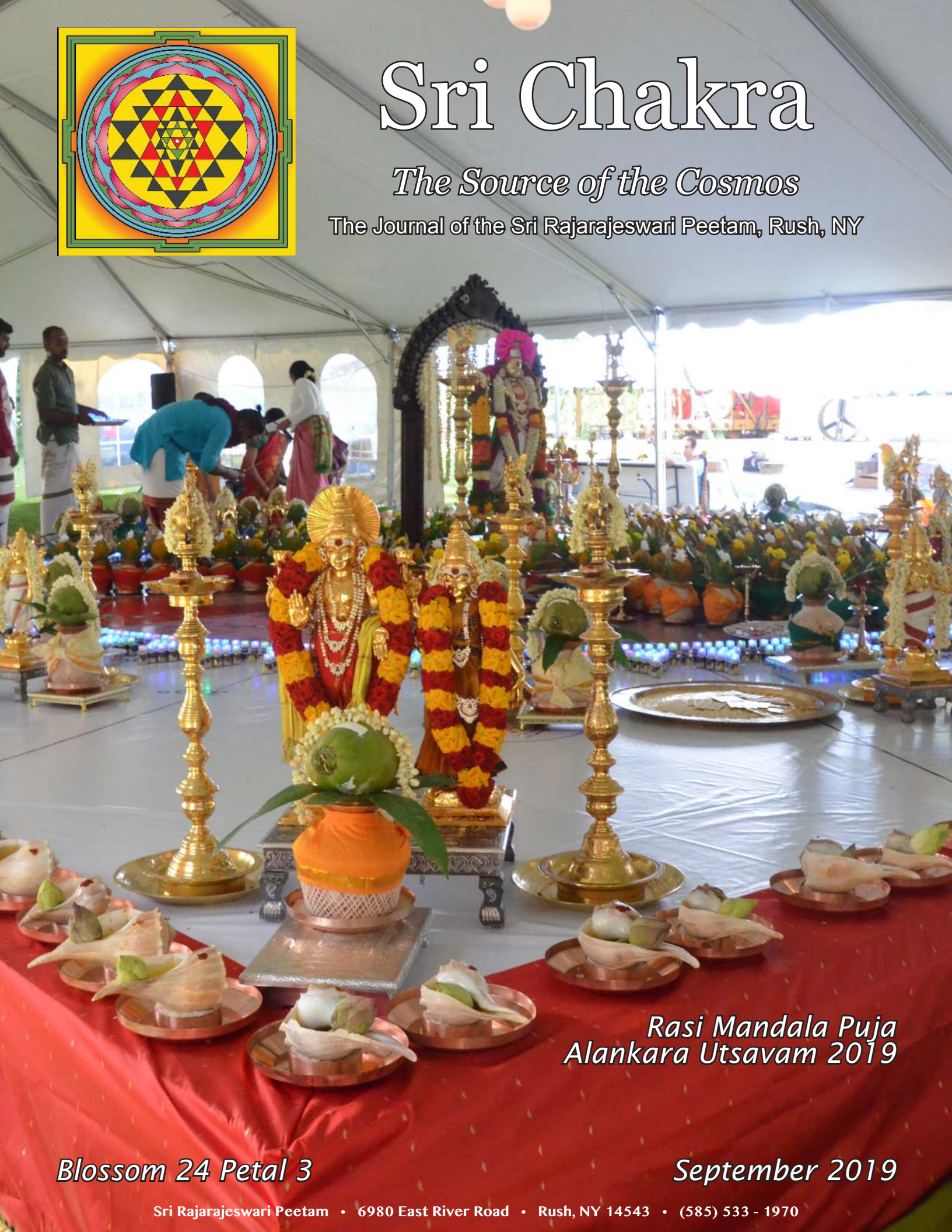

Sri Chakra

The Source of the Cosmos

The Journal of the Sri Rajarajeswari Peetam, Rush, NY

Rasi Mandala Puja
Alankara Utsavam 2019

Blossom 24 Petal 3

September 2019

Sri Rajarajeswari Peetam • 6980 East River Road • Rush, NY 14543 • (585) 533 - 1970

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TEMPLE BULLETIN

Rajagopuram Project

As many of you know, Aiya has been speaking about the need for a more permanent sacred home for Devi for a number of years. Over the past 40 years, the Temple has evolved into an important center for the worship of the Divine Mother Rajarajeswari, attracting thousands of visitors each year from around the world.

It is now time to take the next step in fulfilling Aiya's vision of constructing an Agamic temple in granite complete with a traditional Rajagopuram. With the grace of the Guru lineage and the loving blessings of our Divine Mother, now is the right time to actively participate and contribute to make this vision a reality.

The new Temple will be larger and will be built according to the Kashyapa Shilpa Shastra. By following the holy Agamas, more divine energy than ever will be attracted into the Temple, and the granite will hold that energy for 10,000 years, bringing powerful blessings to countless generations into the future.

As Maha Periyava has beautifully explained: "Temple Renovation, Reconstruction, Kumbabhishekam, etc. are all considered extremely noble deeds. We all should do whatever we can towards these and earn Punya Karma. Whatever we offer, it may be a brick, but as long as that brick is there in that temple, we will spend that much time (thousands of years) in Kailash or Vaikuntham."

