

My interactions with Swami Lakshmithathachar



Looking back over the years

by - M.A.N.Prasad

Publishers

Palalli Narayana Iyengar Charities

**G-004, RMV Clusters Ph. II, Devi nagar, Lottegollana halli,
Bangalore -560 094**

Author's Note



This book is the outcome of a nostalgic journey. It is recalling the interaction with a scholar, a researcher, a brilliant thinker and an Acharya. It was my good fortune that I got the opportunity to work closely with such a person.

This book covers largely the areas in which I interacted with Swami Lakshmithathachar and perhaps leaves out many other areas of his activities, which were very vast indeed. The incidents are covered briefly without going into details.

- **M.A.N.Prasad**

Bangalore
July 2021

Our Acharya

Swami Lakshmithathachar was the Acharya of our family. He hailed from a family which was the direct descendants of Ananthalwan – the disciple of Ramanujacharya and one of the seventy four Peethadhipathis appointed by Sri Ramanujacharya. The legend says that once while speaking on Tiruvoimozhi, Ramanujacharya asked his disciples if anyone would volunteer to go to Tirumala and offer pushpa kankarya to the Lord. Though a huge number of disciples were present, no body volunteered. This was because, the weather at Tirumala was oppressive, and it was surrounded by forest full of wild animals. Slowly, Ananthalwan stood up and said that if his Guru ordained him so, he would be willing to go. Ramanujacharya was greatly pleased and called him "Ananthalwan Aan Pillai" – which in Tamil means 'Ananthalwan is the he man'. This name stuck on and Ananthalwan Aan Pillai became 'Anandanpillai'. Ananthalwan and his successors were known as Anandanpillais.

Ananthalwan went to Tirumala and established a pushpa vana and offered daily pushpa kankarya to Lord Venkateshwara there. There are many legends about Ananthalwan and Lord Venkateshwara, which are fascinating.

From the time of Ananthalwan, Swami Lakshmithathachar's family, generation after generation, has been acharyas propagating Shrivaisnavism. They have been great scholars of Ubhaya Vedanta, Samskrita and have authored many valuable books.

Though hailing from such a traditional background, Swami Lakshmithathachar was very open minded, receptive to new ideas, tech savvy and was involved in a lot of research. I had the good fortune of interacting with him in some of these areas closely. I wish to share with the reader my experiences with this great scholar.

Swami Comes to Mumbai

Apart from being our family's Acharya, Swami Lakshmithathachar was also related to me from my father's side. But somehow, since we had moved out of Bangalore, there was no occasion to interact with him.

When we were in Bombay, we used to come to Bangalore on a Holiday every year. On one such trip, I had gone to visit a relative and they had switched on their TV. There was an interview or talk of Swami Lakshmithathachar on the TV. I watched the programme in their house and was greatly impressed.

At that time I was the Secretary of the Mysore Association at Mumbai. There, we used to invite an eminent personality each year to deliver 3 lectures under their Golden Jubilee Endowment given to the Kannada Department of University of Bombay. It occurred to me that we could invite Swami Lakshmithathachar to deliver lectures under that endowment. When I returned to Mumbai, I discussed this with our Committee Members, as also the Head of the Department of Kannada at the University of Bombay. Every one readily agreed to my suggestion. Further, everyone felt that with such an eminent authority on Srivaishnavism coming to deliver the lectures, the topic should be Srivaishnavism.

Contacting Swami Lakshmithathachar was very difficult. He was very busy at the Academy of Sanskrit Research or was travelling around. Without the confirmation from Swami, we were in a quandary. I was constantly trying to contact Swami and get a confirmation. After quite some time I was informed that Swami would be coming to deliver the lecture series in January 2003. The dates for the lectures were decided as 19th and 20th of January 2003. We then got busy with organizing things.

We wanted his visit to be utilized to the maximum. Other than the Mysore Association, we got some of the Srivaishnava organizations and educational institutions involved and drew up a week long programme for him. Apart from the lectures at the Mysore Association, the programme included talks at Ahobila Mutt Temple, Krishna Sabha, Somayya College and visit to Venkateshwara temple at Fanaswadi, etc.

Initially Swami had plans to arrange for his stay at the Swaminarayan temple. But later he learnt that there was some repair / reconstruction work going on there and therefore staying there was not possible. One of his students called me up and conveyed that in view of this development Swami wants me to arrange for his stay at Ahobila Mutt. I spoke to the Ahobila Mutt authorities. They were very happy to have him as their guest.

