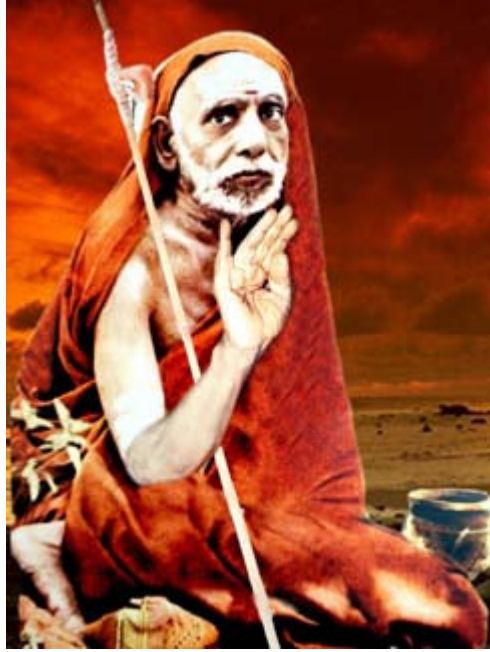


Shree Gurubyoh Namah

Pujya Sri Mahaswamy Divya Charitram



Sri Sambamoorthi Shastrigal, Sri Kuppaswamy Iyer, "Sollin Selvan" P.N.Parasuraman

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1. Birth – Youth – Education

Ancestors

The holiest of holy days was heralded in the year of Jaya, on the eighth day of the lunar month of Vaikasi, on Sunday (20th May, 1894), when the constellation Anusham was shining in the sky. This day was the blessed day when Srimad Chandrashekarendra Saraswathi Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya, the 68th Acharya Swamigal of Sri Kamakoti Peetam, established by Sri Adi Sankara, was born into this world. This auspicious event took place in the house of Govindarayar, located in the southern tip of an agraharam in Nawab Thoppu, in the town of Vizhuppuram in South Arcot district. A Brahman named Subramania Shastrigal and his devout wife Mahalakshmi Ammaiyyar had the good fortune of bringing this holy man into this world, as their second son.

Sri Swamigal, in His purvashramam, belonged to the Hoysala Karnataka Smartha Brahmin community. This community had migrated from Karnataka and settled in the Chola kingdom, near Cauveri during a time when a prominent member of the community, Govinda Deekshithar was a minister to the Tanjore Nayak kings. One of the branches of this community settled in the holy place of Thiruvidadaimaruthur. It is from this branch that our Swamiji's ancestors hailed. Some of the family members held prominent posts in the court of Maratha King Amarasimha Maharaja (Sarabhoji Maharaja's uncle), who ruled over Thiruvidadaimaruthur. In this glorious family, was born Ganapathi Shastrigal, our Swamiji's grand father.

Grandfather Ganapathi Shastrigal

Ganapathi Shastrigal was well versed in Shastras and trained in Rig Veda at an early age. He was fluent in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada Maharashtra as well as being an able administrator. The 64th Acharya Swamy of Kamakoti Peetam, Sri Chandrashekarendra Saraswathi Swamigal, discovering his efficiency, appointed him as the Chief Executive Officer of the mutt in 1835. He occupied this post for more than 50 years during the tenure of 64th and 65th Peetathipathi.¹ The 64th Acharya Swamiji performed the kumbabhishekam of the Kancheepuram Kamakshi Amman temple in 1840 and the Thatanga prathishtai of Sri Akhilandeswari Amman in 1848. Ganapathi Shastrigal helped to conduct these two events successfully and obtained Swamiji's blessings. Moreover, he was instrumental in effecting important events that were beneficial to the mutt in the long term. Let's take a look at one of the key events here:

The 64th Acharya Swamy, Srimad Chandrashekarendra Saraswathi Swamigal camped in Thiruvanakaval between 1844 and 1848 at Kanchi Sankara mutt in North

¹ Sri Maha Devendra Saraswathi Swamigal, 65th Peetathipathi, in his purvashrama was Ganapathy Shastrigal's brother's son.

Street. The ear rings of Sri Akhilandeswari, the residing deity of Thiruvanakaval, had to be repaired and prathishta of the ear rings had to be performed again. The temple officials and authorities requested Swamigal's to accomplish these events and he accepted their invitation.

At that time, officials of Sringeri mutt filed a case at Tiruchirapalli Sathar Ameen court claiming that the right to perform Thatanga Prathishta to Ambal rested with their Acharya only. The judge presiding at that court rejected their claim on 17th October, 1846. The officials of Sringeri mutt filed an appeal at Tiruchi civil court. The civil court judge upheld the lower court's decision and rejected the appeal on January 12th, 1848. Sesha Josyar, the Agent of Sringeri mutt, then filed special appeal with Chennai Sadar Adalat court (then High Court) on 11-9-1848. The High court also rejected the case. But a petition was filed to review the decision and the petition was duly rejected. It is to be noted that all judges who ruled against the Sringeri Mutt were not Hindus.

After the conclusion of the above said event, the 64th Acharya conducted the Thatanga Prathishta of Ambal's ear rings in the proper way after repairing the same, during the later part of the year 1848.

The Sri Mutt was facing difficult times financially after bearing the expenses of a long legal battle, the Thatanga Prathishta and also because the Acharya was stationed in one place. During that time, Acharya was said to have told Ganapathy Shastrigal, "I am getting old and the debts of the mutt are increasing. Taking these into consideration, I feel I should have let Sringeri Swamigal perform the Thatanga Prathishtai".

Immediately following this event, Ganapathy Shastrigal was not found anywhere around the mutt for few days. When he returned, he was asked about his sudden trip. Ganapathy Shastrigal had gone to visit Tanjore palace to find out about the feasibility of the Acharya's visit to the palace on the way from Thiruvanakaval to Kumbakonam. He was informed by the King and his officials that the visit was not possible.

It was decided that Swamigal and his followers would leave for Kumbakonam via Thiruvaiyar in a couple of days. On the appointed day, the caravan including carts belonging to Sri Mutt, elephants, horses, etc were traveling on the way to Thiruvaiyar. At the cross roads to go to Thiruvaiyar, the officials from Tanjore palace waylaid the mutt caravan and ordered them to turn towards Tanjore. Carts belonging to Sri Mutt were forced to travel towards Tanjore. After some time, when Acharya Swamy reached the Thiruvaiyar / Tanjore crossroads, he was received and welcomed with great respect by the Diwan, palace officials and Vedic scholars and taken to Tanjore.

Acharya Swamy was camped at Tanjore for more than a week. Special food was provided to everyone belonging to Sri Mutt as well as the general public at Shreyas Chathiram, Vennathangarai Chathiram and Rathri Chathiram.

On the night before His departure, Sri Swamy was taken on a procession on an elephant with the king's son-in-law seated behind His Holiness. On another elephant, the king followed along with Ganapathy Shastrigal and the procession continued around all the four streets and thousands of people gathered to watch the glorious sight.

Next morning, when Sri Swamigal was about to leave the palace, He was requested to sit in an Asana under a tree. The king Shivaji Raja showered Sri Swamigal with small gold flowers which covered up to His Holiness' neck. The sudden change in the king's attitude that had previously rejected Ganapathi Shastrigal's proposal of Sri Acharya's Tanjore visit was revealed at that time.

Two days before Sri Swamiji left Thiruvanaikaval, the king had a dream where someone kept asking him how he could not do aradhana for Sri Acharyal and Chandramouliswarar Swamy when they were passing by to go to Thiruvaiyar that is so close to Tanjore. Immediately Shivajiraja made all arrangements including the stay and Kanagabhishekham.

Even though, Sri Swamigal was not keen on keeping the gold from kanagabhishekham, Ganapathi Shastrigal wanted to use the money to obtain revenue yielding land for the mutt. After finally obtaining the consent of Sri Swamy, Ganapathy Shastrigal consulted Perunilakizhar Moopnar from Kapisthalam. He purchased 250 acres of fertile lands belonging to Anaikudi Ramaswamy Pillai at Karuppur, which is situated two miles from Tanjore. The lands in this village are the most extensive and most profitable of all of the mutt's properties. It is believed that the lands in Karuppur were purchased within a few years of the ascension of monastery by 65th Peetathipathi of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, Sri Maha Devendra Saraswathi Swamigal.

Father Subramania Shastrigal

Ganapathi Shastrigal had three sons, namely, Subramania Shastrigal, Ramanatha Shastrigal and Sundaramoorthi Shastrigal. The eldest of the three, Subramania Shastrigal was Swamiji's father. He was born in the year 1855, had upanayanam performed at an appropriate age and obtained Vedic instruction. Ganapathi Shastrigal also provided Anglo-education for his son. In the year 1872, Subramania Shastrigal matriculated in the first place from Kumbakonam Government Kalasala.

Leaving Kalasala, Subramania Shastrigal joined as a teacher at a school started by Rao Bahadur Appu Shastrigal, Swaminatha Iyer and other prominent persons at Kumbeswara Swamy South Street, Kumbakonam. He got this job with a recommendation from the principal of Kumbakonam Government Kalasala, Sri.Gopal Rao. The same school today goes by the name of Negative High School in Kumbakonam. After working there for sometime, he was appointed to teach the famous land lord Thyagaraja Mudaliar at Kavalakudi village near Thiruvarur. He worked there for a few years and then joined the government education department as a teacher. Later, he was promoted to supervisor and moved around Virudachalam in South Arcot district, Chidambaram, Parangipettai, and Vizhuppam. Tindivanam, Vikravandi and Manjakuppam for around 30 years.

Mother Mahalakshmi Ammal

Our Swamiji's maternal ancestors belonged to the illustrious Raja Govinda Dikshithar who was a very able administrator and minister in King Sevappa Nayakar, the first Nayakar king to rule Tanjore. Govinda Dikshithar belonged to Upamanyu gothram, conducted various yegnas and was considered a Maha Vidwan. During his times, he was very well known by another name 'Ayyan'. Around Chola kingdom, there are many places named after him, like Ayyankulam, Ayyan Vaikkal, Ayyan street, Ayyan kadai, etc. He claims the acclamation of building various mandapams and stone steps along the

banks of Cauveri in Chola kingdom. He also has the credit of repairing temples in Thiruvannamalai and other temples around Chola nadu. He has also dug tanks and canals in lots of places.

Govinda Dikshithar retired to a famous place Pateeswaram, near Kumbakonam. Even today, his wife's and his full size statues can be found inside Shiva temple here. Our Swamiji's mother Mahalakshmi Ammal belonged to this Dikshithar lineage.

Mahalakshmi Ammal was born to Nageswara Shastri and his dharmapatni Meenakshi Ammaiyar at the beautiful village of Eechangudi, that is four miles east of Thiruvaiyar and on the northern banks of Cauveri.

Nageswara Shastrigal hailed in Upamanyu Vasishta gothram, did adhyayanam of Rig Veda and was well versed in Dharma Shastras. Numerous families in Kumbakonam area respected him and considered him their Acharya. One of the families is that of our Swamiji's grandfather Ganapathi Shastrigal. Once, when Nageswara Shastrigal visited Ganapathi Shastrigal's house for an occasion, he expressed his wish to give his daughter Mahalakshmi's hand in marriage to their son Subramanian. Who in their right mind would reject Mahalakshmi knocking on their front door? Moreover, an offer from his Acharya to wed his own daughter to his son was not something Ganapathi Shastrigal could refuse. The wedding of Mahalakshmi Ammaiyar in her 7th year and Subramania Shastrigal in his 17th year took place at Eechangudi.

Mahalakshmi Ammaiyar was a very humble woman, well versed in prayers and hymns in Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit languages. She spent her time taking care of her husband's needs and bringing her children up with lot of care and attention. She, also, performed all the pujas and vratas observed by women in the appropriate times. Especially, she was known to keep equilibrium without being carried away by good times or bad times, leaving it all to God. She had five siblings, two girls and three boys. Her last brother Subramania Shastrigal was trained in Rig Veda, Shastras, and South Indian languages and spent more than 60 years working in the Mutt.

Birth – Youth

The holy birth of our Swamiji took place at Vizhuppuram in the Salivahana Sahaptham 1817- year of Jaya, month of Vaikasi, 8th day (20th May, 1894). He was born as the second son to his father who was working as Supervisor of Schools at Vizhuppuram. Having named his first son Ganapathi, Subramania Shastrigal named his second son after the residing deity of Swamigal, also their Kula deity, the holy name of 'Swaminathan'.

Shastrigal had four sons and a daughter apart from our Swamigal. They were our Swamiji's elder brother Ganapathi Shastri, younger siblings Lalithambal Ammaiyar, Sambamoorthy Shastri, Sadashiva Shastri alias Sivam, Krishnamurthy Shastri alias Kunju Shastri. Krishnamurthy Shastri learnt Rig Veda from the renowned Mayavaram BrahmaShri Krishna Shastrigal who had served in the Mutt for a long time. He also had the honor of teaching Vedas to our present Peetathipathi Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Swamigal in His youth. Subramania Shastri passed away in his 74th year in July, 1929.

Subramania Shastri performed all samskaras due to by a father in the appropriate age including performing upanayanam for Swaminathan in 1905, at Tindivanam. The 66th

Acharya Swamigal of the Peetam had blessed and sent his prasadam for Swaminathan at the time of his upanayanam. Swaminathan also received gifts on this occasion from Shastri's friend, the zamindar of Soonampet, Diwan Bahadur Arunachala Mudaliar.

Swaminathan's brilliance prompted Shastrigal to home school him till the age of eight. He also trained the boy in music at a very young age. **Demonstrating the phrase that "proof of the crop can be seen in its infancy"; Swaminathan was brilliant and was capable of grasping and remembering anything that he saw or heard just once.** Mahalakshmi Ammal would teach all the hymns and stotras that she knew to the kids. Swaminathan like to learn these stotrams very much, but did not get the opportunity to learn Sanskrit at that time. When his father was stationed at Tindivanam, he was enrolled into second form at Arcot American Mission High School for the first time. Swaminathan was popular for his witticism, humor and especially epigrammatic speaking conveying multiple meaning in a sentence. His father considered him a favorite amongst the siblings and affectionately called him a name after a parrot.

Studies and Prizes

Swaminathan excelled in studies coming first in the class, first in all exams in every grade, won all trophies in every annual day celebrations. He even got the first prize in learning the Bible. All the Christian teachers treated him with affection. Maybe, without realizing it, they were proud of having a future Saint as their student in their school. When Swaminathan was studying in third form, the assistant superintendent of schools, Manjakuppam Singaravelu Mudaliar came to the school for inspection. He was attracted by the spark in Swaminathan's face and was amazed at the way he answered all his questions without hesitation. He took Swaminathan with him in his rounds to higher classes, introduced Swaminathan to other teachers and students, asked questions from the higher standard curriculum and was astounded when young Swaminathan answered every question. When he enquired about the boy and found that Swaminathan was the son of Subramania Shastri who worked for him, he called Shastri and told him that his son was going to become a genius one day. Subramania Shastri was very pleased at this comment and thanked him profusely. It did not occur to Subramania Shastri that his son was going to become the Jnana Guru of the whole world. He just thought that Swaminathan would one day hold a very high position in the government....

Acting in a Shakespearean Play

In 1906. when Swaminathan was in fourth form, the students were arranging to stage the Shakespearean play 'King John' for the annual day celebrations. They could not find a right person to play the lead role of Prince Arthur. The principal remembered the twelve year old Swaminathan. He called him and asked him to take up this role. Swaminathan was very proud that the principal would ask him to play the role. But his class teacher refused to allow him to participate due to his young age. Swaminathan

conveyed the principal's message to his parents and requested them to stitch the appropriate costume for the character. His conservative parents did not want their son to act in a play; however, they did not have the heart to reject their favorite son's aspirations. So, they gave their permission to Swaminathan's acting in the play and also contributed towards his costumes. Swaminathan memorized all the dialogues of the play in just two days. Verbose Swaminathan performed exceptionally and got the commendation of all. He got applause for his monologues and acting and ended up getting the first prize for this play. The teachers visited Shastrigal's house the next morning and conveyed their appreciation for Swaminathan's performance in the play.

2. Guru's Darshan – Renunciation – Head of Kamakoti Peetam

In the year of Vishwavasu (1906), young Swaminathan's father, Sri Subramania Shastrigal took his family with him to obtain the darshan of then Sankaracharya, Sri Chandrashekarendra Saraswathi, and the 66th Peetadhipathi of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam. He was camping in a small town called Perumukkal, near Tindivanam. The Acharya, while performing his nithya puja, bestowed his benevolent grace upon young Swaminathan. After the conclusion of the puja, the Swamigal spoke to Sri Subramania Shastrigal and made kind enquiries about his family. Perhaps he saw in this boy, a worthy successor to himself who was fit to adorn the Kamakoti Peetam. The events that unfolded after this first meeting make us wonder whether the Swamigal had made the decision at that moment itself.

Sri Subramania Shastrigal and his family stayed on in Perumukkal for two days to get the benefit of Swamigal's continued darshan. During this occasion, the Acharya interacted closely with young Swaminathan and asked him many questions. Pleased with the young boy's brilliance and attractive personality, Sri Acharya was heard commenting: "He will turn out to be a Maha Purusha." Hearing this, his father's pleasure knew no bounds. However, he had absolutely no inkling that his 13 year old son would be leaving him and his family soon to obtain sannyas. He took leave from the Acharya and returned to Tindivanam where he was stationed for work. The Acharya had, meanwhile, requested Sri Subramania Shastrigal to bring Swaminathan frequently to the mutt. As per his request, Shastrigal took his son several times to get Acharya's darshan. During these frequent meetings, the grace of the Guru started flowing in full abundance over young Swaminathan.

One day, Swaminathan was found missing from his house in Tindivanam. His parents were very anxious and they searched everywhere including wells and ponds in the vicinity. But he was nowhere to be found. His parents were beside themselves with anxiety, unable to eat or sleep. Two days later, a messenger came from the Acharya's camp which was five miles away. He conveyed the news that Swaminathan had come there for the Acharya's darshan on his own, and he was safe. He added that the Acharya had sent him to convey this message to the parents. One cannot measure the relief and happiness of his parents and friends on hearing the news. Swaminathan was sent home from the mutt two days later.

Renunciation - Pontification

In the first week of February in 1907, Sri Subramania Shastrigal's house received a telegram from the Sri Mutt camp. The telegram requested Shastrigal to come to the mutt immediately and to Swaminathan. However, Sri Subramania Shastrigal had gone to Tiruchi on official work at that time. Assuming that the Acharya must have summoned him for some important purpose, Sri Subramania Shastrigal's friends arranged for Swaminathan to travel by steam engine to Kanchipuram. The Acharya was camped at

Kalavai, which was 30 miles from Kanchipuram, the mutt officials, without divulging any information to Swaminathan's mother, immediately took Swaminathan in a separate horse cart, and headed straight out to Kalavai.

At the time that the telegram was sent to Tindivanam, the Acharya Swamiji's health was in decline. Believing that his time was limited, the Acharya had sent the summons to Tindivanam with the intention of installing Swaminathan as the next Acharya. However, the 66th Acharya unexpectedly attained siddhi on Maha Krishna Ashatami in the Prabhava year, well before Swaminathan's arrival. Before attaining siddhi, he initiated an 18 year old brahmachari, Sri Lakshmikanthan, who was well versed in Rig Veda and was staying in the mutt, serving him as his sishya. It is the tradition of the Kamakoti Acharya Parampara that they are Rig Vedics who take sannyas from the brahmacharya ashram itself. The 67th Acharya adorned the Sri Kamakoti Peetam for seven days. Having served his Guru during his illness, he unexpectedly contracted the illness as well and attained siddhi after seven days. Before attaining siddhi, in accordance with his Guru's wishes, he took a mental sankalpa, appointing young Swaminathan as the next Peetathipathi.

Swaminathan was later formally initiated into the sannyas ashram. This holy event took place on the second Wednesday of the lunar month of Maasi, in the Prabhava year (February 13, 1907) when he was just 13 years old. He took the name of Sri Chandrashekarendra Saraswathi and became the 68th Shankaracharya to grace the Sri Kamakoti Peetam.

An incident happened before Swamigal took sannyas which was an unforgettable and heart warming in nature. It is not an ordinary task to take upon one self the discipline of an ascetic with restrictions on food, rigors of religious schedule, daily pujas and meditation at such an early age of 13. The mother and father could not bear to let their most lovable son take up grueling lifestyle of a sannyasi nor could they bear to part him. On the other hand, the mutt's administrators were persuading them to give their permission saying "When you have three other sons, what is your hesitation to give up one son for the sake of goodness of this world and to bless the devotees and followers of this mutt?" They were perturbed and could not come to a conclusion immediately. At this time, Swaminathan prostrated to them and politely said "Please do not hesitate. I have the complete blessing of my Gurunathar and I will preserve this. Please give your permissions whole heartedly". There is no doubt that his words melted his parents' hearts and made them give their approval for the change, but never saw him again. Swaminathan who was transformed to appear like Adi Sankara with shaved head, kamandalu, saffron robes and staff, was never seen by his parents. Traditionally, relatives keep their distances from sannyasis as they are required to give up all emotional attachments. We wonder if our swamigal's parents were proud of their son for taking up the task of eradicating the sorrows of the people of this world or if they were miserable that they cannot see their own son while the rest of the world praises and adores him. But one thing was certain. In future, whenever somebody came up to them and enquired about Swamigal, both of them maintained silence.

An excerpt of how he became the 68th pontiff was best told by Acharya himself and published in Bhavan's Journal, Bombay:

“ In the beginning of the year 1907, when I was studying in a Christian Mission School at Tindivanam, a town in South Arcot District, I heard one day that the Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam who was amidst us in our town in the previous year, attained siddhi at Kalavai, a village about 10 miles from Arcot and 25 miles from Kanchipuram. Information was received that a maternal cousin of mine who, after some study in Rig Veda, had joined the camp of the Acharya offering his services to him, was installed on the Peetam.”

“He was the only son of the widowed and destitute sister of my mother and there was not a soul in the camp to console her. At this juncture, my father who was a supervisor of schools in the Tindivanam taluk, planned to proceed with his family to Kalavai, some 60 miles from Tindivanam, in his own bullock cart. But on account of an educational conference at Tiruchirapalli, he cancelled the programme.”

“My mother with myself and other children started to Kalavai to console her sister on her son assuming sannyas ashram. We traveled by rail to Kanchipuram, and halted at Sankaracharya mutt there. I had my ablutions at the Kumara-koshta Tirtha. A carriage of the Mutt had come there from Kalavai with persons to buy articles for the Maha Pooja on the 10th day after the passing away of the late Acharya Paramaguru. But one of them, a hereditary Maistri of the mutt, asked me to accompany him. A separate cart was engaged for the rest of the family to follow me.”

“During our journey, the maistri hinted to me that I might not return home and that the rest of my life might have to be spent in the mutt itself. At first I thought that my elder cousin having become the head of the mutt, it might have been his wish that I was to live with him. I was then only 13 years of age and so I wondered as to what use I might be to him in the institution.”

“But the maistri gradually began to clarify as miles rolled on, that the Acharya, my cousin in the poorvashram had fever which developed into delirium and that was why I was being separated from the family to be quickly taken to Kalavai. He told me that he was commissioned to go to Tindivanam and fetch me, but he was able to meet me at Kanchipuram itself. I was stunned by this unexpected turn of events. I lay in a kneeling posture in the cart itself, shocked as I was, repeating Rama Rama, the only spiritual prayer I knew, during the rest of the journey.”

“My mother and the other children came some time later only to find that instead of her mission of consoling her sister, she herself was placed in the state of having to be consoled by someone else.”

“My robes of sannyas were not the result of any renunciation on my part, nor had I the advantage of living under a Guru for any length of time. I was surrounded from the very first day of sannyas by all the comforts and responsibilities of a gorgeous court.”

Visit to Kumbakonam

In the eighteenth century, under the rule of Maharashtra kings in Tanjore, the official site of the Kamakoti Peetam was moved temporarily from Kancheepuram to Tanjore owing to the conflicts in the country in that period. This event happened during the 62nd Acharya's period. He was enroute to Kumbakonam from Kancheepuram, when he was requested by the Lord of Udayarpalayam to stay in their place for sometime. He

complied with the Lord's request and stayed there for sometime as well as in Tanjore. Later, he moved to the mutt building established by then King of Tanjore in the banks of Cauveri. Since that time, Kumbakonam was the temporary place of administrative headquarters of the mutt.

Our Acharya left for Kumbakonam after being pontificated. On the way, he stayed for three days at Tindivanam, the place where his parents were residing. The townsfolk started preparations to receive him even a week before. Hordes of people kept coming to have darshan of Swamiji. They came to have the darshan of Acharya performing puja to the mutt's residing deities Sri Chandramouliswarar, Sri Thirupurasundari Ambal.

The visit to Tindivanam in 1907 by our Swamigal had special implications. The town people who had since seen Swaminathan as a baby, as young boy of twelve years old were now seeing him as Acharya who is a teacher for the whole world. Men, women, children, old people, youngsters all gathered with pride that Swamigal is from Tindivanam and paid their respect to him. The teachers and students from Arcot American mission high school eagerly wanted to see our Swamigal. He spoke to each teacher individually, gave them gifts and made them very happy. He gave darshan to all the students and gave them gifts.

Even though the ascetics who are sitting on the Acharya Peetam are sannyasis, it is the culture in our country to treat them like emperors as they have taken the vow to protect the world. In those days, there were elephants, horses, camels, **chivigai, ambari, golden thadi, silver thadi, instruments like beri, and sangam** were in the mutt.

Devotees of the mutt residing in Kumbakonam wished to celebrate the pontification of Sri Swamigal in a grand manner in Kumbakonam. The grand celebration was held in the mutt's auspices on the 27th day of the month of Chitrai in the year Pilavangam (9-5-1907). Innumerable people from different parts of the country participated in this celebration. The last king of Tanjore Shivaji Maharaja sent both his queens on his behalf to pay princely respects to Swamigal. Special puja services were held around all the temples. Swamigal went to all the temples that day and had darshan. Annadanam was given to thousands of devotees who visited the mutt on that day. Artists and learned scholars were honored with gifts on that day.

During appointed auspicious time, our Swamigal had abhishekam done with the waters of Ganges, after which, he was seated on a throne. At that time, all devotees paid their respects and gifts to Swamigal. The picture of Swamigal being taken around in a grand procession on the mutt's elephant that night was memorable and etched in the minds of devotees gathered there. This is how our Swamigal took upon the title of "Jagadguru" at the young age of thirteen and started his reign at that moment.

3. First Vijaya Yatra

The peetathipathis of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam had taken upon themselves as part of their pontifical duties, traveling around, giving audience to people, giving them advice and encouraging their spiritual growth. Our Swamigal also wanted to take on such a journey after becoming the Peetathipathi.

The pilgrimage temple Thiruvanaikaval, situated near Thiruchirapalli was a very famous place said to have been built by Kochengad Chozhan in the sangam times. Adi Sankara had performed Thatanga prathishtai to the Sri Akhilandeswari Ambal in that temple. The S.Ram family from Kanadukathan had spent lakhs of rupees in renovating the temple and had arranged for its kumbabhishekam to be conducted in February of 1908. It was a well known event of that period. Sri Saradha mutt Peetadhipathi, Jagadguru Sri Narasimha Bharathi Swamigal also graced this event with his presence. Specially appointed administrative officer Sri Rajam Iyer took care of all arrangements for the kumbabhishekam.

An invitation was sent to the young Swamigal to participate in the kumbabhishekam. For Swamigal who was already eager to go on a yatra, this turned out to be an opportune reason. He left Kumbakonam on an auspicious day, reached a week before the event and was witness to the successful completion of the kumbabhishekam. After the event, Swamigal stayed for a couple of days at Panda mangalam agraharam, which is situated close to the Uraiyur, the historic capital of Chola kings.

Darshan of Paramaguru's Adhishtanam

Swamigal wanted to have darshan of the Adhishtanam of 65th Acharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, Sri Maha Devendra Saraswathi Swamigal. This adhishtanam is situated in the village of Ilayathangudi, located in Ramanathapuram district. Enroute, he passed Kadiyapatti, Konapattu, Keezha Sevalpatti and other villages belonging to Chettinadu where he was received with honors by the villagers as well as prominent members of the Chettinadu community. While he stayed few days in these places, he was persuaded to stay for 15 days at Pudukottai. Both the royalty and the people of Pudukottai have historically been closely associated with the Kanchi mutt. They gathered together in great numbers to have darshan of their young guru and celebrated his stay in a grand manner. The king's younger brother Sri Vijaya Ragunatha Durairaja, Diwan Venkataramadas Naidu and other government officials gave a royal welcome to Swamigal.

The temple in Ilayathangudi was the oldest of all temples in Chettinadu. It was once the common temple for the all of the Nagarathar community before they split into 8 divisions (Mathur, Vairavan koil, Iraniyur, Pillaiyarpatti, Nemam, Iluppaikudi, Soorakudi, and Velangudi) and founded famous temples there. The residing deity in Ilayathangudi is Sri Nithya Kalyani sametha Kailasanatar.

The 65th pontiff of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, Sri Maha Devendra Saraswathi Swamigal stayed at Ilayathangudi for a few months during his yatra of Chettinadu. The nagarathar of the local temple showed their affection and respect to the Acharya and

made all necessary arrangements for his comfortable stay. One day, the Acharya was walking around the village and stopped at a place full of thorny bushes and stayed there for a while. The next day, he requested the local Devasthanam trust, if they could donate that piece of land to the mutt. The trust members, not understanding the Acharya, offered to donate another piece of land near there. But the Swamigal insisted on the same piece of land.

Within a week of this event, Swamigal's health dwindled and he attained siddhi on Thursday, a new moon day, 8th day of Panguni in the year of Virodhi, (20-3-1890). The local people amazed at the events that happened a week ago, established the adhishtanam in the place pointed by the Swamigal and also installed a Shivalingam and Adi Sankara's statues there. That temple is maintained by Ilayathangudi Devasthanam even today.

Our Swamigal, having exemplary devotion to Guru, left for Thiruvanaikaval with the intention of going to Ilayathangudi. From Pudukottai, he went to Ilayathangudi to have darshan of the Adhishtanam and on the way back, stayed in Thiruvanaikaval where he spent his first Chaturmasya vratha.

He returned to Kumbakonam via Tanjore. The royal family of Tanjore including the queens Sri Jeejambhabai, Sri Ramambhabai, Senior prince Shivajiraja Saheb, and junior prince Prathabaasimharaja Saheb welcomed Swamigal to the palace where they performed bhikshavandanam and paada puja. The public were also invited to participate in the pujas and obtain the blessings of Swamigal. The procession arranged by the public in Tanjore was very grand and lasted from seven in the evening to two in the morning, when they returned to the mutt.

Return to Kumbakonam for Mahamagham

Every twelve years, the day when constellation Magha rises in the lunar month of Masi is celebrated in grandeur at Kumbakonam as Mahamagham. Completing his above mentioned travels, Swamigal returned to Kumbakonam in March, 1909. The government and local businesses had made special arrangements for the Mahamagham that year. Special arrangements for staying and food were made at the mutt also for devotees and pilgrims. One of the key sights of that year's Mahamagham was the sight of the Tanjore royalty in procession, followed by our Swamigal on the elephant, on their way to the tank for holy dip.

4. Studies

In the years 1909 and 1910, the mutt's aasthana scholars were engaged to teach and train Swamigal in Sanskrit works and Vedic studies. The learned and the academicians of the day were surprised at the brilliance and sharpness of Swamiji's intellect. Moreover, the devotees and followers of the mutt were visiting Kumbakonam mutt in great numbers to obtain darshan of Swamigal. It became essential to find a quiet place to continue studies effectively. The mutt officials chose the beautiful and picturesque village of Mahendramangalam, situated on the northern shores of Cauveri, about five miles west of Musiri. The last Nayaka king from Madurai, Vijayaranga Chokkanadha Nayakar had donated lands in this village to the mutt in the year of Salivagana sakam (1708).

Mahendramangalam was beyond Thottiyam in the Tiruchi – Namakkal route and was not easily accessible. To reach this village, one has to take the local train and get down at Lalapettai and then get the canoe across Cauveri to reach the village. Very few would take all this trouble to come this place in order to get darshan of Swamigal. Considering all these variables, Mahendramangalam was chosen to be a suitable place for Swamigal's vidyabhyasam (schooling). The mutt's administrative office, puja were located in the agraharam at the local rich man - Singam Iyengar's house. Near the Cauveri shore, a small parnasalai was established.

Swamigal left for this village from Kumbakonam in the year 1911 and stopped at Lalgudi on the way. He established a Sankaralayam and Gurukulam at Lalgudi. It is to be noted that many notable scholars hailed from this Gurukulam.

Educational Techniques

The method of schooling given to the Swamigal was very unique. Ordinary folks treat their teachers with respect and devotion and learn from them. However, the scholars who taught Swamigal would pay their respects and devotion to him before and after their lessons. In spite of this, Swamigal paid full attention and learnt from the scholars with utmost respect and concentration in order to grasp all knowledge. Some of the subjects learnt by our Swamigal included arts, Vyakaranam, Tharka shastra (Science of Logic), Vedantha, Meemamsa etc. The teachers, who were learned scholars, found it very easy to teach our Swamigal due to his sparkling brilliance. This village became the favorite pilgrimage spot of our country's most famous scholars and leaders in the years 1911 through 1913.

Amongst our Swamigal's teachers, some of the renowned ones were Painganadu Panjapakesa Shastrigal, Mahamahopadhyay Shastra Ratnakara D.Venkatasubba Shastrigal, Shastra Ratnakara Vishnupuram Swamy Shastrigal and Thiruvissainallur V. Venkatarama Shastrigal. There were others who stayed in the mutt as aasthana vidwans and dedicated their time educating Swamigal. Some of them are Mahamahopadhyay Painganadu Ganapathy Shastrigal, Mahamahopadhyay Karungulam Krishna Shastrigal and Kodi Kannikadhanam Ubaya Vedantha Rajagopala Thathachariar.

It shouldn't surprise anyone to know that Swamigal, on top of learning all these arts, also learnt the French language. Late Keerthanacharya C.R.Srinivasa Iyengar used to

visit and stay with Acharya often. As Swamigal showed interest in learning Marathi and in Marathi works, the mutt officials engaged a Marathi pundit to stay at the mutt for three years. Swamigal had engaged him in researching a lot of Marathi literary works. Swamigal's interest in Tamil was unique by itself. During what little free time he had, he got Tamil scholars to train him in Tamil grammar and literature. He continued to research into Thevara, Thiruvachakam, Periya Puranam, Thiruvizhaiyadal Puranam and Thirukural. He did not allocate any time to learn fine arts. During his interaction with artists excelling in fine arts, during his free time, he absorbed the intricacies of all fine arts. Amongst the different component of arts, it was music (sangeetham) that was most like by Swamigal.

Swamigal used to take walks in the sand dunes in the middle of Cauveri and enjoy the natural beauty, and sometimes get absorbed in meditating in solitude in the beautiful surroundings. Swamigal liked to take photographs of picturesque sceneries. In those days, there used to be a person who would follow Swamigal with a camera. Swamigal would order him randomly to take pictures of certain scenes. As he was familiar with the intricacies of photography, he would give suggestions and tips to photographers while taking pictures. Moreover, he would advice them on techniques to employ while developing the films, negatives etc. Swamigal also became well versed in Mathematics, Astrology and astronomy. In order to obtain training in these subjects, Swamigal had requested Marur Ramaswami Shastrigal (who was the student of Thiruvaiyaru Sundaresa Shrowdhrigal) to stay in the mutt for a number of years and had supported his family also. Swamigal loved to hear Thevaram being sung. Especially, when people who had set it to good music visited the mutt, he would sit with them for hours together and make them sing different Thevarams and also sing with them. Swamigal was also attracted to learn Vaishnavite scriptures including Thiruvaimozhi.

Swamigal stayed in Mahendramangalam from 1911 to 1914 and then returned to Kumbakonam. There is a Sankaralayam established in Mahendramangalam at the place where Swamigal had his Vidyabhyasam. Swamigal was twenty years old when he left Mahendramangalam after completing his studies. Within this short period, he turned out to be extraordinarily brilliant in all lines of studies, starting with Puranas and the history of each sthalam. Once Swamigal grasped something, he never forgot it. He absorbed all knowledge from scholars and subject matter experts who visited him and also applied that knowledge to investigate and analyze the basis of such subject matter. There are very few who can be compared to our Swamigal in the way he interacted with people, analyzing the capabilities of the folks that he met.

When Swamigal was camped at Kumbakonam, he used to visit Gangai Konda Chozhapuram, situated 30 miles away, at least once every year. He visited the Shiva temple that was built in the same design as Tanjore Periya temple and research the artifacts found there. P.V.Jagadeesa Iyer from the archeological department and Engineer Anathazhvar helped Swamigal with this research. Finally, it can be said that our Swamigal after this education, by the young age of 20, obtained all the knowledge required for this position as Peetathipathi.

An episode during study – (Excerpt from A Succinct Biography – A. Kuppuswamy)

One of those who taught the Acharya during this period was Ganapathi Shastrigal of Painganadu near Mannargudi. He was a versatile scholar. Before he was forty years of age, he had written about a hundred works, in Sanskrit – short and long. He was awarded the title of ‘Mahamahopadhyaya’, by the Government of India, posthumously – just ten days after his demise. Ganapathi Shastrigal was residing in a house opposite to the Sankara Mutt, Kumbakonam. He would go to the Math early in the forenoon and teach the teen-aged Acharya for about an hour. In the evenings, lessons in Sastras, Sanskrit, prosody etc. were imparted to the Acharya. In the spring season, the teacher and the student would sit for an hour or more, on the sands of the dry bed of the Cauveri, near the mutt and there the lessons used to be carried out.

One evening the tutor was teaching. The Acharya was frequently thrusting the fingers of his left hand in the sand. Ganapathi Shastrigal observed this. The next morning he went to the mutt as usual. After prostrating to the Acharya, he said “Please permit me to leave Kumbakonam and go to my village”. The young Acharya was much surprised and he asked the teacher, “What is the reason for this sudden request of yours?” Shastrigal’s reply was a bit stern. He replied, “A student, desiring to acquire knowledge, should be quite attentive when lessons are going on. Concentration of the mind is essential. My guru used to tell his pupils that one sitting on sand but not touching it and one having a knife on his hand, but not doing anything with it and one having his mind fixed in something worthy, as examples for a ‘Sthita-prajna’ (one with a steadfast mind). Yesterday evening your Holiness was a bit inattentive to what was being taught yesterday evening”. The Acharya quickly interposed and said, “I was attending although I was thrusting my hand into the sand off and on. I shall now repeat all of what was taught yesterday evening”. Ganapathi Shastrigal who was struck with wonder at the amazing memory and precociousness of the young Acharya, said, “I feel that I am not necessary hereafter. Your Holiness can learn everything without the aid of a tutor and I can go”. The Acharya was loath to part with such an erudite teacher. And Ganapathi Shastrigal continued as teacher for about 10 more months.

Sri Sankara Vijayendra Saraswathi Swamigal – ‘A Hundred Years of Light’ - III Volume

“During the few years when our Paramaguru imparted lessons to me in the Bhagavatpada’s Sutrashya, on my repeated request, the MahaSwami revealed a few interesting episodes pertaining to his youthful years. One of the episodes is as follows:

When the Acharya was in his late teens, during the Chaturmasya period, gatherings of scholars were held in the mutt, off and on. Erudite scholars, well-reversed in two or three sastras participated in these gatherings. Devotees with a quantum of sastraic knowledge belonging to neighboring places would also attend the Vidvat Sadas to hear the Vakyartha-vichara (discussion cum short discourse) of the pandits. The great Acharya would grace the sadas with his presence and

attend the discussion. On one such occasion, after the discussion had been over, some of the lay devotees placed a request before the scholars, praying for a clarification of a particular point touched upon by some of the scholars during the discussion. Mahamahopadhyaya Harihara Shastrigal (who lived in the first half of the current century), who had been a teacher for many a pupil and who had been instrumental in printing and publishing many rare Sanskrit works which had until then remained as manuscripts, came forward to explain. The Great Acharya, the assembled scholars and devotees listened with rapt attention to the hour-long elucidation of the famous pundit. But even after this, some of the devotees entreated for a more easily comprehensible explanation. None of the scholars dared to do so. Silence prevailed for some minutes. The Great Acharya, himself, told the assembly that he would clarify the issue. His Holiness spoke in simple Sanskrit and explained the touchy point in a lucid manner. All the scholars including Harihara Shastrigal were struck with wonder and they paid glowing tributes to the Maha Swamigal.

5. Administration of Mutt (1911 -1915)

Mutt Administered by District Court

A few concerned devotees had petitioned the District court that the administration of the mutt should be taken up by the court while Swamigal was a minor and until he reached the age of twenty-one. Even though there was not enough property in the mutt to be administered, the court considering the benefit of the mutt, ordered the mutt to be administered under the “Guardian and Wards Act”. Sri C.H.Venkataramana Iyer, an illustrious personality from Kolijivadi village near Coimbatore was appointed as guardian by the court. The administration of the mutt was under guardianship from 1911 to May, 1915. On the day of Sankara Jayanthi in the year 1915, Swamigal took over the administration of the mutt on the completion of his 21st year. The administration of the mutt was taken over in name, but the actual work was taken care of by an agent, one Sri Pasupathi Iyer. He was an able administrator who volunteered to do the job without compensation and hailed from Thirupathiripuliyur. Swamigal does not sign any document, instead Sri Mukham stamp is placed on documents.

The Sankara Jayanthi celebration in the year 1915 was celebrated in a grand manner with devotees pouring in from all parts of the country. Swamigal released a monthly magazine ‘Arya Dharmam’ which was targeted in simplifying and making Shastras easily understandable to the public. The magazine was published by Sri T.K.Balasubramania Iyer from Srirangam Vanivilas printing press. Changes to the administration of the mutt were made to achieve efficiency. For the sake of devotees, the history of the mutt was published in different languages. The relics and artifacts belonging to the mutt were examined and studied by Sri T.K.Gopinatha Rao and collated into a book, which was also then released.