To learn more, please visit srividya.org/rajagopuram. To contribute or set up monthly donations, please visit srividya.org/donate and select "*Rajagopuram Building Fund*" from the menu. If you would like to offer your time or expertise towards this noble endeavour, please contact Natarajan Mama at **(585) 533 - 1970**.

Temple Links

Private Homa/Puja Booking:
srividya.org/puja

Rajagopuram Project (Granite Temple):
srividya.org/rajagopuram

Email Subscriptions:
srividya.org/email

Temple Timings:
srividya.org/calendar

Event Livestream:
srividya.org/live

Summer Youth Camp (VSI):
srividya.org/camp

Online Donation:
srividya.org/donate

Learning at SVTS:
srividya.org/learn

Alaya Nirmana Ganapathi Puja

Sri Amma had advised the Temple to organize a daily puja for Sri Maha Ganapati to take place on the location where He will be installed in the new Granite Temple. This daily puja commenced on the auspicious full moon day on May 28 and has been continuing since.

The Temple Board & Administration would like to invite all disciples to offer their love and devotion towards the Rajagopuram Project by taking part in performing this daily Ganapati Puja. All who have received mantra diksha from Aiya, Guruji or Gurugaru are welcome and encouraged to sign up to do the puja on the day(s) of their choice. Please contact the Temple Administration for details.

Connect With SVTS

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Sri Vidya Temple

Sri Vidya Temple

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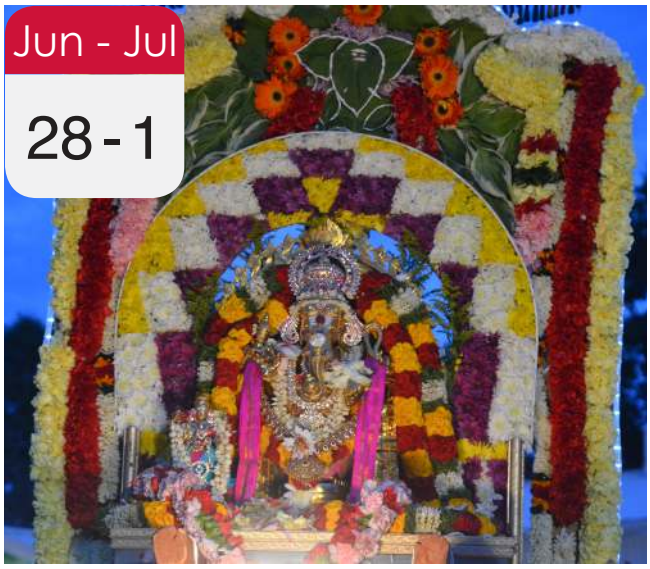
PAST EVENTS

... June 2019 to September 2019



Annual Alankara Utsavam

The four-day Alankara Utsavam kicked off on an early Friday morning with Vancha Kalpa Ganapathi homam, where 1008 modakams were offered. The evening of the first day concluded with Utsava Ganapathi procession. The next day commenced bright and early with Chandi homam, which started around 5 am. This was followed by Anna Pavadai, where Utsava Rajeshwari was adorned with a rice skirt. This rice was then served to all who attended as Prasadam. The night ended with the Chapparam festivities. Sunday began with the powerful Rasi Mandala puja to eliminate doshams brought upon by the movements of the planets and stars. Dattatreya utsavam took place in the evening where everything from the parikrama puja to the parikrama was performed by children. The final day of the festival concluded with the Bhairavar madai, where several items were offered to Bhairava.

Guru Purnima

This day that is very special to everyone as it is a day where we celebrate our Guru, commenced early in the morning with Aiya performing a homam to pay homage to his guru parampara. Shortly after this, disciples performed Ganapathi Tarpanam in Aiya's presence. Once this was completed, all the devotees assisted in the preparation of the temple for the evening ceremonies. Aiya and Amma were welcomed around 4:30pm. All disciples gathered and performed Dattatreya Yantra Puja individually and then received blessings and Prasadam from Aiya and Amma. During this time, Aiya and Amma received several offerings from their beloved disciples in a very traditional manner and the night closed with beautiful bhajans by the SVTS Bhajans group.

Vibhuti Saivaite Immersion (Annual Camp)

This year marked the 15th successful year of VSI. There were about 90 participants this year, including campers, Junior Counselors and Counselors. Avvaiyar was the primary saint of focus and the campers enjoyed learning about her life and her work from Aiya and the counselors. Adi Puram and Adi Amavasya fell during the week of VSI, which allowed campers to learn about these festivals, help with preparations and watch how it is conducted. They also learnt how to carry out a chariot procession and used this knowledge to conduct the Youth Chariot Festival on the final day. This day was a special challenge for the everyone as Adi Puram fell on the same day as well but nonetheless, the campers enjoyed every bit of it. Parents who were part of the Parent Program assisted in running the daily duties of the temple and the background work required for VSI. Special edition 15th year t-shirts were released to mark this milestone year.