They were quite excited and started preparing to receive him. I started getting calls from them regarding the details of the arrangements to be made for his stay. They had rooms on the second floor with no lift facility. The rooms had no cots. They wanted to know if this would do for him. Should they arrange for beddings? What were his preferences in terms of food, etc.? I did not know the answer to these queries and told them I would speak to Swami and revert. I spoke to him and he was so very simple about it. He had no problems with room on second floor. No need for cot or bed. Providing a mat would be sufficient. No need for any arrangement for food, a little prasadam of the temple would be sufficient. I conveyed these details to them.

Finally, Swami arrived in Mumbai and the week long programme went off very well. The lectures at the Association as well as the other programmes were well attended and well participated.

After Swami's talk at Ahobila Mutt, my book – an English translation of 'Tirupallandu' was released by Swami. For a long time the printing of this book was getting delayed as there were

portions in Tamil and the printer did not know Tamil. When Swami's trip to Mumbai was finalized we thought that we should utilize this opportunity and get him to release the book. As luck would have it, everything worked out smoothly and we got the book printed just in time. In fact, the printing of the book had earlier been delayed for such silly reasons that till the book got printed and delivered on the previous night, I had not informed anybody of the planned release the next day.

Dr.Ganesh Upadhyay, the Head of Kannada Department at the University of Mumbai interviewed Swami Lakshmithathachar and it was published in 'Nesaru' the magazine of the Mysore Association.

My interaction with Swami Lakshmithathachar started.

Our visit to Melukote

We were both busy in our own activities. The book Tirupallandu was distributed by an organization called Ramanuja Mission. They had a sizeable membership and they mailed a copy to each of them. The book was well received and many people wrote appreciating the book. This encouraged us to come out with our second publication – Tiruppavai.

By this time I was in touch with Swami Lakshmithathachar and I requested him to write a foreword for Tiruppavai. He readily obliged and mailed it to me. So the necessary preparatory works were done and the printing of the book was taken up.

The release of the book was fixed for 19th may 2003 by the Distributors - Ramanuja Mission. Sri. V.Ranganathan, retired I A S officer, and Chief Advisor of K.J.Somayya Trust was the Chief Guest who released the book. Prof.H.S.Srinivas spoke about the book. The function was well organized by Prof. N.S.Iyengar of Ramanuja Mission. It was well attended and many people purchased the book after the function.

Towards the end of the year, at the invitation of Swami, we made a trip to Melukote. We visited the Academy of Sanskrit Research. Swami took us round and explained us the various activities being carried out there. We had a look at the huge collection of manuscripts. We bought some of the publications brought out by them. We went to the temples and other places. It was a very enlightening and satisfying trip.

I started translating Ramanujacharya's Gadyatrayam into English. Initial job was to read the work by various authors so that I could get a hang of the subject. In the meanwhile, we planned a trip to U.S.A. around August 2004. My son, who went there to do his M.S and Ph.D, had later got into a job there. We wanted to visit him. We planned to return after 3-4 months.

We returned to India in December 2004. I came to now that Swami is no more connected with Academy of Sanskrit Research. He had started few years back an organization called Samskruti Foundation at Mysore. He continued his research activities under this organization.

My son's marriage took place in May 2005, at Bangalore. We all came for that. Swami attended the wedding and blessed the young couple.

We had planned to wind up our set up in Mumbai and move to Bangalore. We had to undo three decades of social and professional contact, bid farewell to innumerable friends and start afresh at Bangalore.

We moved to Bangalore in end of 2005.

More interaction

There were more opportunities to be in contact with Swami, now that we were in Bangalore. We were in touch with each other and whenever Swami came to Bangalore, he used to inform me

so that we could meet. He used to tell me about the areas he was working on, developments, etc. during such meets. He was quite busy and required assistance in making notes or documenting things. I used to help him often in this area.

Once he asked me to edit a book authored by his wife. It was a book on Melukote titled "Melukote – An Introduction". Sri. M.A.Singlachar had translated it into English. Possibly, Swami was not very happy with it and wanted me to edit it. He mailed me the text and as desired by him I edited it. It got subsequently printed and Swami wanted my name to be put in it as Editor. I told him that it is not necessary but he insisted and had my name added.