6. Navaratri Utsav

LakshaDeepam Lakshaarchana

In October, 1916, the festival of Navarathri was celebrated grandly in the Kumbakonam mutt premises. During each of the nine days, special prayer service with a lakh archana to Devi was conducted. Lamps lit with ghee, a lakh in number as well as free food to one lakh Brahmins was also done as part of the celebration. Sri C. Subramania Bharathiar has commented about this festival in his article and an excerpt follows: “ It is common around the land to celebrate the Goddess and her splendor during the spring season when she showers her blessings. It is a common and great practice to worship her during these nine days. There was flash news in a newspaper that special celebrations were to be conducted on this occasion at the Kumbakonam Sankara mutt. Even though it was a common practice, I was curious about Sankara mutt and started to read the news. More than half the article was about Shastras and it was amazing to see the Shastras in a commercial newspaper. But the Shastras were truthful and I was thrilled to read the story”.

The key people who took the initiative in conducting this festival are landlords in the Tanjore district including Billur Abhirami Iyer, Villiyanur Vaidyanatha Iyer, Kottur Krishna Iyer, Kothangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Kallur Vengappa Iyer, M.R.Ramasesha Iyer , proprietor of Ganesh Company in Madras, and Chittamalli Subramania Iyer. It should be noted here that the above mentioned were encouraged and supported monetarily by Srilasri Chokkalinga Thambiran Swamigal of Thirupanandal Kasi mutt, the landlord from Andipatti S.R.M.C.Petthachi Chettiar and Nangavaram Rajappa Iyer.

In the first stage of the mutt, a huge canopy with art work was set up. Twelve thousand lamps were arranged in the shapes of lingam, rishabham, elephant and Dwara Palakas. These lamps were lighted on each of the ten nights using the expensive ghee. While SriVidya homam was happening on one side, Chandi homam was being conducted by pundits on another side. Hundreds of scholars were reciting Ramayana, Soundaryalahari, Bhagawatham, Devi Mahatmiyam and Bhagavat Geetha. Vedic scholars were reciting from all the Vedas in one side, while poets were showering the audience with their talented poems and monologues.

Instruments that are favored by Goddess, especially veena, were being constantly played. The musicologists and artists of that day were competing to offer their art in the lotus feet of Devi. On the day of Saraswathi puja, the concerts of the famous artists Ramnad Puchi Iyengar and Madurai Pushpavanam Iyer took place. The residents of Tanjore district, known for their keen interest in music, gathered in numbers and enjoyed the concerts immensely. When Swamigal visited each of these events, the happiness of the crowd cannot be measured. The tough job of providing food to more than a lakh people was undertaken by Mahan Teppaperumalnallur Shivan. The local businesses and merchants started preparing for the event by sending food articles to the organizers, even a month before the start of the festival.

On the tenth day, being Vijayadasami, Swamigal visited all the temples. The sight of the Swamigal riding on the elephant was seen by thousands of people. The procession

that was a mile long was arranged and organized by Pethachi Chettiar and Sri Chockalinga Thambiran Swamigal. On both sides of the procession, there were strobe lights, dazzling fireworks, six groups of nayanam, three groups of band, veda parayanam, and group singing Thevaram, Bhajan group, four elephants and dancing horses were part of the procession. To top them all, it was the sight of our Acharya in his full splendor that was most memorable for those fortunate to be present there.

7. Vidwath Sabha

August 1917 saw the annual conclusion of the conference on Advaita (Advaita Sabha) in Kumbhakonam. Swamigal called for a gathering of the Vedic scholars of the day and honored the prominent scholars of the day Pazhamarneri Brahmashri Ramaswamy Shastrigal and Brahmashri Thirvisainallur Venkatsubba Shastrigal with the title of “Shastra Ratnakaram” and garlanded them with double shawl bordered with pure silver threads and also awarded them prizes. Following this ceremony, the practice of honoring and awarding scholars was continued to this day. Here are few of the scholars who were honored by Acharyas

1. Mannargudi Mahamahodhpadya Yegnaswamy Shastrigal.
2. Mahamahodhpadya Dhandapaniswamy Shastrigal, Chidambaram.
3. Thiruvaiyaru Viswanatha Shastrigal, Pudukottai Royal Treasurer.
4. Thediur Subramania Shastrigal.
5. Mahamahodhpadya Dhadha Subbaraya Shastrigal, Vijayanagaram.
6. Thundhugiri Narasimha Shastrigal, Guntur.
7. Mahamahodhpadya N.S.Ananthakrishna Shastrigal, Calcutta Sarvakalasalai.
8. Mahamahodhpadya A.Chinnaswamy Shastrigal, Calcutta Sarvakalasalai.
9. T.V.Ramachandra Dikshithar, Kasi Hindu Sarvakalasalai.
10. Kasi Panditharaja Rajeswara Shastry Dravid.
11. T.V.Lakshminarayana Shastrigal, Asthana Vidwan of the mutt.
12. Chidambaram Ramasubba Shastrigal.
13. Polakam Raa Shastrigal, Sanskrit College, Chennai.
14. Bolakam Sundara Shastrigal, Tiruchi.
15. Sripadam Lakshmi Narasimha Shastrigal, South Godavari.
16. Mandalinga Venkata Shastrigal, Ellore.
17. Mahamahodhpadya Madurai K.S.Krishnamurthi Shastrigal, Chennai.
18. T.A.Venkateswara Dikshithar, Profesor, Baratilla Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.
19. Kali Rangacharyar, Pudukottai Royal Treasurer.
20. S.R.Krishnamoorthy Shastrigal.

Aid to Students

Swamigal conducted an essay competition in the English language in order to encourage students to take an interest in our religion. “Ways to practice and protect Sanathana Dharma keeping with the changes in time” was the topic for the essay. Students from schools in big cities like Chennai, Madurai and Tiruchi participated in this competition. The top three finalists in this competition were awarded with monetary prizes and books. The top finalist in this competition, V.R.Ramachandra Dikshithar grew to become History teacher at Chennai Sarvakalasalai. Swamigal had instituted scholarships and assistance to college students and schools, that year and in the years to follow. He also established grants to schools that taught religious education.

Medical Aid to the Poor

An Ayurvedic dispensary was started by Swamigal in those days with the aim of providing free health care to the poor and needy. He had appointed Vaidya Visharath Jagadrakshaka Shastrigal and Vaidya Visharath Thiruvannamalai Krishna Shastrigal who had both graduated from Venkataramana Ayurvedic college in Mylapore.

Patron of Arts

During the years 1914 through 1918, when Swamigal was staying in Kumbakonam, various musicians, artists and linguists from all across the country visited the mutt to get his dharshan. Almost every evening, the scholars would get together and passionate debates would take place. Swamigal would patiently listen to all arguments. He would then elaborate and explain each point of view and fact behind the opinion and finally render an opinion that would amazingly be acceptable to all.

It was a sight to see Ashatawadhanis and Sathavadanis come to the mutt and showed their capabilities in the sadas in the august presence of Acharya. Sathawadhanis are poets and scholars who can grasp a hundred facts and questions at the same time and answer the questions without any hesitation or mistake. Ashatawadhanis are similar that they grasp eight different things at the same time. They are also well known for their scholarship in language arts and poetry, mathematics, Astrology, science of logic, Vedanta, Meemamsa and Vyakarana. To test their brilliance, scholars are seated around them. One scholar would start with the verse of a poetry and leave it to him to continue. Another scholar would ask a complex question in Mathematics; the third might be an astrologer who would recite an horoscope and ask questions about its calculations and predictions; a musical scholar might sing a rare raga and ask him to identify the raga; another scholar would quiz him on the flora; someone would ask him to identify the rakshasa by quoting Ramayana. After hearing all these questions, it is a remarkable sight to see the scholar go to each of the questioner and answer their specific questions correctly and without any hesitation.

Swamigal and Multi-Processing

Once, an old Sathawadhani, also a Vaishnavite, had come to the mutt to obtain the darshan of Swamigal. As usual, the scholars gathered there were eager to quiz this Vidwan. While the pundits were asking the questions, Swamigal instructed a person to note down his own answers to each of them. After the end of the question session, the old man replied to all of them and every one of his answers matched that of Swamigal's. This episode demonstrated the knowledge of our Swamigal too. The old scholar was honored by Swamigal with Kashmiri shawl and other gifts. He returned to the mutt several times in the following years to repeat his performance.

Professors, scientists, engineers and administrators, went to Acharya for guidance and encouragement. Among them was one Professor Ramamurthy, owner of a circus company, who came to address questions to Acharya and clarify doubts on the practice of Yoga. He obtained clear answers to all his doubts and was later heard commenting to a

friend that “ the power of Brahmacharyam (chastity) can be found fully in Acharya and with this power anything and everything in the world can be achieved”.

In the year 1917, the king of Dharbanga came to Kumbakonam during his pilgrimage to the south. He stayed in town for three days, had darshan of Acharya and discussed the temples and practices that united south and north. Engrossed in the spiritual power of Swamigal, he requested Acharya to travel and visit the northern part of the country.

Scientific Research with two Geniuses

Sriman P. Rajagopala Iyer, history professor at Kumbakonam Government College, who later became the principal there, had heard of Swamigal’s proficiency in arts and genius and was eager to meet him. He had postponed his visit as he was skeptical if Swamigal, being a religious head and also a sannyasin would take the time to converse with him. Still he was very eager to meet Swamigal and decided to take a chance and headed to the mutt. He was not aware of the protocol and formality of paying respects to Swamigal maintaining the position of an Acharya. In spite of this, Swamigal welcomed him and started a conversation around the college initially, proceeded to current events and common interests. Later on, there was a deep discussion on Science and Physics. At this point, the Superintendent Engineer of Public Works , P.V.Manicka Nayakkar (M.A in Mathematics) came there to have darshan of Swamigal. He had come to the mutt earlier and was very much devoted to Swamigal. However, after listening to the discussion going on, he was eager for the introduction of the third person sitting there. Swamigal himself introduced Nayakkar to Iyer. The discussions turned to Astronomy and Swamigal explained the similarity between our ancient ways and Western ways. He then requested for a telescope to be brought from the college and elaborated his points further. The two scientists were amazed at Swamigal’s in-depth knowledge and awareness of intricate details in Astronomy. Iyer was astonished to find Swamigal’s knowledge , obtained without formal institutional education in college. He took it upon himself as his life’s goal to have darshan of Swamigal and converse with him at every given opportunity.

Sri.P.V.Nayakkar developed a way in which Sanskrit and other languages could be read and enunciated correctly using Tamil alphabets and he also published this as a book. Swamigal was very appreciative of his efforts and sent his Srimukham² for this book. Nayakkar spoke about his method in lectures and seminars and he was heard to have proudly commented many times about Swamigal’s Srimukham for his book.

Gift from Andhra Landlord

Raja A.V.JeccaRao, a landlord from Sher Muhammadpuram from the Vizakhapatnam district had spent lakhs of his own money in order to build a

² Acharyas and Peetathipathis of Kanchi Kamakoti Mutt do not sign their name. Instead ‘Narayna Smruthi’ is their signature and their letter head / letter is called Sri mukham.

Astronomical Research center in Vizag. He had traveled around the world and met with world renowned astronomers. He was keen to share this knowledge and serve his country. He had obtained an expensive telescope from Italy, paying thousands of rupees, which was four feet long and six inches in diameter. He was impressed by Swamigal's interest in Astronomy and knowledge and gifted this telescope to him.

Outlook of All Religions

Swamigal had respect for any religion that accepted God. He was of opinion that everyone should follow the scriptures and sayings of their own religion. His acceptance of all religions and broad mindedness was well known amongst other leaders. Sri Jinaraja Dasa belonging to Brahma Jnana Sabha met Swamigal and discussed world religions with Swamigal and was duly impressed by his broad outlook.

Support of Musical Art

There is nobody who can enjoy the classical and aspects of the shastras in music like our Swamigal. He would listen raptly to the top musicians performing at the mutt, ask them very thought provoking questions on the lyrics of the pieces performed; the intricate details of raga and the tala of these pieces. His questions and explanations would astonish the musicians who themselves were on the pinnacle of their careers. As our Swamigal was well versed in Telugu language, he would explain in detail the meaning behind Thyagaraja kritis and other Telugu kritis to the musicians. He would emphasize that the musicians should be fluent in Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit so that they can comprehend the lyrics and then sing them. They would be persuaded that this was the practice of musicians of olden times also. Most of them were not familiar with the compositions of Sri Sama Shastrigal and Sri Muthuswami Dikshithar. Swamigal would persuade all visiting musicians to learn and perform the compositions of these two composers.

In those days, musicians and Bhagawathas who would perform katha kalakshebbham took it to be a privilege and honor to perform and show off their talents in front of Swamigal.

Umayalpuram Swaminatha Iyer, who was the primary disciple of Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer, who also hailed from the illustrious tradition of Sri Thyagaraja Swamigal, resided in Kumbakonam. He visited the mutt daily and had darshan of our Swamigal. He and our Swamigal had many discussions and arguments on music. Swamigal honored him with the title of 'Nadanubava- Sarajna'. Once, the famous violinist, Thirkodikaval Krishna Iyer visited the mutt and pleased Swamigal when he played the fiddle.

Mayavaram Veena Vaidyanatha Iyer would visit to have darshan of Swamigal along with his two sons Sabesa Iyer and Krishnamurthi. Sabesa Iyer was very proficient in playing veena. Whenever he played veena and sang along in his soft voice, the audience would be enthralled. Especially when he performed compositions on Devi, Saraswathi's blessing would be very much evident in him. Vaidyanatha Iyer stopped

playing Veena after his son took up performing. Once when Sabesa Iyer was playing before Swamigal, Vaidyanatha Iyer was so carried away, that he shouted unconsciously, 'Sabash en Appane' (Well done, my father). Swamigal smiled at him and said, 'You should not praise your own son in the stage and in public. Your son will be honored only if he receives praises from others. You can only enjoy and appreciate his talent in your heart'. Iyer prostrated to Swamigal and promised to conduct himself as per his advice.

One other musician who frequented the mutt was Nagaraja Rao playing the flute. He was usually accompanied by Semmangudi Naryanaswamy Iyer on the violin, Sakkottai Rangu Iyengar in Murdangam and Umayalpuram Sundaram Iyer on the Ghatam. The group was very dynamic and Swamigal would sit through their concerts and encourage the musicians with his appreciative comments during key moments.

The famous story teller of the day Thirupazhanam Panchapakesa Shastrigal lived in Kumbakonam and performed in the mutt often. Even during those days when there were no loud speakers, thousands of people would gather to watch and enjoy his stories. He was usually supported on the mrdangam by Azhaganambi pillai and later by Kodandarama Iyer. He was given vocal support by Nallur Viswanatha Iyer, Madhiri Mangalam Natesa Iyer and also the sweet voiced Kunju alias Soushtar. He consulted and took the aid of stalwarts of the day and choreographed the life story of Sankara Bhagawathpadal. He requested Swamigal's audience to perform this play and was granted audience. Shastrigal split the entire story in seven parts and performed on seven days. To listen to this new piece, thousands of fans gathered both locally and from other places. Swamigal honored him by staying through the whole performance each day. He also honored the artists duly.

There were other artists of the times who considered it their privilege to perform at the mutt in the august presence of our Swamigal. They included the famous Shoolamangalam Vaidyanatha Bhagawathar, Tanjore Panchapakesa Bhagawathar, Palghat Anantharama Bhagawathar, Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagawathar, Kallidaikurichi Vedantha Bhagawathar, Manudi Chidambara Bhagawathar and Srirangam Sadagopachariar. We have to include in this eminent list, the young prodigy Shoolamangalam Soundararaja Bhagawathar. MahaVidwan Thiruvaiyaru Lakshmanachariar was well known for his discourses on Gita. He gave a discourse in the presence of Swamigal and obtained honors and gifts for his performance. Harikatha was said to have originated from Maharashtra and one Bhagawathar from this place traveled to Kumbakonam with his group to perform before Swamigal. He was the Peetathipathi (religious head) of the Morgamkar mutt, disciple of Samardha Ramdas, the famous guru of Shivaji. He stayed at the mutt and did three katha kalakshebams in Marathi. In spite of the language difference, a huge crowd gathered and enjoyed the stories.

An elderly gentleman, well versed in almost all of Sri Sama Shastrigal's compositions, who hailed from the Madhwa community once visited the mutt and sang in his melodious voice hymns on Devi. Swamigal was very pleased to hear his singing and requested him to stay in the mutt for fifteen days and sing these compositions during puja in the sannidhi of Sri Chandramouleeswarar. Swamigal was partial towards Sri Sama Shastrigal's compositions.

Krishna Iyengar, an artist from Madurai had visited the mutt and was eager to show his talents to Swamigal. His Holiness requested him to perform without any accompaniments. The singer sang Byakadai raga for an hour and enthralled Swamigal.

Later it was found that this gentleman was well known for singing this raga and was popularly known as Byakadai Krishna Iyengar.

Other famous musicians of the era including Konairajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer, Waladi Krishna Iyer, Mysore Pidaram Krishnappa, Veena Seshanna, Veena Subbana used to come to the mutt to get the opportunity to show their talents to Swamigal and obtain his darshan. Thiruvaidaimaruthur Sakaram Rayar was known for his mastery of the unique instrument Gottu Vadyam. He frequently visited Kumbakonam mutt and offered his performance to Swamigal and was honored. Pandit Vishnu Dikambar from Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, Bombay was a very famous Hindustani musician of the time. He came to the mutt along with his large group to obtain darshan of Swamigal. He performed bhajans in North Indian style. Swamigal was enthralled by the devotion in the bhajans and appreciated and praised the singers.

It was not an accepted practice for our Swamigal's sannyashrama dharma to sit and listen to women artists, especially when they are alone. Hence, there were not many opportunities for female artists to perform at the mutt. However, Veena Dhanammal and Bangalore Nagarathinam Ammal have obtained special permissions and performed concerts at the mutt. Swamigal would ask them to offer their talent to the Almighty and sing during puja. As Swamigal would be sitting and performing the puja at the time, these artists also had the unique opportunity to sing in the presence of Swamigal. Similarly, there are few other female artists have been fortunate enough to perform at the mutt. Smt.Pattama and Smt.M.S.Subbulakshmi have had the honor of offering their music to our Swamigal and obtaining his blessings.

Swamigal was also partial towards the compositions of Vedanayakam Pillai. He praised and honored Papanasam Sivan for singing Tamil compositions. He honored Sivan during his 60th birthday with the title 'Siva Punyagana Mani' and honored Tamil music also.

The veena music of Karakudi brothers accompanied by Dakshinamurthi Pillai can be compared to heavenly music. They have also played before Swamigal and obtained his blessings. Once, when our Swamigal was traveling in Chettinadu, Dakshinamurthi Pillai poured his devotion on Swamigal and composed songs. He placed them before Swamigal and requested him to cast his glance on them just once - he didn't have to read them. Swamigal praised Pillai's devotion and pure heart which did not seek fame to everyone gathered there and honored Pillai. Another veena musician from Mysore, Venkatagiriappa had performed a few concerts in the mutt. Swamigal once honored him with the title 'Vainika Sikamani' and gave him double shawl and double earrings(Thoda).

Swamigal wanted to engage a musician who was resident at the mutt. He called for a young musician Srivanjiyam Ramachandra Iyer and appointed him as the official musician of the mutt and also honored him with the title 'Asthana Keerthanamani'.

The senior musician both in age and in talent was the singer / composer from Mysore – Vasudevachariar. He was capable of composing lyrics in both Kannada as well as Sanskrit. He had very scholarly in music and had researched musical and mythological works. Once when he visited Kancheepuram, he shared his research and findings with Swamigal and also sang his own compositions. Swamigal was said to have appreciated his scholarship and music. He was heard to have told other devotees that Mysore Vasudevachariar was probably the best musician of the past century(19th century).

The special instrument in Carnatic music is the nadaswaram which is appreciated by the common people, but a very hard instrument to handle. This instrument in a smaller size is called Thimiri and Pari when it is of medium size. Thimiri and Pari are still played in some temples. The nadaswaram that is being played in the mutt has been there for a long time and is around 15 inches long. In the last century (19th century), a famous artist names Subramaniam played this thimiri at the mutt. In those days, thimiri was accompanied by the mrudangam. The older people have said that when thimiri was played in front of the mutt during puja times, the common people traveling on the road would gather around in great numbers and listen to it. During our Swamigal's time, the child prodigy Narayanan used to play thimiri in the mutt. He passed away early and later Kumbakonam Kandaswamy and his sons Kumararathnam and Chinnayya played the nadaswaram at the mutt.

In the year 1934, when Swamigal visited Kasi there was a conference on Hindustani music. They had invited mutt's nadaswaram artists also to the conference. The artists obtained Swamigal's permission and played a few rare Hindustani ragas in the nadaswaram and surprised the Hindustani artists. It is to be noted that all nadaswara vidwans have been encouraged by our Swamigal during his time. Six families of nadaswaram artists have been supported for more than 50 years by the mutt.

8. Long Vijaya Yatra – Part I

(Kumbakonam to Rameswaram)

Swamigal undertook the journey to visit holy places, take dip in holy waters and grant audience to his devotees around south India. He thought of touring through the entire south of the country, go to Rameswaram and there make the sankalpa (resolve) to go to sacred Varanasi. It was a long and strenuous tour but it was supremely worthwhile because of the opportunities it gave to people all over the country to meet our Swamigal and receive his blessings. He never used any of the modern modes of transport. He used to walk or use a palanquin when necessary. Wherever Swamigal camped, lots of devotees gathered and stayed at the camp as long as they could in order to derive the utmost advantage from the Holy presence. Besides the daily anushtana and puja, meeting the devotees, giving instructions relating to the conduct of affairs of the mutt and of the various religious and welfare organizations occupied Swamigal's time each day. It took almost two decades to complete the Sethu-Ganga yatra. He started the journey on the Amavasya after Shivaratri of March 1919 from Kumbakonam. His entourage for this tour included about 200 people including the officials of the mutt, pandits, vaidikas and servants along with animals such as elephants, horses, cows, etc. Swamigal started that morning by praying to Ganesha in the south side of the mutt, then paid his respects to the Brindavans of three Acharyas in the mutt. He later donated to Brahmins before starting the journey (Yatra dhanam). The Chandramouleeswarar puja on the first day was held at the new building near the Bhagawathi padithurai at the banks of Cauveri. The building was built by V.D.Swaminatha Iyer, son of Deputy Collector V. Doraiswamy Iyer. He performed Bikshavandanam and Pada puja for Acharya Swamigal. Similarly, residents around Kumbakonam invited Swamigal to their houses and offered Pada puja and Bikshavandanam to him.

Vyasa Puja – Chaturmasya in Vepathur

The full moon day in the lunar month of Ashada alias Adi is celebrated as Vyasa Poornima. North of the Vindyas, this day is celebrated as Guru Purnima and teachers are honored on this day. Veda Vyasas are hailed to have divided the Vedas into four parts. Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhwa have written commentaries on the Brahma Sutras given by Vyasa. Sannyasins following the Advaita, Visisht Advaita and Dvaita philosophies perform and pray to Vyasa on the Ashada full moon day.

On the day of Vyasa puja a silver altar is filled with akshadha (combination of rice and turmeric) and in the middle an idol of Krishna is placed. Around the idol, other deities, rishis and gurus are represented by placing a lemon in the altar and pujas will be done to each of them. This is a very key event for a sannyasin that temples around the country would send Prasad to Swamigal. Kings and landlords across the nation would send in their offerings on this occasion. Thousands of disciples from all parts of the country would come together to witness the puja.

For the Chaturmasya of 1919, Swamigal stayed in Veppattur village, about five miles to the east of Kumbakonam. During the Chaturmasya sannyasins must stay at one

place so that no harm may be caused to insects and other creatures by treading on them, when they come out in the rainy season. By considering four pakshas – fortnights as four months, sannyasins take a vow to camp at one place for two months starting Vyasa poornima. This vow is called Chaturmasya sankalpa. The residents of Veppattur welcomed Swamigal and provided all the assistance to the mutt, its members as well as the numerous devotees who came to visit Swamigal. The navarathri puja of that year was also celebrated there. Swamigal later visited lots of villages, even remote ones in the Tanjore district. He visited Sirukulathur village in march of 1920 and was given a grand reception by local landlord Calcutta N.R.Iyer who invited Swamigal to stay in his house. He celebrated that year's Vijaya Yatra from that village in a grand fashion. Later he visited Thiruvarur where his disciples worshiped him eagerly and provided all amenities. Swamigal had the darshan of Thyagaraja Swamy, the residing deity of Thiruvarur, every day that he stayed in the village.

Mahodaya Day -1920

Swamigal stayed for a week at Vedaranya during the holy time of Mahodaya in the year 1920. He had holy bath at Kodikarai and visited local pilgrimage like Agathiyampalli. Then he left for Nagapatinam where the residents welcomed him and he stayed in Neelayadakshi temple. Nagai G.Sadashivam Pillai welcomed him with five songs that he had composed on Swamigal.

1920 – Vyasa Puja at Mayuram

Swamigal performed Vyasa puja of 1920 at Mayuram and stayed there for three months. Veda classes were started for around 300 boys who were brahmacharis and going to school. They all used to take a bath in Cauveri before sun rise, perform their morning sandhyavandanam and then head to a tent in the Rajan Gardens where they offered daily prayers to Agni (Sammithadhanam) before going for more vedic training. The place was serene and had the appearance of abodes of ancient rishis. On 2nd November, 1920, the head of Dharmapuram Adheenam Srilasri Adheena Karthar visited the mutt and paid their respect to Swamigal.

During Swamigal's stay in Mayuram, an elderly Islamic scholar who was well versed in Quran, wanted to converse with Swamigal. He was blind in both eyes and Swamigal asked him to come to the mutt around four pm. At that time, there was a sadas of vidwans who were discussing and explaining Hindu philosophy. The place was also crowded with devotees eager to have darshan of Swamigal. After the discussion of the vidwans was over, Swamigal called the muslim scholar near by and asked him to describe the common practices and philosophies of his religion. He turned towards Swamigal and replied with tears in his eyes, ' What do I have to say in front of great saint as yourself? All religions show the path to God. I am able to see that Godliness in you and feel it in my heart. Wherever there is love, God can be found there too.' All the devotees gathered there were astonished to witness the devotion of that Muslim gentleman.

That year's Navaratri puja took place at Anai Thandavapuram. Later he went on a pilgrimage around the temples in near by villages such as Thirukadaiyur, Thirupungur, Vaideeswaran Koil where he was received the temple official Sri Somasundara Thambiran. Margazhi puja (December) in the year 1920 was spent at Seerkazhi. During his stay, Sri Chidambaranatha Mudaliar invited our Swamigal to visit the school that was running. Swamigal graced the school with his presence and appreciated the teachers and their families for imparting knowledge to the children and he blessed the students also. During his stay at Seerkazhi, Kunnam Subramania Iyer, Thenpathi Thirunarayana Pillai and other prominent members of the society offered their services to the mutt. Later Swamigal reached Tiruvenkadu, and worshipped Svetaranyesvara there. He also had the darshan of the adhishtana of Sri Parasivendra Swarasvathi Swamy, the 57th Acharya of the Kanchi Sankara Mutt and preceptor of the great yogi Sri Sadasiva Brahmendra.

The Vaishnavite saints have sung about 108 vaishnavite pilgrim centers around our holy land. Out of these, 12 of the holy Vaishnavite temples are in Seerkazhi district. Swamigal visited the twelve Divya Desam and had darshan of Narayana there. (

1. Thadalan Koil
2. Thirunagari
3. Thirunangur
4. Vaikunta Vinnakaram
5. Arimeya Vinnakaram
6. SeiKoil
7. Thiruthetri Ambalam
8. Thirumanakoodam
9. Parthanapalli
10. Thirukavalambadi
11. Thiruvallagam and
12. Thirudevanar Thogai)

Later he visited Cauveripoompatinam and had a holy bath at the place where river Cauveri meets the ocean.

Mahamagam – 1921

Swamigal repaired to Patteeswaram, a village some five miles west of Kumbakonam, in March 1921, for the sacred bath in the Mahamagam tank in Kumbakonam, on the Mahamagam day. Since Swamigal, started his journey to Kasi in 1919 itself, he did not go to the Sankara mutt in Kumbakonam. As per tradition, samaradhana to Thepuramal Nallur Sivan took place at the mutt. Swamigal stayed in the mandap situated to the south of the Mahamagam tank and had his bath on the sacred day. Two hundred volunteers from Chennai Young Muslims' associated had come to Kumbakonam to help and serve the pilgrims. Swamigal was very pleased and impressed by the service rendered by these youth who were all less than 22 years old. They were all invited to the camp at Patteeswaram, where they were fed in the mutt. Swamigal spoke to each and every one of them and enquired about their studies, parents, etc. In appreciation of their service to the community, he awarded a silver cup to their organization. There

were also another set of volunteers under the guidance of Congress leader Banthulu Iyer. A silver cup was presented to them in appreciation of their service during this event

A prominent pilgrim for that year's mahamagham was the patriot, Subramania Sivam. He visited Patteeswaram to obtain darshan of Swamigal. His Holiness spotted the patriot in the crowd and requested his assistants to bring him closer. Sivan was clad in saffron with the goal of obtaining freedom for the country and was moved by Swamigal's grace. He prayed for Swamigal's blessings for this country to attain independence as soon as possible and also prayed for the public to be just and god fearing.

Chaturmasya Vratha on that year was celebrated at Kadiramangalam, near Kuthalam. Swamigal spent the next year traveling each and every village in the districts of Seerkazhi, Mayuram, Nannilam and Mannargudi. He visited Saivite and Vaishnavite temples in both sides of the river Cauveri and offered his prayers and respects to the deities. He did not miss even the smallest of temples during his travel.

Darshan to Harijans

During his tour of the Tanjore district, once in the village of Sellur (enroute from Kudavasal to Koradacheri), Swamigal saw about two hundred harijans including women and children waiting for his darshan after having bathed, putting on clean clothes and wearing vibhuti on their foreheads. Our Swamigal got down from the palanquin and spent some time with them. He made kind enquiries about their welfare and wanted to find out if their landlords were treating them kindly. He asked them questions about their methods of worship at home and requested mutt officials to give them new clothes. The local harijans apologized for retaining Swamigal for a long time, but were very happy and felt blessed by His Holiness. His concern for the poor was great and unlimited and he never failed to exhort the better placed sections of society to go to their account.

Nannilam District

After completing Chaturmasya at Kadiramangalam, Swamigal traveled around Nannilam district. There was a prominent community of Vathimas who lived mainly around some villages in the district. They were known to have supported and patronized Vedic and other scholars. Konairajapuram Sambasiva Iyer, a prominent member of this community, was one of the founder members of Advaita Sabha. He owned SriVidya Press where he printed publications such as Advaitasiddhi, Siddhi Brahmanandheeyam and Siva Philosophy of Appayya Dikshithar. Navarathri celebrations in the year 1921 was held at Vishnupuram.

Mannargudi District

Swamigal visited villages in Mannargudi district after completing his tour in Nannilam. Different communities came together to work in unison to make his trip successful. Raju Mudaliar from Poovanur, also a great devotee of Siva, invited Swamigal

to visit his hometown. Accordingly His Holiness camped there for ten days. Swamigal enjoyed going to the Thevaram padasala run by Mudaliar at Poovanur. He would sit for hours with the students, ask them to sing Thevaram, and explain the meanings of the verses to them. He honored the students for their sincerity and effort to learn Thevaram. It is to be noted that many of the Thevara scholars hail from this Poovanur padasala.

Swamigal stayed for a month at Mannargudi and enjoyed having the darshan of Rajagopala Swamy. He visited National High School and blessed the students and gave them upadesams. From there, he left for Vaduvur to have the darshan of the famous Sri Rama. Accepting the invitation of landlord Kunniyur Sambasiva Iyer, he stayed in Kunniyur for some time. Then he traveled around Chitthamali, Alangadu, Pattukottai, Aranthangi and came to Avudayar Koil in month of July, 1922. During this time, mirasdar (landlord) from Chitthamalil Subramania Iyer stayed with Swamigal and served the mutt. He is a scholar well versed in many Shastras and was the disciple of Mannargudi Mahopadhyay Raju Shastrigal.

Avudayar Koil – Chaturmasya

Swamigal took his Chaturmasya vratha at Avudayar Koil and stayed there for two months. Avudayar Koil also known as Thiruperuthurai was one of the famous Saivite temples. King Arimatha Pandian had given crores of gold coins to his minister Vadavur alias Manickavachakar, assigning him the task of acquiring horses. When Manickavachakar stayed in this place, he was immersed in his devotion for Atmanadar. Lord Siva showed himself as a thirteen year old Brahmin boy in the temple corridor and bestowed the knowledge of Sivajnana under the kurundha tree. Manickavachakar spent all the money that the king gave him in renovating this temple. The temple has unique and beautiful sculptures and is administered by Thiruvaduthurai Adheenam. Swamigal visited the temple almost daily and had darshan of Athmanadhar, Yogambika, Manickavachakar and the kurundha tree. One person who toiled very hard during Swamigal's stay here was Neikuppai Ekambra Servaikarar. When Swamigal completed his Chaturmasya here and started on Vijya Yatra, the Adheenam officials and religious head paid their respects to Swamigal with Bikshavandanam etc.

First Visit to Rameswaram

Swamigal reached Rameswaram, traveling via Uppur, Devipatnam etc., on the way. The railway authorities made all the arrangements and facilitated Swamigal to cross the Pamban on the railway track. Pamban Marakkayar helped to transport all of his entourage via boat to Rameswaram. Marakkayar personally met Swamigal and obtained his blessing. The authorities of the temple, priests and hereditary pandas gave a grand welcome to Swamigal. After bating in the sea and the teerthams (wells) inside the temple, Swamigal had darshan of Sri Ramanatha and Devi Parvatavardhani in the temple. He celebrated Navarathri puja in Dhanushkodi. On completion of Navarathri, he took bath in the sea where two seas (Mahothadhi and Ratnakaram) meet, as per tradition for three days in a row. He also donated various materials to Vedic Brahmins on this

occasion. On the full moon day of the Kanya month of the cyclic year Dundubi (1922), Swamigal collected sand from the sea at Rameswaram according to tradition, for depositing in the Ganges on reaching Triveni Sangam alias Allahabad. He came back to Rameswaram to accept Bikshavandanam and pada puja of the various devotees gathered there.

Supporter of Khadar (Hand Woven Cloth)

Swamigal took upon wearing only hand woven clothing material called Khadar from the year 1918. He took great pleasure in wearing this material instead of the grandiose silk. When the ceremonial Dhanushkoti bath was being planned, he ordered two sets of Khadar dresses be bought and given to every employee of the mutt. He requested them to accept the Khadar dresses and take off the mill woven clothes and throw it in the ocean. More than two hundred sets of Khadar dhotis were brought from Madurai for this occasion. Many of the employees took a resolution that day to wear only Khadar for the rest of their lives.

Self Realisation for Landlord

One day, Swamigal was returning from his bath at Kodikarai and was followed by devotees and dedicated rich landlords. They were giving away money and clothes to the poor people on the route. The beggars were edging one another and fighting to get to the free goods. In that commotion, one of the beggars, in his eagerness, happened to stand in front of the Swamigal and blocked him. Angered by the site, one of the landlords accompanying Swamigal took his stick and hit the beggar who fell down bleeding with excruciating pain. Most benevolent of all humans, our Swamigal could not bear this sight and he turned to the landlord and said, 'You are well versed in Shastras. God has bestowed you with enough wealth and intelligence. You should have affinity towards all living beings and be calm in all circumstances. The first thing a human being has to control is his anger.' He requested the mutt officials to treat the beggar for his wound, feed him and take him to his destination. Swamigal's words touched the landlord's heart and he realized his mistake. From that day onwards, he strived to control his anger and in his later age, assumed sannyasa ashrama and the path to self realization.

Visit to Ramnad, Sivaganga

On the way back from Rameswaram, Swamigal halted at Ramanathapuram for some days at the request of the Rajah of Ramnad where he was given the grand royal reception. He then camped at Sivaganga for three days on October 20th, as the guest of the Raja of Sivaganga, Muthuvijaya Raghunatha Gowri Vallabha Thuraisingha Thevar. He was offered bikshavandanams and pada puja at the palace and also by the residents of Sivaganga.

Pilgrimage in the Pandyan Region

Swamigal left Sivaganaga on October 28, 1922 to visit Kalaiyarkoil where he had the darshan of Someswarar, Kaleswarar and Sundareswarar with the sannidhis of Devis. The saivite saints Sambandar and Sundarar have both sung in praise of the deities in this pilgrim place. The birth place of Manickavachakar, Thiruvadavur was ten miles from here. The temple authorities of Sivaganga officially welcomed Swamigal and provided all amenities for a comfortable camp. Later, Swamigal traveled through Nattarasankottai, Cholapuram, Madagupatti and stayed in the vaishnavite pilgrimage center of Thirukottiyur. He had darshan of the lord SowmyaNarayana Perumal and his consort Thirumagal Nachiar as well as the Sarabeswarer sannidhi inside the temple. On November 1st, he visited Thirupathur where Appar and Sambandar have composed songs on the local deities Sivakami and Sri Dhalinathar. The next day, Swamigal came to Ilaythagudi to see the Nagarathar temple as well his preceptor's adhishtanam. He climbed the Pran hill to take bath in the springs there on the sixth of November. From there, he visited Karunkalakudi and Melur to reach Thirumaliruncholai alias Azhagar koil on November 11th. He went up the hill here to take bath in the spring there called Noobura Gangai. Later Swamigal had the darshan of Sundararajar and Sundaravalli Thayar. This sacred temple was known to have been worshipped by the four popular Vaishnavite saints, Nammazhvar, Bhoothathazhvar, Periyazhvar, Thirumangai Azhvar and Andal. Moreover, it was also considered to be one of the six key shrines for Karthikeya.

At Madurai

On the twelfth of November, Swamigal arrived at Madurai, the once famous Pandyan capital. The leading citizens of the city welcomed Swamigal and had arranged for a grand reception and procession for him. Thousands of people were gathered in the main streets of the Madurai where Swamigal was taken around. They made all necessary arrangements for the convenient stay of His Holiness and his retinue. Almost every day he had darshan of Sri Sundareswara and Devi Meenakshi. After a stay of a month, Swamigal left on a tour further south. Devotees gathered in great numbers to witness the puja and to hear Swamigal's speech at the Kalyana Mandap.

Banks of Thamiraparni

Swamigal left Madurai on 12th December, 1922 and headed towards Thirunelveli via Thirumangalam, Vathrayiruppu, SriVilliputhur, Rajapalayam, Chethur, Sivagiri, Chinthamani, Kadayanallur, Thenkasi, Kadayam, Papanasam and Ariyanayakipuram. Bhikshavandanam and Pada puja was conducted in Veeraragavapuram, Sanyasi gramam, Kailasapuram, Vannarapettai and Thirunelveli township. In the town of Veeraraghavapuram, Swamigal presided over the annual celebration of Vivekasamwardhini Sabha and donated a thousand rupees towards their building fund. In

the early part of the year 1923, Swamigal traveled to Azhvar Thirunagari, Sri Vaikunam and Nanguneri. On 11-2-1963, Swamigal reached Thiruchendur where Adi Sankara had composed Subramanya Bhujangam. He later traveled through Ambasamuthiram, Papanasam, Thenkasi, Thirukutralam and Sankaranarayanar temple or a week.

9. Long Vijaya Yatra – II

(Tatanga Prathishtta to Akhilandeswari)

It was arranged to celebrate the Tatanga prathishta of Akhilandeswari Devi in Tiruchirapalli in the month of April. Swamigal quickly completed his travels in Tirunelveli district going through Sattur, Aruppukottai, Madurai and stopped in Dindigul where he stayed for three days. He visited Sirumalai, a hill station about thirty miles from Dindigul, without his entourage. He undertook the long climb on the mountain with selected few for assisting in the puja. A medical center using natural herbs was established there by Swamigal. He enjoyed the serenity and isolation of the place and stayed there for two days. Arrangements for Swamigal's stay at Sirumalai was done by the officials of the Kanniwadi landlord. Swamigal went to Palani from there and had darshan of Sri Dhandayuthapani. He was camped there for three days. He traveled to Thiruvanaikaval via Dindigul, Viralimalai, Ilayathangudi, Kandanur, Thirumayam, Pudukottai and Keeranur in the year 1923. During his stay in Pudukottai, the royal Regent Sri Vijayaraghunatha Durai Raja gave Swamigal a grand and royal welcome and performed sahasra Pada puja. The natives of Pudukottai made him stay there for a week, conducted Biksha and pada puja as well as a grand procession during what was his second visit to Pudukottai. When he was staying at Thirumayam Chathiram, Kadiapatti D.N.Muthiah Chettiar offered a golden plate for Swamigal's puja.

Thiruvanaikaval Sankara Mutt

There are several branches for Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam at various pilgrim centers, of which the one at Thiruvanaikaval is very historical in nature. Uptil recent times, Brahmins would conduct upanayanam for their sons at this mutt. The country's premier scientist Sir.M.Visweswariah conveyed in his 1923 Tiruchirapalli speech, that his upanayanam and brahmopadesam was conducted in this mutt. In the year 1908, Swamigal had noticed that the building of the mutt, made of stone, was heavily damaged. In te year 1920, he requested renovation on this building to be done. He had a plan to create a premier center where Vedas and Shastras would be taught. This was renovated with all the facilities at the cost of seventy five thousand rupees. Teachers and students learning in this school here, were provided with separate living quarters.

Tatanga Prathishtai

Thiruvanaikaval also known as Jambukeswaram was one of the five Panchaboota pilgrim centers. It was the Appu Sthalam (Appu meaning water) where the Lord is symbolized in the form of water. There is always water around the lingam in Thiruvanaikaval. The lord in this holy place was called Jambunathar while the Devi was known as Sri Akhilandeswari. When Adi Sankara traveled around the country, he had performed Sri Chakra Prathishtai to Annapoorni in Kasi, Kamakshi in Kanchi,

Mookambika in norther Karnataka, Tripurasundari in Thiruvotriyur and Akhilandeswari at Thiruvanaikaval. This institution of Sri Chakra had been done in various forms in each place. For Akhilandeswari, he had established the Sri Chakram in the Tatangam or the ear rings of the Devi. Along with that, he installed an idol of her son, Vinayaka in front of her sanctum, there by calming her, making her graceful and pleasing in nature and approachable to her numerous devotees. From that day forth, the Devi has been adorned with the Tatanga, a pair of ear rings made in the shape of Sri charka yantras. The pontiffs of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam have the rights to repair and re-consecrate the ear ornaments of Sri Akhilandeswari.