Adi Amavasya

Adi Amavasya tarpanams are done to honour the soul of one's departed paternal lineage. The tarpanam ritual took place in the morning near Kasi river, and approximately 150 devotees participated and offered pindams into the river. Following this, all devotees present received a chance to perform milk abhishekam took the Kasi Shivalingam. As Adi Amavasya fell during the week of VSI, campers were present to watch the tarpanam, offering of pindams and abhishekam and learned about the significance of this day.

Adi Puram

This festival fell during the final Saturday of the VSI program, and numerous devotees attended. After Chandi homam early in the morning, Vana Durga received abhishekam, was beautifully dressed with her special alankaram to mark the significance of the day. Sumangalis performed the necessaries alaathis, which was followed by Her being taken out on procession. As this day was the same day as the Youth Chariot Festival during VSI, Vana Durga mounted a chariot and went on her procession very royally.

Varalakshmi Vratam

This puja was performed by sumangalis, married women, for the well-being of their husbands. This puja took make in the evening in the Yagna Shala and concluded with the tying of the sharadu. Alankaram was done to a lamp to portray the image of Varalakshmi standing in front of all the sumanglis while doing puja. Maha Prasadam was served to all at the conclusion of the ceremony.

UPCOMING EVENTS

September

02	Vinayaka Chaturthi
22	Dwajarohanam
29	Navaratri - Start

October

06	Navaratri - End
07	Vijayadasami, Rathotsavam, Kedara Gauri - Start
08	Tirthabhishekam, Dwajavarohanam
09	Sri Bhairavar Madai, Kulirtti
26	Diwali
27	Kedara Gauri - End
28	Skanda Shashti - Start

November

02	Skanda Shashti - End
03	Thirukalyanam

**All events will occur at the Sri Rajarajeswari Peetam, Rush, NY, unless otherwise stated above.*

IN THREE MONTHS

Devi willing, the next issue of the *Sri Chakra* will be up on the temple's website at the beginning of December 2019.This magazine cannot keep publishing without contributions! Articles, poems, stories and photos about any spiritual topic are welcomed. The next deadline for article submission is November 1, 2019. Please e-mail us with your contributions or feedback about this issue at srichakra@srividya.org or talk to Virroshi at the temple.

Sri Gurubhyo Namaha!

Our special thanks & gratitude to this issue's volunteers:

Aiya, Adheesh Ankolekar, Skankara Devarkonda, Veena Ganeshan, Mangala Janahan, Bharathi Ramanakumaran, Sashwathi Sriganesh, Skanda Sriganesh, Bhuvana Subramanian, Temple Administration, and the Thulasi Kitchen.

Steps Towards Our Granite Temple

01 Alaya Nirmana Ganapati Puja

02 Ideas & Suggestions

03 Design Contract

04 Sannidhi & Vigraham Sponsorships

05 Phase I

06 Pledges for the Main Temple

We are now accepting pledges towards the main temple structures. Predefined pledge levels are available; you can also pick an amount of your choice. Those who have filled out the Registration of Interest form earlier are requested to fill out the new pledge form to make a pledge on behalf of yourself, your family or your group.

Going forward, when you make a financial donation either online or at the temple bookstore (one time or recurring), please make sure to let us know if it is against a pledge that you have made.

Aiya's Vision

granite temple & rajagopuram

(part 5)

Sri Chaitanyananda Natha Saraswati, affectionately known as Aiya, answered a few questions asked by temple devotees on the significances of our current temple and the future Granite Temple and Rajagopuram Project. We thank Aiya for sharing this with the* Sri Chakra. *Here is the fifth portion of the Q & Aiya.

Q: Aiya, can you tell us about the layout of the Granite Temple?

A: The main granite temple is going to have Devi, the divine mother of the universe, in the main sanctum. There will be subsidiary shrines, beginning with Ganapathi in the southwestern corner Nairruti, Subramanya with his consorts Valli and Devanai in the northwest corner Vayu and the main shrine for Shiva in the northeast facing the Devi. Also with this, there will also be additional shrines for Ardanareeshwara, Dattatreya, Shiva Nataraja and his consort, and Manonmani Shakti. Also, there will be a continuous shrine along the northern wall, facing south, for the 63 saivaite saints, called Nayanmars, plus 15 additional saints making a total of 78 saints. Shiva Nataraja and his consort, Shivakamasundari, will be housed in a shrine adjoining the Nayanmar's shrine. Moreover, on the northern wall, very close to the Shiva temple facing south, will be the shrine for Bhairava.

The Shivalingam in our temple, obtained from the river Narmadha, is a very unique, oval-shaped lingam that is blue in colour. If you want to analyze this chemically, it is of a deep-blue metamorphic rock used as a semi-precious stone called Lapis Lazuli. Since he is blue, he is given the name Neelakanteshwarar.