This book is a concise one giving details of various places in Melukote, as also the legendary background of various places. It is a very useful companion for those who visit Melukote. I understand that this book has now been translated to other languages also and published.

Sometime later, Swami asked me to edit his book on Ramanuja titled "Sri Ramanuja - Life & Philosophy". This was a book written by Swami Lakshmithathachar and his son Dr. Alwar. It dealt with the philosophy of Ramanuja. I was surprised that he has asked me to edit that book. What editing could I do to a book authored by two eminent scholars like him and Alwar? So, I asked him if I could make changes in that text. He said go ahead and do whatever is necessary. Imagine being given such a free hand to edit and correct the text. I edited it and emailed the corrected text to him.

After some time the book was released. I was surprised to read in it an acknowledgement reading as under:

"Sri.M.A.N.Prasad is a scholar and connoisseur in his own right. After successfully serving in industry for many decades in Mumbai, he has now settled in Bangalore, supporting and

initiating many cultural and philanthropic causes. He has also founded the 'Kala-Premi Foundation' that is promoting the cause of religion and fine arts among the masses. He has given many valuable suggestions in the preparation of this publication after going through the entire text in detail. We express our sincere thanks to him and request him to continue to guide us in all possible ways."

Vishva Vaishnava Seva Pratisthana

Swami had been to Alwar in Rajasthan, at the invitation of a spiritual leader of that place. Appreciating the high standard of Sanskrit learning in South, he wanted to have a student exchange programme so that the Sanskrit learning there could be improved. Swami travelled to a few other places around. He noticed that Vaishnavism was quite popular there. Some discussion on creating a Vaishnava organization appears to have taken place there. On his return, I met him at Bangalore. He explained to me about the concept and wanted me to draw a structure of such an international Vaishnava organization. I started working and soon we had thrown up a lot of ideas on how and what we should do.

Broadly the organization would be as under:

Name of the Organization: Vishva Vaishnava Seva Pratishtana

Objective:

- a. To promote a greater awareness of the catholicity and universal nature of Srivaishnavism, which can be adopted as a system of life irrespective of caste, creed, religion, sex, social status, etc.?
- b. To promote the rich quality and excellence in all walks of life brought about by the Srivaishnava way of living.
- c. To promote greater interaction among the devotees in different parts of the country / world.
- d. To propagate:

- i. The rich contribution of the works of Azhwars and other Vaishnava saints to bhakti movement and understanding of spiritual matters, by translating these works into other languages and popularizing them.
 - ii. The Agama way of worship and temple practices.
 - iii. The learning / teaching of Vedic scriptures and Tamil Divya Prabhandhams through:
 - Opening schools
 - Introducing student exchange programmes
 - Visiting faculty of Ubhaya Vedanta scholars
 - Translations of texts into Hindi and other Languages
 - Multimedia presentations
 - iv. To employ all tools of modern technology to achieve excellence in the above mentioned communication and propagation.
 - v. To draw up a perspective of the propagation plan covering the next 25 years.
- e. Create Resource Centers on Srivaishnavism at various points with the view of providing authentic reference materials and information on Srivaishnavism and Bhakti movement.
- f. To bring in harmony among all Srivaishnavas by highlighting the concepts of bhakti, surrender and compassion.
- g. To promote mutual interaction and support among Vaishnava sects and build a greater awareness of their mutually complementary nature.

- h. To have Chapters of the organization in each country with branches / units at the State / Regional levels in each of them.
- i. To involve in any other activity that will promote the above objectives

A Hindi version of the same was also prepared.

Quite some efforts were put in to create such an organization but the organization did not materialize.

The land at Srirangapatna

Swami had a plot of land measuring about 2.5 acres by the riverside at Srirangapatna. He wanted to brainstorm with some of his shishyas regarding the activities that could be taken up at this place. About a dozen shishyas of Swami were invited to the meeting. Sri Natampally Narasimhan co-ordinated the meeting and I presented the Curtain Raiser. The concluding session was by Swami. The suggestions made could be classified as:

- i. Take up activities connected with
 - Spiritual growth/ Spiritual need
 - Teaching Pranayama, Meditation & Stress Mgmt
 - Personality development
 - Research on / reinterpretation of ancient texts
- ii. Target Audience
 - Young Children & their parents
 - Teachers
 - NRI's & Locals
- iii. The Modus Operandi and the support system should include:
 - Vedic Resort / Ashram

- Week end / Sabbatical getaways
- Residential pattern essential
- Focus on Higher learning/ distance learning
- Build up a good library
- Create a Chair for each faculty sponsored by Industry Leaders
- Design the project to be self-supporting
- Need for Packaging and Presenting well.
- Consider management courses at a later stage.

