

srimAn venkata nATHArya kavitaRkika kEsari
vEdAntAchArya varyOmE sannidhatAm sadAhrudi

श्रीमान वेङ्कटनाथार्यः कविताकिंक केसरी ।
वेदान्ताचार्य वयमि सन्निधत्तां सदाहृदि ॥

Swami Vedantha Desikan

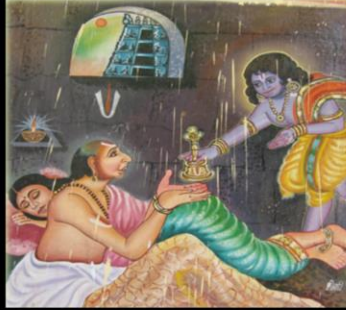
750th thirunakshathiram celebration

Sydney 23/09/2018



Gantaavatharam

- Parents Anantha Suri and Thotharamba
- Thotharamba is sister of Kidambi Appullar
- Went to Thirumalai praying for a son
- Dream about swallowing Ganda Mani and therefore no Ganda mani in sanctum till date
- Born in 1268, Puratasi Sravana Nakshatram-the star of Venkatesa Perumal
- Named as Venkatanathan
- Anantha Somayaji , his grandfather was one of the 74 simhasanapathis appointed by Ramanuja



Hayagreevam Upasmahe

- His Early acharyan was his uncle Appullar
- Grace of Nadadhur ammal during Sri Bashyam kalakshebbam
- After his studies he entered Grahasashram - Kanakavalli, (Thirumangai, Nilamangai)
- Perfect grahasashram- Unchavuthi
- Shri Appullar gave him Garuda mantram
- Chose Thirunaheendrapuram, Garuda nadhi and mountain Oushadhri, both sanctified by the divine presence of Garuda
- Garuda appeared and initiated Hayagriva moola mantram



Compositions

- Sanskrit, PraAkritam, Tamil and Manipravaala (mixture of Sanskrit and Tamil).
- more than 120 compositions in the course of his life as occasions arose.
- lyrics on God and Goddess; weapons; fundamental doctrine of Ramanuja philosophy.
- Many are his original works and rare commentaries on the work of earlier acharyas like Sri Yamunacharya and Sri Ramanujacharya.
- Perfect knowledge of mantra saasthra . He has incorporated the mantras presided over by several deities in his works for the benefit of seekers. Movement of the divine constellations and geography of the world sculpture and architecture, craft , music and dance, poetry and drama.



Swami and Srivilliputtur

- When in Srivilliputtur, he composed "Godha Sthuthi",
- Sri Andal ordained that the Stotra should be recited during her Utsavam days along with Divya Prabhandams.
- "Godha Sthuthi" remains as a Suprabatham for Sri Andal.
- A very big shrine dedicated for Vedanta Desika in Srivilliputtur and a separate festival "Sri Gotha Sthuthi Uthsavam" for 10 days is being celebrated till today



Paaduka Sahasram

- Paaduka Sahasram or "1008 Verses on the Sandals of the Lord" is the Magnum Opus. The whole work is a monument for supreme devotion and superb poetry, all in one night's intuition, - an overnight miracle of one thousand verses!
- It was done by him just as a fulfilment of a competition committed to as a challenge by a jealous vidhwan
- Composed in just one quarter of the night, actually the third quarter. The earlier two quarters were devoted by him, as soon as he accepted the commitment, to yoga and yoga-nidra .
- Paaduka Sahasram has 32 "Padhadhi"s. Mainly sung on the paadukas of Lord Rama, Lord Ranganatha and Lord Krishna, praying for attaining Moksha.



Contributions to SriVaishnavism

- He won several debates with acharyas of different religions and further established 'Ramanuja Darsanam'
- In Thiruvahindrapuram he debated with 19 religious leaders and won
- During his visit to Srirangam won over his opponents in a debate and compiled the entire debate into a collection named "Sathadushini". More Later
- He was conferred the title of "Vedanta Desikan" by none other than our Namperumal.
- Ranganayaki Thayar, also wanting to show her appreciation, conferred a title "Sarva Tantra Swatantrar"
- Manavala Mamuni called Desikar as Abiyukathar and has quoted swami in 32 places in his Ramanuja Nootranadhi treatise.



