

South India Tour 2012 : Day 4

– Sri Rangam

Day 4 – May 26, 2012

Location – Sri Rangam(Tamilnadu, India)

(Maharaja began the lecture by the recitation of Madhurashtakam by Vallabhacharya.)

The lords' gait is very sweet. During the procession of Lord Ranganath sometimes he walks like a swan, sometimes like an elephant, sometimes like a lion and eighteen such forms. It looks like Lord Ranganath Himself is making his palanquin carriers walk in His desired sweet way. It is said that Lord Rama also learnt to walk from Ranganath when Ranganath was in Ayodhya. Onetime I saw a Rama Lila in Delhi organised by Sri Rama Kala Kendra they were walking just like Rama used to walk. 10 years ago I saw this Ram Lila and I can still remember because I never saw any human being walk in this way.

Lord's sleeping is also sweet. Therefore, we have all come from far and wide to see the lord who is lying down on the bed of Ananta Shesh as Sri Ranganath. His form is sweet and His heart is sweet as well.

Vallabhacharya is giving a unique realisation of his experience of Krishna. His flute is sweet as well as the dust of His lotus feet is sweet. His hands that are holding Venu (flute) are also sweet. The beautiful feet of the lord are also beautiful. Everything is sweet about the Emperor of sweetness.

Yesterday as our vehicle stopped in Sri Rangam, the first thing that we saw was a sign board that read 'the footprints of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu'. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu stayed in Sri Rangam for four days. This most pure dham – Sri Rangam is very rarely achieved. To reach here is not an ordinary

achievement. We cannot reach here simply by buying a bus or train ticket. It's not that cheap. This is a special favour of the Lord on all of us. This deity is here since the beginning of creation. Varadaraj also is the first deity in the creation, of course he is in sitting posture and Sri Ranganath is lying. This Dham is in the centre of river Kaveri that envelops the Dham from all sides.

So we are in Vaikuntha. *Yad gatva na nivartante*. One, who reaches my abode, does not return back to the material world. So please cancel all your bookings and your return tickets and you can manage to survive for a few days with that refund money. The lord has descended here from his Dham and this river is compared to Viraja River. Actually Viraja River flows between Vaikuntha and the covering of this material universe. One who reaches here, gets freed from reactions of sinful as well as pious activities. But Vaikuntha is beyond heavenly planets and earthly planet. This heaven and hell are duality. Vaikuntha is beyond duality. Some sample experience of heaven and hell is present on earth also. If someone goes to America he thinks he has reached heaven, thus there is always a long queue in front of American embassy. There are people with this mood – *mor ei abhilasa America dese diyo vaas*.

Most of the rituals of Hindu religion are processes to uplift ourselves to heavenly abodes. *Devan deva yajo yanti*. But we have come to that abode where the Lord resides. We have come to Vaikuntha. It is beyond earth and heaven. Here the lord reached in Treta Yuga. Before coming here He was in Ayodhya. He was brought to Sri Rangam from Ayodhya while Sri Rama was present in Ayodhya. This was some 10 lakh years ago. Since that time this town is here and the deity is here as well. Such exalted towns are present in this country.

One time I was in LA and they were celebrating the anniversary of LA. It was a very huge celebration. So I asked some assembled guests, how old LA is? They said it is very old city – 200 years old. Like a frog in a well. Can you compare a well

and sea. Thus there can never be comparison between LA and Sri Rangam. Since thousands of years daily pilgrims are coming here and are getting benefitted by this Vaikuntha Dham and the glory and importance of this Dham.

Lord Brahma who is also our guru and Acharya wanted that lord may appear in his abode Brahmaloaka or Satyaloka. Such lord if He comes to my abode it will be so nice. Lord agreed to his prayers and resided as a deity in Satyaloka and worship began. He is not only chief engineer of this creation but also a great Acharya. We belong to the parampara which begins with bramha- bramha madhva gaudiya sampradaya.