The Tatanga of Sri Akhilandeswari was repaired by the then Acharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam in the year 1846. The trustees of the temple had conveyed their concern to Swamigal in the year 1920 itself, that the Tatanga was badly in need of repairs. Swamigal consulted experts about making lasting repairs to the ornaments, renovating the jewels by inseting the srichakra shaped gems and making two new protective covers. A small team of expert goldsmiths, sent from Chennai by T.R.Tawker and Sons, premier dealers in precious stones were engaged to carry out the repairs. When Swamigal arrived at Tiruchirapalli, the reception given by the citizens was a grand one of proportions that was never seen before. The municipal chairman, F.G.Natesa Iyer described the event in one of his articles published later:

“I was nominated by the public as the chairman of the Reception committee for arranging a reception for the Acharya of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam. As the municipal chairman , it was my duty to provide a proper welcome and respect to Swamigal who was visiting after a long time. The opportunity to welcome His Holiness in a manner that was exponentially greater than receptions given to kings and viceroys, was accorded to me, along my with supporters Sri MKandaswamy Servai, lawyer Sri. R.Srinivasa Iyengar and the larger public. The procession that was seven miles long, was preceded by seven groups of nadaswaram players, three band groups, four elephants, many horses and camels, instrumental players, Bhajan singers, Seva Samitis. I had the blessing to hold the front side of the ivory palanquin where our guru for the whole world , Sri Sankaracharya Swamigal was seated. He gave darshan to numerous people lined on both sides of the roads, in every floor, irrespective of their religion, caste or creed. There was no count of arathis, Poorna kumbams, garlands, asthika goshams. The procession that started at 6 pm ended at 10 pm in front of the mutt at Thiruvanaikaval. I was enthralled in my service to Swamigal as service to Lord Shiva himself.”

Prathishtai

Two days prior to the prathishtai, the preliminary rites began at the yagasala. There were continous sounds of Veda recital, Bhajan singing and Thevaram recitals. Swamigal gave abhisheka theertam, vibhoothi and mantra akshadai to thousands of devotees gathered to see the pujas performed to Sri Chandramouleeswarar.

Swamigal adorned with his own hands, the ears of Devi Akhilandeswari with the repaired Tatangas at an auspicious time in the forenoon of Sunday, the 17th of Mesha (Chitra) month of the cyclic year Rudrotkari, i.e. 29th April, 1923. The folks who had the opportunity to witness this event were blessed indeed.

Key patrons of this event were M.Kandaswamy Servai, Lawyers Sri R. Srinivasa Iyer, Sri.V.Jayarama Iyer and landlord from Andipatti Sri. Pethachi Chettiar. Free food was provided for seven days on account of this event by Thepperumanallur Sivan. Annadanam of this proportion was not seen in Tiruchirapalli before.

A religious conference was held on this occasion where experts, politicians, members of Brahma Gnanam, high ranking government officials, lawyers, saivite and vaishnavite experts and others joined the debates. The key topic of discussion at this conference was “ How to save our religion in keeping with the times and not letting go of historical values as well as safeguarding core religious aspects”. The conference took place for three days. Chetlur, a politician belonging to Congress was one of the notable participants in the debates. Swamigal would also participate in the discussion everyday. A blanket freedom was given to all to discuss their ideas on how to safeguard the religion and preserve the social values. After heated discussions, several resolutions were adopted after obtaining the blessings of Swamigal. One of the resolutions was to start a university at Thiruvanaikaval. Swamigal wanted this to be in the format of Gurukulam. In commemoration of the Tatanka pratishta, he established a veda patasala and an institution for teaching Advaita philosophy, in the Sankara mutt at Tiruchirapalli. Swamigal had given the responsibility to organize this conference to the editor of Sri Rangam Vani publications, T.K.Balasubramania Iyer. He was honored by Swamigal for efficiently organizing the conference.

Tatanka Pratishta To Goddess Akilandeswari: The Hindu Message published at Srirangam under the editorship of T.K.Balasubramaia Iyer, B.A.; Editorial, May 10, 1923)

“Never before in the annals of Tiruchirapalli have we witnessed te grandeur and enthusiasm that were displayed at the reception of His Holiness Sri Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam who arrived at Tiruchirapali on the 23rd ult. The mile long procession headed by richly caparisoned elephants ad surging crowds wit His Holiness seated high on the ivory palanquin in the center, surrounded by large concourse of Brahmins chanting the Vedas, and followed by numerous Bhajana parties and Tevaram parties, the rich and tasteful decorations all along te route which eteded to nearly eight miles, the buoyant enthusiasm of the huge crowd that pressed on all sides just to have a glimpse of His Holiness, beaming countenance and that followed the procession right through to the end, the festive appearance of the whole town and the eageress of everyone in that vast concourse of people to do some sort of service to His Holiness were sights for Gods to see and they beggar all description. It showed in a clear and unmistakable way the stronghold of religion and religious ideals still on the people of the country. No Viceroy or even the Emperor himself could have evoked such spontaneous and heartfelt enthusiasm. It took nearly five hours for te procession to reach its destination. His Holiness had a smile or a word of cheer for every one of the assembled people and when he retired into the mutt, His Holiness observed that the weariness of the journey was counteracted by the unprecedented enthusiasm of the people. The next day commenced the preliminaries of the Tatanka Prathistha of the Goddess Akhilandeswari at Jambukeswaram. As many of our readers maynot quite understand what it means by Tantaka Pratishta we will describe it a little in detail.

When Adi Sankaracharya incarnated in this holy land, he went round the whole of Bharatavarsha several times and in the course of his Vijaya-Yatra established several Yantra in different temples. Of such temples, Jambukeswara is an important one. It appears the Goddess here was very fierce and with her ugra-kala used to burn everything before her. Even the archaka who opened the temple doors early in the morning was reduced to ashes and the people, unable to put up with such fierceness, eagerly availed themselves of the opportunity afforded by the presence in their midst of the great Sankaracharya who came to this kshetra in the course of his tour and implored him to draw out the ugra-kala of the Goddess and thus appease her ferocity. Accordingly, he established a temple of Ganesa just opposite to that of the Goddess so that when the temple doors were opened in the morning the first person to catch the eye of the Goddess would be her own favourite son. This in a way reduced the ferocity, but not satisfied with this, Sri Sankaracharya prepared two Sri-Chakras in the shape of two Tatankas (Ear Ornaments) and drew forth all the ugra-kala of the Goddess into these two Tatankas and fixed them on her two ears. Thence forward the Goddess became Samya Murti and ever since then this Tatanka has been worn by the Goddess always except during the nights. And whenever this ornament got into disrepair, it was repaired by the spiritual descendants of the great world-teacher, who adorned the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetha, and again put on the ears of the Goddess after due Pratishtha. In accordance with this time-honoured rule, the present occupant of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham deemed it part of his duty to repair the Tatanka and perform the Pratishtha while fixing it again on the ears of the Goddess. With this object in view, His Holiness started from Kumbhakonam more than four years ago and after touring through various parts of the country, teaching Dharma to his numerous disciples, reached Trichinopoly just two weeks ago. The preliminary ceremonies were performed on a grand scale with the help of thousands of Brahmins and the ceremony proper took place on the 29th ulto. Ever since a very early hour that morning, people began to assemble in large numbers and by about 8 A.M. When His Holiness left the Mutt for the temple the crowd had become so dense that the town could not hold it. The twin attraction of Goddess Akhilandeswari (Goddess of all the worlds) and the divine Jagadguru (the World-Teacher) was so great that it attracted enormous crowds with boundless enthusiasm. The rush was so great that it became very difficult even for His Holiness to enter the temple. Finally, when His Holiness got into the Sanctum Sanctorum and the Kumbham was brought in from the Yagasala and the abhishekam was performed for the Goddess, there arose a thrill of reverence throughout the surging mass of humanity. Soon after, under the commands of His Holiness and blessed by him, the Tatankas were fixed up as usual on the ears of the Goddess and immediately there shone a brilliant divine luster, which was the privilege, of only those that were inside, to witness. Thus ended the unique festival eagerly awaited by thousands of pilgrims from all parts of the country. People were fed in tens of thousands and a very large number of highly learned vidvans, who had graced the occasion, delivered a number of public lectures under the command of His Holiness on various interesting topical subjects. They were all duly honoured by His Holiness with valuable presents according to their merits. Thus ended this unique ceremony not witnessed by any for two generations past.”

When Swamigal was residing in Thiruvanaikaval, he used to give darsan to devotees in the infirmary situated in the back of the mutt. The devotees enjoyed Swamigal explaining the effects of scientific discoveries and their results, in a simple and witty manner. Professors P.T.Srinivasa Iyengar and PG.Sundaresa Shastrigal were known to have commented that Swamigal was an embodiment of ancient and modern . Swamigal had darshan of Sri Ranganatha in Sri Rangam and Sri Mathrubhootheswarar in Malaikottai As usual, devasthanam officials from both temples provided the official welcome to Swamigal and facilitated his darshan of the deities.

10. Nerur to Kerala

Our Swamigal traveled along the southern banks of the Cauveri river, after the completion of the Tatanga Pratishtai, visiting and staying at places such as Kuzhithalai, Krishna Rajapuram, Mahadhanapuram, leading to Karur. From there, he went to Nerur to have darshan of the Adhishtanam of Sri Sadhashiva Brahmendra.

Swamigal stayed in Nerur for about a week. He spent a lot of time during that stay immersed in meditation at the Sadhashiva Brahmendra's Adhishtanam. His desire to have special aradhanas at the Adhishtanam as well as the Shiva temple close by was fulfilled by the local devotees.

Youth's Change of Heart

During our Swamigal's visit to Nerur, (June of 1923), a young man hailing from a very conservative and pious vedic Brahmin family belonging to Kerala, came to Tiruchi with the intention of converting to Christianity. He was a graduate and possessed a clear and rational mind. However, his innocence accepted made him accept whatever information was fed to him. He got attracted by the teachings and speeches by the local Christian preachers and priests. His friends took him to meet with F.G.Natesa Iyer, then municipal Chairman at Tiruchi. Natesa Iyer elaborated on his twenty years of experience and knowledge on the Christian religion and advised the young man that the Hindu religion was our mother and it was not appropriate to abandon your mother. He also told him that he was unfortunate to have committed such a sin, but realized his folly in time and he didn't like to see anyone else commit the same mistake. However, this young man was very adamant and did not change his mind about converting to Christianity. At that point, Natesa Iyer looked at him and said, " I cannot say anything else to persuade you at this point. But, before you surrender to Christian priests, I want you to meet Sri Kamakoti Peetam, Sri Acharya Swamigal. He is camping close by and if you are willing, come with me." The young gentleman accepted the offer and both of them went to a nearby village Kuzhumani, where Swamigal was camping. Swamigal asked Iyer to bring that youth to the banks of the local river. A little while after they reached there, Swamigal came to that place. Most of the river was dry and sand was visible. He took them both for a long walk in the sand, inquired his thoughts and desires and rationality for joining Christianity. The young man also expressed his thoughts and feelings frankly to Swamigal. After hearing through, Swamigal told him that the Hindu religion was the basis for all the religions. Whatever practices that are prevalent in other religions can be found in the Hindu dharma also. Moreover, special ways and practices are prescribed in the Hindu religion. These practices and dharmas provide the path to reach God and everyone born as a Hindu can follow any of these paths to attain salvation. He spoke with that youth for a very long time that night and requested Natesa Iyer to bring him to the mutt for the next two days also. When Swamigal met the young man alone, he gave him a few upadesams. After that, the young man changed his mind about converting, got faith in his own religion, paid his homage to Swamigal and headed back home.

Temple Repair at Patakacheri

Seventy eight years ago, a young sannyasin of about thirty years of age, roamed the streets of Kumbakonam. He wore a pure white dhoti around his hips and one around his neck, ashes on his forehead, a brass vessel hung on a rope and across his waist and a staff on his hand. He was called the Patakacheri Swamigal. He was fair and his eyes were charismatic. He spoke rarely and uttered few words. Even though he belonged to the Vellalar community, he was respected by people across the social strata. It was said that he did upasana of KalaBhairavar. Everybody, including businessmen, donated coins generously in the brass vessel he carried. He never asked anyone for any money. Still, the people traveling in the bullock carts would definitely stop and donate money to him. No one asked him why and for what purpose he was collecting this money. It was the belief that being a good person, the money would be spent on a just cause. The money collected grew to a considerable amount and Patakacheri Swamigal's eyes fell on the historical and old Sri Nageswara Swamy temple whose gopurams were in dire need of repairs. The temple towers were cracked in many places; trees and plants were growing from the walls, and other places in the temple needed repairs as well. In order to renovate the temple and its gopurams, a huge amount of money was needed.

This temple is one of the places where Appar Swamigal has sung in praise of the residing deity. There is a Nataraja idol, six feet tall, in this temple in an auditorium (Sabha) which gives the illusion of a moving plane. It is an amazing sight and makes us wonder how the artisans created this feat of intertwined stones in the form of charkas. A special puja to Surya is performed in this temple every year for three days, starting on the 11th day of lunar month of Chitra. On these three days, the rays of the rising sun will fall directly on the Shivalingam, early in the morning.

Patakacheri Swamigal spent all the monies received by him in repairing and renovating this beautiful temple. The effort took a couple of years and was completed successfully and a date was fixed to celebrate the kumbabhishekam. At this juncture, the Viswakarma community got together and insisted that they have the right to perform abhishekam to the Lord before the Shivacharias and priests could perform abhishekam. They filed their claim in the court as there was a dispute. Patakacheri Swamigal was worried at this point, that his effort to complete the renovation of this temple would not be fulfilled. He visited our Swamigal in the year 1920, conveyed the difficulty of the situation, requested his blessings to find a way to resolve the controversy and sought his blessings for the Kumbabhishekam. Our Swamigal appreciated the selfless service performed by Patakacheri Swamigal and assured him that he would do the needful to resolve the matter. Our Swamigal invited the artisans and priests and had conversations with them separately. He inquired about their positions and the rationale for each of their points of view. He convinced them to accept the decision that he would provide. They filed a statement with the court to this effect saying the matter would be arbitrated by our Swamigal, and they would accept the decision provided. The judge who was confused about this matter sighed with relief that he didn't have to hear this case. Swamigal conveyed his opinion that there is nothing stated in the Shastras that prohibited the Viswakarma community from performing abhishekam before the Kumbabhishekam.

There will be no harm done to the deity if the artisans performed abhishekam as long as it is done before the Kumbabhishekam. The municef of the court also issued an order to that effect. The Kumbabhishekam took place with the full hearted support of both the communities in the lunar month of Ani in the cyclic year Rudrothkari (June,1923). Thousands of people gathered to witness the kumbabhishekam with the cooperation of local businessmen, lawyers, landlords and other professionals. Patakacheri Swamigal was tremendously pleased to see the sight. Free food was provided to thousands during this event by Theperumalnallur Sivan. A few years after the kumbabhishekham, Patakacheri Swamigal attained siddhi at Thiruvotriyur.

There was a famous nadaswaram vidwan in Kumbakonam called Shivakozhundhu. He had a younger brother. He was involved in dharmic activities during his entire life. There was a Kalahastheeswarer temple situated on the south side of the Sankara mutt in Kumbakonam. There was no gopuram in the temple and he realized the need for one. He would keep an aluminium bowl on a chair on the road side across from the temple, early in the morning at 5 am. He would rise early in the morning, take a dip in the river, wear rudraksham and vibhuti and stand next to the bowl for a couple of hours reciting “ Shivadharmam, Shivadharmam”. His appearance and voice would attract everyone going to take a dip in the Cauveri or just passing by. They would not leave without putting at least a small amount of money in the bowl. Everyday, he could come to the mutt and stand at distance and have darshan of our Swamigal. He collected money like this for five to six years and built a beautiful gopuram for the Kalahastheeswarer temple. Swamigal would praise this ardent devotee of Shiva in those days.

Patriot C.R.Das

In the year 1922, the conference of Congress was held at Gaya and was presided by the famous patriot from Bengal, Chittaranjan Das. Some differences of opinion arose during this conference and he left Congress to form a new party – Swarajya Party. He was supported in Tamil Nadu by leaders such as A.Rangaswamy Iyengar, S.Srinivasa Iyengar and S.Sathyamoorthy. The intention of this party was to stand in election, capture seats and gridlock the government by being an intrusive opposition party. On the other hand, Congress under Gandhi wanted to boycott the elections. In order to campaign and raise funds for his new party, Chittaranjan Das was traveling around Tamil Nadu during July and August of 1923. During this time, our Swamigal was visiting Pettavaithalai in Tiruchi district. He had heard about this incomparable religious leader who was a genius and extremely interested and favored to releasing the country from the clutches of foreign rule. He expressed his desire to meet our Swamigal to Sathyamoorthy, who in turn obtained permission and arranged for a darshan. Swamigal was stationed in Pettavaithalai and hundreds of devotees and followers had gathered there to witness this meeting.

C.R.Das was silent for some time, experiencing the divinity of our Swamigal. A few people besides Sathyamoorthy and A.Rangaswamy Iyengar were allowed inside the room. Swamigal inquired Das about his personal well being and his family, and later questioned him on the merits of starting this new party. Swamigal also took this opportunity to convey his doubts and questions. C.R.Das was amazed at the extent of Swamigal’s political knowledge. He tried to answer Swamigal’s questions, of which,

most where unanswerable. Swamigal gave his blessings to Das and advised him that whatever party he might belong to, politicians should not conduct politics in such a way that the religious faith of the general public is harmed or affected. Moreover, he emphasized that being a sanyasin as well as a religious leader, he cannot support any one political party, but he was looking forward to the day when the country would be free of foreign rule. Das was very happy to have had the darshan and blessings of Swamigal. After completing his ten day tour of Tamil Nadu, he again visited Swamigal in Thiruvanaikaval during his Tiruchi visit.

Legislature for Hindu Dharmic Organizations

The government headed by Panagal Raja of Justice party wanted to bring a legislation to protect Hindu religious organizations. A committee was appointed to investigate and study its feasibility. They sent out communications to private citizens, requiring their input on the legislature. It was also announced that an opportunity would be given to appear before the committee and voice their opinions.

A statement was prepared on behalf of the mutt after consulting experienced lawyers. Swamigal participated in the discussions and prompted the legal terminology to draft the statement. A lawyer from Kumbakonam, S.Mahalinga Iyer, was sent with the statement for an interview with Panagal Raja. Before accepting the mahajar, Panagal Raja asked him what Swamigal's opinion was on such a legislature. Did he think it was necessary or not? Iyer replied that Swamigal felt that a legislature to protect and maintain Hindu organizations was necessary. He was concerned about some of the provisions in the legislature and had sent a statement to that effect. Panagal Raja was extremely pleased when the mahajar started with an encouraging statement from Swamigal blessing and praising the effort taken by the government. He believed that this legislature would be passed without any issues with the blessings of Swamigal. There was a public meeting held at St.George Fort and T.R.Ramachandra Iyer, a famous devotee of the mutt, explained the key aspects of this legislature in the arena. Panagal Raja said that the government was indebted to Swamigal regarding this legislature and he conveyed thanks to Swamigal on behalf of the committee and himself.

When Swamigal was staying at Tiruchi in the year 1924, one of the key leaders of Congress, Purushottam Das Tandon came to have darshan of Swamigal. His Holiness donated one thousand rupees to him to propagate Hindi for Hindi Prachar Sabha.

Sri Acharya's Compassion during Cauveri Floods

Our Swamigal graciously accepted the request of the citizens of Thiruvayar and celebrated the Vyasa puja in the year 1924, at the Pushya mandap in the north corner of Cauveri. Hordes of devotees from nearby Tanjore and other villages thronged to have darshan of Swamigal.

During the lunar month of Adi, Cauveri overflowed with floods and in some places, broke the banks. As the mandap where puja was taking place was close to the

Cauveri, the flood water came into the puja mandap. The people of Thiruvayar requested Swamigal to move the puja to another place. Swamigal said that the puja cannot be moved during Chaturmasya for any calamity or any reason. The people were worried about the situation. To make things worse, the flood grew and spread across to its tributary Kollidam, which was three miles away. The huts of the poor people, mostly Harijans, were immersed in flood waters. They started to move to higher elevated areas with their goats, cows, children and elderly. Swamigal was compassionate towards these poor people who were stranded in the floods without food and other facilities. He brought together the local key people and organized relief for the people affected in the floods as quickly as possible. He requested the annadhanam at the mutt premises to be reduced. Instead, he arranged for regular daily food to be prepared in huge vessels and had the mutt employees take this food around the affected areas and distribute it. The distribution efforts were organized by the local Congress leader Sarangapani Iyengar and the partymen. The relief efforts were taken for fifteen days after which the floods receded and the public slowly started to return and to repair their homes. The poor folks appreciated and praised Swamigal for his compassion and annadhanam. A help provided in time of need is indeed a valuable help. Everbody was amazed at the timely help provided by Swamigal.

Visit to Sivaswamy Iyer High School at Thirukattupalli

In the beginning of the year 1924, Swamigal went to Thirukattipalli via Koviladi and also visited nearby villages like Nemam, Pazhamarneri, Ombathuveli, Ranganadhapuram, Varghoor, Marur, Sathanur, Koothur, Mullakudi and Bhoodhalur and accepted pada pujas and Bikshavandanams offered by devotees there. Swamigal visited the local high school in Thirukattupalli instituted by Sir P.S.Sivaswamy Iyer on 22nd March 1924. The teachers and students were excited about his visit. They decorated the school and gave a grand welcome for Swamigal. Guruswamy Shastrigal, the principal, performed Pada puja on behalf of the staff and students at the school. He said in his speech that it is indeed the good intention of the founder of the school and their bhagyam that Swamigal visited the school. Swamigal said in his speech that he was very glad to see the respect shown to teachers by the students as well as the love and affection shown to the students by the teachers, similar to the gurukula method of education. He also advised that our Shastras require the teachers to be considered with the same respect shown to Gods. Education given by teachers for only money is of no use; students and teachers should live together like a family; every student there should grow to be a citizen who is productive for this world, for his community and for his parents, and it was his belief that the founder founded the school with the same objective. He added that all children should start their day and their studies after paying their obeisance to their parents and then to the parents of this creation – Parvathi and Parameswara.

Visit to Vallam

Towards the end of 1924, Swamigal visited Vallam, close to Tanjore. Local Christians and Muslims joined the Hindus in giving a huge welcome to Swamigal. Vallam had never seen such celebrations before. Lots of Harijans joined the celebrations to welcome Swamigal. A huge procession was arranged and Swamigal sat in an ivory palanquin and gave darshan to devotees. The crowds were screaming with happiness and believed that their town would prosper with Swamigal's visit. The procession took a couple of hours and reached the place where the mutt was camped. Swamigal gave a speech where he said that he was very happy that such a grand welcome was given to him. All villages should live in harmony and peace similar to Vallam. Even when arguments and situations of discord arise, the people should settle it amongst themselves and should never let the situation elevate to a point that cases are filed in court. Whatever the religion may be, one should follow one's religion as per rules prescribed; Christians and Muslims tend to follow their religious practices more than Hindus and Hindus should learn this aspect from Christians and Muslims. He could see the bhakthi and devotion in the hundreds of Harijans gathered there with Vibhuti in their forehead; the general public should take care of the needs of Harijans and only then would their village / towns would prosper. It is important that everyone ensures that religious piety is maintained around the country. The local people agreed to conduct themselves as per Swamigal's advice and took their leave. Swamigal met with the Harijan men, women and children individually, inquired about their well being and gave them prasadam.

Meeting with the Collector

The office of Tanjore collector was then situated at Vallam. The collector of Tanjore was an Englishman named H.M.Hoot. He was curious about the celebrity for whom a huge celebration and welcome was given and wanted to meet Swamigal himself. He sent his request for an audience through a Hindu friend of his and Swamigal agreed to meet the collector that evening, at the appointed time. The collector's friend translated whatever Swamigal said in Tamil to English for the collector's comprehension. The collector conveyed his government's thanks for the annadhanam provided by Swamigal in Thiruvayar. The collector was immersed in Swamigal's attractive personality and clarity of mind. He had a conversation with Swamigal for close to an hour and spoke about public undertakings, government and mutt undertakings. Later he told Swamigal that he would never forget this visit in his life.

Research about our Culture across the ocean

Swamigal was involved in various research during his travels. He found that Indian culture and practices were prevalent in Java and Bali islands which are now called

Indonesia. Swamigal had previously read about two thousand pages of the book 'Raffle's History of Java.' There are temples in Indonesia for Vinayaka, Siva, Ambika and Vishnu, similar to the ones in Tamil Nadu. However, the Saivite and Vaishnavite religions that were prevalent before have disappeared and Islam has become the national religion. Sri Swamigal would enquire about the ancient culture and practices of the South Asian islands with those visiting from there.

Twenty years ago, a troupe from Java was visiting Madras. They played scenes from Ramayana and Mahabharata. Swamigal sent gifts portraying Indian culture along with his blessings, to the troupe and to each of its members through the mutt's special representative, K.G.Natesa Shastrigal, teacher at Mylapore Venkataramana Vaidyasala. A picture of Swamigal was also presented to them at their request. The head of the group paid his respects to Swamigal and invited him to visit their country. Swamigal was knowledgeable about each of the historic Hindu and Buddhist sites in their country. The famous travel agency Thomas Cook & Co. came to know about Swamigal's interest in the islands. They sent a brochure and information about the places to the mutt, offered to make arrangements for his travel and stay in case he was planning to visit there.

Visit to Cave temples in Chittannavasal

In the year 1924, Swamigal visited temples in Chittannavasal, Naarthamalai, Gundandar Koil, Kudumiyan Malai, Thirugokarnam and Thirumayam during his stay in Pudukottai. There are beautiful paintings of dancing women holding lotuses in their hands to be found in the roof of the cave temple at Chittannavasal They portray the Jain culture and civilization during Pallava rule. Swamigal had those paintings photographed. In Kudumiyan Malai, a stone pellet that was carved during the time of Mahendravarman Pallavan was found. It contained information about Sangeetha Shastras. Many beautiful sculptures can be found in Thirumayam Koil. Behind the hills in Chittannavasal and Naartaamalai, many springs filled with water can be seen. Swamigal requested mechanical pumps to be brought there to empty the springs after hearing about sivalingams at the bottom of the springs. He performed abhishekam, archana and puja to the sivalingams found there. People from nearby towns came in thousands to have darshan of the sivalingams that were never seen before. During this yatra, officials of the Pudukottai royalty and Kadiyapatti D.N.Muthaiah Chettiar made all the arrangements and provided the necessary help to Swamigal.

Interest in Tamil

Swamigal took interest in research around Tamil Sangam literature, epics, Thevaram, Thirukural, Divya Prabandams of Azhvars, Periya Puranam, Thiruvaiyadar Puranam, etc. done by scholars visiting the mutt. The famous tamil scholar, Mahopadhyay Dr.U.V.Swaminatha Iyer used to visit the mutt to have darshan of our Swamigal. Encouraged by Swamigal's interest in this field, he would spend hours conversing with His Holiness in spite of his advanced age. He was known to speak in fluent and sweet languages that attracted and held spell bound people of all ages. He

would take immense pleasure in witnessing daily the Siva puja done by Swamigal and immersing himself in meditation. He was fortunate enough to have witnessed in person, during his eighteenth year, the exceptional Siva puja done by 65th pontiff of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, Sri Mahadevendra Saraswathi Swamigal. After that, he was indeed fortunate to visit a similarly exceptional Siva puja done by our Swamigal. He has also mentioned with pride, in his auto-biography, about his lectures on Puranas at the mutt which were received with accolade by asthana vidwans of the mutt. In praise of the exemplary service done by Mahamahopadhyay Swaminatha Iyer for his contribution to Tamil and growth of Tamil, our Swamigal gave him title of 'Daaksinaathya Kalanidi' as well as two Kashmiri shawls in the year 1925. The award along with the Srimukham was bestowed to Swaminatha Iyer at a ceremony conducted during the annual meeting of Madurai Tamil Sangam, chaired by Sir.C.P.Ramaswamy Iyer. Swaminatha Iyer said, it was indeed his honor to receive the title and Srimukham and prayed to God that saints like Sri Acharya Swamigal who bestowed the title may live for many more years protecting the people.

Yatra in Nagarathar Country

Kandanur Nagarathar requested Swamigal to visit the Nagarathar country, and to fulfill their wishes, Swamigal arrived at Kandanur on 15-4-1925. He had darshan of the holy temple at Sakottai, near that place. In the month of February, he stayed in Devakottai for a month and Karaikudi for a month. (I don't understand this. How can he stay in two places for a month each in the month of February? Also how did he do that when he got there in april?) He stayed at the Dwadasi mandapam in Devokottai, situated near the Silambani Vinayakar temple. The local landlords including a Zamindar, nagarathars, lawyers and professionals joined to provide service to Swamigal during his stay. In Karaikudi, District Board member C.Narayana Chettiar, Chinnayya Iyer and Headmaster N.S.Venkatarama Iyer took the lead in making arrangements for Swamigal's stay. Our Swamigal visited temples at Ariyakudi, Kunrakudi and Kovilur near Karaikudi. The religious head of Kovilur mutt, Sri Sri Mahadeva Swamigal made arrangements for the appropriate welcome and respect to be offered to Swamigal. He later visited Pallathur, Kadiapatti, Rayavaram, Arimalam and Konapattu.

The editor of 'The Hindu', A.Rangaswamy Iyengar and Tanjore E.Suryanarayana Iyer came to Rayavaram to have darshan of our Swamigal. They spoke with Swamigal for a long time about Gandhiji's sathyagraha and the freedom fight happening in our country during that time. Rangaswamy Iyengar was an exceptional politician and was close to Gandhiji's heart. He had come to visit Swamigal to obtain his opinion on certain key political aspects. He later said that he got a few pointers from Swamigal that was very beneficial and was planning on acting on those suggestions. Before he took leave, Swamigal inquired about the operation of Hindu publications. He blessed them and was pleased by the service provided by the publications. He advised them that the press should not hesitate to print what was perceived to be right in their opinion, even while their goal was to make money. He also advised them to not lose their faith in God under any kind of circumstances.

Vyasa puja in the year 1925 was held at Ilayanthangudi. After completion of Chaturmasya vratha, Swamigal visited Nachandupatti, Panayapatti, Viraychilai and Kuzhipirai. When our Swamigal was camped at Ilayathangudi for chaturmasya, Sri Sringeri Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekarendra Bharathi Swamigal was observing his chaturmasya vratha at Kunrakudi, five miles from Ilayathangudi. Devotees and scholars would visit both the mutts at this time. Through them, both the saints would enquire about each other's welfare.

Praise of Pandithamani Kadiresan Chettiar

Many scholars and vidwans would visit our Swamigal at his camp at Ilayathangudi and converse with him for hours. One day, Pandithamani M.Kadiresan Chettiar came to the camp to have darshan. Swamigal and Chettiar were talking with each other for more than three hours. Swamigal felt that Tamil and Sanskrit was ignored during that time and requested Pandithamani and scholars like him to train and generate exceptional scholars. Later, Swamigal praised Chettiar on his scholarship and presented a peetambaram (Shawl). Chettiar paid his respects to Swamigal and prayed that he would be in Swamigal's thoughts for years to come.

Congress Leaders' Interview with Swamigal

Congress leaders such as S.Satyamurthy and U.RamaRao visited Ilayathangudi to interview Swamigal. They conveyed a message about the Congress leaders' participation in the coming elections and requested His Holiness's blessings. Swamigal told them that he was always interested in the well being of his disciples and was always ready to bless them. However, whatever the political party may be, its political leaders should earn the trust of the people in order to win the election. Political leaders standing for elections should undertake to do service to the people and to God in order to do well in the polls.

On the first day of the lunar month of Thai, in the cyclic year of Krodana (14-1-1926), Swamigal went to Rajamatam to take a bath in the ocean on the occasion of solar eclipse. On the twelfth, he visited Nemathanpatti to witness/grace/bless the gruhapravesham of the chattiram built by M.M family. Later, he stayed for more than fifteen days at Kanadukathan. He was given a grand welcome there including a procession by Sir.M.C.D.Muthiah Chettiar and other prominent citizens of the town.

Dharma Bhushanam Award

During his stay in Kadiapatti, the local nagarathar were involved in their service to Swamigal with great devotion. Significant amongst them were the D.S family who had earlier undertaken the renovation of temple at Thirupaadhiripuliyur as well as the silver chariot at Thiruvannamalai. The P.K.N.family, from the same place, offered a right turned conch, covered with gold, for Swamigal's puja. Swamigal awarded the title 'Dharma Bhushanam' to Diwan Bahadur D.N.Muthaiah Chettiar from the D.S. family. A

special ceremony was later held on this occasion and he was praised by Sri.U.V.Swaminatha Iyer and Sri.M.Kadiresan Chettiar.

Vainagaram Ramanatha Chettiar

Vainagaram Ramanatha Chettiar belonged to Amaravadipudur near Devakottai. He was an exception devotee of Shiva and would take his daily food only after the completion of his Siva puja. He always wore rudraksham and would be immersed in his puja for hours together. Apart from being a poet, he had researched the Thevaram, the Thiruvachakam and the Thirumandiram and would lecture on their merits to everyone. He was also a trustee of the Madurai Meenakshi Temple. Chettiar stayed at Kadiapatti for a week to have darshan of Swamigal who was camped there, behold(witness?) the Siva puja and converse with Swamigal about religious and worldly matters. He spent many hours daily talking to Swamigal. Nagarathar of Kadiapatti had arranged for a grand procession for Swamigal where he was carried in a palanquin. Thousands of people had come from out of town also to witness the procession. Swamigal noticed important and prominent people walking alongside the palanquin, but couldn't find Ramanathan Chettiar. He pointed out the absence of Chettiar with whom he had spent hours in conversation in the past week. The procession completed and returned to the camp late, after one am in the morning. Swamigal was seated on a throne after the procession and he immediately called for Ramanathan Chettiar to be brought to him. Chettiar standing in the back in a corner came forward and prostrated before Swamigal. Our Swamigal asked him where he was all this time and why he was not to be found during the procession. Chettiar replied that he came along during the procession. Swamigal replied, he looked for him and couldn't see Chettiar. In reply, Chettiar looked at Swamigal and said, "My shoulders have done great punya today by bearing His Holiness". Swamigal smiled and replied, "Oh, you carried the palanquin, did you?" Chettiar nodded in affirmation, and offered to Swamigal a song with five paragraphs composed by him. It described the ancient culture of Tamil Nadu where devotees took pride in carrying Saivite saints in palanquins. He had heard of the yatra done by Saivite saints to all Siva pilgrim centers and he saw that (same) glorious sight today when Swamigal went on the procession; it was indeed his previous good karma that gave him the opportunity to carry Swamigal in his palanquin.

A Muslim Devotee

In the month of January of 1926, Swamigal stopped for day at Karambakudi on the way to Rajamatam for taking a bath in the ocean on the occasion of solar eclipse. When he was leaving Karambakudi to go to Pattukottai, the local citizens gathered in great numbers, at the outskirts of the town, to send him off. There were some muslims in the crowd gathered there. One muslim gentleman carried the palanquin and walked for more than three miles. Swamigal requested the palanquin to stop and called the muslim gentleman to come close to him. The muslim gentleman conveyed his personal information and details and offered the songs he had composed on Swamigal as well as a

flower garland, fruits, hard sugar cubes, perfumes and gold at Swamigal's feet. Swamigal accepted all the offerings with compassion and asked him to read the songs that he had composed, which the muslim gentleman did and explained its meaning also. Swamigal was listening to the songs with his usual smile. The muslim gentleman was silent for some time. He later looked at Swamigal with tears of happiness pouring from his eyes and said, "Swamigal appears to my eyes in the form of Allah himself. A human being has to just have darshan of saints like Swamigal in order to let go of worldly desires. Swamigal should lead a long life and provide darshan to devotees. I came running with the palanquin for such a long way in order to have ekanta (in isolation) darshan of Swamigal". His eyes reflected the bhakthi of a true devotee. Swamigal gave him leave with his blessings and compassion.

Interview to Raja Sir. Annamalai Chettiar

Swamigal's visit to Kanadukathan on 2nd February, 1926 at the request of local nagarathar was mentioned earlier. S.R.M.A. Annamalai Chettiar, who was on an official trip to Delhi, cut short his trip and rushed to his native place, Kanadukatan, in order to be there during Swamigal's visit. Annamalai Chettiar met with Swamigal and conveyed his appreciation of his long yatra which was very beneficial to the people. Such a long yatra was not undertaken by any religious leader and other religious leaders should follow his lead and conduct intensive campaigns to promote faith in God. His darshan was enough to convert any atheist to have belief in God. He also conveyed his concern about the economic decline of Brahmin families and believed that it was attributable to the dowry system. He was prepared to fund and assist any campaign that Swamigal would take to discourage the dowry system. He was also concerned that the Brahmin community showed more interest in western culture than other communities did, but other communities followed the practices of Brahmins and were unnecessarily increasing their worldly expenses. He wanted to find out ways to change these trends in society. Swamigal listened to Chettiar carefully and agreed that he was equally concerned with all these matters. He felt that evils were penetrating society in a manner similar to poison slowly penetrating the body. Swamigal agreed to involve Chettiar and get his help when needed.

Seth Jamanlal Bajaj and Rajaji

Swamigal was camped at Rangoon Chathiram at Thiruvanaika in March of 1926. Seth Jamanlal Bajaj, a Congress leader, was touring Tamil Nadu and wanted to have darshan of Swamigal. He conveyed his desire to Dr.T.V.Swaminatha Shastrigal, then Congress leader at Tiruchi, who in turn consulted with mutt officials and made arrangements for the meeting. On the appointed day, Bajaj, Chakravarty Rajagopalachariar, Dr.Shastrri and V.Jayarama Iyer, a lawyer went to the chathiram. Bajaj, Shastrri and Iyer went upstairs to where Swamigal was staying. When they prostrated and sat down, Swamigal inquired if anyone else had accompanied them. They replied that Rajaji had come with them, but was standing outside. Swamigal sent

Jayarama Iyer and asked him to bring Rajaji to the room. Rajaji came in to the room and prostrated before Swamigal as per practice. When Swamigal asked him why he did not come in, he replied that he had not taken a bath yet and was planning to come have darshan of Swamigal after completing his ablutions. Swamigal looked at him and said that people who are devoted in the service of the country would not get the time or the opportunity to cleanse their body in a timely manner. Their tireless service is their prayer and vrata. Rajaji was a person with a pure heart and was eligible to have his darshan at any time. Rajaji informed Swamigal about the national freedom struggle, Hindi prachar and Gandhiji's service to the nation. Swamigal also conveyed his opinions to the leaders gathered there. They prostrated to Swamigal and said this darshan would enable them to do both worldly and religious service. Swamigal also donated one thousand rupees towards Khadi machine. (either a kadhi machine or kadhi machines)

Udayarpalaya Vijayam

After spending a year in Pudukottai samasthanam and Nagarathar nadu, Swamigal went to Udayarpalayam via Tiruchi in the month of July, 1926. Traditionally, there was a connection between Kanchi mutt and the Udayarpalayam royalty. When official address of the mutt was moved from Kanchi to Kumbakonam, the then pontiff stayed for a long time at Udayarpalayam. The royalty of Udayarpalayam came under the rule of Tanjore Maharashtra rulers and served as military chiefs under them. They worshipped and were ardent devotees of Sri Kanchi Kamakshi. That is one of the reasons why the samasthanapathis were named Kachi Chinna Nallappan, Kachi Yuvarangappan, etc with Kachi added to their names.

The later years of the first half of the eighteenth century was very confusing and restless in Kanchi. The British East India Company was fighting battles in Karnataka. Then pontiff of Kanchi mutt, Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Swamigal (62nd Acharya) took the main idols for puja and moved from Kanchi to southern parts along with the mutt officials, after making arrangements for puja of Adi Sankara's idol in the mutt at Kanchipuram. He also left behind a few officials to take care of a skeleton office of the mutt there. He went to Rameswaram, stayed for some time in Ramanathapuram and Tiruvananthapuram and then stayed for a long time at Udayarpalayam (surrounded by forests, near Tiruchi) at the request of the royalty. Even before he reached Udayarpalayam, His Holiness had requested the priests of the three main temples in Kanchipuram (Ekambaranathar, Kamakshi and Varadarajaperumal) to secretly bring the Utsava idols from the temples to Udayarpalayam. (Even today, the Siva temple at Udayarpalayam has 'Kamakshi Mandapam' and the Perumal temple has 'Varadaraj Mandapam'). Then king of Tanjore Prathapasimhan came with his Prime Minister Dabeerbandh and requested Kanchi Sankaracharya Swamigal to visit Tanjore. Accepting his invitation, the Swamigal visited Tanjore and stayed there for a few months. He later wished to move to Kumbakonam. Dabeerbandh built a mutt in the southern shores of Cauveri and houses in the nearby three streets for officials and scholars to stay. (Even today, there are streets in Kumbakonam named 'Dabeer Street'). Upon the request of the Tanjore king, a temple was built for Bangaru Kamakshi in the north street. It is to be

noted that Kanchi Sankaracharya Swamigal is the trustee / Dharmakartha of the Bangaru Kamakshi Ambal temple in Tanjore.

The Udayarpalayam zamindar gave a grand welcome to our Swamigal during his visit to the town in 1926 and made arrangements for his comfortable stay at the palace as well as the temple. He also conducted pada puja, bikshavandanam as well as a procession for our Swamigal. Moreover, he offered a six-month old male elephant, two horses, one camel and a few cows to the mutt as his offering. There were no rains in the district for years together and the people were amazed and pleased to see the rains as well as a bountiful harvest that year.