Srirangam-1

- Desikar's role in saving Srirangam



In about 1312 A.D, during the Muslim invasion by Malik Kafur, the General of Allauddin, Sultan of Delhi and in 1323 A.D during the invasion of Ulugh Khan there was a great commotion. To inspire his fellows, Vedanta Desika composed the poem "abhiti stava". The Acharyas deliberated under the guidance of the centenarian Master, Sudarsana Bhattar. One group under Pillai Lokacharya was to take the Utsava Murthi and his consorts covered up in a palanquin to Tirupati. Sudarsana Suri was to stay put at Srirangam, after erecting a stone wall in front of the Sannidhi of Moolavar to cover him from the sight of the marauders. Desikar took Sudarsana Bhattars two sons and the manuscripts of shruta Prakaasika (the elaborate commentary on Sri Bhashyam chronicled by Sudarsana Bhattar during the Kalakshepams of Nadadur Ammaal) to safety at Tiru Narayana puram via Satya mangalam.

Srirangam- 2

- Swami Desikan came back to Sri Rangam, and established the rituals and ceremonies for worship in the temple, which are still in vogue today. In particular, he established the chanting of the the divya-prabandhams, and installed Deities of the twelve Alwar saints for worship in the temple.



The Muslim army attacked them and massacred many of them. Swami hid himself with his wards in the midst of corpses and spent the night. In the morning, they moved towards Satyakalam village in Karnataka en route to Tirunarayana puram.

Desikar's old classmate Vidyaranya visited to assess the situation.

Vedanta Desika's mantra-disciple, Gopanna was one of among the three generals of Vijayanagara empire to recover the south from muslim forces led by the Madurai sultanate.

Gopanna first captured Gingee, temporarily housed the idols moved back from Tirupati.

Swamis Greatness and anecdotes from his life

- The Archa murthi of Hayagriva originally worshipped by Goddess Saraswati was handed over to Bhagavad Ramanuja . As ordained by Perumal it was handed over to Swamy Desikan after couple of generations.



Anecdotes - 1

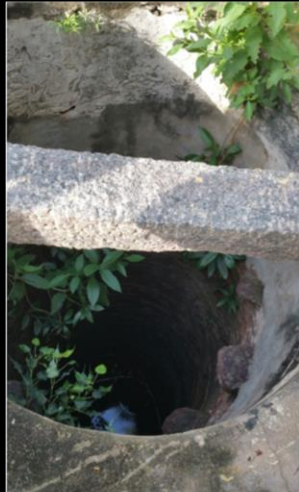
- Sri Stuthi
- Garuda Dhandakm and Garuda Panchasath
- Sudarshanashtakam



Brahmachari (a celibate Brahmin) to ask the swami for monetary assistance for his marriage. Sri Desikan, a “thrikala Gnyani” knew full well the intention of his rivals and took the boy to Sri Perundevi Thayar’s sannidhi and composed a Sthothra named “Sristhuthi”. This appeased our Goddess of wealth, Sri Mahalakshmi, who instantly showered a rain of Gold coins. A snake charmer let loose venomous snakes on Swami. Swami drew 7 lines around himself which the snakes could not cross. On seeing this, the snake charmer sent a Maha Sarpam named “Sangabalan” who crossed the lines and rushed towards our Swami. Acharyar then recited Garudadhandakam, when Peria Thiruvadi VynaTheyan appeared and took away the snake, Sangabalan. The Snake charmer then fell at Swami’s feet and begged for forgiveness. Our Swami then recited Garuda-panchasath, which prompted Periya ThiruvAdi to return the Snake Sangabalan. Swami Desikan is said to have composed it to help the residents of Thiruputtukuzhi, when they suffered from the grip of an epidemic fever. Alternatively, it is said that he composed it at Thiruvahindrapuram prior to a major debate with a leader of another Sampradhaya. That debate blossomed later as the Sri Sookthi of ParaMadha Bhangam, an exceptionally terse analysis of the defects in other siddhAnthams and a celebration of Bhagavath RaamAnuja SiddhAntham over them all. Swami Desikan won that debate in front of Lord DevanAtham and thereby established the supremacy of SrimannArAyana and Vishishtadvaitam.

Anecdotes -2

- Desikar constructing a well
- Desikar's Vairakyam
- Desikar's humility.