Based on the above views, we started working out projects / plans. One of the concepts that appealed to us was that of "Sanathana Gyana Ashrama"- A retreat where one could lead a simple life based on our ancient values, close to nature and away from the humdrum of city life. It would provide a welcome change to city dwellers. It would provide an experience of living according to the traditional Indian customs.

Young children, both Indians and NRI's, could see and appreciate the Indian traditional ways of life.

The promotional folder we prepared for this ashram was like this:

सनातन ज्ञानाश्रमं
Sanatana Gyana Ashramam



The Fountainhead of Indian Wisdom
Brings the best of both the worlds
through programmes
on
Management and Self Development

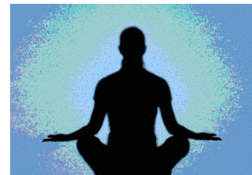


Set in the sylvan surroundings on the bank of river Cauveri near Srirangapatana, the Sanatana Gyana Ashramam offers short term residential courses on Management and Self Development, integrating the timeless wisdom from our great scriptures with the current needs and not only equips you better to handle the stressful life style, but also makes your life more meaningful by enriching your personality.

Spread out on a 2.5 acre land, away from the noise, pollution and humdrum of city life, by the side of the river, amidst the green, natural and peaceful atmosphere is the Sanatana Gyana Ashramam located. It has a couple of cottages for the visiting guests to stay.

and other infrastructures like the lecture halls, meditation halls, library, etc. The focus is not on luxury, but on a Spartan life style, with the basic needs & comfort and a Satvik cuisine. The courses are so designed that they promote a change in one's life style from the "busy executive eternally short of time" to a "relaxed person totally in command of what he wants to do".

A typical day at these courses begins with rising at 5.30 in the morning and learning yoga / suryanamaskaram followed by a walk in the sylvan surroundings. After bath etc, and assembling at the Meditation Hall for a brief prayer, proceeding for break fast at 9.30 a.m.. The sessions start at 9.00 a.m. and goes on till 5.00 p.m. In the evening, before dinner, there will be a lecture on some of the aspects of Indian culture, art, literature, Shastras etc., followed by meditation. The well stocked library and eminent members of the faculty help the interested members to know greater details. Pursuit of knowledge is greatly encouraged through group discussions and debates in these courses.



Initially the following courses are being offered, which will give you an idea of the Ashram's activities:

Course	Duration
1 Management Development Programme	3 Weeks
2 Management Insights from our scriptures	1 Week
3 Personality Development & Bhagawadgita	1 Week
4 Focus on Excellence in our Ancient Systems	1 Week
5 The Complete Manager (Result Oriented, Humane & Knowledgeable)	1 Week
6 An Introduction to Vedas & Upanishads	2 Weeks
7 An Introduction to Divyaprabandhams	2 Weeks
8 Trusteeship and Creation of Wealth	1 Week
9 Motivation & Bhagawadgita	1 Week



The infrastructure

Twenty rooms on twin sharing basis, a lecture hall, a meditation hall and other service facilities will be created.

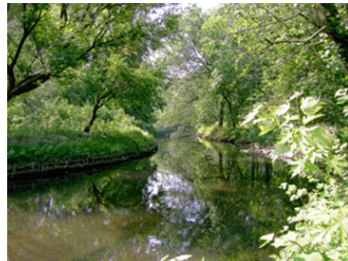
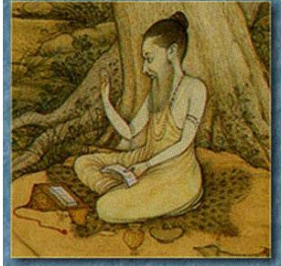
The entire land will be suitably landscaped and developed retaining its natural beauty and animals like deer, cattle, etc will be reared.

A pick up and drop service will be made available for participants to reach the Ashram from the nearest airport or railway station.



The Faculty

Eminent members from the stream of Management studies as well as from the stream of traditional Indian learning will be invited to be on the faculty. In addition we shall also invite eminent research scholars, industrialists and business men as guest speakers. The concept is to bring together the best and synergize the results.