We are going to south Indian temples and we are seeing such huge temples, these are remnants of Dvapara Yuga. Such temples were also in north India but they were all destroyed by the Muslims. The Muslims were stopped from coming to south India, thus there is more culture, rituals, elaborate worship that have been protected. Those who have protected this culture, we are very grateful to them.

Ramanujacharya made 74 such places to establish dharma. Religion is established by Krishna as well as Acharyas like Ramanujacharya. One time Ramanujacharya was begging to the Lord you are the sarnagat vatsal, please accept me. The Lord said, alright I accept you. The Ramanujacharya said, can you also please accept all the living beings. Earlier the Lord had immediately replied, but later he thoughtfully spoke thus – whoever Oh Ramanujacharya will be grateful for all the work you have done to establish religion, if they will understand your work and admire it, to such people I will accept. Not directly.

So lord came to Bramhaloka from Kshirsagar in the form of Sri Ranganath. Lord Brahma worshipped Him. Also Suryadeva – Vivaswan did the worship of Sri Ranganath in Satyaloka. King

Ikshvaku while ruling Ayodhya also wanted to worship Sri Ranganath in his kingdom of Ayodhya. He did austerities, so severe that Indra thought that he might take away my position and kingdom of heaven. Indra became worried and sent brahmastra. But Ikshvaku was meditating on Sri Ranganath, so Lord's Sudarshan Chakra came and defeated the brahmastra. The lord became pleased with King Ikshvaku and agreed to descend to Ayodhya. After Ikshvaku many great kings appeared in his dynasty. King Dashratha was one of them. He did many Yajnas including putreshti Yajna. At the conclusion of the Yajna king Dasharath gave darshan of Sri Ranganath to all the assembled dignitaries.

King Dharma Varma, who was also present at the yajna, saw the opulent worship of Sri Ranganath by Dasharath. He also became inspired to serve the Lord and thought, 'could the lord also come to my kingdom and accept my worship'. So the lord noted this desire of the king. The deity form is not just stone. He is lying down but he eats, sleeps, and accepts worships. Every day there is some festival going on and the lord participates in these festivals. This archa vigraha is incarnation of Krishna, He is Krishna Himself. So the Lord has noted that you have come to see him.

When we do dhyana – the senses are accepting food in the form of sense objects. Eyes drink the various forms of this world; ears keep drinking the words of this world. We keep feeding sabda, rupa, sparsha, rasa, gandha (sound, form, touch, smell, taste) to our senses.

Aashtanga yoga's one limb is pratyahara – means not to see the form, hear the sound, touch the objects, take the smell and taste of this samsara. After pratyahara starts dhyana, and then dharana – retention of that dhyana of naam, rupa, guna, Lila of Krishna. Then Samadhi when this meditation becomes solidified. If we have done pratyahara, the yatra is best time to do it. Of course a sadhaka who has made attaining God his goal, without pratyahara you cannot move ahead in life. Naam

kirtana, rupa kirtana, Lila Kirtana, guna kirtana is possible only when we do pratyahara.

Lord knows our thoughts as well. He just doesn't note that we have come and visited him with folded hands. He also notices the thoughts of your mind.

So Dharma Varma king's desire was noted by the Lord and the lord said so be it. The Lord made up His mind; I will come to your kingdom. After Yajna, king Dasharath gave sweet rice to his wives and eventually four sons were born. When Rama grew and was about to be coronated as the King of Ayodhya, by Kaikeyi's request he was sent to 14 years of exile. After returning from exile, Rama reached Ayodhya. Before that He also went to Rameshvaram, Lanka, when he returned in Pushpaka Viman with Sita, Laxman, Hanuma, and Vibhishan. His coronation ceremony was performed. Then Lord Rama asked Vibhishana to return to Lanka to rule over and take care for the kingdom as it was now his responsibility.

