

## **FULFILLING DEVI'S PLAN by Shri R.Ravi Sankar**

One day, some four years ago; my wife informed me that Shri Gananadha rang up asking for donation from Tamil Arts and Cultural Association for the Kafue Hindu Temple. This was when I was the Vice-Chairperson for the association. This request for reasons unknown to me rolled over into my becoming involved actively at the temple.

Shri Gananadha was looking for a helping hand to manage the grand design he had as a vision from Devi for renovation of the temple. Little did I know the mountain of work awaiting me to help him implement Devi's grand plan for the Kafue Hindu Temple.

At the time I agreed to work with Shri Gananadha, for extension of the temple project and the marble floor project, which required over K35 million, we had a lot of enthusiasm and help from well wishers but no money. Our faith and grace from Devi, pushed us to boldly move ahead in a short time frame starting with involving Shri Shashi Shah in our plan. Shri Shashi Shah gladly agreed and allowed us a free hand to implement this project.

Our boldness to implement this project matched with our faith knowing that whatever action was taken are Devi's plan and her plan for implementation. Devi saw that all difficulties are overcome to everyone's amazement.

The other interesting project now on our hand is the Gopuram project. In this project, Shri Gananadha said I should actively work with him.

About three and a half years ago, I had a visitor from India, a new client, Shri Kataria at my office. He is a registered architect in Zambia and has offices in New Delhi and in London. Both his son and daughter are architects. He was seeking some professional advice on his business. He wanted to remunerate for the professional services offered. However, I felt that the advice given was not all that extraordinary to warrant a professional reward. As an alternative, I suggested that he could help prepare an architect plan for the Kafue Hindu Temple. Shri Kataria readily agreed to this suggestion. Immediately, the work on the Gopuram project started of its own volition. Shri Kataria got down to work, did some research on temple structure in India and Sri Lanka. He came back with an architect plan in August 2002 after some preliminary drawings. This plan is before you all on the temple wall.

In January 2003, I visited India with a plan to obtain the blessings of H H Shri Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam for the gopuram project plan and to engage a Stapathi (traditional temple artisans) as a temple building contractor.

On arrival at Chennai, I got in touch with my family priest Shri Sankara Sastrigal. Shri Sankara Sastrigal besides being trained by Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam in Kanchipuram, is a Rig Veda priest and had trained a number of young priest for priesthood and sent them to countries like USA, Singapore, Australia etc. He has done Kumbha abhishekams for a number of temples in Chennai and is currently active in activities of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam.

Shri Sankara Sastrigal introduced me to Stapathi Shri Natarajan and to his brother, Stapathi Shri Yugander Babu. Stapathi Shri Natarajan and his family run an Organisation called "SILPAKALA NILAYAM" based at Neelangarai in Chennai. They had just completed construction of a Kamakshi Amman Temple in Germany. It was indeed a coincidence that Devi got me in touch with someone who had been involved and completed a Kamakshi Amman temple project. "SILPAKALA NILAYAM" is involved in temple projects in USA, Netherlands, Singapore and also South Africa among other countries.

I was indeed impressed with their organization infrastructure to do temple building work. At the time of my visit they were making an Adhiseshan Vimanam (Serpent Hood) for a temple abroad in pure silver. Stonework was also ongoing for some temples in India and abroad.

Behind my house in Mandavali, Chennai in India, is an association called the Kalyan nagar association. Here lots of religious activities take place. This association has been around for some 40 to 50 years. Coincidentally, in January 2003, there was an Aradhana (anniversary celebrations) taking place with some yagna going on at the association premises being conducted by Guruji Shri KVLN Sharma of Sathguru Sri Seshadri Swamigal Brindavanam Trust. I got his blessings for our project. Satguru Shri Sheshadri swamigal comes under the

Kamakoti Vamsa (lineage) same as Sankaracharya of Kanchipuram and is also an exponent of the Sri Vidya worship and engages in worship of Goddess Kamakshi. This is the same famous Sathguru Shri Sheshadri Swamigal Of Thiruvannamalai who is said to be a divine child of the Goddess Kamakshi.

Along with Shri Sankara Sastrigal, my family and I visited Kanchipuram. At the Kamakshi Amman temple, all of us had darshan of Kamakshi Amman near the Sri Chakra which was sanctified by Adi Sankara. The head priest had obtained the blessing of Kamakshi amman for our Kafue Hindu Temple renovation plan by placing it at her feet.

Thereafter, I went to see Bala Periyaval, H.H Shri Sankara Vijayendra Saraswati Swamigal. The Senior Periyaval, H.H Jagadguru Shri Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal was away on tour in North India. After some two hours, when Bala Periyaval came out of meditation, I had his darshan and blessing. The Swamigal gave his blessing and approval for the architect drawing for the Kafue Hindu Temple. Bala Periyaval was particular that the gopuram design should be of South Indian style and told me to proceed with the building plan.

