

Sri Swamiji installing shivalinga at the
Ashrama in Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka.

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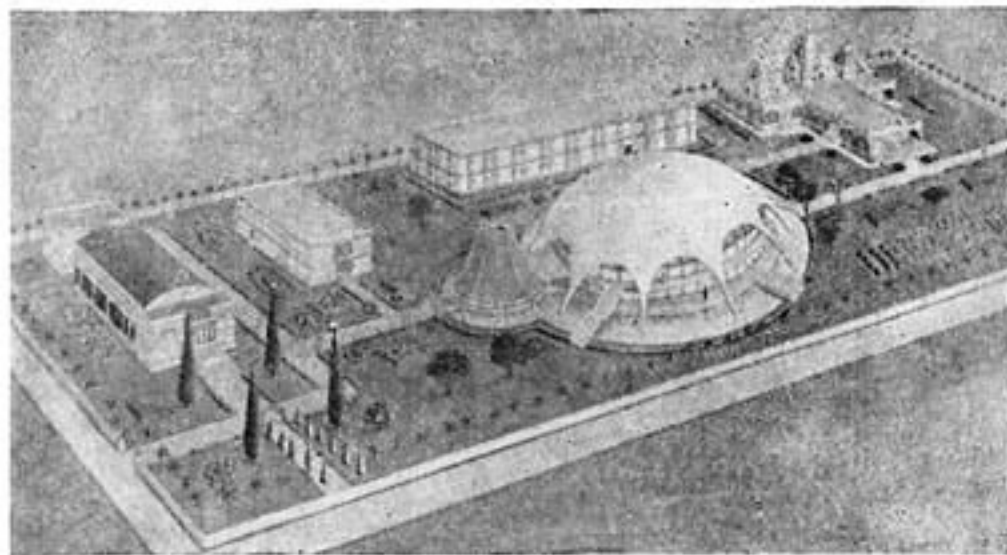


SRI SIVA BALA YOGI

*spiritual
essence
and
luminescence*

The modest building housing the Sri Siva Bala Yogi Maharaj Ashram on the Bannerghatta Road, where His Holiness arrived on August 7, 1963 after camping at Nandi and Doddaballapur between April and June, could not contain the swelling numbers of devotees and disciples over the years.

A casual visit by the Swamiji to a vacant plot neighbouring the Jayanagar Ninth Block and the community site allotted by the Bangalore Development Authority for an Ashram complex happened to be identical. As the first phase of the campus, a building of about 20,000 sq-ft area has come up.



Artist's visualisation of the spiritual campus of Sri Siva Bala Yogi Maharaj Ashram in Sarakki Layout, Bangalore.

Located on the south-east corner of the site is the impressive structure (extreme left in the picture), The International Centre for Indian Culture. The Dhyana Hall has the biggest shell-roof in India with two side-balconies. On the ground floor are a library and ten meditation cells for Sadhakas.

Of the four main features of the Rs. one-crore master plan will be the Dhyana Collage, a central circular building of 100 ft. diameter. A Brahma - Vishnu - Maheswara Temple, a Kalyan Mantap and a school building besides amenities are part of the plan. A 'Mahadwara' will also be put up.

Sri Siva Bala Yogi Maharaj was born in the village, Adivarapupeta near the celebrated shrine of Draksharama (East Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh) on January 24, 1935. His parents Bheemanna and Pervathamma named the child, Satyaraju. On the death of his father the burden of looking after the family fell on his young shoulders, and he was plying a small shop.