The Management

Sanatana Gyana Ashrama is a Registered Charitable Trust promoted by Prof. M.A.Lakshmithathachar, who is an eminent Scholar and has headed many research projects. Other eminent members of the Trust are:

The objective of this Trust is to preserve and propagate the wisdom in our ancient scriptures by blending the current knowledge with the ancient wisdom to bring about a synergy, thus enhancing our capabilities and sensitivities. Being a non-profit organization, Sanatana Gyana Ashrama will plough back its surplus funds, if any, into improving its infrastructure and providing greater service towards its objectives.

The Project

Prof. M.A. Lakshmithathachar owns the land where the project is proposed and has been kind enough to allow the Trust to use this land for the project. The erection of the required buildings, furnishing and other requirements are estimated to cost around Rs.75 lakhs. The Trust is appealing to philanthropic individuals and corporations to help them in this noble cause with suitable donations and sponsorships.

Sanatana Gyana Asharama

No. 142, 1st Floor
K.R.Mohalla
Mysore—570 024
Tel:
Web:



We also worked out the details of various short term programmes and their course contents.

The project did not progress any further.

Gadyatrayam

Around the end of 2006, I had almost finished my translation of Gadyatrayam. Our friends who had come home from Mumbai asked me what I was writing. When I told them that my translation of Gadyatrayam was almost ready, they offered to hold its release at Mumbai, in the Mysore Association. I was very happy and accepted their invitation.

I sent the book to Swami for his views and also to write a foreword for it. Swami read the book and had some corrections in it. He felt that the English transliteration, to be easily readable should have dialectic marks or has to be written in the way one writes in Baraha. He suggested that the English transliteration of the Sanskrit text be fully changed into Baraha style. He also had some other suggestions in the text. So it had to be redone. Unfortunately, the time available was very short as we had plans to go to Kolkota and from there to Mumbai and during the period we would be in Mumbai the book's release function was planned. So it was decided that I rewrite and send Swami about twenty pages at a time and he would send it back to me with his corrections and comments. This way we could complete the corrections in time.

Swami went through the book thoroughly and gave his comments and views. He was not very particular about it, but I insisted that we will put "Under the Guidance of U.Ve. Sri Lakshmithathachar".

Another development took place. While the book was almost complete, I accidentally met a friend of mine who was dealing

with marketing CDs and Audio cassettes. While talking, he mentioned about his desire to produce a recording of Gadyatrayam but did not know anyone who could recite it well. He asked me if I know anyone who could recite it well. I was then going to Swami Lakshmithathachar's residence to request him to write a foreword for my book on Gadyatrayam. So I told him that I am going to meet Swami and I will enquire regarding who can recite it. I enquired with Swami and he said that he, Alwar and quite a few others could recite it. I promptly reported this to my friend. He wanted to know if Swami's voice was good for recording. I told him that I am not aware of that. He can meet Swami himself and find out.

He met Swami, was impressed with his voice and decided to go ahead and plan the recording. This gave me an idea. Why not bring out an audio CD with the book. It would help people to learn reciting Gadyatrayam and also add to the range of products we have produced. We discussed about this and felt that the CD should be in a learner's mode – that is, Swami will recite a few lines and it will be repeated by a learner again. We were to leave for Kolkota. So I requested my friend to organize the recording and send a few CDs to Mumbai in time for the release.

Once I reached Mumbai, I got busy with printing of the book in time planned for its release. It meant sitting with Aarati Printers and getting the matter set in the page maker, etc. The book was printed and ready in time. We also received the CDs recorded and despatched from Bangalore. The CD was recited by Swami and well known singer Ms. Manasi Prasad.

The book was released at a function held at the Mysore Association, by Prof. Ramesh Dave, Director of Anantharya Indological Research Institute, Mumbai. Few lines from the CD were played to give the audience a glimpse of its content. Prof Dave appreciated the book and prised the author for the good work done. Shri A. Bharadwaj, a research scholar from the same

institute spoke about the book in Kannada. The function was a big success.

More Activities and Inauguration of Virtual Academy of Ancient Knowledge

Swami used to ask me to accompany him to various meetings and document / make notes on the discussions that took place. So I attended meetings on various subjects, and in the process learnt a lot of things.