There will also be a Manonmani shrine. Out of the 51 Shakthi Peetams that exist today, all contained in the great country of Bharatam in the distant past, there is a Shakthi Peetam that exists within Tamil Eelam, Sri Lanka. Here, in the northern region, there are a set of islands, of which one is called Nainatheevu. In this island, there is a temple for Nagabhooshani Ambal and this temple is known as the Manonmani Peetam of the 51 Shakthi Peetams. Therefore, there will be a separate shrine for Manonmani in this temple. The statue for this shrine will be in the form of Akhilandeshwari in rememberance of the Devi that walked among us, Sri-la-sri Mathioli Saraswathi, affectionally known as Sri Amma. Sri Amma's padukas will be established in front of the vigraham so that Nitya Puja can be offered.

There will also be subsidiary murthis. At the entrance to the sanctum to the Devi, on the left, there will be Anugya Ganapathi, whose permission you have to seek before entering the sanctum. On the right side will be Subramanya. Right in front of the Devi, who will be placed inside the Garbha Graham, there will be an Arda Mandapam. In this Arda Mandapam, the Maha Meru that has been worshipped in our temple will be installed there. In front of the Maha Meru, the present Nandi being worshipped in our temple will be placed. In front of this Nandi, there will be a Pradhana Nandi, main Nandi, for the Devi. Looking forward, the Bali Peetam and the present Dwajasthambam will be placed there. If you keep going forward, a raised platform of about 18 inches will be the one that will be housing the Maha Mandapam. Maha Mandapam will be mainly for having festivals celebrated with the murthis brought there but also for when a raised platform is needed for dignitary speakers and so on. Between the Maha Mandapam plinth, which is the raised platform, and the wall of the temple, there will be a ceremonial path to celebrate minor festivals. At the foot of the Rajagopuram (entrance), on either side, there will be Surya and Chandra in the form of muthis. On the sides of the entrance, there will be shrines for Ganga and Yamuna. There will be a separate shrine for Dattatreya, in guru stanam. There will also be a Paka Shala, which will be in the southeastern corner, which will be where all the naivedyams and offerings will be made for the temple.

Some distance away from this Dwajasthabam, the main Dwajasthambam will be installed. Between these two dwajasthambams, there will be a homa kundam, where all the homams for the Devi will be done. Maha Ganapathi homam will be done in this homam on a daily basis as well. Just like in the current temple, 28 inches below the surface of the homa kundam, there will be 3 copper tubes running all the way to the sanctum containing 3 silver wires. These wires depict the ida, pingala and sushumna nadis.

There will also be three subsidiary gopurams in the north, east and west. These gopurams will be very much shorter than the Rajagopuram, which will be 51 feet tall and will be 3-stage gopurams as opposed to the Rajagopuram, which will be a 5-stage gopuram.

There is going to be at least 28 exquisitely carved pillars. Each pillar will be at least 15 feet tall and will represent the syllables in the Panchadasakshari Maha Mantra. Each one of these pillar will tell a different story.

This completes the present, intended, plan and structure of the new Granite Temple.

Keep an eye out for the next issue of the Sri Chakra for more responses from Aiya about the New Temple & Rajagopuram project!

Dhyana Shlokam

from Guruji's Namavali

(Part 2)

by Shankara Devarkonda aiya

sarva janasammohinīṁ: She attracts the attention of all around Her.

sakala vidyālaṁkāriṇīm: She adorns all vidyas, where vidyas may be interpreted as all types of knowledge or all mantras referring to Mother.)

sahajānaṁda śāṁbhavīṁ: She is immersed in the sahajānaṁdam, the natural bliss, that manifests while residing in śāṁbhavī Sthithi. Guruji would remain in that state all the time. During this state, while interacting with others, He would be focussing not on the person, but on the space in between. This is called śāṁbhavī mudra. śāṁbhavī Sthithi is also referred to the state of the union of Siva and Sakthi.

guru mūrtinīm: She is the personification of Guru Dakshinamurthi.

ekāgra cidvilāsinīṁ: She resides in the bliss manifested out of focussed mind.

dakṣiṇāmūrti rūpiṇīm: She is the personification of Dakshinamurthi

sarva sammohana sukha vāk pradāyinīm: She is the one that bestows the capability of speech that is so winsome and pleasant that everyone listening is attracted and influenced.

bhagavatīṁ: She is the divinity in pure feminine form.

avyāja karuṇākaṭākṣīm: Her very sight emanates unconditional compassion

pūrṇabīja rūpa ṣoḍaśanivāsinīṁ: She resides in Mahashodashi mantra.

annapūrṇamṛteśvarīm: She is the queen of amrutam bestowed by Annapurna devi. It also means She is the Empress of the duo Annapurnamba and Amritananda.

It may be noted that all through the dhyana slokam, while Guruji is masculine, He is meditated upon as personification of divinity manifesting in pure feminine form indicating that He is meditated upon as Mother Herself. This also denotes that Guru is none other than Mother Herself.