Vyasa Puja and Navarathri(1926)

Swamigal celebrated Vyasa puja that year in Kattumannar koil, situated near Chidambaram. After completing the chaturmasya vratha, he started his yatra staying for a few days at Manjakuppam, Kadalur, Pudupalayam and other places and reached Thirupadhiripuliyur where he stayed, and grandly celebrated the Navarathri festival, at the Kadiapatti Dharmabhushanam D.N.Nachiappa Chettiar Chattiram. Since it was the first time Swamigal had come to that town, the locals gathered in thousands to witness the Navarathi puja on each of the nine days. Kadiapatti Dharmabhushanam Chettiar stayed with Swamigal during camp and made all the arrangements for a comfortable stay and celebration of Navarathri. Chettiar and other prominent citizens of the town made arrangements for Swamigal to be taken around in a grand procession on Vijayadasami day.

During Swamigal's stay in Thirupadhiripuliyur, a learned scholar as well as a patriot who served Gandhiji's freedom struggle, Pandit Achalambika Ammaiyar came to visit Swamigal. She composed five sonnets (Cheyyul) on Swamigal and read them in his holy presence. The learned lady who had also written Gandhiji's biography in the form of cheyyul had been a student under Swamigal's purva-ashrama father. She had met Swamigal when he was a young kid and had praised him. Even though she was of ill health, she came eagerly to see Swamigal, now in the form of her Guru, had darshan and cried with devotion. Swamigal was observing silence that day, but blessed her devotion with his compassionate eyes.

56th Acharya at Vadavambalam (58th according to the mutt records) <http://www.kamakoti.org/peeth/origin.html>

Swamigal visited the small village of Vadvambalam, situated near the Chendhanur railway station, south of Vizhuppuram. The 56th Acharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, Sri Atmabhodhendra Saraswathi Swamigal attained siddhi in this town. He had stayed in Kasi for a long time and was known for his commentary on Rudra mantram. There was no marking in that town to identify the place where the Acharya had attained siddhi. Our Swamigal roamed the village's fields, groves looking for signs and finally stopped at a place and asked the ground to be dug there. The village folks were following Swamigal around during his search. They said that they had dug places around

here for various other reasons and did not see any signs of anyone attaining siddhi there, but there was a well in that place. However, Swamigal insisted and ordered that place to excavated. A few feet into the ground, a skull was found. At that time, one of persons who was digging Kumaramangalam Samabamoorthy Shastri fell down shouting “Stop, Stop”. He regained consciousness after a long time and recanted the amazing vision that he saw.

“I saw a sannyasin wearing saffron robes, having a dhandam in his hand, wearing rudraksha mala around his neck and was as tall as the sky. There were several Brahmins around the sannyasin chanting Upanishads. The huge figure then ordered the chanting to be stopped and I repeated that order to stop. Moreover, I heard the figure say, “Don’t dig, don’t dig” in my ears. The figure became smaller and smaller and disappeared. I just heard someone chanting “ Sadasivam, Sadasivam” in my ears. And that too stopped in a little while, at which point I regained consciousness”. The village people were astonished to hear his vision, prostrated before Swamigal and requested his guidance on how to proceed further. As per Swamigal’s wish, the piece of land was donated to the mutt and a brindavan was built there with the help of one of the local Reddy. On 17th of January, 1927, the brindhavanam was established by Swamigal and daily pujas are being conducted there. Swamigal makes it a point to visit and have darshan at the brindhavanam during his south tours.

Pondicherry Visit

Swamigal visited Pondichery in December, 1927 and a a grand welcome was given to him on behalf of the French government with beautiful arches, pandal and thoranam around the city. He was received at the outskirts of the city with police formation, government bands and welcomed by top government officials, prominent citizens, and the public in thousands, irrespective of their religion. A huge procession was arranged that day and at a given public point, the Governor and his wife, Chairman, Mayor and other key government officials greeted our Swamigal with palms joined together and expressed their pleasure at the city people being gathered there to receive His Holiness irrespective of their cast, creed or religion. Swamigal accepted their loving gestures with his trademark smile. He stayed in Pondichery for a week and granted a private interview to Chairman, Mayor and other officials on one day. The mutt’s disciples including Kuppuswamy Iyer were excited to serve Swamigal during his stay in their town. Everyday, thousands of devotees, both local and from out of town, gathered to obtain his darshan.

Renovation of Thiruvarur Car

There were beautiful Cars / Chariots, intricately carved in temples in Tamil Nadu that were burnt to ashes by a few evil minded people. The car in Thiruvarur was one of the largest in our country and was very well known. The trustees of the Thiruvarur temple, Vadapadhimangalam Zamin family and other prominent landlords in Tanjore wanted to replace the Tiruvarur car with one that was as beautiful and intricately made as

the one that was burnt out. After hearing the news of the destruction of the old car, our Swamigal had been persuading his disciples to take the effort to replace the car. The key person in this effort was Subbaraya Vadyar belonging to the Vedyā community and was known for spending most of his wealth in renovation and service of temples. He was greatly devoted to our Swamigal and came to have his darshan often. He visited Swamigal in Thirupadhiripuliyur in October, 1926 and obtained his Sri Mukham as well as rupees one thousand and one given by Swamigal, took it back to Tanjore and started collecting for this colossal effort. With the help of Narasimha Iyer, manager of Arur Devasthanam, and other friends, he collected about one lakhs within six months. When Swamigal was visiting the district of Malayala, he helped to obtain timber for rebuilding the car.

The renovation / re-building of the car started and progressed fast with the involvement of hundreds of skilled artisans and sculptors and was completed within two years. During this time, Swamigal took a lot of interest and kept inquiring about the status of the work on the car. The key person who was involved in this effort, Subbaraya Vadyar later on took sannyasa ashrama and lived for a few years under the name of Sri Narayana Bramendrar. Later, on 10th January, 1948, in his seventy-seventh year, he was sitting on his seat in the village Marudhavananjeri, uttered the name of his favourite god “Thyagesa” and attained siddhi.

Yatra in Salem, Coimbatore Districts

After staying for a week in Pondichery, Swamigal visited Kadalur, Virudhachalam, Kallakurichi, Chinnasalem, Atthur and arrived at Salem on 31st March, 1927. The people of Salem gave him a very grand welcome and later, he left for Erode.

Muslim, Learned in Sanskrit

The mutt officials communicated to Swamigal, when he was camped at Erode, that a muslim gentleman desired to have darshan of Swamigal. His Holiness asked the officials to bring the muslim person to him at a given time when there was less crowd. The gentleman prostrated before Swamigal and offered the slokas that he had composed on Swamigal in the Sanskrit language. He had also drawn pictures containing Sanskrit aksharas (letters) in the form of a shivalinga. He read the slokas in the presence of Swamigal and also explained the meaning to the surprise of the people gathered there. Swamigal asked the gentleman as to how he obtained knowledge of Sanskrit to the level of composing slokams. To this, the gentleman explained that his ancestors were all well versed in Sanskrit and he had learnt the skill from his father. He was eager to demonstrate his skill to Swamigal and to other respected people and was glad to have got that day, a golden opportunity, which even his ancestors themselves did not get. He shed tears of happiness and stayed silent in the golden presence of Swamigal. He was blessed by Swamigal who encouraged him to continue the study of Sanskrit after exclaiming that this was the first time he had ever met a Muslim gentleman well versed in Sanskrit.

Later, Swamigal left for Mettur via Bhavani and Nerunji. The foundation for the Mettur dam was being constructed at that time. Swamigal visited the site of the dam and asked questions to the engineers who were following him around the site. The government officials and contractors at the site offered bhikshavandanam and pada puja for Swamigal.

Swamigal expressed his wish to see the sight of Cauveri flowing from Mysore into Tamil Nadu at a place that was fifteen miles from Nerunjipettai and had to be accessed after crossing a hill. He left with an entourage of about twenty people early in the morning before six am, crossed the mountain, toured the sights and returned by ten in the morning itself. However, during their return journey, due to the heat from scorching sun, some of them fainted out of exhaustion. Even though Swamigal was very tired, he sent someone down to the village below and asked for coconut water, lemonade, sugar cubes and buttermilk to be brought from there. He asked that to be distributed to the people who fainted as well as others and rejuvenated them. Later, they all climbed down to the village around 3 pm, where they were eagerly welcomed by the village people and bhajan groups.

Swamigal passed through Soolur and arrived at Coimbatore on 26th April, 1927. Arrangements for his stay were made at the local Sringeri Sankara Mutt. Local personalities, government officials, lawyers, businessmen joined the larger public in according Swamigal a grand welcome that started with a procession at seven in the morning and completed after noon. After morning puja, Swamigal gave the devotees prasadam and abhishekam theertam (water). As the devotees were eager to hear Swamigal's speech, he spoke very eloquently in simple Tamil and in his own unique style that attracted everyone, for four hours, on "Siva Vishnu Abedam". In the city where there had not been even a single drop of rain in the past six month, Varuna, the rain god, opened his eyes and showered on the people, cooling the earth as well as the people's heart. Swamigal stayed in Coimbatore for four days.

11. Kerala Tour

Swamigal arrived at Palghat on the 2nd May, 1927 where he toured the eighteen agraharams and stayed for a month. He blessed the residents of the agraharams and then visited nearby villages. During Swamigal's stay in Palghat, the mutt's needs and arrangements were taken care by Dr.Sankaranaryana Iyer. Accepting the invitation of the king of Kozhangodu, Swamigal visited there and stayed in the palace for three days. Every village visited by Swamigal had a festive appearance. The residents of Kerala heard Swamigal speak Malayalam and thought he was a Keralite. Vyasa puja in the year 1927 was held at Kanjikodu, situated close to Palghat, where Swamigal stayed for two months.

Swamigal visited a pilgrim center at Parai in Kerala and spoke the Sthala purana of the place to the devotees gathered there. The story of the pilgrim center is as follows.

Significance of Saranga water

Malayala country was created by Parasurama who had cursed anyone who entering the land. When Sri Rama was banished to the forest, he traveled near Kerala border, took a bath in the river Vazhaiaru, without knowing about the said curse crossed the river and asked Lakshmana also to join him. Lakshmana refused to come as he was aware of the curse. Rama was astonished to see this extraordinary reaction from Lakshmana who was well known for following his brother's footsteps. The younger one reminded Rama of the curse. Rama thought about this problem as he was affected by this curse which could be rid of only by taking a bath in the holy waters of Ganga. But it would take him at fourteen years to go to Ganga to take a bath. So he decided to bring Ganga to that place itself. He took an arrow and shot it towards the earth. The arrow split the earth to its core and Ganga gushed out and Rama along with Lakshmana took a bath in its waters. Having heard this story some years ago, Swamigal also took bath in this holy water.

Thirupugazh Mani

During Swamigal's stay in Palghat, the lawyer from Chennai, T.M.Krishnaswamy Iyer brought his disciples to have darshan of Swamigal and performed Thirupughazh bhajans with his group in Swamigal's presence. Our Swamigal would be pleased to hear anyone sing in praise of Subramanya. When he heard Krishnaswamy Iyer sing Thirupugazh with such great devotion, he was very pleased and bestowed a Kashmiri shawl and the title "Thirupugazh Mani" on him. Krishnaswamy Iyer was very proud of having received such an accolade from an august person , none other than his own Gurunathar.

Meeting with Gandhiji

Towards the second half of the year 1927, Mahatma Gandhi toured southern India to campaign for the Congress party ideology as well as raise funds for the party. He had heard from the editor of 'The Hindu' A.Rangaswamy Iyengar and S.Satyamoorthy about our Swamigal's noble qualities such as clarity of ideas, broadmindedness and acceptance of all irrespective of their caste or creed. He was resolved to make use of this opportunity to meet and converse with Swamigal. This historical meeting took place on the 15th of October, 1927 at a cow-shed, in the village of Nellicheri (Palghat). Just one or two others were allowed in the place and the press was not given permission to go near the cow-shed. Gandhiji prostrated before Acharya, as per tradition and his heart immersed in the glowing presence of our Swamigal who was clad in saffron colored dhoti and seated on the floor. Silence prevailed there for a little while. Then Swamigal spoke in Sanskrit, invited Gandhiji to come nearby and take a seat. Gandhiji sat down on the floor and replied that he could not speak in Sanskrit, only in Hindi, but can comprehend Sanskrit words. Swamigal conversed in Sanskrit and Gandhiji in Hindi. Swamigal conveyed his appreciation to Gandhiji on his service to the nation keeping in mind that political rule based on spirituality would nurture a nation and one based primarily on human strength would lead to destruction. He praised Gandhiji for preaching this principle to the whole world. Regarding letting Harijans enter temples, Swamigal was concerned that majority of the people in this country have beliefs in old system and rules prescribed by Shastras and they would be hurt and such actions would result in Himsa only. The conversation lasted for an hour and Swamigal frequently praised Gandhiji's frank and open hearted expression of his opinions. Finally, when Gandhiji took leave, he said he was greatly benefited by having darshan of Swamigal and would keep his suggestions in mind and act upon them as much as possible.

It was 5:30 in the evening, and Rajaji went inside the shed and reminded Mahatma about his evening meal; as Gandhiji would not take food after 6 pm. At this, Mahatma observed, "The conversation that I am having with the Acharya is itself my evening meal for today". Swamuga gave Gandhiji a grapefruit which Mahatma received with devotion and said it was his favorite fruit. That evening, Mahatma was asked to reveal the details of his conversation with the Swamigal when at a public meeting in Coimbatore. Gandhiji refused to reveal the conversation as it was a private meeting and matters close to his heart were discussed and that is why the press was not allowed in the shed. Swamigal also did not divulge any details about this conversation.

Excerpts from "A Succinct Biography"

The details of the conversation between the great men remained a complete secret, since no one else was allowed inside. Even till long after Gandhiji's demise, the Acharya did not reveal anything about the conversation, in spite of the repeated requests of ardent, interested devotees. But later some details came out. About a year after the return of His Holiness to Kanchi, after the prolonged tour on foot, for six years, a letter was published in the name of a Professor Swaminathan, in an issue of *Statesman* (Calcutta). The professor was then editing the works of Mahatma Gandhi. The letter

contained some details about the conversation between the Acharya and Gandhiji. The letter was perused by His Holiness. Sri Neelam Raju Venkateseshayya, (then editor of Andhra Prabha) had often entreated the Acharya to narrate details of the conversation between the Acharya and Gandhiji in 1927. But the Acharya Swami, once (years ago) told Sri Seshayya, “You have been always asking me about my talk with Gandhiji. None except the two of us knows anything about our talk. Now Gandhiji is no more. Suppose, I reveal the details of our conversation, will it not give rise to a doubt about its truth in the minds of Gandhiji’s followers?”. Sri Seshayya felt that a great secret of dharma had been revealed by the Acharya.

In the letter published in the Statesman giving some details regarding the conversation between the two great men, it was stated that Gandhiji had informed Sri Kishore Lal Masurvala, a resident of Gandhiji’s ashrama and Srimati Ganga Ben Vaidya, about some of the details of his talk with the Kanchi Acharya. In the middle of June 1985, Sri Venkateseshayya was summoned to Kanchi. When he reached Kanchi, His Holiness asked him to read the letter published in the Statesman and then said to him, “Now that some parts of the talk that transpired between Gandhiji and me have been published, I shall comply with your repeated requests concerning the same”.

(The conversation between His Holiness and Sri Seshayya was in Telugu language and it has been translated into English)

A Summary of the Acharya – Gandhiji Conversation:

A=Acharya, G=Gandhi

A: “I appreciate your pointing out about a good thing to mankind. Energy is essential for leading a righteous life. Danger only will result by leading a life based on physical entities bereft of religion.”

G: “Yes, I do understand”.

A: “Our Bharat is one of the very ancient countries of the world. Our country is endowed with old, excellent learning and with an ancient culture. In the past, people followed the social dictum of Varnashrama Dharma, they were engaged in the activities assigned to them, and thereby protected their dharma and enjoyed happiness in the world and in the next”.

G: “Modern society is different from the society of the past. Will it be possible to go along with the ancient ideals of social life?”

A: “The quality of cold water is different from the quality of hot water. If both get mixed they will lose their natural characteristics and become useless. Society of course will not be uniform. For instance take a mango tree. It has several branches. In these branches flowers blossom and mangoes emerge at different times. But the tree is only one. Society is, like the tree, only one. Even as the different branches and the trunk combine into tree, all castes together form society. Nowadays, politicians enter the fields

of religion and society and try to make in roads into them and to change them. And this had weakened our religion, and altogether changed the smooth running of the world”.

G: “I concur with the opinion of your Holiness”.

A: “What is the necessity for the removal of untouchability?”

G: “Among the people of Bharatadesa, besides Hindus, there are Muslims, Christians, and also some other religionists. Hence it seems to me that untouchability needs to be removed, what does your Holiness think about entry of the untouchables into temples”?

A: “Temples are sacred places. They are intended for those who believe that God is enshrined in the Sanctum sanctorum of the temple. The Agamas extol the sacred nature of the temples. Those who do not have faith in the Agama Shastras and those who do not accept the principles enunciated by the Agamas in connection with the purity and sanctity of the temple are decidedly unfit for entering our temples”.

(Later after a talk between the two for more than twenty minutes over other problems, almost towards the end, the conversation turned on to the murder of Swami Sraddhananda).

A: ‘I suppose, you know about how Swami Sraddhananda has been killed by a Muslim recently”.

G: “Yes. In the present condition of our land how can we attain unity amidst Hindus and Muslims”.

A: “In case a Hindu kills you or mein the future, can we hate the entire Hindu community on that count?”

(In the letter of Sri Swaminathan published in the Statesman(1985), he has hinted that Rajaji expressed to his friends, the prophetic remark of His Holiness immediately after the assassination of the Mahatma).

Tour of Cochin – Thiruvananthapuram

Swamigal completed his Chaturmasya Vrata of 1927 in Kanjikodu and left for a tour of the southern towns in Kerala as requested by scores of his devotees. He had darshan of Sri Krishna Paramatma in Guruvayoor on February 2nd, 1928. Thousands of people gathered to witness Swamigal’s arrival in Guruvayoor. Special decorations were made to the idol of Sri Krishna in the temple. The temple officials offered a grand welcome as per protocol and invited Swamigal in the temple to have darshan of Sri Krishna. Later Swamigal left for Tiruchur via Chittor and had darshan at Vadakku Nadar temple in Tiruchur on February 5th, 1928. There used to be four Sankara mutts in

Tiruchur before, but two of the mutts have Namboodris who have observed sannyas. Swamigal visited these mutts, inquired about their history and keenly inspected the archeological artifacts that portrayed Sri Adi Sankara's biography. He also visited Brahmaswa mutt, where he blessed the new students that were starting their education in the Guru kula style. Swamigal visited the coastal town of Kiranganur from there and was received by the local king and had darshan at the Bhagawathi temple. He later reached Cochin on March 19th, 1928 where he was received by the royal family. He stayed at Thirupanithura till the end of March. He used to visit the temple belonging to the royal family and also the Sanskrit Vidyalaya where he would converse with the students in Sanskrit. Arrangements for his stay was done under the leadership of Diwan T.S.Narayana Iyer and the Samsthan officials. A grand procession was conducted by the organizers who also performed bikshavandanam and pada puja.

Swamigal traveled to Vaikkam and stayed in the holy place for a day and had darshan of the God. He visited the key pilgrim centers in the Trivandrum district and reached Azhapuzha via Kottayam on April 15, 1928. The citizens of Azhapuzha persuaded Swamigal with their devotion to stay in their town for a week. He visited the patasala installed in his name and also patronized by him – Sri Chandrasekarendra Patasala in Azhapuzha. He tested and blessed the students learning the Vedas and Shastras. He also commended the organizers after meeting some vedic students whose primary education was in English. Travel to Mankombu, situated seven miles from there was undertaken by ocean. Sankara Jayanthi was celebrated there in that year in a grand manner. Swamigal traveled back to Azhapuzha and Manar to reach Kollam on May 3rd, 1928. He stayed in Kollam for five days. From Kollam, our Swamigal visiged Kottarakarai, Punalur, Ariyangkavu, Chengottai and reached Kuttralam where he had the darshan of Sri Kuttralanathar and camped for a week. Swamigal's travel and stay in Cochin and Thiruvananthapuram districts were arranged by the royalty and their officials. The government officials there were also instructed not to collect road tax from the mutt vehicles or cattle.

12. From ThiruKutralam to Chegelput

Swamigal visited the holy places in Tirunelveli district, had a holy bath at the birth place of the river Tamirabarani at Bana Theertham on the ninth of June. He left for Kanyakumari via Nagercoil and had darshan of Kanyakumari Ambal on the seventeenth of June, stayed there for two days and had a holy dip in the ocean. He traveled via Nanguneri, Thirunelveli, Koilpatti, Sattur, Virudhunagar and reached Thiruvedagam.

Vyasa Puja at Thiruvedagam

Thiruvedagam is a holy place situated about five kilometers from Cholavandan, in the banks of the river Vaigai. This place is known for having been sung about by Thirugnanasambandar. When Gnanasambandar debated with the Jain scholars in Madurai, they wrote a padigam (poem) called “Vazhga Andhanar” in tablets and set it to float on the river Vaigai. In reply, Gnanasambandar composed a padigam called “Vanniyum Mathamum” and set it float and this Edu (Tablet) reached the shore first at a place and hence that place was called Thiruvedagam. The puranas mention a minister named Kulachiraiyar who followed the edu on horseback to the place where it reached shore, marked the land and brought the tablet back. It is noticeable that the main deity is in the form of an edu. Behind the temple, the river Vaigi flows towards the south. As this place was set in a surrounding that was conducive to our Swamigal’s meditation, he chose to spend two month of Chaturmasya vratha in the cyclic year of Vibhava (1928) at Thiruvedagam. Arrangements for his stay were coordinated by local Congress leader, Mattaparai Venkatarama Iyer, residents of the agraharam at Cholavandan and people from surrounding villages. Mysore Maharaja donated a female elephant to our Swamigal during his stay here. Mazhavarayanendal Subbarama Bhagavathar, hailing from a famous musical family performed in the presence of our Swamigal here. Swamigal praised his musical scholarship and honored him with peethambaram and other gifts.

Sir Tej Bahadur Sabru

Swamigal stayed at Madurai for a week after completion of the Chaturmasya vratha. During this stay, Sir Tej Bahadur Sabru, considered one of the top most legal minds of our country, had darshan of our Swamigal. There was a lot of confusion in the country as Gandhiji and other political leaders were put in prison. Sabru was trying to bring all political parties together in a conference and also consult with the government to bring peace. He explained in detail to our Swamigal, the efforts taken by him during the current political turmoil. Swamigal appreciated Sabru’s efforts and said it was his wish too that there be peace in the country and the people are benefited finally.

Swamigal left Madurai for Vathalagundu, Periyakulam, Theni, Chinnamanur and reached Ammayyanayakanur for Navarathri celebrations.

Land Donation by Ammayyanayakanur Zamindar

Graciously accepting the invitation of Ammayyanayakanur Zamindar, Sri Ramaswamy Nayakkar, Swamigal visited the place, stayed there for fifteen days and grandly celebrated Navarathri there as well. Zamindar welcomed the entourage with affection and made all the arrangements for their comfortable stay and also donated three hundred acres of land at Sirumalai to the mutt. After Navarathri, Swamigal traveled via Dindigul and visited Palani again for the second time, he had darshan of Dhandayudhapani and performed abhishekam to the deity. The citizens of Palani welcomed our Swamigal and performed bikshavandanam and pada puja. From Palani, he left for Tharapuram, Kolinjiwadi, Chinna Tharapuram and Karur to reach Tiruchi in January, 1929.

Travel in South and North Arcot

In the month of February 1929, Swamigal completed his stay at Tiruchi and left for his tour of South Arcot district. Swamigal spent seven months in Kallakurichi and Thirukovilur districts, performed Vyasa puja (21-7-1929) at Manalurpettai where he stayed for two months.³ Around that time, our Swamigal was taken ill for close to a month with fever. In spite of this, Swamigal would take a bath and perform his puja thrice a day. This had his devotees very worried and concerned about his health. He refused to hear the pleadings of his devotees to take some form of medicine to treat his fever. He took in only Thulasi Theertham(juice of Thulasi leaves) and eventually got better. Sri Acharyal was taken care of by a Maharashtrian sannyasi who was more than a hundred years old. The doctor from Palghat Sankara Narayana Iyer and Mylapore Vaidya Visharatha Pandit K.G.Natesa Shastri also stayed with our Swamigal for the whole period of his illness to offer their services. Later Swamigal visited his birth place, Vizhupuram on 28-11-1929. The local people gave a very grand welcome to their favorite citizen. Some of the older people would recall their memories when our Swamigal was a young boy and talk about their association proudly. Swamigal later visited the place where he undertook studies at Dindivanam on 1-5-1930.

During his yatra near the village Dhandalam, a shepherd there wanted to sell all of his lands and offer the proceeds to Swamigal. He would not budge an inch even after Swamigal refused to accept this. He sold his lands to a local wealthy businessman and proudly offered the proceeds to Swamigal. Our Swamigal was immensely pleased with his offer and accepted it praising his devotion. He later made arrangements with the local Tahsildar to have four kanis of land transferred to the shepherd's name.

Darshan of Karthigai Deepam

³ Our Swamigal's purvashrama father Sri Subramania Shastrigal passed away at Kumbakonam on 24-7-1929. When the mutt officials came to Swamigal and conveyed the news, he listened to it silently and did not say anything.

Swamigal visited Thiruvannamalai in December, 1929 to have darshan of the Karthigai deepam there. Thiruvannamalai is a very famous Saivite religious centre and is considered one of the Pancha Bhootha Kshetra, the Theyu Kshetra (Agni). There once was a rishi called Brungi, who had intense devotion towards Siva to such an extent that he refused to pay his homage even to Devi. The Goddess was upset by this and is said to have merged with the left side of Siva. This form of Siva is called Ardhanareeswarar and Siva in Thiruvannamalai also goes by the name of Ardhanareeswarar. The God here is called Arunachaleswarar and Devi goes by the name of Abhithakuchalamba. The meaning of her name in Tamil is called Unnamulai. To demonstrate the Lord in his glorious form of Jyothi, a huge Deepam is lit on top of the hill, on the day of Karthigai. The pilgrim centre is also known for having been sung by Appar and Sambandar. There is also a story in the puranas that Mahavishnu took the form of a boar and went to the nether worlds to see the end of Siva's magnificent form. Brahma in turn took the form of a swan and flew towards the sky in search of Siva's head. It is said that both of them traveled great distances and still could not see the end of Siva's form. This story is depicted in the idol Lingodbhava. Almost all Siva temples have the idol of Lingodbava in the western side of the sanctum sanctorum. A swan on the top and a small boar can be seen in the bottom of the idol depicting the story. It is also said that Vishnu and Brahma searched for Siva's feet in Thiruvannamalai. There is also another story involving Subramanya teaching Arunagirinathar here. Pattinathar was said to have spent some time in Thiruvannamalai. Idaikattu Siddhar attained heavenly abode when he was residing here. During our times, Ramana Maharishi spent his life on meditation and did Gnana sadhana in this place.

When Swamigal visited this place for the first time, the people gathered together in great devotion and welcomed him. Swamigal stayed there for almost a month, during which time, he went around the Giri (hill) and had darshan of Arunachaleswarar several times.

Swamigal wished to see the natural beauty of the river Cauveri and headed from Thiruvannamalai , via Sengam to Harur and Dharmapuri in Salem district. He bathed in the falls of river Cauveri at Theerthamalai. He then traveled to Megadhada near Hoganakkal where Cauveri was so narrow that it flowed between two rocks that even a goat could jump across. He had a bath in the river there too. Megha meant a goat in the Kannada language and hence this place was called Meghadhadu. Swamigal spent most of the year 1930 traveling around North Arcot district. Vyasapuja that year took place at Poosai Malaikuppam near Arani Zakeer. This place was situated in the middle of a forest and was very inaccessible. But the Zakeer officials worked tirelessly to make all the necessary arrangements for Swamigal's stay as well as the comfort and convenience of numerous devotees visiting this place to have darshan of our Swamigal.

Disappearance of the Mutt Elephant

During Swamigal's camp here, the hay shed near the place where the elephant was staying caught fire one night and nobody noticed it. . The elephant, not being able to withstanding the heat from the fire, broke of the chain and ran into the forest. The next morning, the elephant was nowhere to be found and the shed was also burnt to ashes.

Mutt officials searched for the elephant for two days and could not find it anywhere. Later, passers by, informed the mutt officials that an elephant was found lying down near a pond filled with water, situated more than five miles from the camp. Many people including the caretaker of the elephant went there and tried to get the elephant back, but in vain. Finally, Swamigal went to that place. Immediately the elephant came to the shore and knelt before Swamigal as if it was prostrating before its guru. When Swamigal saw that the elephant was hurt from fire, he patted it softly and slowly and made arrangements for the burns to be treated.

Devotion through Music

A few devotees from Vellore came to have darshan of Swamigal during his stay at Pusamalai Kuppam. They included people from various professions including doctors, lawyers, businessmen and government officials. There were a few in the crowd who were well versed in music. They had brought with them, the tambura and other musical instruments. They were very eager to perform in the august presence of Sri Swamigal. His Holiness asked them to come to the foot of a hill situated about two kilometers from the place where he was staying. They were gathered there and Swamigal arrived around five o' clock in the evening. A musical concert started and amongst the artists a Vaishnavite was singing in a melodious voice and everybody was mesmerized by his singing. He was singing a song "SivaDeeksha parula" when Swamigal interrupted him and asked him to explain the meaning of the song. The vidwan hesitated as the song conveyed the meaning that one would not associate with a Vaishnavite. Everyone gathered there started laughing. Swamigal, then explained the true meaning of the song, saying there is no place for humor or prejudice within this song, instead the intensity of the meaning in the song conveyed the intensity of devotion shown by the composer. He advised everyone to practice the same kind of devotion that the composer had shown to any God that was closest to their hearts. The devotees were very happy to have obtained this unexpected lesson from Swamigal, prostrated before him and promised to conduct themselves per his advice.

Visit to Saint Appaya Dikshithar's Village

Swamigal visited Adayapalam which was known for its famous resident Appayya Dikshithar who had composed various books in northern language and was well known as a devotee of Siva. This small town is situated five miles near Arani. Swamigal finished his puja in the local Sivan temple and gave a lecture about the life and works of Appayya Dikshithar who had lived there four hundred years ago. He persuaded the local citizens to celebrate one day every year as Dikshithar's day. He also visited Virijipuram, the birthplace of Dikshithar. He also emphasized that his descendants should not just boast about the greatness of their ancestor, they should also learn his works and propagate it around the country to make his name remain in this world.

Yatra in Chengelput District

Swamigal completed Vyasa puja and Chaturmasya vratha at Poosamalai Kuppam in the year 1930 and traveled to Cauveripakkam, Ranipettai, Valajabad, Arcot, Thiruvallur, Poondamalli, and Koyambed and other places near Chennai. Towards the end of the year, he visited Chengelput and then Patchi Theertham alias ThiruKazhukundram near Chengelput. He had darshan of Vedagiriswara Swamy in the local temple there. He was welcomed there by All India Sadhu Sangam (25-12-1930). The affection and devotion that the Sadhus had for our Swamigal can be seen below in the welcome speech given on their behalf:

“ Jagadgurunatha, you light this land of Bharata with light of your knowledge. Sankara – you have taken up the task of actioning all the thought of Sri Sankara and soothing our Atmas. You are the generous soul who has taken the holy birth to become the Sathguru and to grow the goodness in this world. Welcome on your holy visit here. Benevolent Saint who Shines with Knowledge! It is of no doubt that your lotus feet , wherever it goes, would purify this holy land even more and would purify the souls who are elevated already and nudge them to sacrifice for the good of this world. This mandap explains how it got purified when Swamigal’s lotus feet landed on it. During these times, where there are plenty of pseudo saints who have not realized themselves, but give lectures on this and that, You are our Gnana Sathguru who has self realized the truth and also teach the religion and good conduct to all. We pay our obeisance to your lotus feet. Violence has entered in all the hearts and spiritual strength of the souls are reducing and at this time, please give us your loving words which give us the essence of Advaita oh Gnana Guru! We prostrate humbly before you feet. Please feed us happiness, help grow our spiritual strength. Charanam, Charanam, Jagadguru Sankara Bhagavatpada, Charanam!”

Swamigal received this welcome graciously and addressed the Sadhus gathered there. He advised to work towards obtaining Moksha, but also work towards guiding the people to lead religious and pious lives.

Interview with Paul Brunton at Chengelput

Swamigal arrived at Chengelput in the beginning of January, 1931. The citizens of Chengelput who were awaiting his visit for a long time, were extremely happy. Irrespective of caste or creed, the rich and the poor, the elderly and the youngsters all gathered to have his darshan everyday. During his stay in the town, he gave lectures every night in the local Siva temple.

Paul Brunton, an Englishman who had immigrated to America, was traveling around our country meeting with Yogis in order to obtain their blessings. After completing his travels in northern India, he came to Chennai with the intention to tour south India.

13. Interview with Paul Brunton at Chengelpet

Swamigal arrived at Chengelpet in the beginning of January, 1931. The citizens of Chengelpet, who were awaiting his visit for a long time, were extremely happy. All gathered to have his darshan everyday, irrespective of caste or creed, the rich and the poor, the elderly and the youngsters alike. During his stay in the town, he gave lectures every night in the local Siva temple.

Paul Brunton, an Englishman who had emigrated to America, was traveling around our country meeting with Yogis in order to obtain their blessings. After completing his travels in northern India, he came to Chennai with the intention to tour south India. He brought with him, from England, an introduction letter to Sri K.S.Venkataramani, a famous English writer residing in Chennai. Later on, Paul Brunton praised Sri Venkataramani highly in his book 'A Search in Secret India'.

When he met K.S.Venkataramani, he expressed his desire to meet genuine yogis of South India and to not waste time with pseudo yogis. Venkataramani told him that yogis cannot be found out in the open and that moreover they cannot be easily approached by a European. However, the next day Venkataramani met Paul Brunton at the latter's residence and said to him, "Sri Sankaracharya of the Kanchi Sankaracharya Mutt, who is the religious head of South India, is now camping at Chengelpet. I got this information last night. He is my benefactor and I seek his spiritual guidance. He is the ultimate embodiment of penance and a true sannyasin. Though he may not be a yogi, he knows the truth and intricacies of the path of yoga. He has traveled the cities and villages in this country. People revere him and bow to him, wherever he goes. I think that you may get some useful instructions from him. His camp at Chengelpet, is about 35 miles from Madras. But it is doubtful if he will grant you an interview. Yet I shall attempt to help you". Brunton told the novelist that he would gladly accompany him to Chengelpet the next day.

The next day Brunton and Venkataramani left for Chengelpet. On the way, Venkataramani described Swamigal's simple way of life, the biography and greatness of the Adi Acharya of the mutt, Sri Sankara and his Advaitic philosophy. Brunton listened with rapture to all of the above as well as to the history of the mutt. Both of them reached the house where Swamigal was staying. Venkataramani requested the manager of the Mutt for an interview. But the manager said it was not possible to obtain an interview as thousands were already waiting and moreover he was a European. Later Venkataramani himself requested Swamigal for an audience for Paul Brunton, at which point Swamigal gave him permission to bring Brunton before him. Then Venkataramani conveyed the information to Brunton whose joy knew no bounds. The Englishman brought flower garlands, fruits in a tray and entered the house where Swamigal was staying. At the far end, there was a small lamp burning. In the dimly lit room, Brunton beheld the short figure standing in the shadows. Hesitantly, he slowly offered the garlands and fruits to Swamigal and prostrated before him. He slowly thanked Swamigal in English for granting this audience. Which Swamigal accepted with his usual bright smiling face. Then the conversation between the two of them started. Paul Brunton started to ask questions about the future of the world and Swamigal replied to them.

Venktaramani acted as the translator for the conversation between Paul Brunton and our Swamigal.

Question: When will the world's political and economic situation improve and become equitable.

Answer: It is not an easy job to change the world situation. It has to happen in its own time. When world's super powers are spending enormous amounts of money to manufacture weapons of mass destruction, how can the world improve?

Q: Will there be any useful outcome from the talks that are currently taking place to eradicate weapons?

A: Even if your ships are torn apart or your machine guns get rusted, the fighting will not stop. People will take the sticks and start fighting.

Q: Then, what do you think is the way to obtain world peace?

A: Countries should understand each other spiritually. Similarly, the rich and powerful should recognize the poor. Only then can goodwill towards each other be generated. Goodwill created thus will bring peace amongst countries and benefit to all.

Q: If we see the world filled with turmoil and injustice, it makes us wonder whether or not God really cares about people

A: That is not the correct way to think. A patient man will silently think deeply about the future. God will appear in the form of a human and solve all these problems. The more the discord amongst empires increase, the more the bad activities of the general public increase and the more the poor people suffer, the chances of a turnaround happening becomes higher. A human being with godly powers will appear in the world. Through him, a resolution to all these problems will be seen. Such a great person may be born in any country. The changes in the world will happen step by step in accordance with physical laws. The faster the agnostic beliefs rise and the faster the miseries and sorrows of the people arise, the faster the man to save this world will also appear.

Q: So, do you think that such a person will arise in our times also?

A: Yes. It is possible that this avatar might be born in our country. It has also become necessary for such an avatar. The darkness of ignorance is spreading fast in the world.

Q: Do you think the people of the world have hit rock bottom?

A: No. There is Atma Shakthi (Spiritual power) in every human and this will take him to God finally.

Q: But demons have entered the hearts of human beings in the western world. Their actions prove that. What do you think of that?

A: Do not blame the human race like that. They act according to the circumstances in which they are born into. In reality, no one is a bad person. It is the circumstances that change them and make them act in certain ways. This is true for both eastern and western worlds. A higher philosophy should spread across the world. They should change the perception that what is being seen and heard is the truth. Instead, humans should comprehend the existence of a power higher than human capacity, that of God. Only then, a solution to the world's problems can be found.

Q: So, you think it is possible to enforce piety and belief in God into the hearts of the human race in this world?

A: Yes. I think it is possible. Ultimately, this is the only thing that will satisfy everyone. The fruits will not disappear that easily. The more the number of people with spiritual power in this world, the faster the thought will spread. The people of India treat godly persons and saints with great respect. If other countries of this world follow this practice and treat saints with respect and practice their teachings, there will definitely be world peace. Currently there is both good and bad prevalent in the world. I believe that coming generations would follow the high points of their respective civilizations and be respected citizens of their society.

Q: How many years have you been pontiff of this Peetam?

A: I became a pontiff in the year 1907 at the age of 12.

Q: I think you do not stay for long at the mutt's headquarters. Am I right?

A: Yes. I have been traveling from village to village in the past fifteen years in this state. My yatra is progressing slowly. I plan to travel to Kasi.

Brunton now starts to converse with our Swamigal on the topic for which he has come here. Swamigal asked Brunton about the sannyasins and yogis that he has met in India so far. He explained in detail his experiences with the sadhus and yogis so far and then started his questioning.

Q: I want to meet a yogi / saint who are experience in yoga and one who can show me the way to attain its benefits. I do not even want to talk to him. You may think that I am desirous of something above my station. Can you help me in this matter?

A: There is nothing wrong in wanting to practice the path of yoga. Your shraddha will benefit you in this path. One needs extreme will power and determination to go this path and I think you have them both. There is a light lit in your heart and that will show you the path for which you are seeking.

Q: I am not able to completely understand what you said. I have been thinking about this for a long time. Ancient rishis of India have said that God resides in our hearts itself. Can you explain this for me?

A: God exists everywhere. One cannot think of him as just existing in our hearts. He is carrying this whole creation.

Q: Can you tell me what path should I take?

A: Continue with your travels and at the end of it , contemplate on all the yogis and sadhus you had met in your travels. Whomsoever you think, you can relate to in your heart, approach him. He will show you your path.

Q: What should I do if I do not find anyone that is satisfactory to my heart?

A: If you do not find any one satisfactory, then you should continue your efforts by yourself. Spend every day in meditation. Stop thinking about silly and trivial matters and engage your mind to think lovingly about higher things. Think often about your atma and that will help you in your sadhana. The best time to practice this is early in the morning. You can meditate in the evenings also. Both the times are peaceful and appropriate for meditation without interruption.

Q: If I do not get any results from my personal efforts, will you help me?

A: I am a head of a public institution. Most of my time from dawn to night is spent in the official duties of this institution. Hence, you have to go in search of a Guru who can spend time with you.

Q: I am told that it is very hard to find a real / true Acharya. It is especially difficult for a European to meet such an Acharya?

A: There are true Acharyas in this world and it is possible to meet them.

Q: Then, can you send me to a true Acharya?

A: I know of two such Acharyas. One of them is living in a dense forest in the southern part of this country, but in silence. Very few people can see him and no European has ever seen him so far. I could send you to him, but he might refuse to see you.

Q: I am eager to know about the other person. Who is he?

A: The other person lives in the country. He is jnani and you can seek him.

Q: Can I obtain more information about him?

A: He is called 'Maharishi'. He lives in the place called Thiruvannamalai situated in the North Arcot district. If necessary, I will give you details to reach him.

Q: I am very much obligated to you. Another person has come to see me from the same place. I have pulled you away for a long time from your numerous and important official duties. Please excuse me for that. Please give me leave.

A: Yes. I presume that you will definitely go to Thiruvannamalai.

Q: I was planning to complete my South India tour today and had already made arrangements to leave tomorrow. What can I do in this situation?

A: You can decide to change your arrangements and leave South India after meeting with Maharishi. Do not worry. Your desires will be fulfilled.

Paul Brunton promised Swamigal to seek Maharishi, meet him before leaving India. With a heavy heart, he took leave of Swamigal. Later he wrote the following in his book about his experience.

“ And so, hearing these cryptic and puzzling words, I reluctantly withdraw from this interesting man, whose entire life has been dedicated to God from childhood. He is a pontiff who cares not for worldly power, because he has renounced all and resigned all. Whatever material things are given to him he at once give again to those who need them. His beautiful and gentle personality will surely linger in my memory.