On August 7, 1949 noon when he was playing with friends, Satyaraju chanced to pick up a palm fruit from a tree on the banks of the Godavari

Manching a bunch of palmyra fruit with his palm on the sandy bank of a river canal in East Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh one sultry August afternoon, a 14-year-old-boy was suddenly overcome with an out-of-the-world feeling of exaltation. The teenager saw an immense flash of light, heard a monosyllabic vibration and quivered all over. The strange experience ended the career as a petty shop-keeper of Satyaraju, the independent-spirited lad of Adivarapupeta, a hamlet of weavers, about 18 miles from the coastal town of Kakinada. For 12 years from then on August 1949-the world outside did not exist for Satyaraju and he sat down to a rigorous exercise in self-realisation, braving the inclemency of man, animal, reptile and nature. —Deccan Herald

canal outside the village. As he held the fruit in his hand, Divine Consciousness suddenly shone before him and he was urged to take to penance





to actualise this presence. He was 14 years and six months old then. From then on, the young lad practised severe penance for 12 long years, uninterrupted and it was completed in a small cell, which is now the well-known Dhyana Mandir.

Sri Swamiji abstained from even milk for over a year and did not get up from his seat for 15 months. During this phase, Tapasviji Maharaj visited him and initiated him in the 'Suryamantra' for success in the penance.

Shastric injunctions enjoin on a Yogi during the 'Yuga parva' to do tapas facing each of the four directions in turn. The tapas in a particular direction is continued till 'siddhi' is attained. The Bala Yogi gained siddhi of Suryamantra on Karthika poornima of 1954.

Years later, Sri Swamiji recalled the experience: 'It is possible in a state of Samadhi to travel to Surya Mandal and return alive.' Aspirants for such an experience are cautioned to strive for Atma Jnana (self-knowledge) and strive to know themselves, their True Nature. This alone brings peace to the world.



Different stages of the severe penance. First picture shows the Yogi three months after the commencement; second one, a year later.





Swami completed his 12-year-long penance on August 7, 1961. His mother, Parvathamma, who fully recognised the greatness of her son, looked after his creature comforts during this period. She was a source of constant encouragement and support for him. It was by her active co-operation that the penance was successfully completed. She passed away in Bangalore on June 15, 1976.



Penance over, Swami founded his first Ashram at Adivarapupeta to minister to the spritual needs of the devotees who began to gather round him. He installed in the Dhyan Mandir a Siva Linga (brought from Narmada River) and an icon of Parvathi (sculpted in Mysore), on February 2, 1962 Mahasivaratri).