Jñānāmrutham

Vēyuru Thōli Pangan

Thēvāram

by Virroshi Sriganesh

Pann: Payindhai Gāndhāram
Thālā: Ādi
Composer: Thiru Gnāna Sambantha Mūrti Nāyanār

Thirumurai: 2nd
Padhigam: Kōlāru Padhigam

Thirucchittrambalam

Vēyuru Thōli Pangan Vidamunda Kandan
Miganalla Veenai Thadavi
Māsaru Thingal Gangai Mudimēl Anindhen
Ulamē Pugundha Adhanāl
Gnāyiru Thingal Sevvāi Budhan Vyālan Velli
Sani Pāmbirendum Udanē
Āsaru Nalla Nalla Avai Nalla Nalla
Adiyār Avarkku Migavē! || 1 ||

Thirucchittrambalam

Background Story: During the time Thirugnāna Sambantha Mūrti Nāyanār and Thirunāvukkarasar met in Thiruvengādu, Jainism started to grow and rise within the Pandya Dynasty, leading to King Pandya becoming a Jain himself. Queen Mangayarkkarasiyār and Chief Minister Kulachiraiyār were not pleased with what was occurring, and hence, requested Thirugnāna Sambanthar to visit Madurai. Sambanthar was stopped by Thirunāvukkarasar, who himself has been persecuted by the Jains in the past. He tried his level best to prevent Sambanthar, a very good and young boy, from going to Madurai as he did not want Sambanthar to experience the same. In addition, he mentioned that Sambanthar was not going through an auspicious period astrologically. In response to this, Sambanthar stated that none of the planets can harm any wholehearted devotee of Lord Shiva and sang the Kōlāru Padhigam to complement his explanation.

Benefits: 'Kōl' means planet, usually referring to the negative effects. 'Aru' means remove. Hence, this padhigam helps a devotee remove the negative effects from any planetary motion when sung with utmost bhakti and devotion.

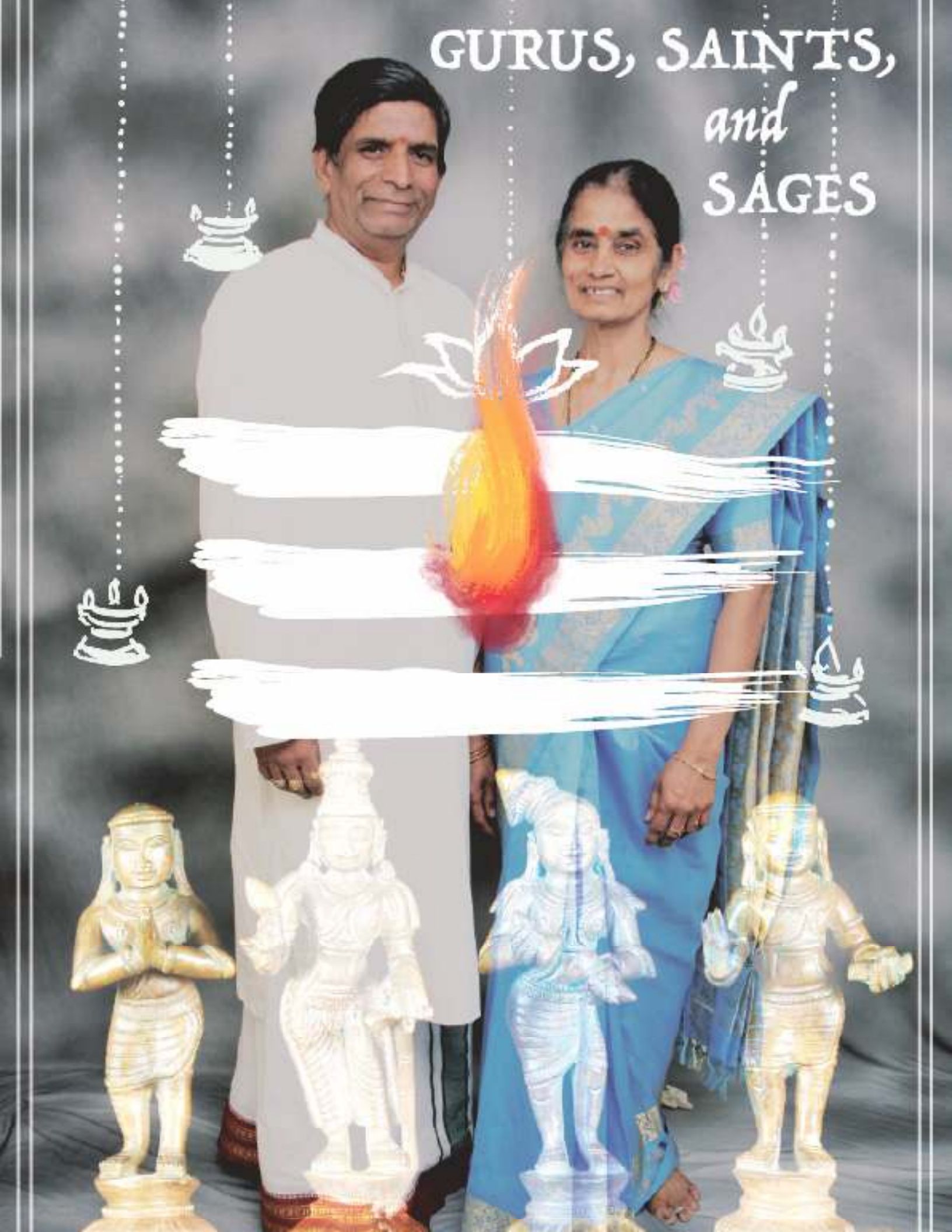
Let's take a look at the meaning to see how Gnāna Sambanthar prayed to Lord Shivā requesting him to relieve King Pāndiyan of his pain and sufferings!