I roamed the streets of Chengleput at night and enjoyed the sights. I wanted to see Swamigal once more before I left. Swamigal was sitting amongst a big crowd in a local temple and giving a sermon. Even though I could not understand what he was saying, I realized that an educated Brahmin as well as commoners was equally fascinated by his speech. I was fascinated by Swamigal's attractive personality. I was jealous of the deep faith in the people gathered there. They have no doubts in their lives. They have the ultimate faith that there is a God. Their minds are not immersed in any other thought about the world's conditions or destruction of parts of the world, etc.

Later, we left from Chengleput to Chennai in a car. I kept hearing the rustling sounds of water in the side of the road as well as the coconut trees moving with the wind. We traveled silently for sometime and suddenly my friend Venkataramani announced that I was indeed very fortunate. He explained that it was the first time a European author

has been accorded permission to get an interview from Swamigal. Hence I have the complete blessings of the Acharya. I was very proud to hear this.

By the time, I reached my place of stay, it was close to midnight. I climbed the stairs of the cottage and took my flash light to the verandah. My friend who had come from Thiruvannamalai to see me woke up from his bed. I asked him what he was doing, for which he grinned and replied that he had promised to meet me before. When I enquired if his Guru was called 'Maharishi', he was surprised. I told him not to worry, that I have changed my plans and intend to travel to Thiruvannamali with him to visit Maharishi. He was extremely happy. We talked with each other for half hour and went to bed.

I must have slept for a little while, when I suddenly woke up. My bedroom was filled with darkness. I felt that the nerves in my body were stiff and charged. The air around me was also charged with current. I took my wristwatch under the pillow and checked the time. It showed quarter to three. At that time, a light showed at the foot of my bed. I immediately got up and looked keenly at the light. My agitated sight found the form of Acharya Swamigal. There was no doubt that the form was no ghost, but a human form. There was light surrounding that form. The bright light of the form and the darkness in the room were very distinctive. There was no doubt that it was the person whom I had seen at Chengleput. To test myself, I closed my eyes shut tightly. I could still see the bright light and the form that had come to show me compassion and love. When I opened my eyes, it was definite that I still saw the form clad in saffron. The lips moved and it appeared to say " Be disciplined and you will attain what you desire". Why should I perceive a human form at this time of the night? Just as the way it appeared, the form disappeared. I found immense peace, happiness and pride in this unusual happening. I could not brush it off as just a dream and I did not get any sleep afterwards. I kept thinking about my encounter with Acharya Swamigal considered as an incarnation of God by the people of South India. "

A Dog's Devotion

A dog came along with the mutt to all its camps from the year 1927. It was an intelligent dog that did not go near ablutions. It would stay near the mutt during night and protect the cattle and materials from getting robbed. It would eat only the food given in the mutt and would not accept any food from anybody else. Hence, Swamigal would enquire everyday if the dog has taken food. When Swamigal traveled in the palanquin from place to place, this dog would walk under the palanquin. If the palanquin got stopped in the middle by devotees, the dog would move outside the crowd and wait. Sometimes, it would even walk between the legs of the mutt's elephant. If the security in the mutt was lax for some reason, it would guard the mutt's premises. If the person who usually fed it forgot to do so for some reason, it would starve for the day. Once it got separated from Swamigal, but soon came running to him. Since that day, it would not eat food without having darshan of our Swamigal.

14. Yatra to Kanchipuram, Chittur, Tirupathi and Venkatagiri

Swamigal entered the Prithvi Kshetra of Kancheepuram on Sunday, the twelfth day of the lunar month of Thai in the cyclic year Pramodootha (25-1-1931). There are numerous temples in this city. The legend says that Sri Kamakshi Ambal picked up a handful of earth from the Ekambresanathar temple, made a Siva lingam out of it and worshiped the Lord. Therefore it is considered a Prithvi Kshetra – one of the pancha bootha kshetras. The temple to Sri Kamakshi Ambal is situated right in the center of the city. None of the Siva temples in the city have the idol of the Goddess in them. Kamakshi, who is in the form of performing tapas to attain Siva, remains as the reigning goddess to all the Siva temples there. The main gopurams of all the temples face towards Kamakshi Amman temple. When the temples have processions, they come around the Kamakshi Amman temple. Sri Adi Sankaracharya installed Sri Chakra inside this temple. Later, he ascended the Sarvagna Peetam here and attained Siddhi. Inside the Kamakshi temple, there is a sila idol of Sri Adi Sankara.

When our Swamigal entered this city which is the seat of Kamakoti Peetam, the citizens offered reverential and glorious welcome to him. Our Swamigal stayed at the mutt situated in Peria Kanchipuram for almost a month. He visited Ekambreswarar temple and Varadarajar temple as often as possible. However, he had darshan of Sri Kamakshi Amman daily.

The Kumbabhishekam to Kamakshi Amman temple was conducted in 1840 by the 64th Acharya Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Swamigal. Our Swamigal wished to renovate and repair the temple. He appointed Dubash Dandalam, Sri T.S.Ramaswamy Iyer of Best & Co, and Chennai as chairman of the committee to oversee this effort. Swamigal saw some of the necessary repairs in the temple and expressed his desire to fix the problems as soon as possible. He also wanted to conduct during his lifetime, a kumbabhishekam to the temple, which was last conducted almost 90 years ago. As per his wishes, the efforts to renovate and repair the temple started immediately with the help of able artisans.

Swamigal stayed at Kanchipuram until the end of the month of April. Later he visited the temple at Utharamerur, where he read the ancient archeological artifacts and explained their meaning to the village officials gathered there. Utharamerur was famous for its archeological findings. He journeyed through the southern Chengelpur district and visited places like Vandavasi, Palur, Achirupakkam as well as Dindivanam and Marakkanam in the South Arcot district. Swamigal spent around two months in this area where arrangements for his stay were provided by Diwan Bahadur C.Arunachala Mudaliar, a close confidant of his purvashrama father.

SriPerumbudur Vijayam

Swamigal visited SriPerumbudur in Chengelpet district, the birthplace of Sri Ramanujar. He was given a formal reception by the temple Devasthanam committee. Swamigal had darshan of Sri Yathirajavalli and Sri Adikesava Perumal. He later gave an upanyasam on the merits of the kshetra.

Vyasa Puja at Chittur

After completing his yatra in Chengelpet district, our Swamigal stayed for a couple of days at Esayanur, a village in the North Arcot district. Gokilamabal, a resident of Esayanur as well as a great devotee of the mutt had invited our Swamigal numerous times to visit this place. From Esayanur, Swamigal arrived at Chittur on July 28th, 1931. Chittur was also considered to be the home town of the hunter Nambirajan, father-in-law to Sri Subramania. To prove this point, there is also a small hill close by called Vallimalai. A Siva temple and the river Neeva are situated close to this hill. The legend is that the river was situated at a distance from the temple. The priest had to walk quite a distance from the temple to the river to fetch water. He was harassed by a demon and was frightened. Siva in compassion, called the river to come closer ('Nee Vaa') and the river came to be called Neeva since then.

Vyasa Mandapam was arranged in the front of the Agastheeswaran temple. Swamigal entered the city of Chittur the day before Vyasa puja and was given a grand welcome by thousands of people who were gathered there to witness the sight of Swamigal taken around in a procession in an ivory palanquin. The Chief Administrator of the mutt, Andhakoor Subramanya Shastrigal and Lawyer C.Venkataraman Iyer welcomed our Swamigal with purna kumbham into the Vyasa mandapam. Thousands of devotees had gathered there hours before the start of the puja.

The puja got over at four in the evening, after which, Vyasa Akshadhari and prasadam were distributed to all the devotees. Swamigal requested the Principal of Sanskrit College, Mylapore, Vedantha Vibhushanam Karungulam Krishna Shastrigal to lead the discussion on Vedanta that evening. Shastraratnakara Thiruvayaru Viswanatha Shastrigal, Polagam Rama Shastrigal, Varagur Venkatarama Shastrigal, Patchitheertham T.A.Venkatesa Dikshitar, Madurai K.V.Subramania Shastrigal and mutt's Asthana Vidwan Lakshminarayana Shastrigal were amongst those gathered there to participate in the vakyartha debate. Brahmasri Venkatesa Dikshitar read aloud the fifteen verses in Sanskrit that he had composed on Swamigal and explained their meaning to those gathered. Representatives of temples from other states all gathered there that day to have darshan of our Swamigal. The whole city of Chittur was in a joyous mood that day. Swamigal stayed in Chittur for two months and completed his Chaturmasya vratha. On the evening of the last day of the Chaturmasya (26-9-1931), Swamigal left for Muruganpattu in order to take a bath on the occasion of lunar eclipse and also for the convenience of starting the Viswaroopa Yatra the next morning. The citizens of Chittur requested Swamigal to stay in their city for Navarathri and he graciously fulfilled their

wishes by returning to Chittur on 12-10-1931 to celebrate Navarathri there. He camped at Chittur for the rest of the month of October.

Visit to Velur

Swamigal left Chittur to Kudiyaatham, Vaidyanatha Kuppam, and Katpadi and reached Velur. He stayed there till 22nd of December at Tharakeswarer Temple. The people of Velur were very excited about Swamigal's visit. Under the leadership of the lawyer Gangadhara Shastrigal, they made elaborate arrangements for his reception and a grand procession. Lawyers, Businessmen and workers all gathered with no exception and worked together in making his visit a comfortable one. Thousands of people gathered in the evenings to hear Swamigal's speeches. Swamigal then left for Esayanur for Arudra darshan. He later departed for Kanchipuram via Arani.

Darshan to Congress Volunteers

When Swamigal was camping at Arani, a group of two hundred Congress workers wished to have his darshan. Those were the peak days of the struggle for freedom. The British government would come down on anyone who showed any hospitality to Congress volunteers or Congressmen. Hence the officials of the mutt hesitatingly informed Swamigal about the request of the Congress volunteers. Swamigal immediately asked the mutt officials to allow them to come in to the mutt and have darshan of Swamigal as well as the mutt's resident deities, Sri Chandramouliswarar and Tripurasundari Ambal. Later he met with each Congress worker individually, enquired about their occupation etc., and gave them prasada. Food was provided to all of them in the mutt itself that day. The British government did not create any problems for the mutt on this account.

Visit to Kalahasti for MahaSivarathri

Swamigal wanted to visit the holy place of Kalahasti for Mahasivarathri on March 5th, 1932. He left Kanchipuram and traveled via Thiruparkadal, Veppur, and Velur, reaching Chittur on February 28th. He left for Pakkala, stayed at Tirupathi for a day and finally reached Kalahasti. The sight of our Swamigal sitting under a big mango tree after taking a bath in the Swarnamukhi river reminded everyone of Dakshinamurthi taking an avatar in this world in the form of our Swamigal. The residents of Kalahasti came in crowds to have darshan of Swamigal and tried their best to make last minute arrangements for his stay. They were pleasantly surprised at the sudden decision of our Swamigal to spend Mahasivarathri at Kalahasti. The king of Kalahasti ordered for a pandal to be fixed at the banks of the river Swarnamukhi where Swamigal had taken a holy bath. He gave a royal welcome to our Swamigal along with his ministers and Devasthanam officials and took Swamigal in a long procession to the temple. Since that night was Sivarathri, thousands of people had gathered from across the country at

Kalahasti for the occasion. The procession was taken around the main streets of the town. Swamigal got down from his palanquin to have darshan of Sri Kalahasteswarer and Sri Gnanakuchambika. Later the procession ended at the Karpaga Chatram where arrangements were made for Swamigal's stay. The king of Kalahasti came along with the procession and took leave at the chatram. Swamigal stayed at Kalahastri for a week. During his stay, he took bath at the holy waters of Bharadwaja Theertham, Mayura Theertham, Markandeya Theertham, Banasagona, and Sahasralingeswaragona. Swamigal wished to go around the nearby Kailasagiri hill on the new moon day of Sivarathri. The local people requested Swamigal not to go there because of the difficult forest terrain as well as the long distance of thirty miles. Whatever the difficulty may be, Swamigal was determined to climb and walk around this hill. Swamigal left in the morning around nine a.m. and walked through the extremely hot day. It was past midnight by the time he completed the walk and came back to the mutt. Around twenty people who had accompanied Swamigal became very tired. His feet were covered with boils from the strenuous trek. The next day, the king of Kalahasti invited Swamigal to his palace, performed Pada puja and offered other services. He requested Swamigal to sit in the ancient throne which was kept with reverence in the palace. Before this day, the 65th Acharya of Sri Kamakoti Peetam, Sri Mahadevendra Saraswathi Swamigal had sat on this throne in the year 1887. Everyone gathered there came to know of this information from the documents in the palace.

Visit to Tirupathi

Swamigal reached Tirupathi on March 13th after staying at Kalahasti for a week. The citizens of Tirupathi as well as the devasthanam officials gathered at the Angalamman temple on the southern border of Tirupathi to welcome Swamigal. He was carried in a palanquin decorated beautifully with flowers, taken in a procession, with thousands of people, Veda parayanam, and bhajan groups which culminated at the SriGovindaraja Swamy devasthanam. Swamigal got out of the palanquin and had darshan of Sri Govindarajar. Tirupathi Sri Makand had made arrangements for Swamigal's stay in the garden in front of the Ramaswamy temple. When the procession reached the garden, Brahmasri Venkateswara Dikshithar read a welcome speech in Sanskrit while Nagapudi N.Kuppuswamy Iyer read one in Telugu and offered it to our Swamigal. His Holiness visited the mutt that evening and accepted the pada puja offered by the mutt's Chief Administrator BrahmaSri Venkateswara Dikshithar. The camp was at Lower Tirupathi until 21-4-1932. During that time, Swamigal visited Thirumala for three days. There, the authorities of the temple devasthanam as well as the public offered pada puja and bikshavandanam to Swamigal. On behalf of the devasthanam, the committee chairman Mahant donated seven hundred rupees towards bikshavandanam. Along with the usual respectable greetings, the devasthanam committee also presented Swamigal with an umbrella with golden top and a long peetambaram which was previously offered to Perumal. Swamigal offered an expensive gem-studded makarandi padakkam and a peetambaram to Sri Venkatachalapathy. He also conducted Sahasrakalasa Abhishekam and Garudotsavam. Swamigal then gifted dhotis and prasada to all the employees, priests

and others and blessed them. During all three days of his stay, Swamigal took a bath in the holy waters of Papanasam and Akasha Ganga falls. While climbing down the hill, Swamigal donated money and clothes to all the poor people seated on the way. During Swamigal's stay in lower Tirupathi, people from all communities including Vedic Brahmins, Vaisya, Beri Vaisya, Balija, Reddy and Kandla communities offered pada puja and bikshavandanam. Thousands of people enjoyed our Swamigal's daily evening speeches in the simple Telugu language. Hundreds of people from other states also came to have darshan of Swamigal in Tirupathi. Swamigal gifted Kashmiri shawls to the pundits visiting the mutt.

Venkatagiri

Swamigal graciously accepted an invitation from the king of Venkatagiri and visited the place on 24-4-1932. He was welcomed in the outskirts with great respect and affection by the prince and the citizens of Venkatagiri. Swamigal stayed at the Sankara mutt, newly constructed by Dharba Kalahasti Shastrigal. Sankara Jayanthi was celebrated that year at the mutt. The royal family of Venkatagiri performed pada puja and bikshavandanam for each day of his stay. Swamigal blessed the royal family, gifted them with shawls and prasada and left Venkatagiri on 11-5-1932.

Karvetnagar

Swamigal left Venkatagiri and traveled through Poodi, Vadamalpettai, Padhiredu, Jokula Mallavaram, and Pungalur, reaching Tirupathi once again. He had darshan of Venkatesa at Tirumala on Purnima day, stayed at Thiruchanur for two days, had darshan of Padmavathi and reached Puthur on May 22nd. He stayed there for fifteen days in the naturally beautiful surroundings and enjoyed bathing in the Kailasagona, Sadasiva gona and Ammavaru gona water falls. During his stay at Puthur, Anam Kuppaswamy Naidu, G.Renaiah Reddy and other prominent citizens requested Swamigal to kindly visit the nearby Bugga and spend Vyasa Puja and Chaturmasya vratha there. Swamigal accepted their invitation with grace and affection. He arrived at Karvetnagar on 4-6-1932 and stayed there for four days. The king of Karvetnagar welcomed Swamigal and made arrangements for his stay at Lakshmi Vilas palace. The king, the members of the royal family and the general public performed pada puja and bikshavandanam every day. The king also offered a silver sahasradhara (used to perform abhishekam) for Sri Chandramouleeswarar. Our Swamigal blessed the king and the learned at the palace with prasada and shawls.

Death of Mother

When Swamigal was staying at Nagari in Chittur district, a telegram arrived at the mutt to the manager. The gist of the message was that Swamigal's purvashrama mother Mahalakshmi Ammal had passed away at Kumbakonam in the Anglo date of 14-6-1932, first day of the lunar month of Ani, when it was Sukla Ekaadasi.

At the time the telegram came, Swamigal was sitting with pundits and was deeply immersed in a discussion on Vedanta. When the manager of the mutt approached Swamigal, the latter asked him if the telegram was from Kumbakonam. Swamigal released him when he nodded in the affirmative. Swamigal was quiet for some time and then asked the learned scholars gathered around him, "What should a sannyasin do when he hears about the death of his mother"? The pundits gathered around were able to guess the reasoning behind the question, but could not say a word in spite of being very learned. Swamigal then got up from the place where he was seated and walked on to a waterfall at a distance of two miles, followed by a great number of people chanting the Lord's name. He took his bath there and others too, did the same silently. The mutt officials donated silver and gold coins to vedic pundits.

Vyasa Puja at Bugga

There is a spot of natural beauty near Nagari, called Bugga. In the temple here, are the shrines of Kasi Viswanatha and Prayaga Madhava. The river Kuchasthali flows near the temple. Five springs that originate from under the idols feed the river. Commencing from the 17th of July, 1932, our Swamigal observed the Chaturmasya vratha at this fascinating place. As usual, many devotees gathered to witness the puja. Some of the devotees named a nearby well 'Vyasa Theertham' on this occasion. During Swamigal's stay here, the temples of Kasi Viswanatha and Prayaa Madhava were renovated and kumbhabhishekam was performed on a grand scale on 11-9-1932. Thousands of people from nearby towns and cities came to attend the kumbhabhishekam. M.S.M. Railway officials had made arrangements for special trains on this occasion. Arrangements for the kumbhabhishekam were made by Anam Kuppuswamy Naidu, P.Manicka Naidu, Gunda Reddy, Rangiah Reddy and P.Krishnaswamy Iyer. After completing Chaturmasya vratha, Swamigal headed towards Chennai upon the request of citizens of Chennai. En route, he stopped at Thiruthani to have darshan of Sri Subramania Swamy.

15. Visit to Chennai

Swamigal preferred not to stay in big cities like Chennai as it was not convenient for his puja and other personal routines. That's probably one of the reasons why he did not visit Chennai in spite of visiting Koyambedu, close to Chennai, in the month of December in 1930. The devotees of Chennai came to Bugga as a group and requested

Swamigal to visit Chennai and stay there for a couple of months. Swamigal graciously accepted their invitation and arrived at Chennai on 28-9-1932 after completing Vyasa puja at Bugga and his trips to Thiruthani. Thousands of people had gathered near Mylapore Luz Church Road as well as Mowbrey's Road in groups carrying purna kumbams as well as garlands. Swamigal visited the residence of T.R.Ramachandra Iyer situated at the end of Luz Church Road around 6:30 pm. He completed his evening anushtanams there. Mayor T.S.Ramaswamy Iyer and K. Balasubramania Iyer, on behalf of the Reception Committee, gave purna kumbam to Swamigal and requested him to come in the procession that was arranged. Devotees shouted with joy at the sight of Swamigal seated in a palanquin coming in the procession. Shouts praising His Holiness tore the sky. Immediately behind the palanquin was Vedic chanting, followed by musical instruments and bhajan groups. The huge procession reached Sanskrit College, where arrangements for Swamigal's stay were made. A huge tent was installed in the grounds there for the comfort of Swamigal's camp. Welcome speeches were offered to Swamigal in Sanskrit, Telugu and Tamil. That night, Swamigal gave a speech on the merits of Siva Bhakthi, in which he also paid tributes to Sri Kabaleeswarer, the residing deity of Chennai. The next day, one of Swamigal's devotees, A.K.Ranganatha Iyer, offered anna dhanam and vastra dhanam (food and clothes donation) to three thousand poor people on the occasion of Swamigal's visit to Chennai.

Chennai Corporation Decides to Welcome Swamigal

A resolution was passed by the Chennai Corporation before Swamigal's visit to Chennai, to offer a welcoming plaque on behalf of the people of Chennai and three hundred rupees was budgeted for this. When Sir A.Ramaswamy Mudaliar proposed this resolution, he announced that this was indeed the first time such a welcome was being accorded to a religious leader on behalf of the Corporation. However, Swamigal was an honorable person who had the respect and esteem of not just Hindus, but people of all other religions also. The proposal was passed unanimously in the Corporation. Still, Swamigal sent his apologies that he would not be able to come to the Corporation building and accept this plaque per official protocol, but instead sent mutt representatives for the same.

Navarathri Puja at Sanskrit College

Navarathri is celebrated twice in a year. The first Navarathri is celebrated in spring, culminates in Rama Navami and is called Vasantha Navarathri. The second one is celebrated in autumn, culminates in Saraswathi Puja and Vijayadasami and is called Sharath Navarathri. Both Navarathris are celebrated grandly at the mutt.

Navarathri puja started in Chennai on October 1st, 1932. From the start of Navarathri, Swamigal would maintain Mouna vratha (Vow of Silence) for nine days and would break the silence on the tenth day. In those days, pujas were conducted in both mornings as well as evenings. Scores of devotees would gather to have darshan of

Swamigal as well as see the special pujas. They would make their offerings for the puja based on their own capacity.

Women are given a special status on these days when they are considered embodiments of Devi and are given auspicious gifts such as turmeric, kumkum, flowers etc. Food is served to women before it is given to anybody else. Everyday, Kanya puja is done to young girls between two and ten years of age. Devotees would wait for hours to witness the Kanya puja. Scholars and Vidwans would chant Devi Bhagavatham, Ramayanam, Geetha, and Brahma Sutra Bhashyam. Sri Vidya Homam and Chandi Homam would be conducted in the premises of the mutt. The citizens of Chennai had never before witnessed such a sight and gathered in thousands to partake in the Navarathri celebrations held at Sanskrit College. Mylapore had the appearance of a huge festival which ended with Saraswathi Puja. Swamigal broke his silence the next day on Vijayadasami.

Chandrasekarendra Theertham and Bhashya Mandap

Before Swamigal's visit to Sanskrit Kalasala, K.Balasubramania Iyer expanded the well there and made it into a small pond for the convenience of Swamigal's bathing routine. Swamigal took his bath there everyday during his stay. In order to memorialize Swamigal's stay there, Iyer named the pond Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Theertham. Sanskrit Kalasala had built a mandap where Swamigal would gather with pundits on Vijayadasami and discuss / debate on Brahma Sutra Bhashyam. This mandap was named Bhashya Mandap after the event.

Visit to Ramakrishna School

During his stay at Mylapore, Swamigal visited nearby Ramakrishna Mission School. The head of the place, Ramanujachariar welcomed our Swamigal with purna kumbam, showed him around the place and explained the daily routine of the students. Swamigal expressed his pleasure at the work done by the disciples of Ramakrishna Mutt and he advised them to keep Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa's teachings in mind and follow the path of bhakthi. Swamigal also praised the selfless service done by Ramanujachariar. A musical concert by G.N.Balasubramaniam was held in the presence of our Swamigal. His Holiness distributed vibhuti and atchadhai to all the students and devotees gathered there. A great devotee of Swamigal from Chetti Nadu donated a big picture of our Swamigal to the school in memory of his visit that day.

Government Interference in Entry to Temples

Gandhiji had announced in the second week of September, 1932 that he would fast unto death if an agreement between high caste Hindus and low caste Hindus also called Harijans was not reached. Concerned with his health, Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya and C.Rajagopalachariar had made public announcements. Within five days of

Gandhiji's fast, an eight point resolution accepting the demands of the Harijans was passed on 24-9-1932 at Pune. Gandhiji ended his fast after this resolution was passed. He requested the countrymen to open the temples to Harijans as per the resolution. However, the followers of Sanatana dharma argued that entry to temples was not part of the resolution and it was against the ancient vedic and agama Shastras. Also, many Harijans at the time announced that there was no extra benefit to them by obtaining entry to temples. But, to fulfill Gandhiji's wishes, intense propaganda was undertaken across the country to allow entry into temples for Harijans. This became a huge issue at Guruvayur situated in Kerala where untouchability was practiced fiercely and it was also the holy pilgrim center for Sri Krishna Paramatma. With our Swamigal's complete blessings, a group of Sanatanis left for Kerala on 10-12-1932. The group included legal experts such as T.R.Ramachandra Iyer, Thirpugazhmani T.M.Krishnaswamy Iyer, Sivaramakrishnan, Rajagopala Iyer, S.Subramania Iyer as well as legislators such as M.K.Acharya and V.Somadeva Sharma. They were accorded welcome by Palghat municipal Chairman S.K.Ramaswamy Iyer. There was a public meeting at Palghat on December 10th and one in Guruvayur on December 11th. The Guruvayur meeting was led by Kodakkal Raja. Palghat Dr.Sankara Iyer and Thekadi Govinda Menon also made speeches at the meetings. Many resolutions were passed against the Harijans' entry into temples. The opposition to entry into temples for Harijans was gathering momentum in Kerala where even women participated in the demonstrations.

In order to obtain a peaceful resolution to this issue, Congress leaders such as Babu Rajendra Prasad, Chakravarty Rajagopalachariar, K.Bhashyam, Varadachari and others came to meet Swamigal at Mylapore as advised by Gandhiji. They were not able to obtain the results they expected from the discussions. However, they announced that they benefited spiritually from having darshan of Swamigal.

Daily Upanyasam, at Chennai

During the four months of his stay in Chennai, Swamigal completed his puja in the evenings, sat in a throne and gave rare lectures every day to the scores of people who gathered there to listen to his words. Thousands of people including common folks as well as geniuses like T.R. Venkatarama Shastrigal, Judge Kumaraswamy Shastrigal and Sir P.S.Swivaswamy Iyer all gathered daily to listen to Swamigal's upanyasams. In spite of such a huge crowd, there would be an astonishing silence and everyone's eyes would be on the sparkling and compassionate figure of our Swamigal on the stage. Swamigal would maintain silence for a few minutes and then start his speech. Nobody would know beforehand what that day's topic of the speech would be. Swamigal's ability to attract the attention of the audience could be seen within a few minutes of his beginning to talk. Everyday, Hindu and Sudesamithran carried the text of the previous night's speech. R.Narayanaswamy Iyer, publisher of Mylapore Law Journal, took upon himself, the task of collating and publishing Swamigal's speeches into two six hundred and fifty page volumes of Sankara Vijayam Upanyasam. He also accepted the responsibility of selling the books to the general public at a concessional price. The preface to the book was written beautifully by K.Balasubramania Iyer.

The third volume of the compilation of speeches was published by the Mylapore Kamakshi Firm at a low cost irrespective of the loss and had one hundred and fifty six pages in it. As the first edition of the print was sold out fast, Kamakoti Gosh published the next edition of fifty upanyasams again.

Unexpected visit to Devotee's Residence

A prominent doctor from Mylapore was desirous of inviting Swamigal to his house. He would visit the camp everyday to have darshan of Swamigal and his face would reflect his yearning. Once, Swamigal inquired of him, to his surprise, the location of his residence. Then, Swamigal informed the doctor that he would visit the latter's residence in half an hour and asked him to rush home and prepare for the visit. The happiness the doctor felt had no bounds. He was worried about making suitable arrangements to welcome someone of Swamigal's stature at such a short time. Sensing his concern, Swamigal assured him that mutt officials will take care of all the arrangements and asked him to go wait at home without any worry. As suggested, the doctor went home, waited for the arrival of Swamigal and welcomed him with purna kumbam. Swamigal stayed at their house for some time, called the family members and children aside separately, inquired about their well being and blessed them all with Vibhuti, Kumkum and Atchadhai. The doctor was very proud and shed tears of ecstasy and joy.

Blessing to Sudesamitran

Silver Jubilee of Sudesamitran magazine was celebrated at Chennai on 8-10-1932. The editors of the magazine were devotees of our Swamigal and he sent his message with the Sri mukham on the occasion. The organizers of the event, including Editor C.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, were very happy to receive the letter of appreciation.

Devotee who Donated a Palanquin

During Swamigal's Mylapore stay, one of the devotees, Dhandapani Iyer, owner of P.T.Pani Publishing Company offered and donated a palanquin with five kalasas for Swamigal's comfortable yatra. The devotees were very appreciative of Dhandapani Iyer's gesture and he had the fortune of witnessing Swamigal travel in that palanquin.

White Silk Umbrella for Vajapayem

Swamigal was cognizant of the fact that people capable of performing yagnas were dwindling in the country and insisted on honoring the scholars on behalf of the mutt, wherever yagnas were conducted. Swamigal also always reiterated that yagnas

should be performed more often for the good of the world. He had special affection for people conducting yagams. Dhandangarai Appathurai Dikshithar had performed yagnas for more than twenty five years and had completed the superior yagna called Vajapeyam. With the intention of honoring him, Swamigal presented him with a white silk umbrella at Mylapore. It was the custom in our country for emperors to present the maharishis who had performed yagnas with white silk umbrellas. It was indeed appropriate for our Acharya Swamigal, who was emperor of all emperors, to award such a white silk umbrella to a scholar who had conducted the Vajapeya yagna. Later, Swamigal also honored Chengalipuram Narayana Vajapeyar and his brother Venkatesa Vajapeyar with white silk umbrellas for conducting this yagna.

Interview to Harijan Politicians

Go puja (Puja to Cows) was held on the day of Mattu Pongal in January, 1933 at A.K.Ranganatha Iyer's slate factory situated at Thirumangalam, near Chennai. Go puja was performed in the mutt daily, before sunrise. On the day of Mattu Pongal, special Go puja is performed in the evening to cows and buffaloes. Harijan leader Rao Bahadur M.C.Raja came to Thirumangalam with his family, to obtain darshan of our Swamigal on the occasion of Mattu Pongal. This was the time when the movement to let Harijans enter the temples was being spear headed by Gandhiji and Sanathanis were opposed to that idea. Swamigal had publicly stated that it was a sin to do so. It was during such a situation that M.C.Raja came to see our Swamigal. It was not his intention to argue with our Swamigal, but to have his darshan and obtain his blessings. Raja was attracted by Swamigal's pure aura and compassionate words. He had worked hard for the benefit of his community when he was the secretary of the All India Adi Dravidar Sabha. He had also participated in the first Round Table conference held at London in the year 1929. Swamigal welcomed Raja with his usual bright smile, enquired about the political conditions of the day, the conditions of the Adi Dravida community and the country's political situation. M.C. Raja was amazed at our Swamigal's political ingenuity and brilliance. Swamigal conveyed his concerns that he voiced everyday in his speeches: "Our country should be rid of its poverty; All the people should attain happiness; the public should not let go of their dharma; mental peace can be attained only with belief in God; if there is no peace, it generates greed; greed is the basis for misery and wars in the world."

M.C.Raja was impressed by Swamigal's broad minded opinions and promised to keep these in mind while performing service to the country. When they were about to take leave, Raja's wife who was standing next to him, quickly scraped the sand from the place where Swamigal was standing and tied it in her sari. Her eyes were filled with tears of joy, having obtained something she considered pure and sacred. Her gesture surprised her husband and others gathered there. Raja was sad that he did not get the idea and felt his wife's devotion exceeded his own.

Once, Harijan leader Diwan Bahadur Srinivasan, who was also the grandfather of the religious endowment minister Parameswar, came to have darshan of Swamigal and discuss the state of Harijans in the country. Swamigal made a few suggestions to

Srinivasan to elevate the economic state of the downtrodden. He also donated five hundred rupees towards the building of a temple in a Harijan resident area.

Honoring Celebrities

Before leaving Chennai, Swamigal honored prominent citizens of Chennai. He honored the Sanskrit Professor at Chennai Presidency College, Mahamahopadhyay Kuppaswamy Shastrigal and gave him the title of “Darshana Kalanidhi”. He also gave the title of “Dharmika Dhurantharar” to advocate T.R.Ramachandra Iyer and “Dharma Rakshamani” to K.Balasubramania Iyer who was responsible for his special services during Swamigal’s visit to Chennai. As they really deserved the title, they were praised by one and all.

One more person who was closely associated with Swamigal during his visit to Chennai was the retired police commissioner Rao Bahadur A.Krishnaswamy Iyer. He was well known and befriended equally by the rich and the poor. The Mylapore Sanskrit Kalasala and Venkataramana Ayurveda infirmary were established and administered ably by V.Krishnaswamy Iyer. After his death, his sons, K.Balasubramania Iyer and Sri K. Chandrasekara Iyer gave the administration of the two organizations to A.Krishnaswamy Iyer, confident of his abilities to carry on their fathers’ tradition.

Swamigal awarded the title “Paropakara Chinthamani” to Sri Krishnaswamy Iyer and honored him with a spatika chain set in gold as well as a Kashmiri shawl. Iyer was extremely thrilled and fell at the lotus feet of our Swamigal.

Blessings to Brahmins residing at Chennai

Swamigal during his stay at Mylapore gave a lecture on 17-11-1932, specifically directed at the Brahmin community for their benefit. Below is an extract from the speech

“People who resided in villages earlier are migrating to cities, forsaking their villages. They are selling their lands and houses in the village and are using that to live in the city. Nowadays, it is hard for educated people to get work. Jobs are given based on caste. Initially, Brahmins were denied employment and now everyone is denied of employment. It was Brahmins who first sold their lands to come to the city. Other communities followed them and started to sell their lands. There are so many houses in the villages that are ruined. On the other hand, people are unnecessarily increasing their wants and holdings and are looking for bigger places to keep them. After spending money on all of this, they are worried about the next month’s food. It is an illusion that there is a lot of wealth in the world, but there is poverty everywhere. Businesses have increased in the world now and everything is being done very fast for the sake of profits. Cities expect things to happen fast and there is nothing slow here. It takes more money to make things happen here. I have three ideas to bring the poverty down in this community.

16. Everyone including women should wear dresses that are the most inexpensive.
17. Instead of coffee, people should drink wheat porridge in the morning.
18. Parents of groom should refrain from getting dowry in the weddings. Marriages can be celebrated in a simple manner without extravaganza.

19. Instead of going to the beach or clubs, use the time to perform your daily rituals.

You will all reap the benefits and good things will happen to you.”

Blessings to Teachers

Summary of Swamigal’s blessings to teachers:

“Teachers are those who use what they learnt to make a living. Others are involved in professions which are mostly unrelated to their studies. The teachers should understand their subjects before teaching and only then can their students effectively comprehend the subjects. Once upon a time, a vidwan went to the King to recite Bhagavatham. The king sent him back asking him to re-learn the Bhagavatham. He re-learned it and came back to the King, who sent him away again. This happened over and over with the king sending the vidwan away twenty one times. By this time, the vidwan finally realized the meaning of the Bhagavatham and went to the forest to attain self realization. When the king found out that the vidwan had gone to the forest, he realized that the vidwan was now ready to teach him the Bhagavatham and sought the vidwan out. Similarly, it takes reading any piece of literature numerous times before its true meaning is realized. Only then, will you have the capability to teach. I wish you would live like the rishis in the ancient times and teach your shishyas in the correct way.”

Blessings to Students

Below is the summary of Swamigal’s lecture on December 18th, 1932 to the students at Hindu Theological High School situated on Thangasalai Road, Chennai:

“This whole world is one big family whose parents are Parvathi and Parameswara. The first verse of Kalidasa’s Raghuvamsam portrays this truth. The teachers and you are living like a small family. As children you have learn as much as possible in your youth. There are two aspects to learning: one is devotion to the guru and the other is morality and personal discipline. Students should avoid getting angry and not criticize anyone or anybody. Just like we maintain a diet while taking medication, while obtaining education, refrain from talking about freedom or disobeying the instructions of elders. Guru Bhakti, moral righteousness, and humility are essential for a student. Children who are humble in their youth will rise high later in their life. Devotion to mother, father and guru (matrubhakthi, pitru bhakthi and guru bhakthi) are all key for you. You should strive to remove the ego that destroys. Avvaiyar has said that mother and father are the primary gods. The Vedas also say the same thing. When you are studying, do not interfere in worldly activities. You might ask, ‘Isn’t it necessary to do service for the well being of the world?’ It is definitely necessary to do service. However, first obtain all the knowledge needed in this world to do the service. You have to think that your studying is your contribution to the world and involve yourself in it completely.”

Visit to Thirvotriyur

Sri Swamigal visited the holy city of Thiruvotriyur and had darshan of Sri Thyagesar and Sri Tirupurasundari Ambika. Brahma, Valmiki and Vasuki are said to have performed puja to Siva in this place. Appar, Sundarar and Sambandar have all sung songs in praise of the Lord here. The story where Sundarar married Sangili Nachiar can be found in Peria Puranam. This is the place where Pattinathar attained mukthi and his burial place can still be found here. Sri Adi Sankara who was born more than 2500 years ago, did prathisthai of Sri Chakra before Sri Tirupurasundari Ambal. We can see an idol of Sri Adi Sankara in the inner sanctum of Sri Thyagesa in this temple. The temple priests still belong to Adi Sankara's community of Keralite Brahmins. Pujas are performed for Devi as per vedic rituals and they are performed for Siva as per Agamic rituals. It is said that immediately after Adi Sankara, Acharyas belonging to the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam have stayed here for long periods and spent their time in meditation and atma vicharam. There was a Sankara mutt in the South Maada street which was badly in need of repair and our Swamigal took the steps to have it renovated. There are two adhishtanams in the mutt. One is that of the 61st Acharya of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, Mahadevendra Saraswathi Swamigal (1704-1746) and the second is that of the 55th Acharya, Sri Chandrachoodendra Saraswathi Swamigal. Upon our Swamigal's wishes, pujas are being conducted regularly to both the adhishtanams.

Swamigal stayed in Chennai for more than four months and went to Mylapore, Mambalam, Guindy, Town, Komaleswarer temple, Kachaleswarar temple, Mallikeswarar temple, Kalahastheeswarar temple, Purasaivakkam, Thiruvallikeni and other places, blessed the devotees and gave sermons. Before leaving Chennai, Swamigal gave a speech which said:

“Speak the truth; follow dharma; consider your mother, father and guru as Gods – these are preached by our Vedas. Sri Adi Sankara appeared amongst us thousands of years ago and established six sects of our religion including Saivam and Vaishnavam. He has explained the meaning of truth and dharma as told in the Vedas in “Prasnotra Ratnamalika” composed by him. Doing good for other living beings is the truth. Practicing the good dharma practiced by ancestors is one's dharma.

We should keep in our thoughts Ambika, Eeswara, and Dakshinamurthy, who are our mother, father and guru, as well as Krishna Bhagawan who gave us the Gita.

Follow the rituals as prescribed in the vedic shastras and reduce the expensive habits and clothing. Reduce your expenses and help poor people who don't have any food by giving them food once or twice a week. Offer porridge or some food to the village gods at least once or twice a week, especially on Fridays and Tuesdays. Harijans should follow the Siva Bhakti of Nandanar, one of the sixty three saivite saints and not go against their communal restrictions. That will give them benefits in life.

Women of all communities should maintain and practice their faith similar to the ancient Thilakavathiar and Mangaiarkarasi even if the men folk wander away from their faith, and bring them back into the fold. By following our ancestors' path, our religion and community will prosper more and more.”

14 Yatra to Kumbakonam for Mahamagam – Navarathri at Tanjore

Virtue of Kumbakonam

There are several Siva and Vishnu temples in this city. Just before the last Mahapralaya, Brahma went to Parameswara and asked him what to do for the re-creation after the Mahapralaya. Parameswara asked Brahma to take a large amount of earth soil, make a kumbam out of it by mixing the soil with Amrutham, fill the kumbam with the seeds of all living beings and sprinkle amrutham on them, keep mango leaves in the mouth of the kumbam, tightly close it with coconut, then adorn the kumbam with Poonal and Dharbai. He later also instructed Brahma to keep the kumbam on the south side of the Meru hill. Brahma made the kumbam as instructed by Siva and kept the kumbam on a stand at the Meru hill.

When the mahapralaya started, darkness engulfed the world and there were non-stop rains, floods and winds. After the pralaya got over, the sun rose once again and the rains and the wind stopped. Brahma's kumbam moved from the Meru hill and floated towards the south. Brahma tried to approach it, but the hot air from the kumbam stopped him from touching it. Parameswaran, who was standing aside, took an arrow, aimed it at the kumbam and split it in half. The places where the kumbam's neck, mango leaves, coconut, dharbai and poonal fell became holy.

The place where the coconut from the kumbam fell became known as the 'Abhimukeswarar temple' on the south side of the Mahamagam tank. The place where the the poonal on the kumbam fell is now called the 'Gowtameswarar temple' on the north side of the tank. The mango leaves are said to have fallen five miles north of Kumbakonam at 'Thirupurambiyam'. The mouth of the Kumbam fell ten miles south east of Kumbakonam at a place named 'Kudavail'. The place where Parameswaran stood while shooting the arrow is 'Panathurai' on the south side of the city. The place where most of the kudam fell came to be known as 'Kudandhai' or 'Kudamooku'. Two drops of amrutham that fell out from the Kumbam became two holy tanks and one of them is now known as the Mahamagam tank.

Parameswaran came to the place where the kudam fell, made a Sivalingam with the earth and amrutham from the Kumbam and entered in the sivalingam in the form of Jyothi. That swayambu lingam is 'Adi Kumbeswarer,' residing in the center of the Kumbakonam city. Brahma celebrated and performed pujas for ten days to the Sivalingam that was made by Parameswara himself and in the end, performed Avabrutha Snanam in the maha magam tank. That day is the Mahamagam Poornima day. Based on these celebrations, Brahmotsavam is celebrated in temples all over Tamil Nadu and other states.