But Vibhishan said, I do not want anything else, but you alone. Rama thought, I have to stay here in Ayodhya, I cannot go. But he wants me, so let me give him Ranganath. You take Sri Ranganath. There is no difference between me and Sri Ranganath. You may carry Him to Lanka. The only thing you must bear in mind is that the annual festival for Sri Ranganath will occur at the time while you will be taking Him along. So you must stop on the way when the appropriate time for that festival arrives and organize it with great enthusiasm. Vibhishan agreed and left for Lanka. While he was passing by Sri Rangam, it was time for the festival.

King Dharma Varma was ruling Sri Rangam at that time and he came to know that Lord Ranganath has arrived. He was very happy to receive and to help in organising the festival. So there was a huge celebration for 7 to 9 days. After the festival was over, King Visbhishan thought I should proceed towards Lanka. When Vibhishan tried to lift the Lord, he did

not even move an inch. After lots of endeavours, he realised that the lord wants to stay here. King Dharma Varma became overjoyed at this. Sri Ranganath told Vibhishan, I will not come ahead of this place but from here I will keep looking South, towards Lanka. Usually the deity should face east; but here Sri Ranganath is lying with his face towards south. From here he kept giving blessings and mercy to Vibhishan.

This temple of Sri Ranganath is spread over 156 acres. This is a thousand year old construction and there are thousands of pillars all over, which are monolithic structures.

Ramanujacharya –

Ramanujacharya is not ordinary human being. He is Ram Anuja or Laxman. Laxman appeared, or we can say, Balaram appeared. Balaram represents guru tattva. In sastra it is said- sesa, laxman, balaram will appear. Someone will appear in some form kaschit- that kaschit is Ramanuja. He appeared again as Varavarm muni. His speciality was that when he would recite the Katha of the lord, people would forget the samsara completely as if it does not exist. The soul would hear his katha in dhayna avashta (deep meditation). One time he was doing katha which went on for a year. Sri Ranganath himself would come to hear his katha. Katha is Sri Ranganath himself.

So for 1 year the archana stopped and all would just hear katha. Everyone was experiencing the presence of Sri Ranganath in the Katha so no one was missing the darshan.

On Tula sankranti, once a year all the holy rivers appear in Sri Rangam. If you take bath in Kaveri that day, there is no need for taking bath anywhere else. Yamuna also came and one time there was a conversation between Yamuna and kaveri. Kaveri questioned Yamuna that in your waters the Lord played the wonderful pastime of dancing on the hoods of Kaliya, but he never performed any such pastime in my waters.

So Sri Ranganath thought I will also do the Lila in Viraja or

Kaveri. So lord danced on Anantashesha. The river water rose very high and entire town was flooded with water and sand. After the flood, people forgot that here was ever a pilgrim place here. After many years, a king came hunting in this area. He was tired and was sitting under a tree. All of a sudden he heard a parrot- named Killi. This parrot told the king, right in this place Sri Ranganath is residing underneath. Then they unearthed the deity and began the worship.

One time one Muslim king became attracted by Sri Ranganath. He took Him to Delhi and installed Him in Lal Quila. The daughter of king started worshipping the Lord very nicely. So here in the memory of that Muslim king and his daughter, Lord Ranganath is worshipped in the morning in Muslim style. He also stayed in Tirupati for 40 years in Sri Ranga Mandapa.

One time one king came to attack the temple. All the Vaishnavas stood up to protect the deity, but that Muslim king beheaded thousands of devotees. Then a well-dressed woman said I can tell you where Sri Ranganath is please come behind me. Captured by the beauty and words of the woman he climbed the white Gopurama following the lady and she showed him the golden Vimana (golden tower made of 25 tonne gold). That tower contains 4 kalash (water pots). They are the 4 Veda. There is a lotus made of 18 petals which represent the puranas. There are 108 circular symbols which represent the Upanishads. If someone circumambulates the vimana twice, he gets the result of 1000 horse sacrifices.

So the lady brought the Muslim king on the top of a Gopuram and pushed him from the top and the king died. The woman started thinking I have done a great offence so I must also commit suicide. But as she jumped, Ranganath caught her and protected her. There are many such incidences in the history of this Dham.