Meaning (word for word and verses):

Vēyuru	Bamboo-like shoulders
Thōli	Female
Pangan	The One who shares a portion
Vidam	Poison
Unda	Swallow
Kandan	The One with the neck
Miganalla	Faultless
Veenai	Veena, the instrument
Thadavi	Gently plays
Vēyuru Thōli Pangan Vidamunda Kandan Miganalla Veenai Thadavi	The One who has a woman (Parvati) with bamboo-like shoulders as a part of His body; the One with a throat stained from swallowing poison; the One who gently plays the Veena flawlessly
Māsaru	Blemishless/spotless
Thingal	Moon
Gangai	Ganga Devi
Mudimēl	On top of head
Anindhu	Wears
En	My
Ulamē	Mind/Heart
Pugundha	Entered
Adhanāl	Therefore
Māsaru Thingal Gangai Mudimēl Anindhen Ulamē Pugundha Adhanāl	The One who wears the blemishless moon and Ganga on His head entered into my heart, and therefore …
Gnāyiru	Sun
Thingal	Moon
Sevvāi	Mars
Budhan	Mercury
Vyālan	Jupiter
Velli	Venus
Sani	Saturn
Pāmbu	Snakes
Irandum	Two/both
Udanē	With/and

Gnāyiru Thingal Sevvāi Budhan Vyālan Velli Sani Pāmbirendum Udanē	[Therefore,] with forces like the Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn and the two snakes (Rahu and Ketu) …
Āsaru	Cut away desires
Nalla Nalla	Good
Avai	They
Nalla Nalla	Good
Adiyār	Devotees
Avarkku	For them [devotees]
Migavē	Very good
Āsaru Nalla Nalla Avai Nalla Nalla Adiyār Avarkku Migavē	Therefore, with forwards like the Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn and the two snakes (Rahu and Ketu), nothing will do anything evil once you cut away desires. This is good, very good, to devotees of Lord Shivā.

GURUS, SAINTS, *and* SAGES



In Memory of Sri Amma

Sri Amma will forever be in our hearts. She has touched us all in so many ways. In Her memory, a few of the *Sri Chakra* community members have shared their personal experiences with Sri Amma! We sincerely thank all the contributors for sharing their special memories with the *Sri Chakra*!

Sri Amma's Paadams - Another Perspective (Part 1)

by Bhuvana Subramanian

In 2003, Raju Venkatraman (New Jersey) called me one night and mentioned he needed Sri Amma's paadams made. He asked if I knew any jewelers in Toronto that will be able to do this task with care. As he called me late in the night, we decided to continue the phone call the next morning.

The next morning, Sri Amma called me around 8:30 AM. I still remember this call as if She called me this morning. In Her divine voice she said "Bhuvana, I want you to get my paadams made." She explained in detail how the paadams should be made and specified that they should be made out of silver. Since I was living in St. Catharines, Ontario at the time, I asked Amma if I can approach another person to help coordinate the task with a jeweler. She agreed.

Within a few hours, Raju sent me all the measurements via fax. Mind you, this was still a time when you couldn't send a digital picture by email or phone! And to top this, Sri Amma wanted the paadams made within a few days, as per Her instructions. I didn't have much resources to find a jeweler in such short notice.

Once I received the fax, I drove from St. Catharines to Toronto to meet Perinpanathan (Kumaran's father) to ask for help to coordinate this task. Before I left St. Catharines, I called Perinpanathan and briefed him on the details of the task at hand. To make use of the very little time we had, Perinpanathan took time off work and started making calls to a few jewelers he had worked with. Most of the calls to potential jewelers were made prior to my arrival at his home. We made a couple more calls to finalize details with potential jewelers and off we left to visit our first jewelry.

We met the jeweler and explained the detail for the work that was required. After explaining who Sri Amma was, we instructed the paadams had to be made within two days. We also advised that during this time, the jeweler and anyone else involved in the making had to meet the requirements Sri Amma had given while making the paadams. The requirements included eating only satvic foods until the divine paadams were made.

The next morning, I got a phone call from the jeweler who mentioned that we can pick up the paadams at 8:30 PM. Everything was going so smoothly following everything Sri Amma mentioned. At 3 PM, I picked up my son, Sreekanth, from school in St. Catharines and drove to Toronto. On my way to Toronto, I received a phone call from Sri Amma. I informed Her that I was on my way back to Toronto to pick up the paadams as they would be ready by 8:30 PM. That was when Sri Amma then mentioned that She wanted the silver paadams to be gold plated. The tone of my reply of "sure" was worrisome given that it was already the evening and there was very little time left for me to go and find someone for gold plating. She sensed the concern in my voice and told me not to worry and that everything would be fine.

Did they get the Paadam gold plated on time?
Watch out for the next issue of the Sri Chakra to find out more about what happened with Sri Amma's Paadams!

In Memory of Sri Amma

Sri Amma will forever be in our hearts. She has touched us all in so many ways. In Her memory, we are compiling a special section in our upcoming issues of the *Sri Chakra*. If you would like to share your experiences with the *Sri Chakra* community, we request you to send us a short article describing your special memories.