Mahamaga Vaibhavam

Every twelve years, in the lunar month of Masi, when Guru resides in Simha rasi and Chandran resides in Maga star, Mahamagam is celebrated in a manner similar to Kumba Mela in north India. Kumba Mela, Mahamela, Pushkaram are all celebrated in the banks of the Ganges, Godavari and Krishna. But in the Mahamagam, lakhs of people take a bath in one tank. There are eight holy theerthams at the bottom of this tank carrying the names of the eight Dig Balakas as well as Brahma Theertham. On the four sides of the tanks there are nine theerthams representing the nine rivers: Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Narmada, Saraswathi, Cauveri, Kumari, Payoshni and Sarayu. Sixty-six crores of theerthams sparkle in the middle of the tank in the form of small wells.

The legend says that Ganga and eight other holy rivers went to Kailasam, approached Paramasiva and complained that all the human beings on earth get rid of their sins by taking a bath in their holy waters, but how would they, the holy rivers, get rid of all the sins accumulated thus. Paramasiva asked them to go to the holy place of Kumbakonam, it being both a Siva and Vishnu Kshetram, and take a bath in the holy Mahamagam tank on the auspicious day of Maha Purnima. That will wash all their sins away. The nine rivers did not know the location of Kumbakonam. Therefore, Parameswara rode the rishabam with Parvathi and asked them to follow him. He reached Kumbakonam and sat down on the north shore of the tank while Ganga and the other rivers along with Devas, took a holy dip in the tank to dissolve their sins. There is a shrine of Kasi Viswanathar in the northern shore of the tank and the idols of the nine rivers can be seen there. This story can be found in Pavishyotra Puranam.

The credit for building stone steps to the tank, building sixteen mandaps around the tank and installing Sivalingams in them goes to the Maharaja Govinda Dikshithar who was minister to the first three Nayak kings of Tanjore. Adikumbeswarer will give darshan in the main mandap 'Brahmatheerteswar mandap' on the north side of the tank on the day of Maha magam as well as the magam every year.

With the intention of participating in the Mahamagam to be held in March, 1933, our Swamigal left Chennai in the first week of February and arrived at Thiruvidamarudur two days before the auspicious day. Mahamagam was held on the twenty fifth day of the lunar month of Masi in the cyclic year Angirasa (8-3-1933). Swamigal was staying at the residence of R.Narayanaswamy Iyer, proprietor of Chennai Law Journal Publications. Swamigal left Thiruvidamaruthur and went to Kumbakonam with many of his disciples. He had a holy dip in the presence of Adikumbeswarer and other deities around noon along with thousands of devotees. He later returned to Thiruvidamaruthur. He had resolved to undertake a journey to Kasi in the year 1919 before leaving the Kumbakonam mutt. He did not want to go to the Sankara mutt at Kumbakonam without fulfilling the resolution.

The year when Mahamagam was held, there were no wars, droughts or floods in the country and it was a prosperous year. There was no lack of transportation facilities in the country. Southern Railways had arranged for special trains. The police had made effective arrangements for crowd and traffic control, enabling smooth movement of the people in and out of the city. It is estimated that around six lakh people came that day to take a holy dip in the tank. A quarter of them were estimated to have come into the city

via bullock carts or on foot. The city officials had arranged for an exhibition on this occasion where there was music and dance. The businessmen advertised their goods in bright colors. Individuals and organizations had arranged for anna dhanam, out of which the biggest food donation was the one at Sankara Mutt arranged by Tepperumalnallur Sivan.

Sankara Mutt at Kumbakonam

It has been mentioned before that the 62nd Acharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Swamigal had moved the mutt premises from Kanchipuram to Kumbakonam due to the Carnatic war happening near Kanchi. Tanjore was then ruled by Maratha kings. King Pratapasimha's minister Dabeer Bandh built this mutt and four agraharams around it in the south banks of the Cauveri river. There used to be coconut trees in this place, before a skeleton mutt was built in a hurry to accommodate the then Swamigal.

In the year 1820, then king Saraboji Maharaja built a sanctum sanctorum for then Swamigal's puja behind that mutt. The document describing the event can still be found in the left frontal wall. The old buildings grew badly in need of repair with the passing years. Swamigal wished to renovate the mutt after the completion of the Thiruvanaikal mutt in the year 1923. The effort was spearheaded by the then mutt manager and lawyer K.Kuppuswamy Iyer. He was assisted by Theperumalnallur Sivan in this effort. Diwan D.N.Muthiah Chettiar of Pudukottai donated Rs.25,000/- for the renovation. Rs.75,000/- more was funneled from the mutt's income and directed toward the renovation of the Kumbakonam mutt. The renovation task was completed in the year 1933 under the supervision of Sivan.

After six years, more construction was undertaken to a kitchen, a private room for Swamigal and Gosala. The key people involved in completing these tasks were Kumbakonam Dr.R.Mahalinga Iyer's father Ex-Thasildar Ramamurthy Iyer and Gopala Iyer – son of Deputy Collector A.Krishnaswamy Iyer of Dabeer Road, Kumbakonam. They were able to finish this with the help of donations from various devotees including Ramanathapuram Raja and Kollankodu Rani.

Raja Govinda Dikshithar Patasala

On the banks of the river Cauveri, Govinda Dikshithar, a minister for the Tanjore Nayak kings, had built a Veda patasala in Kumbakonam. The patasala was supported by Maratha kings after the Nayaka kings. There are still students at this patasala and it is being administered by the Devasthanam Committee. The chairman of this committee, K.R.M.Singaram Chettiar, took the effort to renovate and build a new building for this patasala. Accepting the invitation of the Devasthanam committee, our Swamigal opened the new building during his visit to Kumbakonam in the year 1933. A welcome speech was given to Swamigal by municipal chairman Muthukumara Chettiar. In his speech, Swamigal said, "A building built on a solid foundation remains strong for a long time. Similarly, this patasala was started four hundred years ago by the great soul Govinda

Dikshithar. Even now, the sound of Veda Gosham can be heard from the patashala. Governments may change, but the light lit by that minister is still shining brightly. Any dharma that is being done with good intention will continue for a long time.” On this occasion, N.K.Venkatesa Banthulu, an English Professor at Anantapur government college offered the biography of Govinda Dikshithar written by him , to Swamigal. It should be noted that the principal of the patasala was Mahamahopadhyay Shastra Ratnakaram Yegnaswamy Shastrigal who hailed from the illustrious lineage of Appayya Dikshithar and also happened to be the grandson of Mannargudi Raju Shastrigal.

Long Stay at Thiruvaidaimaruthur

After the Mahamagam, Swamigal stayed at Thiruvaidamaruthur for a long time. Sankara mutt was situated in the Thirumanjana Street immediately next to the front door of Mahalinga Swamy temple. This temple has been the subject of songs composed by Appar and the other three Saivite saints. Sri Adi Sankara had also stayed there and had darshan of Sri Mahalinga Swamy. It is mentioned in Sankara Vijayam that when Acharya was praying to the Lord, a figure appeared from the lingam, lifted its right hand and said “Advaitam is the Satyam – Truth” and disappeared. Celebrations where the Lord is taken in the Silver Chariot were held in the lunar month of Thai in the year 1933. Our Swamigal was welcomed for the occasion by Thiruvaduthurai Adheenam Srila Sri Vaidyalinga Swami. Swamigal greatly praised the service done by Adheenakartha at such an elderly age and appreciated the way the temples and other rituals are being maintained under him. Sri Adheenakartha performed bikshavandanam on 14-3-1933 and the mutt’s expenses for the day were incurred by the Adheenam.

Sankara Jayanthi at Thiruvaidaimaruthur

Swamigal celebrated this year’s Sankara Jayanthi very elaborately at Thiruvaidaimaruthur. He gathered a sabha of vidwans where there were debates and discussions on Vedanta and he also gave lectures. During the five day celebrations, Swamigal gave sermons on how Adi Sankara went around the whole country in his short thirty years of life, his achievements and philosophy of Advaita. On each of the five days, a picture of Adi Sankara was kept on a chariot and brought on a procession around the four streets. In the front of the procession there were five elephants which carried Adi Sankara’s Padukas, his Panchaloka idol and his Bhashyams. There were also horses in this procession. On both sides of the procession were youth carrying umbrellas. Many nadaswaram musicians were fortunate to participate in this procession. Swamigal walked in the procession along with the Tanjore princes. On returning, Swamigal honored the vidwans with gifts.

Darshan of Chidambaram Nataraja

Chidambaram was one of the pancha bhootha kshetram, the Akasha (space) Kshetram. Amongst the innumerable devotees who desired to bring our Swamigal to their towns, the notable ones are Mahamahopadhyay Dhandapani Swamy Dikshithar – belonging to the illustrious and devoted sect of Dikshithars, and Mahamahopadhyay Dakshinatya Kalanidhi U.V.Swaminatha Iyer. Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar had also been persuading our Swamigal to visit Chidambaram. The Dikshithars and other citizens of Chidambaram requested Swamigal to visit after the completion of Sankara Jayanthi. Swamigal accepted the invitation of the Dishithars and agreed to come. The residents of the city had made arrangements for a welcome that is suitable for a Kanchi Acharya who was coming to their town for the first time. The Dikshithar community along with the general public gathered in the outskirts of the town on May 18th, 1933 (Fifth day of the lunar month of Vaikasi) and welcomed Swamigal with purna Kumbam, Veda Gosham, Bhajan groups, Nadaswaram and melam. They took him on a procession around the four Ratha Streets. Thousands of people had darshan of Swamigal and obtained his blessings. Arrangements for Swamigal’s stay were made Karaikudi R.S.Veda Patasala situated in the South street. Swamigal was anxious to have darshan of Nataraja dancing in Ponnambalam.

Concept of Nataraja

Below is the gist of Swamigal’s speech at Chennai on 20-10-1932 on Nataraja’s cosmic dance:

“Nataraja is another name of Parameswara. Amongst Natan, Vitan and Kayan, Natan is the dancer. The king of all the Natans is Nataraja. It means that nobody can dance better than him. He is also called Mahanatan. In the Tamil language, he is also called “Ambala Koothaduvan”. Nataraja is a very big actor. He is playing the act that we all should have taken upon us. The hair in the Nataraja idol appears to be stretched out. These days, when a photo is shot, a snap shot is taken. It is a sudden capture of an object in motion. When Nataraja is dancing fast and stops for a second, his hair is stretched out. The sculpture had taken a snap shot of this image and created the idol. He has an udukkai also known as damarugam or dakka in one of his hands. The beat of the damarugam will match the beat of the feet. There are three types of instruments – Sarma vadyam (Instruments made with skin), Thanthri vadyam (string instruments) and Vayurendra Vadyam (instruments with holes). The Sarma vadyam are played using sticks of hands and when the beat stops is the indication for begin of a new cycle (Chappu). The chappu in Nataraja’s damarugam appears when there is a pause in the dance.

Nataraja is dancing while Sanakar, Patanjali, Vyagrapadhar and other rishis are standing around him. As they were saints, they were able to comprehend the cosmic dance via their Gnana Eyes. There is something called lens in our eyes. Our sight depends on the power of the lens. The older we grow, we are unable to see that clearly and substitute with another lens. Hence, what we see is not the real sight. Sanakadhis witnessed the dance with their real eyes. Vishnu played the mathalam while Brahma put the beat for the music. During the end of the dance, there arose fourteen different sounds from the damarugam in line with the fourteen different types of arts. The sounds seemed to be enjoying the Siva swaroopam. Nandikeswarer considered the sounds to be Siva

Bhakthi Stotram and wrote Bhashyam for them. Amongst those gathered to witness the cosmic dance was Panini who wrote the Panini Vyakaran Suktam starting with 'A' and ending with 'I'. All languages have their alphabets starting with Akaram. (Middle eastern language has Alif as the first letter, while Greek language has Alpha as the first letter). Both the letters came from the sound 'al' and so is the word 'Alphabet' start with the letter 'al'. The basis of the Vyakaranam is the Mahesa Sutrams that came from Parameswara's damarugam. Patanjali and Vyagrapadar are next to Nataraja and their idols can be seen behind Nataraj's idol. Patanjali wrote Bhashyam for Panini Vyakarana Sutram that was generated from Parameswara's damarugam. Patanjali is also considered to be incarnation of Adi Sesha who also is found under the feet of Parameswara. From this, it can be surmised that Parameswara is the main author of Vyakarana Shastra."

On the night of Swamigal's visit to Chidambaram, he asked the young man who does Vastra Kaingaryam (washes and maintains Swamigal's clothes) to come to the Sivaganga Thatagai / tank in the Nataraja temple early next morning before 5 am with his new clothes and without anyone's knowledge. Swamigal went to the holy tank early in the morning with that young man, took a bath, completed his morning prayers and was there in front of the sanctum sanctorum before the doors were opened. The priest who had the morning duty there turned around and was shocked to see our Swamigal standing there reciting slokas. He did not expect to see our Swamigal there unannounced and immediately sent word through the security guard to all the Dikshithars about Swamigal's presence in the temple. Within minutes the word spread and hundreds of people hurried towards the temple. The Dikshithars prostrated before Swamigal and said they had made lots of arrangements to welcome Swamigal in an appropriate way and they were upset because he was there all by himself, unannounced. Swamigal replied that he was eager to have 'Viswaroopa darshan (the first puja done in the morning) of Nataraja and also that he would be visiting the temple many times every day during his stay here. The Dikshithars took Swamigal back to his camp with all the Devasthanam honors. They requested Swamigal to stay in the temple for few days and conduct Sri Chandramouleswarer puja in the thousand pillared mandap. Welcome speech was given in Sanksrit by Upanyasa Ratnakaram C.S.Sivakamasundara Dikshithar and in Tamil by his son C.S.Sachidananda Dikshithar, on behalf of their entire community. Swamigal stayed in the temple for about fifteen days and conducted the puja there. It is said that Adi Sankara brought back five lingams from Kailasa and of those, the Moksha lingam is said to be in Chidambaram. The Yoga Lingam is being worshipped by Adi Sankara and all the Kamakoti Acharyas. Thousands of people witnessed the puja and heard Swamigal's upnyasams in the evenings. Members of all communities offered Bikshavandanam and pada puja. Swamigal had darshan of Nataraja and Govindaraja every day of his stay. He arranged for special abhishekams of Chitra annam as well as Bakshana pavadai for Nataraja. Every year, special decorations are made to Nataraja and he is brought in a procession around the four Ratha streets, twice in the month of Ani for Ani Thirumanjana celebrations as well as in the month of Margazhi for Arudra darshanam. It would take the priests three days to complete the decorations.

The Dikshithars brought our Swamigal down the Panchakshara steps to the sanctum sanctorum of Sri Nataraja to have the darshan of the Lord decorated thus for the procession. Sri Swamigal had darshan of Ratnasabapathi, Moksha Chandramouleswarer

lingam, Chitsabesan, Sivakamasundari and the famous Secret of Chidambaram. His Holiness stayed in Chidambaram for a month. Before leaving the city, Sri Swamigal donated crescent moon made in gold and with diamonds embedded on the top, for Nataraja.

Visit to Parangipettai

Swamigal visited Parangipettai from Chidambaram. There was a Muslim gentleman resident here who had many years ago, studied under our Swamigal's purvashrama father. Swamigal's father had worked at Parangipettai in the year 1898 and this gentleman had respect and affection for his teacher as well as the teacher's family. This gentleman had the good fortune to have met and associated with our Swamigal in his early years and witnessed his brilliance first hand. The gentleman was a rich businessman and when returning from business trips used to buy toys, dresses and fruits for our Swamigal and his siblings. Swamigal's purvashrama parents would accept the gift for the affection and love with which it was offered. The gentleman would visit Swamigal during the yatra in various towns in order to have his darshan.

Swamigal was 48 years old when he visited Parangipettai. The Islamic gentleman totally forgot that he belonged to another religion and was heard to have boasted about his association with Swamigal to friends and relatives. He bought large amounts of fruits and flowers and came to have darshan of Swamigal, who was maintaining silence that day. Swamigal accepted the offering with a gracious smile. The Mohammedan owned salt fields and a few ships and he wanted Swamigal's lotus feet to come to all his salt fields. Swamigal went behind wherever the gentleman took him in spite of the extreme heat. By the time Swamigal returned back, it was after noon. The Marakkayar prostrated before Swamigal and apologized for the inconvenience he had caused. Everyone gathered learnt from the blessing that Swamigal gave to that Muslim, that God blesses and recognizes true bhakthi in one's heart.

Vyasa Puja and Navarathri in Tanjore

Swamigal visited several places after Parangipettai and accepting the invitation of the citizens of Tanjore, agreed to observe Chaturmasya at Tanjore. He conducted Vyasa puja in the year 1933 at Tanjore as well as the Navarathri puja that came after. On Friday, 25th of the lunar month of Ani in the year Sri mukham, on the day of Vyasa Purnima, Swamigal performed Vyasa puja in a big mandap situated in the front of the Tanjore Brahadeeswarar temple. Thousands of people gathered there to witness this puja. He observed the Chaturmasya vratha at Mukasa building situated on the North Street in Tanjore. Every day there was a gathering of scholars and artists in the vidwath sabha and Swamigal blessed and honored those gathered.

It is to be noted that Swamigal, during the stay at Tanjore, went to a house in Varadappan Iyer street, in order to have the darshan of the Rama idol that was worshipped by the musical genius, Sri Thyagaraja Swamigal.

Navarathri puja was held in the Co-operative building in the same North Street, Tanjore. The whole building was specially decorated for the sake of the puja. The public

came out in thousands everyday to witness Swamigal perform Navarathri puja everyday. On the last day of celebrations, Vijayadasami day, a grand procession was arranged to go around the four main streets. Swamigal was seated on an ambari (a throne mounted on the elephant) on an elephant and he was followed by the senior prince Rajaraman and his brother in another elephant. Thousands of people walked with our Swamigal immersed in his glowing figure and majestic sight. Scores had gathered around in the balconies of buildings to catch a glimpse. The gas lights were numerous and so shiny to make the night appear as daytime. The procession included elephants, horses, camels, umbrellas, 'Pavatta', nadaswaram groups, band groups, vedic chanting, Thevaram chanting and bhajan groups. It was a sight that was never seen before. All along the way, devotees offered purna kumbam to our Swamigal and showed camphor aarati.

During his stay at Tanjore, people from all walks of life including government officials, lawyers, landlords, businessmen and political leaders participated with enthusiasm in offering their services to our Swamigal.

Sankara Mutt at Tanjore

For two hundred and fifty years, Acharyas of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam had wished to establish a Sankara mutt at Tanjore, in case the need to stay there arises. Their wishes and efforts came true when our Swamigal returned from his Kashi yatra. The prince of Tanjore Prathapa Simha Raja and T.R.Joshi accomplished this goal in a simple manner. Both owners of the Mukasa building where Swamigal had stayed earlier, agreed to donate the whole building to the mutt. From that day onward, that building was considered the Sankara mutt. An idol of Adi Sankara has been installed there and daily puja is being performed. Devotees gather there to celebrate religious holidays as well as listen to lectures and musical events. A big picture of our Swamigal was hung there in November, 1946 by T.R.Venkatarama Shastrigal. At this event, he extolled the virtues of our Swamigal, saying it was hard to find such great souls in our lifetime. It is indeed our good fortune that we have such a guru, the public should understand the greatness of our Swamigal; following his words would bring goodness to this world. The chief guest at this event was S.Chandrasekara Iyer, Chief Justice, High Court, Chennai.

15 Quick Yatra from Tanjore to Kashi

Swamigal had collected sand from Rameswaram in the year 1932 and had kept it in the puja. There is a religious rule that the sand has to be dissolved in the holy river Ganga at Prayag within twelve years of its collection. In order to comply with this rule, Swamigal decided to go from Tanjore to Prayag as soon as possible.

Ananthakrishna Sharma

Sri Swamigal wanted to find out the logistics of traveling to Kashi on foot. He had sent a young twenty year old man named Ananthakrishna Sharma to Kashi by foot, ten years before embarking on his trip. Swamigal had given certain restrictions to this young man. He should go to Kashi all the way by foot. He should prepare his own food. He should carry only a few vessels and a few necessary clothing items on his person. He should not receive any gifts or money from anyone. Other than for health purposes, he should not stay in one place for more than a day. He should write down the names and details of the places he went to and people he met every day and post it everyday to the mutt. Arrangements were made to send him replenishments of postcards from the mutt.

Ananthakrishna Sharma was young, healthy and full of will power and acharya bhakthi. Aside from Tamil, he could speak English as well. He followed Swamigal's instructions, did not cross the restrictions and reached Kashi in six months. There was interesting information obtained from the post cards that he sent to the mutt daily. He gave the details of distances and traveling conditions between one place and another and the availability of water in each of the places he visited. After overcoming difficulties, he finally reached Kashi and stayed there for a few days. On Swamigal's request, the mutt's agent at Kashi bought him a train ticket to travel back to Kumbakonam. By the time he returned, he could converse very well in Hindi. He had darshan of Swamigal in a camp and described in detail his travel experiences. Swamigal appreciated his deep devotion to his guru and blessed him. Later Ananthakrishna Sharma got married and worked at the mutt itself.

Request from Residents of the Banks of Ganga

In 1932, Swamigal sent Kunnakudi Swaminatha Iyer ahead of him to the places on the way to Kashi, in order to make advance arrangements. Swamigal decided to follow the same route that Ananthakrishna Sharma had taken earlier. The residents near the banks of the river Ganga came to know about the imminent arrival of our Swamigal from Swaminatha Iyer. They were very excited about the visit and got together to draft and send invitations to Swamigal through Swaminatha Iyer. A few of the prominent personalities who were signatories to the invitation were:

- 16 Allahabad University Dean Mahamahopadhyay Ganganath Jha
- 17 Dharmadhikari Sri Shankara Bandh, Allahabad

- 18 Sri Kamalakanth Mishra, Allahabad
- 19 Mahant of Sri Viswanatha Temple, Kashi
- 20 Administrators of Tarakeswar Mutt, Kashi
- 21 Administrators of Pancha Ganaga mutt, Kashi
- 22 Administrator of Sringeri Mutt, Kashi
- 23 Sri Bhagawananda Mandaleswarer Swamy, Kashi
- 24 Sri Swaroopananda Mandaleswarer Swamy, Kashi
- 25 Mahamahopadhyay Tharka Choodamani Sri Anand Saran, Principal Pundit,
Bharatha Dharma Mahamandalam, Kashi
- 26 Sri Vidyadhara Gowda, Dharma Shastra pundit, Kashi
- 27 Sri Kashinath Sinha, Gaya
- 28 Sri Govardhana Mishra, Gaya

Kunnakudi Swaminatha Iyer returned back from his yatra on 23-04-1933 to Komal, a village near Kutralam in Tanjore district. Swamigal enquired about arrangements and accommodations on the way to Kashi. Swaminatha Iyer returned to Komal exactly seventy five days before Vyasa puja. Arrangements for Ganga yatra was made immediately after Chaturmasya and Navarathri ended.

Government Assistance for Swamigal's Yatra

Every government ruling India, whether they were Muslim rulers, East India Company or the British rulers that followed, have always helped out with the travel of Kanchi Acharyas and have always waived taxes for the mutt. For example, on 18-4-1792, the officers of the East India Company issued an order to help the then Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam's Acharya Swamigal, his entourage of five hundred mutt employees, twenty five bullock carts, twenty horses, five camels, three elephants and ten palanquins. The whole entourage was traveling to Thirupathi, from there to banks of the river Krishna and then to Rameswaram. The government order requested that all necessary help and security for their safe journey be extended to them.

During our Swamigal's north India yatra, the Madras government had issued (G.O.MS.612 Public Police Department d/26-11-1933) a request to other state governments as well as independent kingdoms to make all the necessary arrangements for Swamigal and his staff. In response to their request, the governments of Hyderabad, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Bengal and West India made all the necessary arrangements for Swamigal's comfortable stay and journey.

Swamigal started from Tanjore in the second week of September 1933. Travelling thirty miles every day, he passed through Thiruvannamalai, Aranai, Velur, Chittur, Palamaneru and reached Madanapalli, where he was given a big reception by the residents. He stayed at Chinnathippasamuthram, a village close to Madanapalli, for a month. Then he had darshan of Sri Narasimhamurthy at Kadiri. From there, he left for Kurnool via Dharmapuram, Anandappar, Thone, Dhronachalam. He stayed in Kurnool for a week. At every place Swamigal stayed, thousands of people from nearby gathered to have his darshan and to witness the Chandramouliswarer puja.

Journey to SriSailam

Srisailam, also called Dakshina Kailasam (Kailash of the south) is considered to be one of the holiest of holy places in our country. Sri Adi Sankara Bhagavatpadal has described the twelve Jyotir lingams in his Dwadasha Linga Stotram. Amongst them, the Jyoti lingam, also called Mallikarjuna is found in Srisailam. The Sthala tree for this pilgrim center is the tree called Arjunam. The Goddess worshipped at Srisailam temple is called Bramarambika. Bramaram refers to a bee. Since Siva has the name of Mallika (Jasmine), we can sense that the Goddess in the form of bee is hovering around the jasmine flower. To reach this pilgrim center in Andhra Pradesh, one has to travel about sixty miles from Kurnool to Pethacharivu, through a road surrounded by forests on both sides. From there, a twelve mile trek up a mountainous road has to be undertaken to reach Srisailam. Every year, on the day of Sivarathri, thousands of people walk through the path to have darshan of Mallikarjuna. A few people used to go there on Makara Sankaranthi or Ugadhi. Other than the above mentioned holy days, travelers did not travel there that often. However, now roads have been formed for cars or buses to go up the mountains.

When Adi Sankara traveled around India, he went to Srisailam and had darshan of Mallikarjuna Mahalingam and Sri Bramarambika. Proof of his visit can be seen in this slokam from the Shivanandalahari composed by Sri Adi Sankara.

“sandhayaramba vijrumbitham shruthi shirasthaanaantharaadhishtitham
saprema bramaraabhi raamamasakrut sadvaasanaa shobhitham
bhogeendraa bharanam samastha sumanaha pujiyam gunaavishkrutam
seve Shree giri mallikarjuna mahaalingam shivaalingithamll”

The meaning of the above shloka is that “One who dances during the holy time of evening (sandhya), one who blossoms like a flower, one who resides in the Upanishads which are the height of Vedas, one who is adorned by Brahmarambika, who is devoted to him, one who wears the snake as an ornament, one who always has Satva guna and is worshiped by the Devas, one who is engulfed by the Ambika and called Shiva, I prostrate to that Mahalingam also called Mallikarjun and residing at Srisailam”. Our Swamigal used to often sing the above shloka in his sweet voice and worship Lord Shiva.

The Devi’s shrine is situated on the outer corridor of the Mallikarjun shrine. The holy water in this place is called ‘Padala Ganga or Krishnaveni’. In order to reach the tank, one has to climb down nine hundred steps and walk two miles. In spite of the distance, devotees trek down to take a dip in the holy waters. Appar, Sundarar and Sambandar, all three Saivite saints have sung songs on the deity of this temple, also called Thiruparupadam. The legend is that Nandi is in the form of a hill near the temple.

During his stay at Kurnool, Swamigal enquired about the logistics of travel to Srisailam. The residents insisted that the travel can be undertaken only during Sivarathri and other holy days. They suggested that Swamigal could undertake the trip next month, on Sivarathri. However, Swamigal was in a hurry to proceed with his Ganga Yatra and did not want to postpone the Srisailam trip. He consulted others and decided on traveling by boat via the Kurnool – Cuddappa canal. Moreover, he was keen on having darshan of

Mallikarjuna when there was no crowd. He took the Chandramouliswarer puja and a few men for help and started on 24-1-1934 to travel via boat from Kurnool. On the 25th, he was at Pagadibala, on the 26th, at Atmakur, 27th, at Nagalutti and 28th, at Pethasarivu. He stopped at each place for a short time to complete his puja and then left for the next place. From Pethasarivu, he climbed the hills by foot to reach Shuklaparvatham. From there, the climb was even steeper before he reached Srisailam. On the 29th, he had darshan of Sri Mallikarjuna and Sri Brahmarambika. The temple devasthanam officials were notified earlier of our Swamigal's visit and had made all the necessary arrangements for his trip at such short notice. Swamigal stayed for a long time before the shrines of Siva and Ambal and sang with ecstasy, the Sivanandalahari and Bramarambika Stotram composed by Sri Adi Sankara. Swamigal went down to Padalaganga the next day as it was the day of the lunar eclipse. The eclipse started 9:30 p.m. on 31-2-1934 and ended at 10:30 p.m. The camp and Sri Chandramouliswarer puja was set up near the banks of the Padalaganga. The mutt's workers burned huge oil lamps throughout the night as well as bonfires. This kept the wild animals away and also kept everyone warm. Swamigal climbed up the nine hundred steps the next morning to have darshan of Sri Mallikarjuna again. He also stayed here for one more day and then left for Pethasarivu. The return journey was also undertaken via boat back to Kurnool on 6-2-1934. Swamigal was at Alamburi on 12-2-1934 for Sivarathri. He took a dip in the holy river Tungabhadra and had darshan of Sri BalaBrahmeswarer before performing the four sessions of Chandramouliswarer puja for the occasion. He traveled to nearby villages upon the residents' requests and arrived at Hyderabad on the 21st of the month.

Senjukal Tribe's Assistance

The members of Senjukal tribe heard about Swamigal's imminent arrival to Srisailam from the devasthanam officials. A group of hundred tribals came to Nagalutti to have darshan of our Swamigal and promised to provide whatever help they could to His Holiness. They were well built and excelled at archery. Normally, they would not let outsiders come through their hills. Initially, they were hesitant, but later provided safety against wild animals and also helped carry cargo up the steep hills. When Swamigal asked the mutt officials to offer monetary compensation, they refused any money. They had the practice of performing a dance before dignitaries who visited their land. They wanted to perform their dance before our Swamigal and entertain him. Swamigal agreed and watched them perform a bit from each of their dances. Later he gave them fruits and vibhuti and requested that delicious and sumptuous food to be given to them. Their pleasure knew no bounds after receiving blessings from our Swamigal.

Special Welcome by the State of Hyderabad

Swamigal crossed over the river Tungabhadra at Kurnool and reached Hyderabad state on the other side. He traveled by Jallapuram, Anantapuram and reached the city of Katwal. In those days, Katwal was a sub-territory of the Hyderabad kingdom and was ruled by a queen. The queen of Katwal welcomed and honored Swamigal and made

arrangements for the camp for four days. People gathered in thousands from nearby places to have darshan of our Swamigal. Later, Swamigal traveled via Krishna Agraharam, Atmagur, Kothakotta, Chinnajanam Petta, Jetjarla and Pethaganam Petta, reaching the city of Hyderabad on 12-3-1934.

Earlier, the citizens of Hyderabad had formed a Reception committee under the leadership of Diwan Bahadur S.Aravamuda Iyengar in order to make all the arrangements for a successful visit. On the evening of 12-3-1934 at 6 p.m., prominent citizens such as Sri Rajaram Roy, Vaman Naik, Shyam Rao, Tukaram, Rangadam Bhat and Engineer Nataraja Iyer lead thousands of people gathered there to welcome our Swamigal with purna kumbam and other honors in the outskirts of the city. From there, a procession preceded by the Nizam's troops was taken around the main streets and reached Rajaroy's personal palace called Lakshmaneswara Bhag, situated at Laldharwaya. Swamigal got down from the palanquin and sat on the throne and everyone prostrated before him. Local dignitary Vaman Naik spoke in detail about Swamigal's trip to Kashi and requested the citizens of Hyderabad to provide whatever assistance they could. He also spoke in praise of Swamigal. His Holiness stayed at Lakshmaneswara Bhag till 24-3-1934. On the twenty fifth, a common bhikshavandanam and pada puja on behalf of the townsfolk was held at Thulaja Bhavan. Swamigal stayed at Advocate Kalayanarama Iyer's house on the 27th and with Professor Krishnamurthy Iyer, Nizam College on the 28th. Accepting the kind invitation of Prime Minister Kishan Prasad Bahadur, Swamigal stayed in his palace on the 29th and accepted his bhikshavandanam and pada puja. Swamigal also gifted a Kashmiri shawl for the Prime Minister. During this stay, all the key employees of the Samasthanam were introduced to Swamigal. The government took upon the day's expenses of the mutt as per the wishes of the Nizam. Under the Nizam's rule, only key government officials had the right to own an elephant. The government issued an order excepting Swamigal and the mutt from this law. During Swamigal's camp at Hyderabad, there was a death in the royal family. As part of the mourning, public display of vocal or instrumental music was banned in the city. However, the government again made an exception for nadaswarams played daily at the puja. The citizens of Hyderabad and the government as well as the royalty contributed respectfully for Swamigal's camp in their city. Swamigal stayed from 30th March to 16th April in Supt. Engineer M.Gopala Iyer's house.

Sanatana Sabha at Hyderabad

During the Hyderabad camp, a Sanatana Sabha was held at the residence of Madhav Rao and Swamigal visited his house to attend the Sabha. This was attended by respected scholars such as Nyaya Vedanta Baskara Brahmashri Pulusu Appanna Shastrigal, Ubaya Vedanta Nambakkamm Ragavachariar, who was the asthana vidwan of Vanaparathi, Vemuri Rangamulu and various other scholars. Swamigal commenced the sabha with his speech where he asked every person born as Hindu to take whatever efforts they could to protect our dharma and religion. If everyone practiced their personal dharma, Sanatana Dharma would always be protected. He extolled the virtues of having such sabhas where our religion and dharma are discussed and explained. The scholars and

vidwans should participate in such sabhas and the general public should provide the necessary support so that vidwans could go about doing their work.

Sri Appanna Shastrigal later, while speaking in praise of our Swamigal, said that he was an incarnation of Sri Adi Sankara. He further persuaded the people to take the words of Swamigal to be the words of Sri Adi Sankara himself. Ubaya V.Ragavachariar also spoke in praise of Swamigal's scholarship and genius, described him as the embodiment of Siva himself and felt that the whole world would benefit by Sri Swamigal's yatra. Prominent citizens gathered there at the meeting were accorded honorary membership of the Sabha. The Sabha promised to carry out the necessary tasks to protect Sanatana Dharma as advised by Swamigal. A building to house the Sabha was felt to be necessary and Swamigal gave a donation of a hundred rupees. Swamigal requested Mahadeva Damodara Gadgil to take up the responsibility of establishing an Advaita Sabha in Hyderabad.

Journey from Hyderabad

Having stayed for more than 44 days in Hyderabad, arrangements were made to depart for Swamigal's Ganga yatra on 22-4-1934. As the upcoming part of the journey was considered to be difficult, Swamigal decided to leave a part of his entourage there and proceed onwards. The people of Hyderabad who were fortunate to have associated with our Swamigal for more than a month, were concerned as to when they would get such an opportunity again. Thousands gathered at the mutt on that day and Swamigal blessed each and every one of them and gave them mantrakshadhai. The entire city including government officials, businessmen, rich and poor, gathered to take leave. Swamigal accepted the invitation of the people of Secunderabad and stayed for a day at the house of Sri Krishan Shetty, grandson of Diwan Bahadur Ramgopal Shetty and conducted puja there. He left Secunderabad the next day.

Journey through Northern Hyderabad

Swamigal left Secunderabad on April 24th, 1934 and traveled through Mechal, Thupran, Narasingi, Bignur, Kamareddypet, Indalvai, Meda and Rajpalli, reaching Sonna on the fifth of May. He had a bath in the holy river of Godavari at Sonna and made donations to Brahmins on the banks of the river. Swamigal left the next day and reached Bendalawada on May 15th, passing through Neermal and Athilabad. It is to be noted that every place Swamigal went, he was received with affection and great honor by the residents who celebrated his arrival to their hometowns with great pomp.

Sankara Jayanthi at Bendalawada

Swamigal stayed at Bendalawada, situated in the Madhya Pradesh from the 15th to the 22nd of May. He celebrated Sankara Jayanthi in that city. Vidwans participated and recited the Veda parayanam, Upanishad parayanam, Geetha Bhashya parayanam and

Brahma Sutra Bhashya parayanam. Sankara Jayanthi celebrations were conducted over four days. Swamigal spoke about Sri Adi Sankara's journey around the country and his achievements. This Sankara Jayanthi took place on the banks of the river Penganga, a tributary of the river Godavari. Many pundits and scholars from Maharashtra came here to have darshan of Swamigal. The journey then continued via Karanchi, Marsada, Van, Varora and Themutta, reaching Nanduri on the 31st of May.

Visit to Nagpur

Swamigal stayed at a place called Jham on June 1st and then traveled to Kandhini, Ashoka and Thankardham, reaching Nagpur on June 5th. A big reception was arranged in Nagpur by the combined efforts of the local Maharashtra, Andhris and Tamilians. A huge procession around the main streets was arranged and thousands of people participated in the procession that was four hours long. Welcome speeches were given to Swamigal in Hindi, Tamil and Marathi. Swamigal accepted the welcome in all three languages and said in his speech that the public should follow and protect Sanatana Dharma and not doing so would cause misery and unhappiness amongst the people at large. Swamigal stayed in Krishna Iyer's house in Nagpur until the eighteenth of June. The Tamilians of Nagpur made all the arrangements for Swamigal's further journey. All communities gathered together and performed pada puja and bhikshavandanam. Chief Justice Pande and famous pundits Sri Varnekar and Sri Thane Shastri were amongst the dignitaries who came to have darshan of our Swamigal and obtain his blessings. Swamigal honored them with Kashmiri shawls and gifts.

Journey through Vindhya Range

Swamigal left Nagpur on June 19th and journeyed via Kamdi, Manser, Deolbar, Gawasa, Gorai and Moorgaona, reaching the district headquarters at Seoni. Gawasa and Deolbar were situated in the Vindhya mountain ranges. It was very difficult to get any water in these areas and it was a hot 120 degrees during the peak summer period of June. It was very difficult to obtain water, food or the necessities for Swamigal's bath, puja, cattle and the mutt's employees. Tents were set up in the forests during the day time for puja, the journey was continued with Theevattis (fire sticks) during the nights and close to twenty five miles were covered each day. It is commendable that the mutt employees did not complain, but did service to Swamigal with enthusiasm, in spite of all the difficulties faced during the journey through the Vindhya mountains. The police department of Madhya Pradesh government provided security for Swamigal through his journey and attempted to provide all the assistance that they could.

The residents of Seoni made all the arrangements for Swamigal's comfortable stay there. They requested that he stay in their town for at least four days. Swamigal apologetically declined their invitation, as he aimed to spend Vyasa puja and Chaturmasya vratha at Prayag and had to travel three hundred and seventy five miles more to reach there.

Visit to Jabalpur

Swamigal traveled to Mandol, Chapra, Lagnadhoom, Dhooma, Shukri and Bargi from Seoni, reaching Jabalpur on the third of July, 1934. There were a lot of Tamilians working at the big railway factory situated there. Swamigal stayed from June 3rd to June 6th in the Railway colony there. The Tamilians residing locally made all the arrangements for Swamigal's visit. Thousands came to witness the puja and have darshan of Swamigal. He had a holy dip in the river Narmadha at Gowri Ghat on Wednesday, June 4th.

Mehar, Reeva

Swamigal left Jabalpur and went to Banrakar, Koshalpur, Chihora, Seemnabad and reached Kathini on July 10th. From there he traveled to Jukkeri that was situated in the Mehar kingdom. The government officials greeted Swamigal with appropriate honors and made arrangements for his stay and travel through their kingdom. Swamigal reached the border of Reeva on 15th July and stayed here till the 21st. The police and revenue officials of Reeva made all the arrangements when Swamigal passed through their territory.

Visit to Prayag

Swamigal visited the holy center of Prayag alias Allahabad, on July 23rd, 1934. Thousands of people lead by a Reception Committee including: Mahamahopadhyay Ganganath Jha – Dean of the University, High Court Judge Kanyalal, C.Y.Chinthamani – Editor, Leader and Venkatesa Shastri, Deputy Mayor, gathered in the outskirts of the city to welcome Swamigal with purna kumbam, nadaswaram and other mangala instruments. Swamigal was taken on a procession from there to Tharakanch, where arrangements were made for his stay. Thousands of people who witnessed this event shouted “Guru Maharaj ki Jai” with joy.

July 25th, 1934 was marked to dissolve the sand in the place where three of the holy rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswathi meet (Triveni Sangam). This sand had been collected for this purpose from Rameswaram in October 1922 and had been guarded safely along with the puja. On the appointed day, Swamigal started with all his followers to Triveni Sangam. The local residents and priests had gathered there earlier. Swamigal made sankalpam as required, made donations to the priests and other Brahmins, took the silver vessel holding the sand from Sethu and walked towards the Triveni Sangam. In the presence of the Venimadhavar's sanctum, he dissolved the sand from the silver vessel in the Triveni Sangam and donated the vessel to a panda (priest) there. The thousands of people gathered there also took a holy dip in the Ganges along with Swamigal. On the way from the banks of Ganga, Swamigal had darshan of Someswarer at the temple.

The next day, Vyasa puja was conducted at Tharakanch on 26th July. Thousands of people gathered to witness the Vyasa puja including devotees and shishyas from South India. The puja was held grandly as usual and Swamigal took the Chaturmasya sankalpa. As it was lunar eclipse, Swamigal had a bath in the Ganges that night and returned to the

place of stay to perform the special Purnima puja. Swamigal stayed at Allahabad till September 24th.

During the camp at Allahabad, Swamigal arranged for a large vidwath sabha (gathering of Vidwans) on 1st of September. Many north Indian vidwans participated in the sabha and in the debates held. Swamigal honored all the participants accordingly. He had darshan of the ashrams of Bharadwaj and Vasuki on September 18th. On behalf of the citizens of Kashi, an invitation was given to Swamigal requesting him to spend the upcoming Navarathri at Kashi. Swamigal had darshan of Akshaya vada Vruksham on the 22nd of September. Thousands of people came to see the puja on September 24th, the last of Chaturmasya, knowing Swamigal would be leaving them soon. He blessed them all and gave mantrakshadai and prasada.

16. Stay at Kashi – Spiritual Capital of India

There are two rivers called Varana and Asi that come and join the river Ganga. The land between these two spots along the banks of Ganga is Kashi, also known as Varanasi. It is also to be noted that the river Ganga is flowing towards North at Kashi.