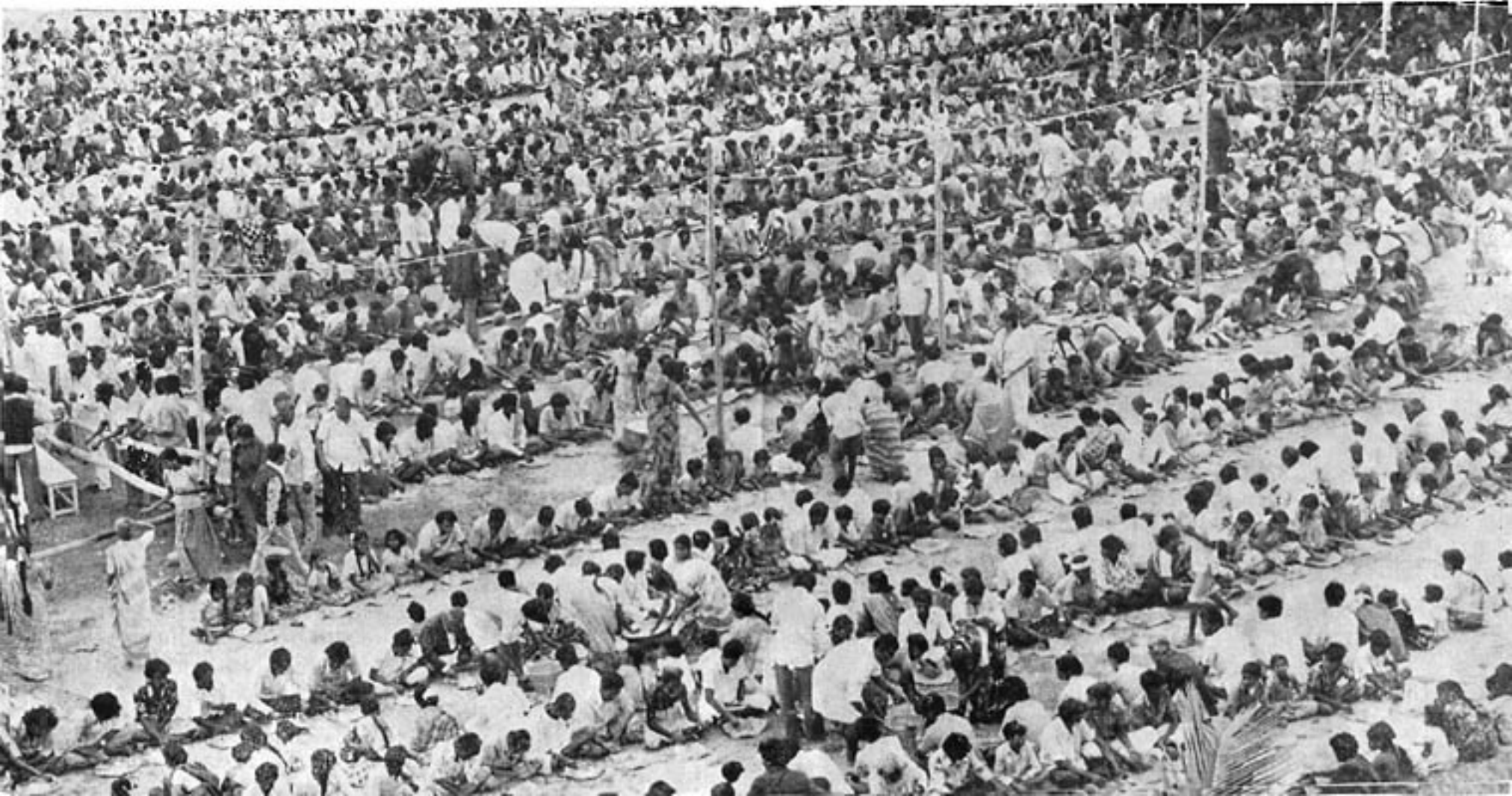
Swamiji moved out of Adivarapupeta on March 21, 1963, and passing through Kakinada, Madras and Nandi Hills (where Tapasviji Maharaj had established his ashrams), he arrived in Bangalore. The Ashram on Bannerghatta Road was established on August 7, 1963 where one year penance from July 24, 1968 and two spells of tapas of 40-day each in 1965 and 1971 for 'desh-raksha' were done. It became the chief centre of activities.

'Anna daan', gift of food, has become part of our heritage. Giving food to devotees and disciples has occupied a special place in spiritual ministrations by Swamiji. Mass feeding has become a regular feature of Sri Swamiji's Ashram from the early days of his tapas.

Explaining his particular fondness for feeding his devotees, Sri Swamiji says that prolonged tapas generates intense heat in a yogi's body; by 'anna daan' this heat is neutralised to a considerable extent, as a result of which the yogi experiences great peace and satisfaction.

Just as the fire of hunger in an individual is appeased by food intake, the consuming fire of tapas in a yogi is appeased by the food offering partaken by him through innumerable people. For, the yogi looks upon all creation as only a manifestation of his own Atman (self).

Thousands of devotees partake of prasadam twice a year, marking the annual celebration of the completion of the 12-year penance and of Swamiji's birthday, at Adivarapupet, Bangalore and Dehra Dun.





Devotees in bhajan with Swamiji amidst them



Padapuja by a devout family in Bangalore



Devotees initiated into 'Dhyana' (meditation) by Sri Swamiji come into direct contact with the Divine presence in themselves. They enter into various states of spiritual exaltation





Swamiji guides them in channelising this great power of contact. They experience remarkable moods of absorption and ecstasy.



The unique method of 'Dhyana' evolved by Swamiji helps liberate the devotees of inhibiting influences in life and take them along the path of spiritual progress. The state of trance ('punaka') the devotees get into is, in fact, the manifestation of the spiritual powers of Sri Swamiji.