Deadline: October 15, 2019
Length: ~ 100 - 500 words (about 1 pargraph to 1 page)

To Submit: e-mail your contributions to srichakra@srividya.org

naivedyam
nivedayami

Ellu Urundai

by Bharathi Ramanakumaran

Always remember not to smell or taste food when it is being made as Naivedyam. In addition, always think pure thoughts and make the Naivedyam whole-heartedly. A good way to do this is to chant manthras or slokas that you may know or the nama of your ishta devata.

***We thank Bharathi Ramanakumaran and the Thulasi Kitchen Coordinators for providing this recipe to the* Sri Chakra.**

What is Ellu Urundai?
Sesame Brittle

For which deities is Ellu Urundai usually offered to?
Ganapathi

When can you offer Tomato Saadam?
Puja, Homam

What are some festivals you can offer Tomato Saadam for?
Vinayaka Chathurthi

Prep Time	*Cook Time*	*Serves:*
1 minute	15 minutes	5 people

Ingredients:

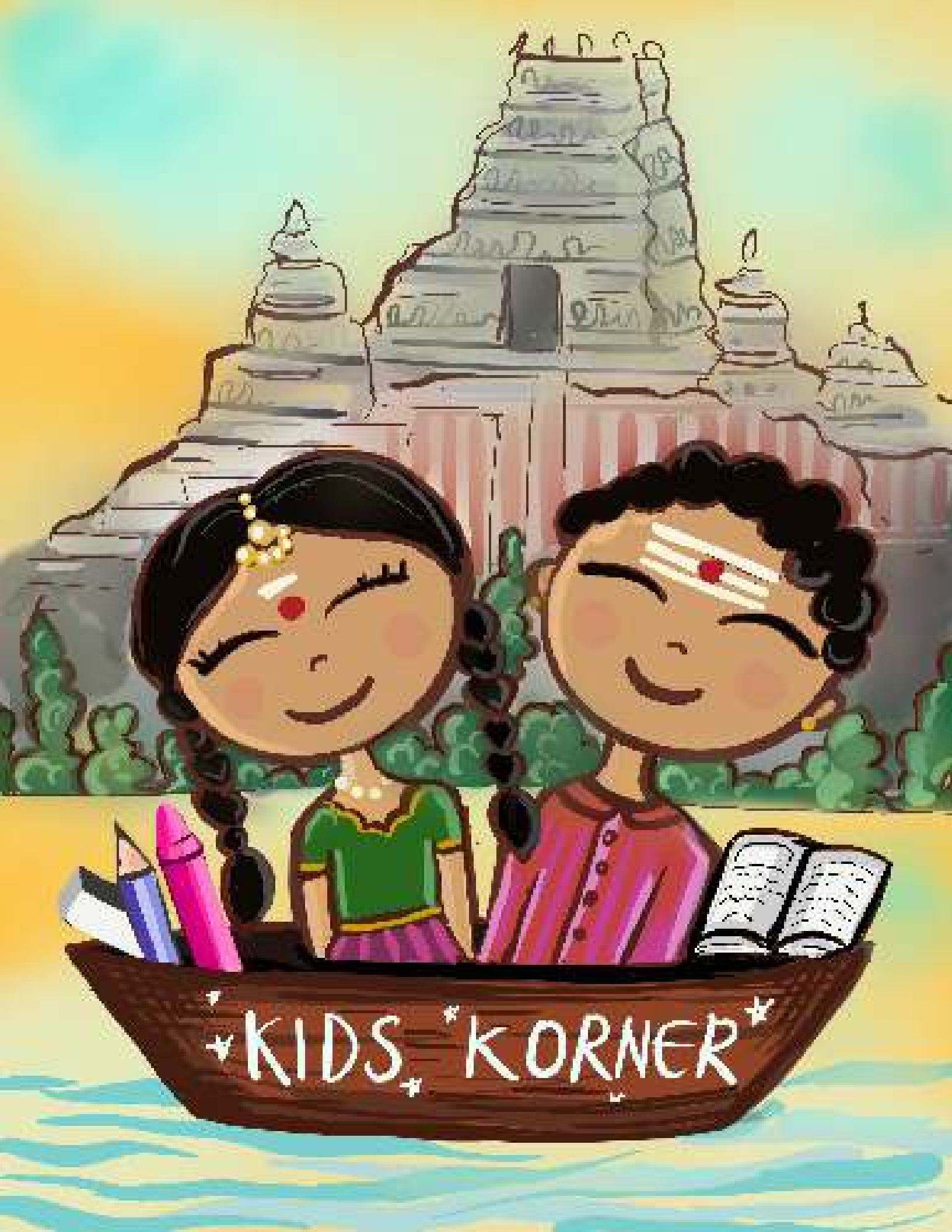
4 cups Sesame Seeds
1.5 cups Jaggery
1 cup Water
2 cups of Ghee

Instructions:

1. Clean the sesame seeds in water and then, strain the water. (If they are clean, you can directly go to step 2).
2. In a deep non-stick pan, sauté the sesame seeds for about 2 minutes on low flame until the water evaporates.
3. Once the sesame seeds start popping and turn aromatic, take it off the flame and let it cool down.
4. In a new pan over a medium flame, melt jaggery with a cup of water.
5. Strain to remove scum.
6. Stir consistenyl for about 8-10 minutes or until the syrup becomes thick and sticky.
7. Test the consistency by putting in a drop of the syrup into a bowl of water. Ensure that it is firm enough to be rolled into a tiny ball.