Reception by Residents of Kashi

In the last week of September, 1934, Swamigal walked all the way from Prayag to Kashi. On the third of October, he reached the outskirts of Kashi's Panchakrosa border. Three days later, he set foot in the holy land of Kashi. Dignitaries such as Madan Mohan Malaviya, Pundits of Kashi, Sannyasins and the public all gathered to receive Swamigal with all due respect including purna kumbam. Members of different sangams as well as individuals performed pada puja for our Swamigal at the Town Hall. Swamigal had darshan of Sri Viswanathar and Annapoorni the same night. More than a lakh had gathered there to have darshan of Swamigal and the whole city had a festive appearance. Below is the translated article that was published in the Pundit magazine on 8-10-1934.

“Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetadhipathi Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya Swamigal traveled by foot all the way from Prayag and reached Kamatcha near the border of Kashi today (6-10-1934) at 2 pm. Thousands had gathered there since morning looking forward to his arrival. Many were busy with the arrangements for the reception. Their happiness knew no bounds the minute they set their eyes on the holy man glowing with the effects of his penance. There were shouts of ‘Jaya Jaya’ piercing the sky. A huge arch was set up near Kamatcha and it read “A Great God amongst Humans”. A stage was built near the arch. The Maharaja of Benares, ascetics, eminent scholars and prominent citizens were gathered here to receive Swamigal. On behalf of the people of Kashi, the Maharaja welcomed Swamigal. Earlier, he and his Yuvaraja had taken Swamigal to their gardens called Kahlia Saheb and performed Sahasra Pada Puja.

Elephants, camels, horses, bands, and flags were all lined up along the Kamatcha camp. A huge procession started from there at 3:30 pm, went through the key streets and reached the guest house of Rao Saheb Madhavram Santh. All along the way, the city was decorated with flowers, plantain trees and thoranams. Swamigal went inside the temple and had darshan of the Lord. Wherever Acharya went, he was honored with Aarathi, flowers and monetary contributions. All buildings were filled with men and women. In spite of volunteers for crowd control from the Youth group, Varnasrama Suyam Sangh, Charanar group under the leadership of Swamylal Nath, Hindu Youth Association, Kashi Swayam Seva Sang volunteers, and the hardworking police, it was impossible to control the crowd. To begin with, there were more than twenty-five thousand people in the procession. As the procession proceeded, a greater number of people joined it. Sri Yatanji Pande, President of Bharatiya Swayam Seva Sangh and Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya had come to have darshan of Swamigal. Sri Pande walked all the way alongside the procession. In the front of the procession, seated on an elephant, Swamy Shivananda Brahmachari held the flag of Rishabh. The next elephant carried the picture of Jagadguru

Sri Sankaracharyaji. Sri Rao Saheb Madhavramji was trying hard to control the crowd. Swamigal stopped and stood on top of the palanquin to give darshan to all. The procession was a hindrance to thousands of people who were seated on the sides of the roads since morning, waiting to have darshan. That event will go down in the history of Kashi as an important day. Swamigal visited Sangaveda Vidyalaya situated in Ramghat that night. The administrator for the school performed pada puja to Swamigal using flowers and donated five hundred and one rupees”.

Sharath Navarathri Celebrations

On October 7th, Swamigal took a bath in Manikarnika ghat and performed Chandramouliswarar puja inside Sri Viswanathar temple. He had darshan of the idol of Sri Adi Sankara that was kept in the Kanchi Sankara mutt situated near Hanuman Ghat. On the eighth, he accepted pada puja at Saardha mutt and Pancha Ganga mutt. He later went to Kedareswarer temple as well as Bindu Madhava temple to have darshan of the Lord. Navarathri began that year on October, 9th. Swamigal performed Navarathri puja in Madhavram Santh's house itself. Several homams including Rig-Veda Samhitha homam, Sri Vidya homam, Chandi homam, Maharudra homam as well as the recital of all four Vedas, Upanishad parayanam and Durga Saptasathi parayanam took place grandly on the occasion of Navarathri.

On Tuesday, October 16th, Saraswathi puja and Kanya puja were conducted on the day of Mahanavami. As a part of the puja, young girls and married women were given food, dresses and gold. The completion of the homams as well as purnahuti also took place on this day. The Maharaja of Kashi and other dignitaries came on this day to witness the events. Special abhishekam was done for Sri Viswanathar on that day. The next day being Vijayadasami, our Swamigal took a bath (Avabrutha snanam) in the river Ganga and donated gifts to the scholars who had participated in the pujas, homams and parayanams. Thousands of people were blessed by witnessing this wonderful sight.

The Holy Place of Kashi

Kashi is one of the seven mokshapuris in India. There is a firm belief that those who die in Kashi do not have any rebirth at all. The key banks along the river Ganga where people take a holy dip in the city of Kashi are: Manikarnika Ghat, Panchaganga ghat, Asi Ghat, Dasaswamedha Ghat and Varanasangama Ghat. Aside from Sri Viswanathar temple, Annapurna temple, Visalakshi temple and Dhanti temple are well known places.

On October 17th, Swamigal crossed the river Ganga to visit Dakshinamurthy mutt on the other side, had darshan of Sri Dakshinamurthy and accepted the pada puja offered by devotees gathered there. On the 19th, Dharbanga Queen had darshan of Swamigal at Goghat and performed pada puja. North Indian sannyasins got together and performed pada puja and bhikshavandanam on the 27th of October. The next day, sannyasins who were residents there and who hailed from Tamil Nadu offered bhikshavandanam to Swamigal.

On November 16th, Swamigal had a holy dip in the river Asi at Hanuman Ghat. Two days after that, he had a holy dip at Panchaganga situated in Hanuman Ghat and had darshan of the Border Devatha of Kashi and the cave temple. The holy month of Dhanur commenced on December 17th. Swamigal went to Vyasa Kashi to have darshan of Veda Vyasa. He had a bath in Gowri Kumbam on the 27th of December.

Throughout the month of October, Swamigal stayed at Goghat in the house of Sri Rao Saheb Madhavram Santh. Later he moved to the mutt's building in Hanuman Ghat and stayed there until the day he left. Swamigal spent more than five and a half months at Kashi, almost every day of which was marked by some important activity or other.

Visit to Benaras Hindu University

Swamigal accepted the invitation of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and visited the Benaras Hindu University. All the buildings in the university were decorated beautifully on this occasion. Malaviya, high ranking officials, professors and students all gathered excitedly at the gates to receive our Swamigal. Pandit Malaviya made introductions of the dignitaries there to Swamigal and took him to every building in the university, explaining the classes and curriculum that were being held there. Then he led him to a stage where a special throne was placed for Swamigal. Pandit Malaviya presented a welcome address in Sanskrit and read aloud five slokas that he had composed on His Holiness.

*“yadvaachaam lasithaihi triloka janathaa mohaandhakaarakshayaha
padaabja smaranena yasya kalushadh vamsaath praasadaha sthirahal
tasyaadvaita giram guroho bhagavathaha Sri Sankarasyonnathham
Kanchi peetapatham yateeswaramahan sthane twayaadhishtitham|| (1)*

*Tathva gnaana tapaha samaadhi karunodhaarya prasaadaadhibhihi
Punyam bhaaratha varshamethadhanagam praapnothi laabham paraml
Keerthyate amalayaa yateendra! Mahataamaadarshathaam praapthayaa
Santaha santatamullasanthi cha dishaha sarvaahaa samudhbhaasithahal||*

(2)

*Swaamin! Swaagathamasthutte shivapuri shree vishwavidyalaye
Shikshaakendra varetra bhaarata bhuvam vidyaarteenaam sarvatahal
Sreemadvaktra saroruhoditha shubhasheergeehi sudhaadhaarayaa
Saapalyam shrutijanmano bhavatu nah shaantyai shravantayaa bhuvahal||*

(3)

*Ghore kalau prathidhisham bhuvi satya dharmo
hantaapakarsha madhunaa nitaraamupaithil
Tasyonnathihi punarihaakilamangalaartha
bhooyaadhyathaa, karunayopadishethi yaache|| (4)*

*Praanchya prateechyashubhamaavasamanyavena
bhogaapavargadha sukshina dhaanasheelahal*

*Eshokhilabhyu dhayakrudhyathivarya! Vishwa
vidyaalayastava shubhaagamanena dhanyahall (5)*

*Maaga shukla saphami sam
madanamohanahal”*

-iti nivedayathi – malaviyo

The meaning for the above five verses offered by Malaviya is thus: “The great soul whose lotus feet when a human meditates on, all ignorance vanishes, the great soul, whose golden words echo around the world, the great one who mirrors all the Shastras and their hidden meaning, such a great soul are thou, who adorns Sri Adi Sankara’s Kanchi Peetam!

It is Bharat’s great fortune that your knowledge, religious austerity, penance, compassion, and blessings have spread all around the country and purified the people.

We offer our welcome on our behalf and on behalf of the students who joined this university from different parts of Bharat to learn all kinds of arts and sciences.

In this age of Kali where dharma is declining, we are awaiting the golden words from thy mouth that will benefit the people and the whole world and these words will be immortalized.

This university provides education to benefit in this world as well as spiritually using the best methods offered in east and west. We hope that this university, our country and our people will benefit from your visit and your sermons today.”

Swamigal made rather a long reply to the address presented by Malaviyaji almost in the form of a sermon.

“It is widely accepted knowledge that the more peace that dwells in our hearts, the more happiness there is in life. To achieve the height of peace is the ultimate human experience. When peace decreases, misery and unhappiness increases in human life. When men try to get rid of their unhappiness, they end up hurting others and causing unhappiness for them. If this continues, there is chaos in the society and the government officials use law to control this chaos. The less peace there is in the world, the more laws and regulations there are in the country. When people turn away from external material things and turn to internal peace, their sorrows will go away. A good education will help achieve this peace. You have the opportunity to obtain an excellent education at the Hindu University in the holy city of Kashi, and you can expect to obtain the highest state of peace. It is the duty of the elders gathered here to teach and install peace amongst students. The expenditure of the government, police department and the army will be reduced if there is peace and calm in the nation.

The goal of our ancient educational system was always to attain mental peace. If the new scientific knowledge and education grows and benefits the spiritual growth also, the country and its people can attain peace in the highest form. On the other hand, if the senses are let to wander, it will create unnecessary thoughts and desires and lead to worldly misery and sorrow.

People can attain immortality by acquiring education. Hence, the benefit of education exceeds the benefit of any other worldly objects. Education reaps and returns material profits. These material returns can be used towards dharmic activities and those will lead to knowledge of Brahman. Adi Acharya has said that a person can

attain Atma gnana by following his dharma correctly, doing penance and worshipping God.

The quest for knowledge of Atman is called 'Paravidya' and others are called 'Aparavidya'. Paravidya removes the ignorance and helps attain knowledge of the Atman. This University at Kashi has, in its name, the name of our Dharma 'Hindu' associated. It is with the blessings of the Almighty that this university is well known and shining all around the world. Every person gathered here will automatically realize the greatness and will power of Pundit Malaviya. Apart from western scientific subjects, Dharma Shastra, Tatwa gnana, Law, Sculpture, Philosophy and Smruti are also taught at this university. It is my understanding that the Astronomy taught here is from a part of the Vedas. The benefits of Dharma are not visible to the naked eye and can be obtained from learning the Vedas and Smruti. As said by Acharya, knowledge can be obtained from the Vedas or by instinct or through experience. The subjects that are comprehensible to human eyes and brains such as astronomy, politics, and economics are also being taught here. I'm glad to know that the western approach to education is also being used to teach these subjects and will contribute to the advancement of this university. One has to be careful in combining our religious teaching methods with the western teaching methods. All things that would give pleasure easily to our senses should be removed from the teaching curriculum. If we start adopting the clothing, food, habits and speech habits of westerners, we risk losing our culture completely and also cause harm to our holy land, Bharat. If we find that there is no use in learning the modern sciences from the foreigners, we have to stop and re-think about learning them in schools. There is a trend in our country where children do not have good habits of moral behaviour and praying to God. People are attracted to western culture and inclined to follow western habits. It is evident that this is a hindrance for people to attain happiness both in this world and beyond.

It is my wish, that having come in a pious tradition, we should teach our children our culture, morality, dharma, truth, etc from an early age. I would like to remind everyone that when this University was originally founded, people were aware of Pundit Malaviya's dharmic life and moral caliber and expected his high principles to be taught here.

It is not acceptable the way our historical methods of learning are being referred to as 'Oriental Learning'. Our country that is in the southern part of the world is being called South Eastern country and our Shastric methods are being called Oriental ways. It is amazing that our own countrymen are mesmerized by westerners and call our Shastras – Oriental studies. Do they refer to their arts and sciences in their universities specifically as Western Studies? I am not worried about naming conventions. I am more worried that these misconceptions should not enter this traditional Hindu University. Pundit Malaviya has crossed innumerable obstacles to commence this university with the object of creating this place as the pulse of our Hindu culture and studies. My blessings to this University that it should thrive independently and conform to Manuneethi Dharma. The gist of my sermon is that everyone in this university should not divert from a spiritual frame of mind, should work together, alleviate poverty in this country and benefit the whole world.

There are many leaders in this country for political advancement of all. There is a difference of opinion between the general public and the political leaders

where religious views are concerned. They consider our religious practices a hindrance for political development. Political leaders should have good character and also belief in our faith. The scholars who graduate from this University should become like Rajarishis and serve our country.

About sixty years ago, the house of a Vedic scholar also had the appearance of a university. In those days, the students did not pay teachers and the teachers did not receive money for teaching. Unlike today, all the students did not gather in one place for studies. Students would live closer to their teachers' house. They would go and beg for their daily food from the neighbors. The kings and landlords felt it was their duty to take care of the teachers and provided for them. The teachers also felt it was their duty to impart knowledge to the students. As there was no practice of involving money in education, the teachers stayed in their villages. Every village had a teacher and the students benefited from their presence. The teachers also had the opportunity to keep an eye on the students and build their character as well as their knowledge base.

The teachers showered love and taught the students selflessly. The students reciprocated this by showing guru bhakthi, good character, patience, humility etc. aside from effective learning. As the teachers were independent and were not bound, they taught the facts as per the Shastras without having to obtain approval from anyone. In those days, people had faith in God and lived their life auspiciously and happily. Such teachers and scholars are hidden today and have to be searched for. Everybody knows the reason for this. People with money have spent it seeking western education for economic reasons and their religious faith is dwindling. It is important that the pundits and teachers at this university are independent. The students should go to villages, beg for food and lead their lives with good qualities such as humility, character and truth.

I have an idea now. This university should support teachers the way the Lords supported vidwans in those days. A Chowdhury, who is well versed in one sakha of the Vedas, at least one Darshan of the darshans and the Smruti, and his family should be taken care of throughout his life, without any monetary worries, by the prominent members of our society. Dharma, righteousness and happiness will prevail in our country just like olden times.

I would like to say a few words to the students assembled here. You have been born as human beings; after all it is a rare thing. It will not be easy to elaborate on your good fortune or your virtues. Knowledge and discernment are virtues capable of rendering life fruitful. You must strive hard for utilizing these two factors for the benefit and welfare of the country. In the olden times, the pundits did not have monetary problems, as the people acted in accordance with the dharma and protected them. In these days, different ideas crop up in the minds of the people. Our Sanatana Dharma is in a state of distress because of political changes speeding like surging floods in a river. Society too, is witnessing gradual changes. Under these circumstances, those who, after studying in this University, leaving its portals as scholars, should enter the field of politics, march onward with courage, and work for the good for our country, without detriment to our ancient Dharma. It is my desire that your learning should be intended for the welfare of the people and for simplifying the administration.

Of all virtuous qualities, righteous conduct is the topmost. This place is greatly fit for the practice of Achara(good conduct) and for upholding our Dharma. Your parents, living in different parts of our Bharatadesa have sent you here with high hopes.

Every student, thus sent here, should sit in this vast mantap, situated on the bank of the holy Ganga, and perform his worship of God according to the customs prescribed for him. Thereby you must learn not to deviate from the path of Dharma and righteousness. By these virtuous acts you will attain all kinds of benefits and fame”.

Later, Pundit Malaviya, in his short concluding remarks observed, “Revered Swamiji! I am overwhelmed with joy by your words of advice to the staff and students of this University. We people of Kashi have now been fortunate in having darshan of Sankara incarnate. It is a rare good fortune that the administrators, teachers and students of this University have had darshan of your Holiness. We avow that we will earnestly act upon your advice”. He offered his namaskar on behalf of everyone to Swamiji. All were blessed and very happy to have obtained the blessings and darshan of Swamigal.

Blessings to Haridwar Pundits

On February 11th, 1935, two groups of pundits from Haridwar and another group from Swargashramam came to Kashi to have darshan of Swamigal who was staying at the mutt in Hanuman Ghat. They were very learned in the Shastras and Swamigal held discussions with them. The pundits were amazed at our Swamigal’s scholarship and exclaimed that they have never met such a great soul before. They invited Swamigal to visit Haridwar. His Holiness honored them with Kashmiri shawls.

Visit to Sang Veda Vidyalaya

Thousands of people were gathered at Sang Veda Vidyalaya, situated in Ramghat, on 16th February, 1935 when Swamigal visited the place. The king of Kashi, along with the crown prince, visited the place. The administrators and teachers of the vidyalaya composed ten verses on Swamigal and offered them to him. Swamigal quizzed the teachers and blessed them. He expressed his happiness at the fact that the school was working towards the cause of Sanatana Dharma. He emphasized the importance of Brahmins learning the Vedas. The King of Kashi offered at the lotus feet of Swamigal, a poem written in Sanskrit in a conversational tone. Swamigal made a speech on Veda Vyasa and Sri Adi Sankara. He had requested for Sri Adi Sankara’s picture to be brought from the Sankara mutt at Hanuman ghat. Similarly, the King had brought a picture of Sri Padarayana from his palace. Swamigal installed both the pictures at the Vidyalaya. The King also hung a picture of our Swamigal next to the two pictures and everyone worshipped all three of them.

Meeting at Town Hall

A few days prior to Swamigal’s departure from Kashi, a farewell meeting was arranged at the Town Hall on the 9th of March, 1935. An invitation was sent to people all around the city, signed by more than seventy five pundits and dignitaries. Thousands of

people had gathered at the hall long before Swamigal was scheduled to arrive. The police and other volunteers of the Seva samithi worked hard to maintain order. As advertised, Swamigal arrived exactly at 4 pm to the loud shouts of “Jagadguru Maharaj Ki Jai”. Tributes to Swamigal were read in Sanskrit and Hindi. Mahamahopadhyay Giridhar Sharma from Jaipur, Panchanana Tharkaratnam Bhattacharya who had given up his Mahamahopadhyay title and Devanayakacharyar spoke in the meeting. They extolled the virtues of our Swamigal’s visit to that city, and the benefit reaped by the citizens from the visit. Swamigal, in his speech in Hindi, expressed his happiness at the number of people gathered there and how it showed proof of Acharya bhakthi amongst the public. He explained that he had undertaken this yatra in the footsteps of Adi Sankara and hoped that Sri Viswanatha and Sri Visalakshi – Annapoorni would shower their blessings on this world, by enabling everyone to live in peace, harmony and freedom within the boundaries of our Dharma. A long procession started there, went via Chowk and ended at Viswanatha temple. Swamigal walked in the procession- the public, pundits and sannyasins all walked with him. Swamigal inaugurated a huge picture of Sri Adi Sankara and installed it in the temple. The temple officials believed that this was an indication that soon an idol of Sri Adi Sankara would be installed there and it would indeed be appropriate.

Mahasabha of Pundits at Kashi

A huge conference consisting of all the pundits from Kashi, was organized on 9-3-1935 at the Central Hall. All the renowned scholars, as well as Dhandi sannyasins arrived for the mahasabha. Some of the prominent scholars included: Sarvashree Panchanana Tarkaratna Bhattacharya, Harihara Krupalu Giridhara Sharma, Trilinga Lakshmana Shastri, Brahmada Tarkabhushana Dhurga Saran, Sankya Vedantateertha Mukud Jha Bhaksh, Punditaraja Chandi Prasad Shukla, Balakrishna Mishra, Ramayashas Tripathi, Vamasaran Bhattacharya, and Pattapalli Jeevanyaya Theerth. The Dhandi swamys participating in the sabha included: Swamy Karabathraji of Kashi Saradha Saka mutt, Swamy Nijabothashrami, Swamy Bowmashrami and Swamy Vasudevashrami.

The sannyasins and the pundits got together and wrote a resolution in Sanskrit Granth proclaiming that Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam was one of the important Peetams of Sri Sankaracharya and this resolution was signed by all. Earlier, one hundred and thirty prominent members of Bengal Brahmins Mahasabha from Calcutta had got together and signed a declaration that Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam was installed by Sri Adi Sankara and he was the first Acharya of this Peetam. They offered this declaration before our Swamigal. Some of the pundits who were signatories to this declaration were: Sri Panchanana Tarkaratna Mahamahopadhyay Kamakshyanath Tharka Vaseegar, president of Calcutta Brahmins Association, Mahamahopadhyay Sri Durgasaran Sangya Vedantha Theerth, Mahamahopadhyay Sri Yogeendranath Deva Sharma, Mahamahopadhyay Sri Shithikanda Vachaspathi Sharma, Mahamahopadhyay Pundit Sri Sitaram Shastri, Mahamahopadhyay Sri Ananthakrishna Shastri, Mahamahopadhyay Sri Kunjavihari Tharka Siddhantha Vakeesa, Mahamahopadhyay Sri Haridas Siddhantha

Vakeesa, Mahamahopadhyay Sri Sakal Narayana Sharma and Mahamahopadhyay Sri Devanayakacharya

On behalf of the pundits, Sri Durgasaran Sangya Vedantha Theerth and Sri Damodaradas Kanna brought the declaration to Kashi on 1-3-1935 and offered it to Swamigal at the town hall meeting. They both extended the invitation from the people of Bengal to Swamigal and insisted he visit there and bless the residents of Bengal. Swamigal promised to fulfill their wishes soon in his usual compassionate manner.

Departure from Kashi

Pada puja and bhikshavandanam were offered on behalf of Brahmana Sabha, Kashi and Varnashrama Swarajya Sabha to Swamigal on 11th March, 1930. On March 18th, the Tamil speaking residents of Kashi, under the leadership of History Professor K.V.Rangaswamy of the Hindu University, offered their bhiksha and pada puja and paid tributes to Swamigal. On the 20th of March, Swamigal left Kashi via Raj Ghat to pursue his journey to Gaya. Mahamahopadhyay Chinnaswamy Shastrigal, Pundit Raja Rajeswara Shastrial and other prominent scholars joined Swamigal in this journey.

17. Kashi to Rameswaram

Visit to Kastar Mahadev

En route to Gaya from Kashi, Swamigal stopped at the pilgrim center, Kastar Mahadev on the 2nd of April, 1935. The Siva worshipped in the temple is also called Kastar Mahadev. There are lots of sannyasins, especially over a hundred years of age, living in this place. Amongst them is the famous Dhandi Baba who is said to have received blessings in his early age from the Acharya of Sri Kamakoti Peetam. He had built an ashram and a temple at this pilgrim center. He welcomed our Swamigal to his ashram and honored him appropriately. The pundits residing in the ashram read a welcome speech for Swamigal. Acharya visited the temple and had darshan of Mahadev. The sannyasins of the town, under the leadership of Karapathraji, gave a grand reception to Swamigal and read a welcome speech in Sanskrit. The speech paid tribute to Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam and mentioned Swamigal's Kashi yatra and its objectives.

On the 4th of April, Swamigal stayed at Surajpura where the king welcomed Swamigal to his palace and performed pada puja. At Dhandi Baba's request, Swamigal visited Kastar Mahadev again on the 6th. He left there for Ara via Kasipuri and Baksar and reached Ara on the 19th of April. The city is two hundred and fifty miles away from Kashi. A big reception was arranged there to honor Swamigal. Mahamahopadhyay Pundit Sakal Narayana Sharma and other pundits came here to have darshan of Swamigal. He spoke in fluent Hindi with all the pundits gathered there. In that evening's speech, Swamigal praised the guru bhakthi amongst the people gathered there.

Koilgarh

Swamigal visited the holy place of Koilgarh in the banks of the river Sonabadra or Sone, on Sunday, the 21st of April, 1935. This river joins Ganga around fifteen miles west of Patna. Swamigal had a holy dip in the river and performed puja in that town. The name Sonabadra was given to the river as stones in the form of Ganesha, called Sonabadra, are said to be found in the river bed. Swamigal, himself dove into the river and brought back some of these stones.

Visit to Patna

Swamigal left Koilgarh and traveled through Thanapur to reach the historical city of Pataliputra also commonly known as Patna on Wednesday, April 24th, 1935 in the evening. At the outskirts of the city, a large gathering of devotees headed by Maharajas of Amaon and Atwa offered a ceremonial welcome to our Swamigal. A throne was

placed on a high stage, where Swamigal was seated and could be seen by thousands gathered there. Welcome speeches were presented on behalf of various organizations of the city in Hindi and Sanskrit. A huge procession started from the outskirts of the city with the King's troops marching in the front of the procession. Swamigal was seated in the palanquin and blessed the crowds gathered on both sides of the road. The Maharajas and other dignitaries performed pada puja when the procession ended at Swamigal's camp. On 26th of April, Swamigal visited a mahasabha of pundits where the hundreds of pundits chanted the first part of Magadam and Videham together. The members of Patna Vihara Pundit Samaj read a welcome speech in Sanskrit. The Queen of Adwa visited Swamigal on the 26th and 27th and performed puja and biksha for Swamigal. On May 3rd, Swamigal graciously accepted an invitation and visited Patna Hari Sabha. The members of the sabha also performed pada puja that day.

The following is an excerpt from the article that was published in the issue of 'Search Light' dated April 28th, 1935:

“Bihar accords a cordial and respectful welcome to Jagadguru Swamy Sankaracharya of Kamakoti Peetam. Heir to a great and honored tradition, Swamiji Maharaj is an object of veneration to Hindus all over India and his presence in our midst is a rare privilege. Religious leadership is on the wane in these modern days but there is something truly majestic and inspiring in some of these traditions of old that had their roots in the spiritual needs and requirements of the people. The many Peetams established in India served a definite purpose and were parts of the closely knit religious organization of the times. We have no doubt that Swamiji's message will leave an abiding impression on all who receive it, for what he has to say is the result of study and tapas.”

Sankara Jayanthi at Patna

Swamigal celebrated Sankara Jayanthi that year in the palace of the Maharaja of Adwa. A meeting of all pundits was organized on this occasion. A big procession was arranged to get to the Bhageerathi building on the banks of the river Ganga. The procession started from the mutt with Adi Sankara's picture and padukas on top of the mutt's elephant, followed by vedic chanting, nadaswaram music, devotees and with Swamigal himself walking behind the elephant. When the padukas reached the banks of Ganga, Swamigal performed abhishekam to the padukas. Then the procession reached the palace and pujas were performed to the padukas and to Acharya's picture. Swamigal made a speech on Acharya in Hindi and awarded the scholars gathered there for the occasion. The next day's bhikshavandanam was performed by members of the Patna Pundit Sabha. Former High Court Judge Chatterji, Chief Justices, Judges and Chief Engineers. Babu Rajendra Prasad and his family were amongst those came to have darshan of Swamigal at Patna. Arrangements for Swamigal's stay at Patna were coordinated by Rao Saheb R.Mahalinga Iyer, who hailed from Thiruvaidaimaruthur and worked for the government at Patna.

Swamigal left Patna on the 11th of May, 1935 and went to the holy place of Harihar situated on the northern banks of Ganga. He had a bath in the river Kandaki at Harihar. The next day, he left for Punpun where he also had a bath in the river Punpuna. Later, he made a stop at Tehta where Narasimha Jayanthi was celebrated. The community

of Kaanyakubja Brahmins, a sect of the Pancha Gowdas, welcomed Swamigal here and performed pada puja and bhikshavandanam. They took Swamigal in a procession, seated in a flower chariot (Pushpa Viman) prepared by Sri Madhava Mishra and his friends. To the villagers who had never seen an Acharya who is also a Peetathipathi, this was indeed a sight to witness. Swamigal proceeded on his yatra to Gaya from there.

Gaya

Swamigal visited the holy place of Gaya on 20th May, 1935. He was received in the outskirts by Tihari Maharaja, Mahants and priests as well as the general public and taken to Tihari Maharaja's palace. Swamigal had a holy bath in the river Palguni, had darshan of Vishnu's feet and worshipped them by touching them with his Dhandam. He stayed at Tihari Maharaja's place on that day as well as on the next day. The main Mahant of the place made all the arrangements for Swamigal's stay and puja, as well as for the people accompanying Swamigal. On the 22nd of May, 1935, Swamigal visited the grand mansion 'Anandanhavanm' of Kasinath Sinha in Gaya. The members of the Gaya Sanathana Darbha read a welcome speech there. The same day, Maharaja Sri Chandreswara Prasad had darshan of Swamigal and performed pada puja.

Buddha Gaya

Swamigal visited Buddha Gaya on Saturday, the 25th of May, 1935. The main mahant of the Buddhagaya temple welcomed Swamigal in the outskirts and took him through the town in a procession. Swamigal visited the key sites viz. the Bhodhi tree, the Buddha Idol and also had darshan of the Sivalingam installed by Sri Adi Sankara. The next day, Swamigal crossed the Palguni River, reached Dharmaranyam and had bath at the Mathanga Theertham. Later, Swamigal visited the Mathangeswar temple and touched the holy well – Dharmakoobam and the holy pillar- Dharmayoobam with his staff. Swamigal returned from Buddha Gaya to Gaya on the 27th of May, in time to have darshan of Akshaya vada (tree) next day. He offered his prayers there by touching with his dhandam, the Munda Prishtam – the idol with only a back.

Yatra through the Bihar State

Swamigal reached the village of Putoli on June 5th, where he was welcomed by the local Mahants and he stayed here for three days. The next halt was at the Toda mutt, where special arrangements were made by the Mahants for Swamigal's camp. He traveled via Navada and Sikandira, reaching the city of Jamooyi on the 11th of June. A reception committee under the leadership of Sri Sivasohna, including the prominent members of the community was formed and they welcomed our Swamigal with appropriate protocol and welcome. Swamigal reached Kidore city also known as Krudrakootam on the fourteenth. The King of Kidore offered a royal welcome to our

Swamigal, invited His Holiness to the palace and offered pada puja. The royal pundits read a welcome speech at the ceremony.

Visit to Vaidyanatha Kshetra

Devgar – meaning the house of God, is a holy pilgrim center in Bihar. Our Swamigal visited here on Friday, the 21st of June, 1935. He went straight to the Sanskrit Vidyalaya where the pundits, pandas and devasthanas officials gave him an official reception. He later went to the holy water of this center and had bath at Sivaganga. Swamigal went to Sri Vaidyanathar temple where the temple officials and priests gave him a ceremonial welcome and took him inside the temple to have darshan of the Lord. Swamigal meditated for a long time in front of the Sivalingam in the temple. He also had darshan of Sri Girijadevi. He offered vastrams and shawls to all the deities in the temple and participated in special worships on this occasion. In the evening, Swamigal honored the pandas and pundits with shawls. The next morning, Swamigal visited Swargashramam which was established in this city by Balananda Brahmachari. He welcomed our Swamigal with honor and offered pada puja. He also offered a Gowrishankara Rudraksha mala to our Swamigal. The general public was amazed to see him worship our Swamigal as a manifestation of God.

Swamigal had decided to conduct Vyasa puja at Calcutta which was two hundred and fifty miles to the southwest and there were only twenty three days left to it. Arrangements were made to travel fifteen miles everyday without stopping. Due to the limitations of the travel schedule, Swamigal could not stay a whole day in any place. Everyday, puja was conducted during the day and travel resumed after the sun started coming down. Some of the places that he passed through during this time included: Dumka, Kuri, Khadwa and Parthwan.

Reception at Calcutta

Swamigal arrived at Howrah on the south banks of the river Hooghly on Saturday, the 15th of July, 1935. Thousands of people, including key citizens of the city had gathered there to welcome our Swamigal. It is to be noted that the various groups including Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Hindusthani, Marwadi, Andhra, Dravida, Kerala and Kannada people worked together in unison in the reception committee. A member of the city council, Vasanthkumar had decorated a palanquin with the help of a few friends. Swamigal was taken on a procession in this palanquin, around the main streets of the city. Thousands of people gathered on both sides of the streets in this important city of Calcutta to witness the procession and have a glimpse of our Swamigal. The police force was gathered there to follow our Swamigal, control the crowds and ensure that everyone had a chance to have darshan. Swamigal spent the day at Howrah, crossed the river Ganga at night and arrived at the headquarters of Varnashrama Swarajya Sangh. Thousands had gathered there too, to see the reception accorded to our Swamigal by the members of the Sangh. Welcome speeches were read at this reception. Members of Swadesh Samasthan royalty, senior government officials and members of the press were

also seen at the reception. Swamigal arrived that night at the Nattukottai Nagarathar Inn situated on the banks of Adi Ganga, at Kali Ghat.

Vyasa Puja at Calcutta

Vyasa Puja was conducted at the Nattukottai Nagarathar Inn, near Kali Ghat on Tuesday, the 16th of July, 1935 (Ashada Shukla Purnima in the cyclic year of Yuva). Early that morning, Swamigal had vabhanam and took a bath in the Ganges. Prasadams from the important temples in Tamil Nadu, Kasi, Gaya and other north Indian temples as well as offerings from royalties through their royal messengers were presented on this occasion. Later, Swamigal performed puja for a long time to the Krishna Idol, Vyasa Rishi, Adi Sankara and other gurus invoked in the lemons as per tradition. After the completion of the puja, discussion on the Brahma Sutra was conducted with the pundits. The scholars and pundits were honored the next day. Swamigal continued his Chaturmasya vrath at Calcutta and stayed there for two months and then forty more days.

Visit to Associations in Calcutta

Swamigal visited Devi Manthram, residence of the special devotee Damodara Das Khanna on Saturday, the 19th of July, 1935. Mahamahopadhyay Sitarama Shastrigal read the welcome speech for our Swamigal there. On the 2nd of August, pada puja was performed to our Swamigal by Calcutta Devalaya Protection Sangh, Marwadi Mahajana Sabha and Vishudananda Vidyalaya at their respective places. A welcome speech was given at the Vidyalaya by Mahamahopadhyay Durga Charan and hundreds of pundits gathered there to witness and participate in the event. The pundits presented a Valampuri conch for use in Swamigal's puja. On the 7th of August, Swamigal graciously visited Ratan Sarkar Murarilal Mehta Samaj at the request of the devotees. Thousands of devotees had gathered at the Samaj building. Representatives of the Samaj including Giridarilal had gathered to welcome Swamigal and a welcome speech was given in Bengali. Swamigal, in his speech in Sanskrit, advised all those who are born as Hindus to practice their religion and teach their children the good ways. On Friday, the 23rd of August, famous pundits from Videha Pradesh, Sourashtram and Somnath came to have darshan of Swamigal. They submitted a written request inviting Swamigal to visit their lands. Swamigal in turn honored them with Kashmiri shawls.

Reception at Kali Temple

The trustees and Dharmakarthis of the famous Kali temple, Calcutta, offered a welcome to our Swamigal on the 1st of September, 1935. Welcome speeches were read in praise of Swamigal in English, Sanskrit and Bengali languages. On behalf of temple trustees, 'Dharshanasagar' Sri Gurupada Sharma Halidar welcomed him with a flowery speech. It described the way Sri Adi Sankara traveled throughout India and in the end, adorned the Sarvagna Peetam at Kanchipuram and established a mutt for himself at Kanchipuram. Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam is famous and well known throughout the land of Bharat. The current Acharya who adorns this Peetam, Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Swamigal is traveling throughout India like Adi Sankara in order to fight

atheism and establish faith and piety. Prayers were made to Parameswara and Kali that Swamigal would complete his travels successfully and return safely to Kanchipuram. In reply to their speech, Swamigal accepted their welcome and praises on behalf of Sri Adi Sankara and offered them at his lotus feet.

Services by Citizens of Calcutta

The Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court, Manmathanath Mukherji offered bhikshavandanam and pada puja to Swamigal on the 4th of September, 1935. On the 12th of September, Chaturmasya vratha concluded and Swamigal crossed the Bhageerathi and visited the village of Agar. He stayed in the house of Sivaramakrishna in the village. The kings of Parthwan and Nadore offered bhikshavandanam and pada puja there. On Saturday, the 14th of September, Swamigal stayed in the house of Mahamahopadhyay N.S.Ananthakrisna Shastrigal and accepted bhikshavandanam offered by the host. Swamigal was offered welcome speeches there in Sanskrit by Dwarakanath Mittar – Justice at High Court as well as the Head of Calcutta Government Sanskrit College and other learned pundits.

On the 18th of September, Swamigal visited the village of Pattaballi on the banks of the river Bhageerathi where many scholars were residing. A reception was given on a stage situated in a courtyard that was in the center of five Siva temples. After accepting their welcome speech, Swamigal advised the scholars on the efforts they should take to propagate Vedic mantras. Swamigal visited the goshala at Kanchanpalli situated in Navadweep on the 19th of September and a go puja was performed there. Swamigal accepted the invitation of Bengali Brahmin Sabha and visited their office on the 23rd of September. Along with Bengali Brahmins, Hindusthani, Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu and Tamil Brahmins were also gathered there. The President of this Sabha was Panchanana Tarka Ratna Bhattachariar who was renowned all over the country. He was a great scholar and was known to have been the first to give up his Mahamahopadhyay title in protest against the Saradha Act enforced by the government. A translation of the welcome speech rendered by him in Sanskrit is as follows:

“Welcome to His Holiness who adorns Sri Kamakoti Peetam in the illustrious lineage of Sri Adi Sankara and who is the embodiment of Siva in the human form and a leader of all Sadhus. To the people of Calcutta who are ignorant of what their dharma is and who are struggling in the ocean of sorrows, your kind words guide them in the right path and encourage them to follow our dharma. Your visit to Calcutta is indeed our good fortune. You have come here as Siva himself in human form. I prostrate at your lotus feet and would like to say a few words.

The city of Calcutta is newly formed city in the Gowda lands. There are no historical references to this city. On researching the ancient book of Bruhathsamhith written by Varahamithrar, this area is described as being flat lands about two thousand five hundred years ago. Earlier, these were little colonies and did not have any facilities. Later, they were grouped together as a city by the Britishers. This city has never been purified by the visit of a holy man

like you. It is our good fortune that your Holiness, the 68th Acharya of Adi Sankara's Kamakoti Peetam purified this city by your visit. Your Holiness, a direct descendant of Sri Adi Sankara, has opted to travel to Kashi and perform Sri Chakra prathishta the traditional way, traveling in a palanquin, even though modern forms of quick transportation are available.

It is our great fortune that we got the opportunity to have darshan of your lotus feet. The Bhagawatham says that one attains benefits of visiting theerthams and kshetrams only after a long time. However, instant gratification is obtained by having darshan of holy men like you.

During the times of Sri Adi Sankara, detriment to our dharma was caused by Buddhists and Jains. Similarly, our religion is facing interference now. Your Holiness is taking steps like Adi Guru to remove the hindrances caused to the practice of our dharma.

We don't know how we can praise a man like Your Holiness. My words are lost, my throat is stuck, my whole body is shivering with happiness and my eyes are filled with tears of joy. On this auspicious day, our welcome to Your Holiness who is traveling through the country to re-establish our dharma, with shouts of Jaya Jaya Sankara."

Sri Bhattacharya performed pada puja on behalf of all gathered there. Swamigal blessed the pundits and scholars and gave his upadesams. Saradha Navarathri commenced on the 28th of September in the year 1935 and Swamigal performed the Navarathri puja at the residence of Accountant General M.Subramaniam. Thousands of people thronged to witness the Navarathri puja on all nine days. The expenses for the nine days of puja were borne by the Bengali, Gujarati, Marwadi and South Indian citizens of the city. On the 6th of October, the day of Saraswathi Puja saw the conclusion of Chandi homam and other homams. Swamigal continued his yatra on the 7th of October on the day of Vijayadasami. During the one hundred days of stay at Calcutta, prominent Bengali citizens as well as people from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra, Kerala and Tamil Nadu who had settled in Calcutta participated in making the arrangements for Swamigal's stay in Calcutta.

Departure from Calcutta

Sri Acharya left Calcutta in the third week of October in the year 1935. In order to cross via road, the rivers Damodar and Roopnarayan that join Hooghly, a long detour has to be taken. Hence, arrangements were made for a small yacht to cross the rivers. Hundreds of devotees had gathered at the harbor in Andersonghat to take leave of His Holiness. Swamigal spoke a few words to each person there and blessed them with mantraakshadhai and prasad. Sri Jeevanyaya Theertha, of Calcutta Sanskrit College joined Swamigal's yatra there. Kasinath Singh from Gaya had darshan of Swamigal in the yacht. Swamigal descended from the yacht on the 20th of October at Golaghat, where he stayed for three days. The next camp was at Panchkoora. From there, Swamigal visited the ancient harbor town of Tamiralipti, one of the 64 Sakthi Peetams. Deepawali in the year 1935 was

celebrated on the 25th and the 26th of October at Swamigal's camp at Janardhanpur.

Reception at Mitnapur

Swamigal visited the town of Mitnapur, situated about sixty miles southwest of Calcutta on the 27th of October, 1935. Terrorist organizations were on the rise in this town. On hearing about the impending visit of Swamigal to Janardhanpur, the citizens quickly formed a reception committee within a few hours to make plans to invite Swamigal to visit their town. The government had issued a curfew that no public meetings or processions could be held after nine p.m. and this had been in force for many years. The people there were living a restricted life without freedom.

The members of the reception committee went to Janardhanpur and invited Swamigal to visit their town. In spite of the government restrictions, Swamigal accepted their invitation to bless the citizens of Mitnapur. On the day of Swamigal's entry to Mitnapur the government relaxed the curfew to the pleasure of its citizens. The people of Mitnapur considered it to be a day of independence. Their excitement in welcoming Swamigal knew no bounds. They had decorated the city beautifully with arches adorning the streets. The arrangements were overseen by Zamindar Prafulkumar Mallik and he was joined by local lawyers, doctors and other businessmen. Swamigal arrived at Mitnapur on the morning of the 27th of October, 1935. The people of the city took Swamigal in a procession around the main streets. Thousands of people lined up on the sides of the street to have darshan of Swamigal. Welcome speeches and a reception were given to Swamigal at twelve different places during the procession. Swamigal, in his speeches in Sanskrit and Hindi, blessed the devotees and gave advice about dharma and bhakthi. The procession that commenced at 9 a.m. ended at noon at Swamigal's camping place. Thousands of devotees gathered to witness Chandramouliswarar puja after which Swamigal gave theertha prasadam to the devotees.