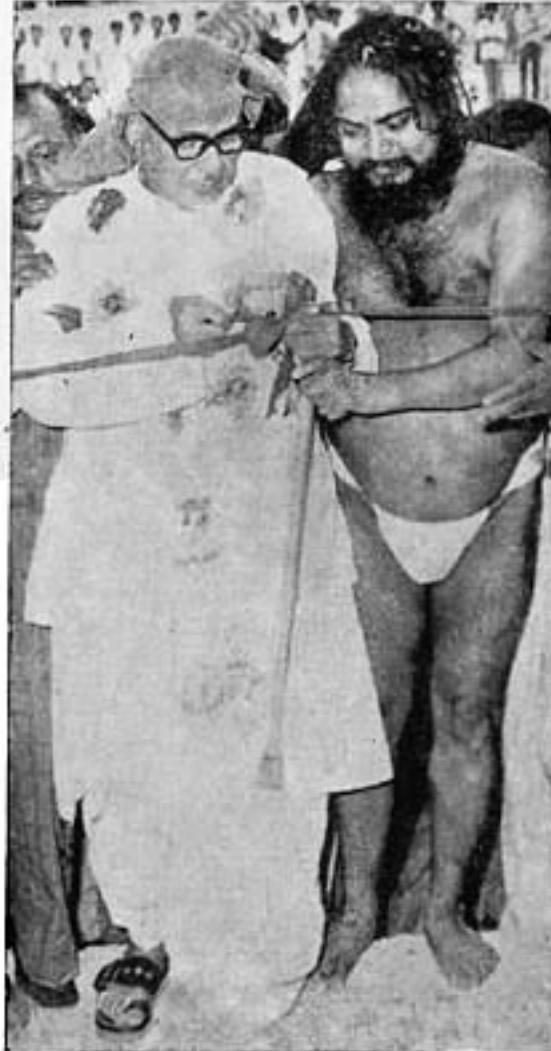
Sri Swamiji seated at the Asokavana during his visit to Sri Lanka



Sri Swamiji seen against a background of rolling hill slopes on his way to the Ashrama in Sri Lanka



Sri Tapasviji Maharaj, was a great saint and was known as 'Kalpacharya' (adept in rejuvenation practices). He lived for 185 years before he entered Mahasamadhi on October 12, 1955. Visiting Sri Siva Bala Yogi at Adivarapupeta in January 1951, he foresaw the spiritual greatness of the young Yogi and proclaimed it to the world. He also directed that the Dhyana Mandir be built for the Yogi.



The International Centre for Indian Culture in Sarakki Layout in Bangalore was declared open by Sri Raj Narain former Union Health Minister on August 7, 1977.

The mission of Sri Swamiji is to initiate and guide sadhakas essentially on the path of Dhyana Yoga. Practice unfolds theory and sadhaka acquires understanding of spiritual truths. Sri Siva Bala Yogi Ashrams have been opened in different parts of India and in Sri Lanka.

Main Ashrams :

Adivarapupeta (Adi Ashrama); Diaksharama P. O. East Godavari (Andhra Pradesh)

Bangalore : Bannerghatta Road and Sarakki Lay-out.

Branch Ashrams : India

Balangir (Orissa); Dehra Dun and Agra (U. P.) Sambhar Lake (Rajasthan); Ananthapur; Hindpur, Hyderabad and Rotalpuri (Andhra Pradesh) and Doddaballapur

Abroad : Nuwara Eliya; Colombo, Sri Lanka.



The International Centre for Indian Culture is the focal point for dissemination of Indian culture to the peoples of the world with no creed or sex bar. The imposing structure housing the Centre is part of a Rs. 1 crore master complex with a central circular building for the Dhyana College, the Trimurthi Temple, a kalyan mantap and a school building. The ICIC is unique in architecture with the biggest shell-roof span in India. The dhyana-bhajan-darshan hall seats 1500 people.