8. Take the syrup off the flame and add the roasted sesame seeds into the hot jaggery sauce. Mix thoroughly.
9. Rub some ghee on your palms and prepare firm golf-size balls whilst still hot.
10. Set aside and let it cool.
11. Add a few drops of ghee and offer it to the Devi.

Amrta Mahā Naivēdyam Nivēdayāmi!

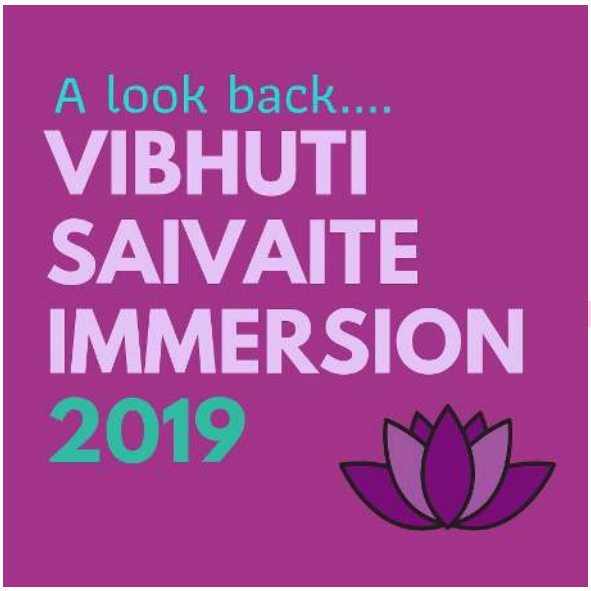

KIDS KORNER

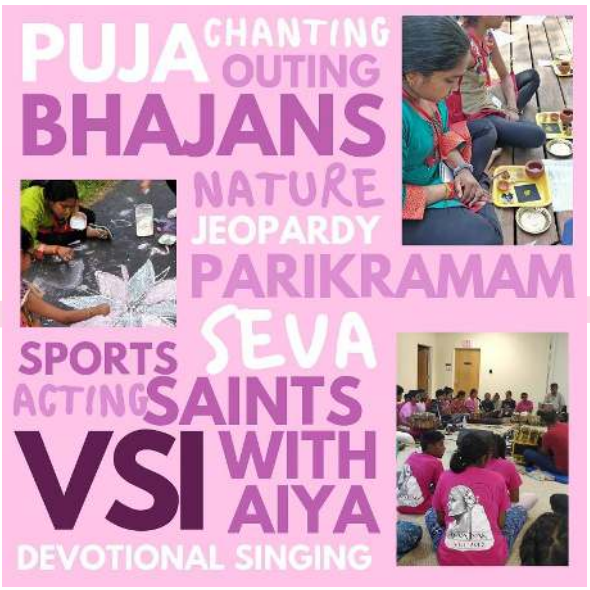
Temple's Instagram

If you haven't followed us yet, you might want to do so soon! You're missing out on beautiful pictures of the Devi, from festivals, infographics on festivals and spiritual content and many more!

Start following us!

Here is some information about the temple's **Vibhuti Saivaite Immersion (VSI)**, the annual camp that occurs for kids between the ages of 10 and 18. Continue reading to find out more about VSI:



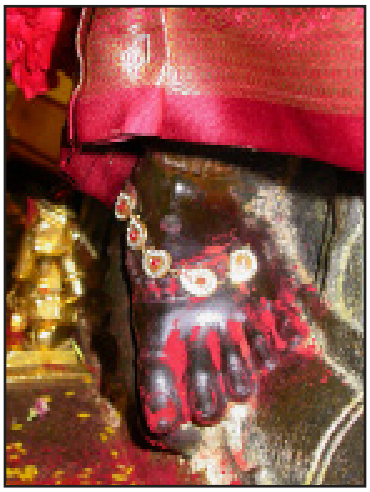


ABOUT VSI

The program is known as "Vibhuti Saivaite Immersion," or "VSI," because we strive to immerse the kids in the rich traditions of Saiva culture. As our Temple is a "Learning Temple," it's an ideal place for kids to get involved and truly experience the wealth of Saiva philosophy and worship

Here is some information about the **Shata Chandi** that took place at the temple in August. It was an all-female event. Continue reading to find out more about this year's Shata Chandi:

In this Sata Chandi, all of the ritwiks, pujacharyas and homa kartas were women. To our knowledge, **this was the first time such an event has been held anywhere in the world!** The ladies recited vedic suktams and Devi Mahatmyam more than the required 100 times! The All-Women Sata Chandi was jointly conducted by the Sri Vidya Temple and the GRD Iyers GuruCool.



Sri Gurubhyo Namaha