Darshan for Prisoners

The news of Swamigal reached the prison at Mitnapur where freedom fighters were imprisoned. Amongst them were college students, graduates, lawyers, doctors and others who had sacrificed their life for the sake of their country. Even though the prison officer was an Englishman, the prisoners submitted a request that they be allowed to have darshan of Swamigal. Respecting their religious faith, the officer, upon certain conditions, let them out the prison and allowed them to visit the camp and have darshan of Swamigal. A police escort was sent with them to ensure that the prisoners did not escape. One of the other conditions was that they return by 6 p.m. Accepting all conditions, a group of prisoners left for the camp with the police escort. By the time they reached there it was 5:30 p.m. and Swamigal had just completed the nithya puja and was resting. The mutt

officials were hesitant to wake Swamigal and advised the visitors that they could have darshan in ten minutes. Afraid that they would break the curfew, the prisoners headed back to the prison disappointed. Swamigal came out in a few minutes and the mutt officials appraised him of the prisoners who came and left without having darshan. Immediately, Swamigal sent someone to bring them back. They came back and prostrated before Swamigal. They prayed for his blessings for the freedom of the country and wished for all people to live in peace and happiness. They returned back to the prison in time, happy that they had the darshan of Swamigal. He was also very pleased at their devotion to their country.

Visit to Kharagpur

On the evening of the 28th of October, Swamigal left Mitnapur to visit nearby Kharagpur. This was a PNR Railway town. People from all over the country were settled here to work in railway factories. North and South Indians all got together and welcomed Swamigal. The plan was to stay in this town for ten days. But within a week of stay, many of the mutt's employees were sick with a poisonous fever and were down. Swamigal was forced to stay for two more weeks at Kharagpur.

Visit to Tatanagar

The residents of Tatanagar had requested Swamigal many times that he visit Tatanagar, where the largest steel mill in India was situated. The officials of Tata Steel factory had made arrangements for Swamigal's travel of approximately one hundred and twenty miles between Kharagpur and Tatanagar. Swamigal left Kharagpur at night on the 24th of November, 1935 and traveled through Manikbarha, Jargram, Barhahadi and Sakoolia, staying at each place for a day. On the 1st of December, the camp was at Narasinghar, on the 2nd at Ghatsila, on the 3rd at Moubandar, famous for copper mines and on the 4th at Kaludhi, home to many Marwadis. Swamigal crossed the Swarnalekha River at the small town of Chandralekha and reached Tatanagar on the 5th of December. Swamigal stayed in Tatanagar until the 27th of January in the year 1935. The pujas for the whole month of Dhanur and Thai Pongal were celebrated at Tatanagar. During Swamigal's continuous fifty four-day stay at Tatanagar, many of the employees of the mutt fell sick due to extreme cold and strenuous travel. They were taken care of and treated well by the main doctor at the factory hospital and they got better eventually. The administrators of the steel plant requested Swamigal to visit the plant. Graciously accepting their invitation, Swamigal visited the plant to witness how the supplier of most of the nation's steel needs was being operated. S. Samabasiva Dikshitar, an administrator at the plant, took Swamigal around the plant and answered all his questions. During the camp at Tatanagar, Swamigal took grahana snanam in the river Swarnalekha on the day of the lunar eclipse.

Visit to Bihar – Orissa

On the 27th of January, 1936, Swamigal left Tatanagar to visit the small independent kingdom of Saraykela. The local king welcomed Swamigal to his palace and performed pada puja. Swamigal stayed here for four days. He then left Saraykela and traveled to Saibasa in the Singhbhoom district of Bihar where he stayed for two days. Next, he stayed for four days at Chakradharpur, twelve miles from Saibasa. From here, Swamigal traveled to the small kingdom of Karswan where the king gave him a grand welcome. Swamigal stayed there for three days until the 8th of February. The king invited Swamigal to his palace and performed pada puja after which Swamigal was taken in a grand procession. Swamigal then came back to Saibasa and stayed there for nine days from the 9th until the 14th and celebrated the Aradhana of his Paramaguru.

Visit to Keonjar Kingdom

The city of Keonjar was the capital of the kingdom of Keonjar, situated about sixty miles south of Saibasa. The geography of this area had forests and mountains. During his travel from Saibasa, Swamigal stayed at Hadgameria, Sambuva and Palaspanga to finish the daily pujas and reached the city of Keonjar on the 23rd of February, 1936. A grand reception was given to Swamigal in the outskirts of Keonjar. Swamigal performed Sivarathri puja as well as his Guru's Aradhana at Keonjar. The king and queen stayed and witnessed the Sivarathri pujas starting at night, done through the next morning. Swamigal visited some of the ancient temples in the land. Amongst them, the temple for Dharanee Devi was very popular. Swamigal offered Peetambaram to all the deities. The king informed Swamigal that the Devi's idol was brought from Kanchipuram to Keonjar by Govind Panchdev. There were Brahmin agraharams called Sasanas. Swamigal sent food for three days to around one hundred Sasana Brahmins residing in Keonjar.

Mayurpanch

Swamigal returned to Saibasa from Keonjar on the 21st of February. He left Saibasa on the 1st of March to travel to the Mayurpanch kingdom. He then traveled through Pagalda, Rairanganpur, Bilai of Tata Iron mines and Pangiriposi, reaching the capital Paripada on the 7th of March. Diwan K.C.Nyogi, judges and high ranking government officials welcomed Swamigal in the outskirts of the city and took him in a procession to the Dharmasala. Swamigal visited the Varaneswarer temple and had darshan of the Mahalingam. There is a well in the stone floor of the temple where the walls are also made of stone. Water always overflows through the holes in the wall. During Swamigal's stay at Paripada from the 7th to the 13th of March, the government officials performed bhikshavandanam and pada puja every day. Leaving Paripada, Swamigal stayed at Gunda on the 14th and 15th, Udla on the 16th, and Kapthipada on the 17th and 18th. This town is referred to as the famous Viradnagar in Mahabharat.

Travel through Nilgiri

Leaving the Mayurpanch territory, Swamigal started his travel through the Nilgiri kingdom and reached the city of Sujangat on the 19th of March. There is a huge temple of Chandi Devi in this town, where Devi is unusually seated on Varaha (pig) instead of the traditional Simha vahana. Swamigal stayed in this holy land for four days until the 22nd of March. Graciously accepting the invitation of the teachers and administrators of the local school, Swamigal visited the school and blessed them with a few words. Yugadhi – celebration of the birth of the lunar New Year, was celebrated in the small town of Kandabara on the 23rd of March. After staying here for two days, he traveled through Chora and Badrak, reaching Pandaripukkar where Vasanth Navarathri was celebrated.

Jajpur and Artistic Temples

On the 4th of April, 1936, Swamigal traveled to Jajpur in the Cuttack district in the state of Orissa. Jajpur is famous for ancient temples known for their artistic sculptures and art. The river Vaitharani flows here towards the north. This is a pilgrimage place visited throughout the year. The puranas say that Gaya is the head of the Gayasura while Jajpuri is the navel. Prayer services to the ancestors are performed at Nabigaya. There are twelve temples and theerthams at Jajpur with tall gopurams filled with Oriyan sculptures and art. There are idols of the Saptha matha in this pilgrim center. It is said that three hundred years ago, there were more than a hundred Somayajis⁴ in this town. The town is named after them as Yajipur or Jajpur. Even today Godhan is performed in the banks of the Vaitharani river.

The residents of this holy city welcomed Swamigal with great enthusiasm and performed pada puja. Swamigal stayed there for five days and visited all the twelve temples. The temple administrators and the pandas gave special welcome to Swamigal in the temples. On the 7th of April, the pundit sabha presented a welcome speech to Swamigal. On the day of Mahapradosham, Swamigal took a holy bath in the river Vaitharani. He also donated a cow to Srividyaabharathi, a renowned panda in the town. He also gifted him silk dhotis and a silver vessel to milk the cow.

Sankara Jayanthi at Cuttack

Swamigal left Jajpur at night on the 8th of April in the year 1936 and stayed at Haripur on the 9th. He crossed the river Brahmani by sand and reached Dharmsala on the 10th where he camped for three days. With great difficulty, he crossed the sand dunes, visited Tangi and stayed there on the 13th and 14th. He crossed a tributary of Mahanadhi as well as the Mahanadhi river and reached Cuttack on the 15th of April. Arrangements for Swamigal's stay were made at Mayurpanch Palace in Cuttack. Swamigal visited the new capital of Orissa, Bhuvaneshwar and had darshan at the local temples. Sankara Jayanthi was celebrated in front of the residence of L.Venkatakrishna Iyer who was employed as Special Engineer in the Orissa government Public Works Department. A large conference of vidwans was held where many scholars participated and spoke about

⁴ Somayajis are those who perform Soma Yagam. As per grammer, 'Ya' is changed to 'Ja'.

the life of Sri Adi Sankaracharya and his Advaitic philosophy. On the day of Sankara Jayanthi, the picture of Adi Sankara as well as his padukas, was taken in a procession on top of an elephant to Mahanadhi. Abhishekams to the padukas was performed on the banks of the river Mahanadhi. At night, a long procession started beginning with a nadaswara group in the front, followed by a local band and then Swamigal. Thousands of people gathered to enjoy the sight. Arrangements were also made for fireworks. All arrangements were overseen by L.Venkatakrishna Iyer. During Swamigal's stay at Cuttack, the administrators of the Puri Govardhana Mutt came to Cuttack and invited Swamigal to visit Puri.

Satchigopal Darshan

Swamigal camped at Cuttack from the 15th to the 24th of April 1936 for ten days and left there on the 25th to travel through small villages to reach Balianath on the 30th, Palgatti on the 31st and Mukundpur on the 2nd of May. When Swamigal was camping at Mukundpur, the members of the Puri Jagannat Mukti Mandapa Sabha quickly gathered together and passed a resolution to invite Swamigal to Puri. The key representatives of the Sabha brought the resolution with all the signatories to Mukundpur and presented it to Swamigal who graciously accepted their invitation and promised to visit Puri.

On the 3rd of May, 1936, Swamigal visited the famous temple of Satchigopal. The legend is that the idol of Gopal in the temple originally belonged to Vada Mathura. Gopal himself came down to Kanchipuram to act as a witness for a Brahmin. Later the king of Puri, Purushottama Maharaja, brought the Gopal idol to Puri. There were two Brahmins from Kanchipuram who traveled on Ganga yatra. One of them was old and the other was a young brahmachari. On the way, the older man fell sick and the younger man carried the former on his shoulder until he got cured and got better. The grateful older man promised to marry his daughter to the younger man. The promise took place in front of Gopalan Sannidhi in Mathura. As per the promise, the young man later asked the older man's daughter's hand in marriage. However, the older man refused as the younger one belonged to a lower caste. The young man took his case to the king's court. The king asked for witness and ordered the young man to bring the Gopalan from Mathura as the witness. He went to Mathura and complained to Lord Gopala who promised as Asareeri (Heavenly voice) that he would come and confirm the young man's story at the king's court. But he put a condition that the man should not turn back and if he did, the Lord would stay put in the place where he turned back. The young man traveled through various towns with Gopala following him and reached Kanchipuram. Excited about reaching his hometown, the young man mistakenly turned back and Gopala turned into a stone idol at that spot. This story spread around the town and the king came there to have darshan of Gopala. The older man pleased at his devotion gave his daughter in marriage to the latter.

Once, the Puri king came to Kanchi to request marriage to the Kanchi king's daughter. After getting married to the Princess Padmavathi, he asked for the idol of Gopala and took it to Puri. Swamigal stayed at Satchigopal temple on the 2nd and the 3rd of May, where special arrangements were made for his stay by the temple authorities.

Visit to Puri Jagannath

Swamigal visited Srikrishnapura Sasana (Agraharam) at night on the 4th of May. Pundits and poets from there read a welcome speech for our Swamigal. On the 5th of May, before sunrise, Swamigal took a holy bath in the Chandanlap tank, in the outskirts of Puri. A beautifully decorated tent was installed near the tank. Prominent citizens of Puri had gathered there early in the morning to welcome Swamigal. Sannyasins from the four Advaita mutts in Puri, the King of Puri, pundits from Mukti Mandap, government officials and the general public had all gathered near the tent. A welcome speech was read near Chandanlap tank at 7 a.m. Shortly thereafter, a long procession started with floats from the devasthanam as well as from the palace. It was followed by the mutt's elephant, horse, bala, Makara Thoranam and umbrellas, as well as the nadaswaram group. People had gathered on both sides of the procession to have darshan of Swamigal. It reached the Govardhan mutt near the shore at 10 a.m. Swamigal was welcomed with purna kumbam at the gates of the mutt. pada puja was performed to Swamigal inside the mutt. Our Swamigal was seated on a throne and Sannyasins, administrators from the Govardhana mutt, Sankarananda mutt, Sivatheertha mutt and Gopalatheertha mutt all prostrated before him. Swamigal visited Neelathri (Jagannath temple) at around 10'clock in the afternoon. He was welcomed there by devasthana officials and pandas showing appropriate respect and protocol. They showed Swamigal around the temple to the Jagannath, Balarama, Sridevi, Subadradevi, Bhudevi, Vimaladevi, Kanchi Ganapathy and Narasimhamurthy shrines. Swamigal offered garlands made of golden flowers to Jagannathar, Balarama, Balapathrar and Subadradevi. The same night, Srimad Vasudeva Theertha Swamigal offered contributions on behalf of their mutt and officials to Swamigal and paid their respect.

Reception at Jagannath Mukti Mandap

From early days, there is a great league of pundits at Jagannath in which pundits from more than eighteen Sasanas of Puri are members. The office of this league is situated inside the temple. It is tradition that the religious leader of the four mutts who is the oldest can hold the position of Head of this league. Whenever there are questions raised in relation to the Dharma Shastra, this association of pundits would gather, discuss and debate the issue and come to a conclusion. The conference of pundits would be held in the temple in the Mukti Mandap and hence came to be called the Mukti Mandap Sabha. There is an ancient and beautiful Peetam in the middle of the mandap and there is a stipulation that only the direct descendant of Sri Adi Sankara can sit on this Peetam. The league of pundits decided to make use of such a rare opportunity and celebrate it. They conveyed this resolution to Swamigal and invited him to the temple the same day. Swamigal was taken around all the shrines in the temple to have darshan. Later, the pundits took our Swamigal with pomp and respect to the Mukti Mandap and requested him to take the seat in the Peetam. Once our Swamigal sat on the Peetam, they all showered him with flowers and prostrated with shouts of 'Jaya Jaya!' Thousands of people had gathered there to witness such an amazing sight never seen before. A welcome speech was read and offered to Swamigal on behalf of the Sabha. The head of the Sabha who was also the head of Sankarananda mutt, as well as other pundits, spoke in praise of our Swamigal and described how he has traveled around the country for the

good of the world like Sri Adi Sankara, it was very rare for such a holy person to visit Puri and how fortunate the people of Orissa are that Swamigal visited Jagannath. Later Swamigal made a speech in Sanskrit. He said he was very happy that there were Vedas being learnt in Orissa, more than any other place in the nation, all the glory and respect offered in that mandap by the sabha be re-directed towards Sri Adi Sankara, who was responsible for eradicating all other religions in this country and also the person worthy of such glory. He requested the pundits of Jagannath to be leaders for our nation and work towards spreading our dharma in this world.

Holy Dip in the Ocean

Swamigal was staying at the palace of the Daspur king on the 6th of May, 1936, also being a Purnima day. Swamigal took a holy bath in the Bengal Sea also called Mahodadhi (The Bay of Bengal on the east is called Mahodadhi and the Arabic sea on the west is called Ratnakaram). The sannyasins and devotees from Puri also took a holy bath along with our Swamigal.

Awards to Pundits at Puri

Swamigal visited the Sankara Vidya Peetam on the 3rd of May, blessed the teachers and students and spoke a few kind words of advice to them. The general public offered pada puja and bhikshavandanam to Swamigal at the Daspur king's palace on the 8th of May. The next day, a conference of about a hundred pundits from Orissa was held in Swamigal's presence. The pundits showed their scholarship to Swamigal and gave explanations to questions asked in the Shastras. Swamigal awarded Kashmiri shawls and monetary contributions to seventy pundits and suitable contributions to the other pundits gathered there. The pundits were very happy and spoke about how the vidwans had never been honored in this way before. Some of the older pundits spoke about how the 65th Acharya of Sri Kamakoti Peetam Sri Mahadevendra Saraswathi Swamigal had visited Puri in the year 1866 and honored the vidwans before. After fifty years, they were fortunate and happy to see such a sight again. Swamigal returned back to Satchigopal on the 10th of May.

Journey towards Burhampur

Swamigal stayed the night of May 10th at Satchigopal and left for Tilang the next morning and reached Kurta on the 18th. Kurta is the biggest city in the Puri district and is situated thirty five miles from Puri. The same night, he left for Chatrapur situated seventy five miles south of Tilang. In the beginning, there were high mountains on either side of the path and was filled with forests and wild animals. There was no place to stay or to get water. After crossing a few miles, the landscape changes to being completely sandy with ups and downs and twists and turns. There were no signs of human inhabitation along the way. The employees of the mutt crossed over to Chatrapur with great difficulty. They traveled at an average rate of twenty miles per day and reached Chatrapur on the 17th of May. On the way, the camp was at Tangi on the 14th, Palugoni on the 15th and Ramba on the 16th. Chatrapur is the capital of the Kanjam district, situated on the southern end of

the lake Silka, on the shore of the ocean. There is a temple for Adi Sankara there. Swamigal camped here for seven days - from the 17th until the 23rd. The Marwadi community and the local citizens of Chakrapur gathered to give an enthusiastic welcome to our Swamigal. The camp left here on the 24th and reached Berhampur situated about five miles southwest. After staying at Burhampur for twenty_three days until the 15th of June, Swamigal left for Ichapur on the 16th. He stayed until the 23rd of June at Ichapur, then for three days at Naubasam; 25th at Padmanabapur, 26th at Digbahandi, 28th at Serugada, the next three days at Damodarpalli and reached Hingilli ghat on the 2nd of July. At every place, Swamigal was welcomed with respect and offered pada puja and bikshavandanam.

Vyasa Puja at Burhampur

In preparation for the Vyasa puja to be held on the 4th of July, Swamigal returned back to Burhampur on the 2nd of July, 1936. Arrangements for our Swamigal's stay were done very well by the local people under the leadership of Barlakimidi Maharaja. A special mandap was beautifully decorated and Vyasa puja was conducted in a grand manner. Numerous people came to witness the puja. Pundits from Andhra Pradesh had darshan of Swamigal and received awards from him. Once in a while, there will be an extra lunar month in a year. During this year, Chaturmasya vrath lasted for three months. On the 28th of September, 1936, there was a conference of Sanatana Dharma held at Burhampur. As per the request of Barlakimidi Raja and Tarkot Raja, Swamigal graciously commenced the conference to the pleasure of thousands of people. He gave a clear speech about the meaning of the word 'Dharmam'. Many resolutions were passed in this conference under the leadership of Barlakimidi Raja. One of them was to express appreciation at Swamigal's visit to Andhra Pradesh.

Visit to SriKurma Kshetram

The following is Swamigal's travel schedule from Burhampur to Chikakol ninety miles away

- 1st and 2nd of September – return to Ichapur
- 3rd through 5th of September – Sompetta
- 6th of September – Paruva
- 7th of September – Palasa
- 8th of September – Dakkali
- 9th of September - reached Chikakol

En route, the local people greeted Swamigal with warmth, made arrangements for his stay and obtained his blessings. Swamigal stayed at Gujarati pettai in Chikakol. On the 10th of September, Swamigal reached the holy pilgrim center of Srikurma, situated on the seaside. Mahavishnu appears here in the form of a turtle during his Kurmavataram. Srikurma Kshetram comes under the jurisdiction of Vijayanagara Samsthanam. The Samsthanam officials welcomed Swamigal appropriately during his visit to the temple and arranged for his darshan. Returning from Srikurma Kshetram, Swamigal also had darshan of Sri Suryanarayanawamy temple at Arasavalli.

Visit to Vijayanagar – Navaratri Puja

On the 12th of October, in the year 1936, Swamigal left Chikakol and traveled to Sumatrapur, Sipurpalli, Nellimarla staying a day at each of these places and reaching Vijayanagar on the evening of 15th October. The whole city had a festive look on that day. A reception committee was formed under the leadership of Sri Yechuri Narasimha Panthulu four months prior to this day and the people had decided to celebrate our Swamigal's visit to their town in a grand manner. The representatives from the reception committee had darshan of Swamigal at Srikakulam on the 11th of October and formally requested for the Navarathri puja to be held at Vijayanagar. Fifty years before this day in the year 1885, the 65th Acharya of Sri Kamakoti Peetam, Sri MahaDevendra Saraswathi Swamigal had visited Vijayanagar and celebrated Navarathri puja here. The diary recordings of these events were conveyed to our Swamigal.

A large decorated tent was raised near the outskirts of the town, near the municipal reservoir to receive our Swamigal, who arrived on the 15th of October in the evening, around the time the sun was setting. The Diwan of the Samsthan along with officials and local people gathered in great numbers to welcome our Swamigal with purna kumbam and a welcome speech was read aloud. A procession was taken around the key streets with our Swamigal in a palanquin. The local people gave purna kumbam, flower garlands and karpura harathi to our Swamigal on the way. The procession reached the residence of Kathe Ramaiyengar at 9 pm. Swamigal got down from the palanquin and gave anugraha bhashan to the thousands of devotees gathered there. Navarathri celebrations commenced the next day. From that day, Navarathri puja was held in a specially decorated puja mandapam. As usual, kanya puja, homams and parayanam took place every day. Thousands came to witness the pujas conducted by our Swamigal both in the mornings and evenings.

Swamigal completed his mouna vratha on Vijayadasami on the 25th of October, 1936. A conference of pundits was arranged for on that day. An award of "Shastra Ratnakaram" was given to the famous pundit in the Andhra state Mahamahopadhyay Datha Subbaraya Shastrigal. Swamigal, along with the title, also gifted two Kashmir shawls and silver vessels. That evening, Swamigal visited the six temples in Vijaynagar and had darshan of the deities. He also visited the Veda Vignana Parishad building the same day. A welcome speech was read in Sanskrit by the pundits gathered there including Moolaramapriya Kanukurthi Venkatakrisna Rao, Aginna Sathanarayana, Mahamahopadhyay Datha Subbaraya Shastri, Mahamahopadhyay Nethuri Venkata Shastri, Nyayaratna Beri Lakshminarayana Shastri and Srimad Koil Kandhadai Venkataramachariar. Swamigal graciously accepted their welcome and gave an upanyasam on the glory of the Vedas. Both the common people as well as vedic pundits equally understood and enjoyed his speech. Swamigal blessed the pundits gathered there and gave them appropriate gifts.

Swamigal visited the Vijayanagar Palace on the 27th of October and accepted pada puja performed by the Dowager queen Srilalitha Kumari Devi. Swamigal visited the local Maharaja College on the 30th of October, where he was received by Prof. N. Venkataraman and other professors. Venkataraman performed pada puja on that day. All the students had gathered to have darshan of our Swamigal.

Swamigal gave a speech on Advaita philosophy to an audience of both scholars and commoners on the 31st of October in the year 1936. In his speech, Swamigal explained the non-disparity between Shiva and Vishnu, citing Samartha Ramdas as an example. Such devoted souls would practice Bhakti and upasana and realize Advaita before reaching the state of Moksha. Swamigal while explaining the path of Jnana explained that the seeker would receive Guru's blessings, let go of worldly attachments slowly, maintain will power and reach moksham through their own realization and this is called Jeevabrahma Advaitam. Both the paths of Upasana as well as the path of Jnana reach the same goal. He also gave a few pointers on how women should conduct their lives. That evening, the resident veena artist of the Samsthanam, Venkataramana Das played veena in the presence of Swamigal who honored him with a Peetambaram. The Dowager queen performed bhikshavandanam on that day and the citizens of the city performed pada pujas.

Arrangements were made for Swamigal's departure from Vijayanagar. Thousands of people had gathered early to send Swamigal away from Vijayanagar. The crowd was so eager to have a glimpse of Swamigal that his palanquin could not move. That night, Swamigal traveled to Padmanabha, had a holy bath the next morning (1-11-1936) at the Gosthani River and had darshan of Lord Padmanabha. After accepting the pada puja performed by the residents, he left for Beemilipattnam the next day. Beemilipattnam used to be a famous harbor town in the state of Andhra Pradesh. There is a temple for Sri Narasimhaswamy on top of a hill in this town. Swamigal had darshan at this temple, visited Anandapuram next day and reached Simhachalam on the 4th of November, 1936.

Simhachala Yatra

The residents of Andhra Pradesh specially worship the Narasimha Avataram. One of the notable temples is that of Ahobilam situated thirty miles from Nandhia, in the Kurnool district, in a very isolated and beautiful environment. The Jeer Swamigal – the Vaishnavite religious leader bears the name of “Azhagiya Singar” where Singar refers to Narasimha. The mutt at Ahobilam is also called the Ahobilam mutt as Narasimha Murthy is the reigning deity at the mutt. Similar to this there are many more Narasimha pilgrim centers, of which Simhachalam is one. This temple is also under the jurisdiction of Vijayanagara Samsthanam and it is widely believed that Sri Prahlad himself installed the Narasimha idol in this place. The temple is on top of a high hill and the artistic sculpture and paintings on the walls and dome of the temple can be seen from far. The temple is situated in an isolated place where there is minimal crowd.

The Vijayanagar Samsthana officials had made arrangements for Swamigal's stay in the foothills and the devasthanam buildings were decorated on this occasion. The devasthanam assumed the expenses for Swamigal's stay for the day. Swamigal started climbing the hill early next morning and had darshan of the Anjaneya temple on the way. He was followed by hundreds of pundits, villagers and tribals throughout his climb to the temple. Once he reached the top, he came around the temple and then had darshan of Simhathrinadar. Peetambaram was offered to the Lord. Later, Swamigal had darshan of Varaha and Lakshminarasimha shrines as well as other deities. After special pujas and archanas were completed at all the shrines, the devasthanam officials offered special

respect to our Swamigal. He honored the priests and pundits gathered there and gave them monetary contribution. Later, he visited the temple of Sri Tripurandakeswarer, where Rudrabhishekam was performed on the Siva linga and also had darshan of Ambal and other deities. Swamigal then went to the Gangadhara falls in the hills and sprinkled the water on himself. He sat on the hill and meditated for an hour. Graciously accepting the requests of the devotees, he sat on a newly made Doli and came down the hill, enjoying the natural scenery on the way. The day-time puja was conducted at the Devasthanam Inn and was witnessed by numerous devotees. On the 6th of November, 1936, the residents of the Simhachala village performed bhikshavandanam and pada puja and took our Swamigal on a procession.

Conference of Pundits at Vizhagapatnam

In the night of 7th of November, 1936, Swamigal left Simhachalam and reached Vizhagapatnam. The local people, government officials, lawyers and businessmen all got together and gave an eager welcome to our Swamigal. During the stay here, Swamigal would give upanyasams every night after the performance of the evening puja. On receiving an invitation from the Port officials, Swamigal visited the natural harbor and the ship yard. A big conference of scholars was held at Vizhag during Swamigal's stay. The meeting was presided over by Judge Sahityaratnakara Dr.M.Krishnamachariar. Pundits from Simhachalam and other nearby places also participated in this sabha. Many discussions took place with reference to the Shastras. Swamigal visited the conference stage and gave a speech suitable for both the pundits and the local people gathered. All expenses for this conference were borne by Lawyer Prabala Lakshminarasimha Banthulu. Swamigal honored the participating scholars with shawls and other gifts.

Yatra in Vizhagapatnam District

On the 3rd of December, Swamigal left Vizhagapatnam, stayed at Aganampoondi and reached Kasimkotta that night. The king of Kasimkotta welcomed our Swamigal with great devotion and performed pada puja. He stayed here on the 4th and 5th and reached Chodavaram on the 6th of December, where he camped for three days. On the 10th of December, the Brahmins belonging to the community of Vedula Dravida performed bhikshavandanam and pada puja at Aganapalli. The community along with their relatives living in Vedurparthi near Kasimkotta were practicing and protecting the Vedas. Swamigal visited Vedurparthi, stayed there on the 20th and 21st of December and accepted their bhikshavandanam and pada pujas.

Swamigal left Vedurparthi and arrived at Yellamanjili on the night of the 21st. Under the leadership of the district muncif Sri Muthukrishna Naidu (Bar-at-law), the people of Yellamanjili welcomed Swamigal with a speech and offered bhiksha and pada pujas. During Swamigal's two-week stay at Yellamanjili, the prominent scholar from Kashi, Rajeswara Shastri Dravid visited to have darshan. Swamigal then traveled through Benugal, Dharmavaram, Gollabloru and Nakkapalli, reaching the town of Thuni on the 11th of January in the year 1937. The king of the land, Sri Venkatanarayana Gajapathiraja Bahadur welcomed Swamigal and performed bhikshavandanam and pada puja. In the year 1886, the 65th Acharya, Sri Mahadevendra Saraswathi Swamigal had also visited

Thuni. Swamigal left Thuni on the 21st and went to Hamsawaram, Thattagunda, Thottangi, Annavaram and Kollaporulu, reaching Pithapuram on the night of January 28th. A huge reception and procession was arranged at Pithapuram for Swamigal. He had a holy bath in the local tank called Padhagaya. The legend is that the feet of Gayasura fell at Pithapuram in Andhra and hence the name Padhagaya. Swamigal had darshan at the Kukkudeswarer temple on the banks of Padhagaya. Bhikshavandanam was performed that day by the famous Tharkashastra scholar, Vadali Lakshminarayana Shastrigal. There was a conference of scholars presided over by Sripada Lakshminarasimha Shastrigal. Swamigal honored the vidwans gathered with shawls.

Visit to Kasinada

On the night of the 21st of January, 1936, Swamigal visited Kasinada where he was given a grand welcome by the citizens. He stayed in this city for a month until the 21st of February. Swamigal took a holy bath at the place where the river Thulya (a tributary of Godavari) reached the ocean, on the new moon day that fell on the 10th of February, 1937. That day is called Sholangi Amavasya in Andhra. It is considered a holy day similar to the Mahalaya Amavasya in Tamil Nadu. About one lakh people took bath in that confluence that day. On the same day Swamigal visited the nearby Drakhsaram village and had darshan of Bheemeswara Lingam and Manikambika. Special abhishekams and pujas were conducted in that temple. Swamigal offered silk Peetambaram and sarees to the deities. Swamigal left for Janardhanagiri on the 24th of February and stayed there for four days.

Visit to Kodipalli

Swamigal left Kakinada on the 28th of February and reached Kodipalli on the 1st of March. The legend is that the Kodeeswara Lingam was installed by Indran and Someswaralingam was installed by Chandran. Kodipalli is situated on the banks of the river Matru Godavari, one of the seven tributaries of Godavari. Swamigal took a bath in this river at Kodipalli. He also had darshan at the temples, where he was welcomed and given proper respect by the devasthanam officials.

Yatra through SapthaGodavari Region

Swamigal visited Kodipalli, Mukteswaram and then visited Konaseema, situated at the tail end of the Godavari River. There are several agraharams in Konaseema. In every agraharam that Swamigal visited, numerous people gathered to welcome and witness the nitya puja. Every day, Swamigal gave a speech in Telugu on dharma. In the delta region, Swamigal visited Kannavaram, Rasol and Vemavaram. Sankara Jayanthi that year was celebrated in Mukkamala, situated on the banks of the Kousiki River, another tributary of Godavari from the 14th of May until the 23rd of May, in the year 1937. A huge congregation of scholars had gathered during that time. Many well renowned scholars of Andhra participated in the sabha. The resident Pundit of Vijayanagaram Samsthanam, Vedantham Seshayya Shastrigal also visited here and participated in the Sabha. There were talks every day on the Advaita philosophy, as well

as on the life of Sri Adi Sankara. Vyasa puja was performed at Palakol next to Narasapur on the 23rd of July, 1937. Swamigal stayed there until the 20th of September.

After completing the Chaturmasya vrata, Swamigal stayed at Narasaraopet and Dhade Pallikudam for many days. During the stay at Dhade Pallikudam, a rich landlord from Hukkumpet, Hodha Sri Veerabadrappa had darshan of Swamigal and requested Swamigal to perform Navarathri puja at his town. Graciously accepting his invitation, Swamigal performed Naavarathri puja at Hukkumpet. Swamigal blessed and honoured Sri Veerabadrappa, who had made all the necessary arrangements for the stay as well as the special Navarathri pujas, with an expensive Peetambaram.

Later, Swamigal traveled through Polavaram, Kovuru and Eluru, reaching Rajamahendrapuram on the 1st of October. He stayed for about four months at Rajamahendrapuram where the citizens expressed their devotion and made all the necessary arrangements for Swamigal's comfortable stay. Swamigal traveled through a stream boat upstream to see the natural beauty of the wide Godavari, flowing between two hills that are two thousand feet tall. Swamigal enjoyed the beautiful sight called Pappikonda. Swamigal also had darshan at the Nandeewarer temple situated near the place where Godavari is flowing through a narrow gap between the hills. Swamigal wished to take a holy dip in the ocean on the 31st of January, 1938 and traveled to Kakinada to take a bath. About a lakh crowd also took a bath in Kakinada on the occasion of the holy period of Mahodaya.

Visit through Krishna, Guntur and Nellore Districts

Swamigal completed his tour through the banks of the river Godavari and traveled to the banks of the river Krishna in the month of March, 1938. Sankara Jayanthi was celebrated very grandly that year at Bheemavaram from the 30th of May to 4th of June. Swamigal took a bath in the Krishna River at Vijayawada and had darshan at the Kanagadurga temple. The residents of the city welcomed Swamigal and made arrangements for a week's camp. Swamigal visited the kshetram of Mangalagiri, situated near Vijayawada. There is a temple of Paanaga Narasimhar here, situated on the top of a hill. The legend is that Paanagam is offered as Neivedyam everyday to the deity and it is said the quantity of the Paanagam reduces after the puja.

Swamigal visited the Sanskrit Patasala at Kovur, enquired the teaching methods and gave a speech for the students and the teachers in Sanskrit. The correspondent of the school, Sri Jatavallabha Purushottam Bandulu offered a welcome speech to Swamigal in Sanskrit.

Later Swamigal traveled through Kudiwada, Kapileswaram, Ayilur and Thenali, reaching Guntur for Chaturmasya Vrata. Swamigal performed the Vyasa puja grandly at Guntur on the 12th of July, 1938. The citizens of the town had made a special mandap for Swamigal's puja and thousands witnessed the glorious sight of Swamigal performing the Vyasa puja. Swamigal stayed at Guntur for two months. Many of the scholars participated in the vidvath sadas that took place every day. Pulyam Umamaheswara Shastrigal, secretary of Akhila Andhra Dharmic Pandit Parishad, resident of Munikanda Agraharam in the banks of the Godavari River and also a famous Vyakarana pandit, composed in Sanskrit, one hundred and seventy slokas on our Swamigal and read them in his presence. His rare poetry is also in the form of a book. After completion of

Chaturmasyam, Swamigal left Guntur to visit Margapur in Kurnool district. He celebrated Navarathri puja here in a grand fashion.

Swamigal stayed at Nellore from November of 1938 through January of 1939 where the residents expressed their keen devotion to him. Special services were rendered here by lawyer Goda Narasimha Bandulu and Inguva Sri Krishnayya. Swamigal left Nellore on the 6th of February to go to Venkatagiri where he stayed from the 12th to the 25th of March at the request of the king. Then he traveled via Kodur and Naidupettai, reaching the village of Alladi. It was the hometown of the famous lawyer Sir Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer. Iyer had darshan of Swamigal and performed bhikshavandanam and pada puja to Swamigal at his residence.

Visit to Kalahasti and Tirupati

In the year 1932, Swamigal had spent Sivarathri at Kalahasti. After seven years Swamigal re-visited Kalahasti and stayed there for eleven days from the 7th of April to the 17th of April, 1939. He had a bath in the holy Swarnamukhi River everyday and had darshan of Sri Kalahasthinathar. He visited Tirumala Tirupati on the 19th and 20th of April and had darshan of Sri Venkateswara. As per tradition, the devasthanas officials gave the official temple welcome and also performed Poolangi Seva to the Lord. Sankara Jayanthi was celebrated on the 24th of April at Pukkai near Nagari.

Darshan at Tiruttani, Kanchipuram and Chidambaram

Swamigal started from Pukkai and had darshan of Sri Muruga on the Thiruttani hill on the 30th of April. After staying at Thirumalpur on the 1st of May, he reached Kanchipuram on the 2nd of May. He had darshan in the Kanchi Sri Ekambranathar, Sri Kamakshi and Sri Varadaraja Perumal temples. Swamigal traveled through Arani, Senchi, Vizhuppuram, Banrutti, Thirupadhiripuliyur and Parangipettai, reaching the holy town of Chidambaram on the 17th of May. He was welcomed by the general public as well as the Dikshithars. Arrangements for Swamigal's nitya puja were made in the Thousand Pillar Mandap, within the temple premises. Swamigal had darshan of Sabanayakar as well as Govindarajar. Thousands of people gathered to witness Swamigal perform the Chandramouliswara puja.

Gangabhishekam to Ramanatha Swamy

Swamigal's sankalpa for Ganga Yatra done in September of 1922 at Ramasethu has been mentioned before. The sand taken from here was dissolved at Triveni Sangam on the 25th of July, 1934. The same day, water from the river Ganga was gathered to be taken to Rameswaram to be used for Sri Ramanatha Swamy. Our Swamigal had kept this water in his puja all this time.

Swamigal left Chidambaram and traveled via Chettiathoppu, Anakkarai, Ozhugucheri, Konerirajapuram, Mudikondan, Thiruvarur, Moolangudi, Thaneerkunnam, Sathanur, Mannargudi, Pattukottai, Aranthangi, Aavudayar Koil, Uppoor and Devi Patnamand, reaching Rameswaram on the 9th of June, in the year 1939. The devasthanas officials, local pandas and the local people gave a grand welcome to our Swamigal.

Numerous people had gathered to see Swamigal take a dip in Agni Theertham the next morning. Then, Swamigal walked towards the Ramanatha Swamy temple where Ramanathapuram Raja gave an appropriate welcome in front of the temple. The water from Ganga brought by Swamigal was used to perform Abhishekam to Ramanatha Swamy with the chanting of Ekadasa Rudram. Swamigal's Ganga Yatra was completed then.

Swamigal undertook silence from the next day, 11th day of June onwards. He had a bath at Dhanushkodi and had darshan at Dharpasayanam and Navabhashanam and headed towards Kumbakonam swiftly with the intention of performing Vyasa puja there.

Visit to Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga

Swamigal visited Ramanathapuram on the 13th of June, 1939 where Sethupathi Raja gave him a royal welcome and took Swamigal in a royal procession to the palace called 'Sankara Vilasam' and performed pada puja there. Swamigal also traveled to Manamadurai and visited Sivaganga on the 14th of June, where he was given an appropriate welcome by the Sivaganga Raja. He performed bhikshavandanam and pada puja and the people gathered in great numbers to witness the puja. Swamigal stayed at Thirupathur on the 16th and reached Ilayathangudi on the 17th where he had darshan of his Parameshtiguru, Sri Mahadevendra Saraswathi Swamigal's adhishtanam. He stayed at Kadiapatti on the 18th and had darshan of Sri Sathyamoorthy and Sri Sathyagiriswarer at Thirumayam that night. He stayed at Rayavaram at the request of the Nagarathar and came to Pudukottai the next morning at 5 a.m.

Reception at Pudukottai

Early morning on the 19th of June, 1939, the Assistant Administrator of Pudukottai kingdom Raobahadur Krishnamachariar along with the treasurer, pandits and the public gathered at the outskirts of Pudukottai to welcome our Swamigal. The residents of Pudukottai had great devotion for our Swamigal and were eager to have his darshan after sixteen years. A huge procession started that morning from the government college. Government horse troops, police marching troops, the military band and devasthanam floats all preceded Swamigal in the procession that proceeded via the Raja street. Arrangements for Swamigal's puja were made at the Dharma Chathiram in front of the Sri Santhanathar Temple. Official holiday was declared on the 19th and 20th of June, on the occasion of Swamigal's visit. People gathered to have darshan of Swamigal, witness the puja and obtain Akshada, Vibhuthi and Theertha Prasad from Swamigal. Swamigal gave audience separately to officials and dignitaries as well as the general public and blessed everyone individually. The first day of the stay, bhikshavandanam and pada puja was performed on behalf of the government. Many devotees invited Swamigal to their homes and performed pada puja there. Even though the initial plan was to stay at Pudukottai for two days, Swamigal agreed to stay one more day at the request of the local business organization called the Pettayyar. That day, bhikshavandanam and pada puja were performed by the Pettayyar, who had also arranged for a grand procession at night through the main streets and the sight was an unforgettable one. On the morning of the

22nd, Swamigal left Pudukottai and reached Keeranur, where puja was conducted at the Siva temple and was witnessed by many.

Swamigal left Keeranur on the 23rd of June, 1939, and reached Thiruchirapalli where he stayed at the Sankara mutt in Thiruvanaikkaval and accepted the welcome and respect given by the people. Swamigal had darshan of Sri Jambunathar, Sri Akhilandeswari, Sri Mathrubhootheswarer and Sri Ranganathar at Sri Ranganam. Swamigal was greeted enthusiastically wherever he went. After staying at Tiruchi for three days, he traveled through Bhoothalur, Vallam, Tanjore, Eechangudi and Swamimalai and reached Kumbakonam on the 21st of July. Swamigal's resolution to undertake a Kasi yatra was completed successfully.