While in ThiruvahIndhrapuram, a mason challenged Vedanta Desika to construct a well by using bricks with uneven dimensions , if he wanted to live up to the title of "Sarva Tantra Swatantrar". Even though the bricks given to him did not fulfil these requirements, Desika used his extraordinary acumen to arrange these bricks in a unique sequence and plastered them to form the circular periphery of the well, which can still be seen at the Thirumaligai of Swami Desikan in ThiruvahIndhrapuram. A few admirers of Desika, feeling sympathy for Desika's poverty and abstinence, decided to mix gold coins along with the rice that went to his house as alms. Desika handed the alms to his wife, who promptly showed him the coins. Desika informed her that they were worms that had got mixed with the rice, and separated them using a blade of grass, and threw them out without touching them.

A few envious scholars wanted to insult Desika. They strung a few shoes just outside his door. When Desika came out of his house the next day, the shoes hit his head. The watching scholars felt that Desika would become angry at being insulted. Instead, Desika exclaimed in great joy, "Oh, what good fortune do I have that the sandals of the great devotees of the Lord have blessed me by touching my head?" Incidents from Desika's life teach us how he followed what he preached: and totally surrendered to the lotus feet of the Lord in a mood of utmost humility and detachment.

Anecdotes -3

- Desika the Sculptor
- Desika's advise on food

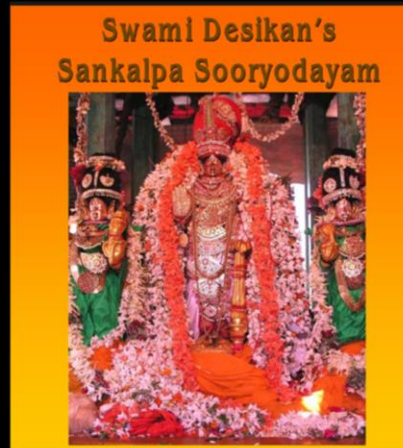


Once a sculptor asked Desika to make His own image out of panchaloha on a condition that the image had to exactly fit on the base provided by him. Desika not only sculpted an immaculate image but also pointed out the defects in the base structure provided by the professional sculptor.

The Vedic scriptures categorize food into three – sattva, rajasa and tamasa. Taking cues from the Vedic scriptures, Vedanta Desika has provided in one of his work 'Agaara Niyamam' a detailed catalogue of food which should be consumed to maintain a healthy mind and a disease-free life.

Swami's Genius

- Drama Sankalpa Surodayam
- Knight's tour problem .
- Desika showed his knowledge of the arts and sciences through other works Silpartha-saram , a guide on sculpting, and Bhugola-nimayam - a research text on the formation of the earth.



Drama called Sankalpa Surodayam which beautifully portrays the different aspects of human character and their interplay which can lead a man towards a higher goal - Salvation (moksha), or to a lower goal – the infinite loop of birth and death. The main character in this play is Man with two forces acting on him: (i) divine and (ii) demoniac. Vedanta Desika, personifies these forces into kings and queens who in turn seem to be assisted by their own armies (the human qualities that drive these forces).

Early 18th century that the great mathematician, Leonhard Euler investigated the Knight's tour problem . 500 years earlier, in the 30th chapter of his composition, the Paduka Sahasram, Vedanta Desika had used several types of poetic imagery. Chaturanga Turanga Bandham was one such imagery through which the knight's tour problem had already been solved elegantly,

Desikar Leaves for Paramapadam

- Swami Vedanta Desikar lived for 101 years and left for Paramapadam in the year 1369 from SriRangam
- His son is Kumara Varadacharyar who compiled Pillai Andhadhi in praise of his father Desikar



Kavitharkika Simhaya Kalyana Gunasaaline कविताकिंकसिंहाय कल्याणगुणशालिने ।
Srimathe Venkatesaya Vedanta Gurave Namaha श्रीमते वेङ्कटेशाय वेदान्तगुरवे नमः ॥



Swami Vedanta Desika lived for 101 years and he realized that the time had come for him to reach the divine abode of Sriman Narayana during his stay in Sri Rangam. Swami Desika consoled everybody and instructed all to continue their divine works and follow the Ramanuja dharshanam.

Praying to Udaiyavar (Sri Ramanujacharya) and Kidambi Appullaar by placing their Paadukas on his head resting his head kept on the laps of Nainarachar (Sri Kumara Varadhachariar) and his Lotus feet on the lap of Brahma Tantra Svatantrarar (Sri Periya Parakala Jeeyar of Sri Parakala Mutt, while his Sishyas chanted Tiruvoimozhi and Upanishads, He left for the Divine Abode of God-Head Sriman Narayana.

He attained Paramapadam in Tamil Sowmya year in the Tamil month Kartigai in the star of Kartikai in 1369 AD in Sri Rangam.