Bala Periyaval was equally particular about the choice of Stapathi. He made enquiries on the stapathi's background and was happy when I showed him the visiting card. The Swamigal was equally keen to meet me again to spend more time knowing about the Kafue Hindu Temple but this could not take place due to other pressing engagements.

The Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham through Sankaracharya's divine guidance wanted us to promote Veda Samskruta education among the young to promote and preserve the Hindu identity. I did inform Bala Periyaval that our temple would promote Vedic education.

In accordance with Bala Periyavals wishes the stapathi had prepared a preliminary drawing on the detail Gopuram design for the main Devi Sanctum. This is now on notice board.

The Kafue Hindu Temple committee had reviewed my visit and had agreed to process a visa application for the Stapathi's visit so that the building plan can be finalized. The Stapathi visited the Kafue Hindu Temple during the month of April 2003.

The plan for the Gopuram project is to build the gopuram over the main sanctum. As part of the gopuram project, a Navagraha Sannithi to the east of the Goddess shrine as per vastu, is to be installed.

The architect plans and drawings were in due time approved by the Kafue District council and Local government town planning authority.

The architect is working out the total project cost including materials and labour as the stapathi had indicated broadly his material requirements for the building works. A local contractor Spencon and Polyphase was engaged to construct the flat roof with steel beams over the sanctum. A detailed working drawing was prepared for the flat roof work. The estimated cost for the flat roof project was estimated at between US \$ 50,000 and US\$ 65,000. To our amazement the whole project was completed with us only bearing a portion of the material cost. This certainly was Devi's work to involve others and literally kick started a project, which would have taken some time to actually start. Through the blessing of Devi, the project became a reality.

This same miracle happened for our support for electrical works. In good time even the electrical wire circuitry drawing was done as a seva to Devi and completed in good time to our amazement.

The Stapathis came in a group of four persons. The team lead by Stapathi Yugander Babu got down to work on arrival. Within a day all their essential material were organized like bricks, sand and other materials as requested. They were ready for Bumi pooja and this was organized in a day.

The stapathis showed such dedication on the gopuram works and also the pillar work. They managed to complete the work in such a short time and able to crash a seven-month project to four months.

A good reason for the ability to complete the project so quickly was also the active support of transport, clearing and forwarding services being provided free on request. Being in a foreign country this issue of transport, clearing and forwarding services certainly played an important role to help the project move at a feverish pitch.

During the construction of this project there certainly was one important Shakti the presence of Devi by my side to guide me to make many decisions boldly.

I also had the assistance of Devi to give strength to consistently print a newsletter every month now for fifty months with the January issue – January 2006.

Many times I used to admire in amazement as to if it was really me who was organizing and printing these articles. Indeed the articles also radically changed the way I thought of most issues. Indeed Devi's way of thought is different from ours. This conclusion I could reach through the way I had the opportunity to feel and see her work being performed.

It is also true that the Kafue Ambe family is residing at my House. This also happened through coincidence. Initially, my wife asked the Stapathi to make Kamakshi deity for us, which he promised to make. However, what really transpired was that he made the Kamakshi Deity as he thought that that was the main Diety which was supposed to be Bhavani Ambe. He had to redo his work and the Kamakshi Ambe ended up in my house.

Lord Ganesh deity also came to our house by coincidence. A friend of ours asked the Staphis to make a Lord Ganesh for him, which he promised to make. Also, the staphis made the Lord Ganesh deity without his vehicle the mouse. However, through some mishandling the finger of the deity had broken. This I had not noticed. When I brought it home my wife said that since it is broken it could not be given to our family friend

On the last day of the Staphis stay, he rang up to say that he had a Lord Subramania which he had made as an extra piece and he said he did not know where to leave it as there was no place to position it. This way Lord Subramania also made his way to my house.

This way all the deities came to be present in my house.

There was a time in my project work for the temple when I had literally not been able to concentrate on anything but Devi. It became to such a feverish pitch that I started to just write about Devi to release the hold of Devi on my body. The most peculiar thing was I was not proficient even to recite from a book the Devi sloka. But I was preparing an article on HOW TO RECITE LALITHA SAHASRANAMA. I also came to write an article on THE NATURE OF DEVI. Even to this day I am wondering at the amazing way in which these articles got written. Certainly these articles are a gift from Devi to her devotees to know her better.

The fever pitch became so great that when I posted the articles at the yahoogroup website many of its members had the feeling that Devi was actually talking to them. This also led me to another unexpected work, an invite to be a moderator at [srilalitha@yahogroups.com](mailto:srilalitha@yahogroups.com) Certainly an unexpected development.

Devi's plan for this Kafue Hindu Temple is still unfolding and She has great plans. My involvement in the temple may not be in prayer or a great devotee. For reasons known best to Devi herself she ensured that anything to do with the Gopuram project never got started until I had my final say in it. Certainly, the thought sent goose bumps through wonder and me, at the grace that is being showered.

**Please join me in taking a bold step by placing your desires in the hands of Devi. The strength of your faith and humility will enable you to gain spiritual knowledge and experience Devi's Greatness. You will be blessed in fulfilling Devi's plan.**