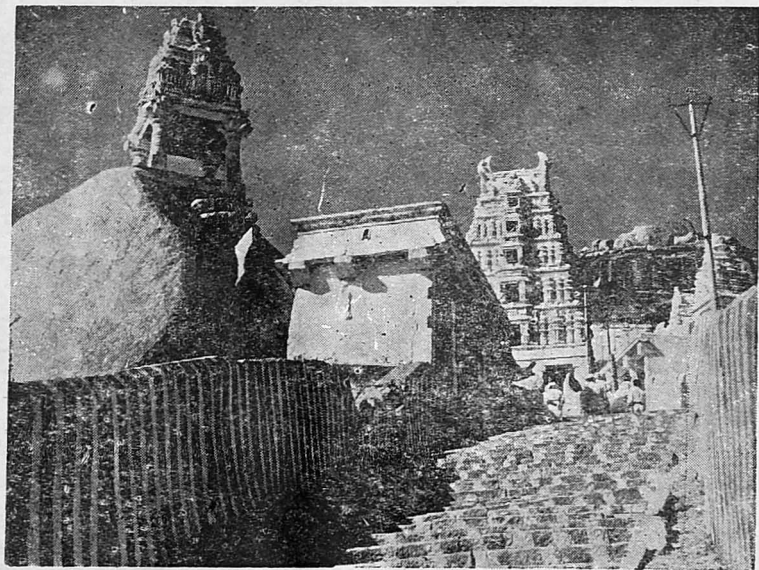
**Sri Bhagavatpada Samkaracharya**



**The Math Building**



The Hill — General View



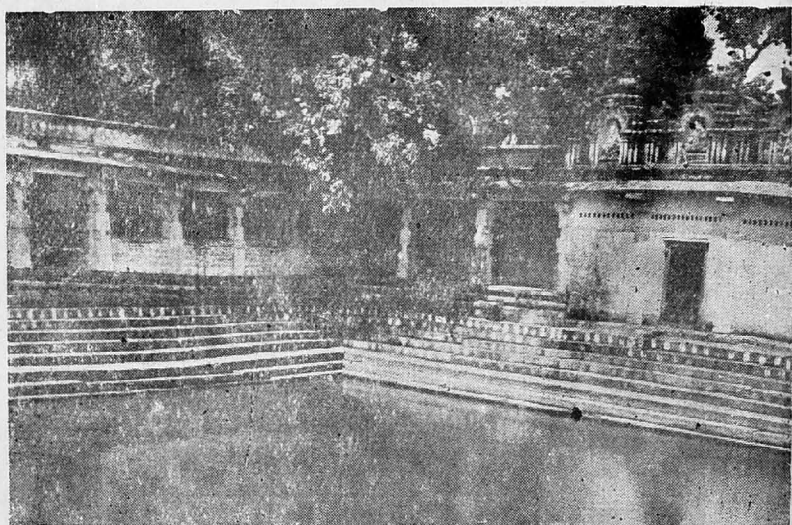
Steps leading to the Temple



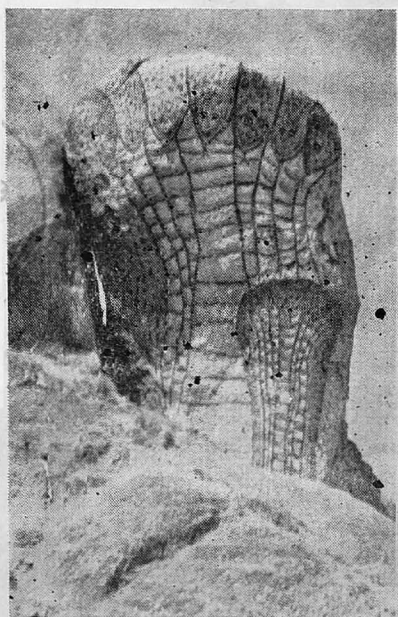
Sri Gangadharesvara



Sri Devi Svarnambika



Agastya Tirtham



The newly discovered Naga (Subrahmanya)