Swami took me along with him to a conference titled "Vedic Sciences and their relevance to Modern thought" at Ved Vignan Maha Vidya Peeth at Bangalore. This institution is promoted by Acharya Ratnananda, the father of Sri Sri Sri Ravishankar. Around 40 scholars were assembled there and they were discussing on preserving and digitalising the old manuscripts on science. Swami was the prime speaker at the meet. The material they distributed at the conference contained brief details of various scientific works like Soudamini Kala, Akasha Tantram, Loha Tantram, Shakti Tantram, Aswa Chikits Sastram, Amsu Bodhini, garudam etc.

Mandayam Srivaishnava Sabha used to often seek Swami's guidance for various traditional activities. He gave suggestions like building a Mandayam Wikipedia, Mandayam Genological Table, creating a Digital Library of Mandayam author's books, etc. Meetings were held on each of these subjects and detailed suggestions were drawn up.

I recall an incidence. Swami was speaking to me over the phone. The topic was contributions of our community members to literature and philosophy. He pointed out that in the absence of an organized library, we may not know about the community's contribution or get a chance to go through the book, or refer to it. Talking of the large number of books authored by the community members, he started enumerating the authors and

their works over the phone. He must have easily reeled off some 100 titles, off the cuff.

The Vidyarthi Nilayam at Mysore was being reconstructed as it was very old and beyond repairs. At one of the meeting to update members on the progress of the Vidyarthi Nilayam, Swami Lakshmithathachar made a power point presentation on "The Pride of Mandayam Srivaishnava Community" to the members. Starting from the etymology of the word Mandayam, he went on to explain the contribution of the community to various fields of activity. The presentation was received very well by the gathering.

Once, Swami showed me a copy of the manuscript on 'Sri Vachana Bhushanam' of Pillai Lokacharya. It was the compilation made by a member from Burudu family. Swami said that this gentleman was working in the postal department and the manuscript was the result of what he had heard in the various lectures he had attended. Swami suggested that I translate it into English. The manuscript was quite massive in size. I took the manuscript and started translating. After covering a few pages I realized that it had too many cross references. Since it was based on a lecture, it had some amount of repetitiveness. It was well written in Kannada and I felt that translating it into English is pointless. I suggested to Swami that it could be published as such in Kannada. Swami felt that portions of the original text could be combined with it, to make it more meaningful and then published. We suggested that it be published jointly by Samskriti Foundation and Palalli Narayana Iyengar Charities.

Around this time we started an organization called "The Kala Premi Foundation". Its objective was to promote greater awareness and appreciation about art and culture. Swami attended the inaugural function of Kala Premi. Sometime later we requested him to conduct a Lecture Demonstration on Gana

Yoga. Swami spoke about how music has been an inseparable part of our life and how it has influenced the human mind. He cited references from ancient texts to support his statements. Vidushi Lata Ananth set the select portions of these texts into music and rendered them. This was followed by a concert of Vid. Latha Ananth. Discerning music lovers felt that the Lecdem was unique.

Swami organized seminars on Manuscriptology and National Sanskrit Festivals at Iskcon Auditorium, Bangalore. I attended these well-organized events. In one such National Sanskrit Festival, eminent scholars and participants felt the need to establish a virtual academy which would have a global access and would promote the awareness, study and research on Ancient Indian Knowledge systems. They further felt that Samskriti Foundation which has been involved in similar activities for over a decade now should take the lead in creating such an academy.

Responding to this need expressed by many, Swami established "Virtual Academy of Ancient Knowledge" under the umbrella of Samskruti Foundation. This organization is devoted to promoting greater awareness of ancient systems, promote research and offer academic courses in the area of ancient Indian knowledge systems. It had an eminent panel of Management and Swami wanted me to be its Secretary. The organization was formally inaugurated at Mysore on 2nd February 2014, at the auditorium of Indus Valley Ayurvedic Centre. Dr. Talavane Krishna of Indus valley Ayurvedic Centre was the Chief Guest.



Swami lighting the lamp



Formal function in progress

Sri Ramanujacharya's millennium

Ramanujacharya's millennium was approaching and Swami wanted to celebrate it in a grand manner. Since the followers of Sri Ramanuja were spread all over the globe, the celebration was to be world over. The concept was to have an apex body which would draw up a plan of activity and it would be implemented by various Srivaishnava organizations. This would promote greater interaction among these organizations also. The various activities we could take up were listed as follows:

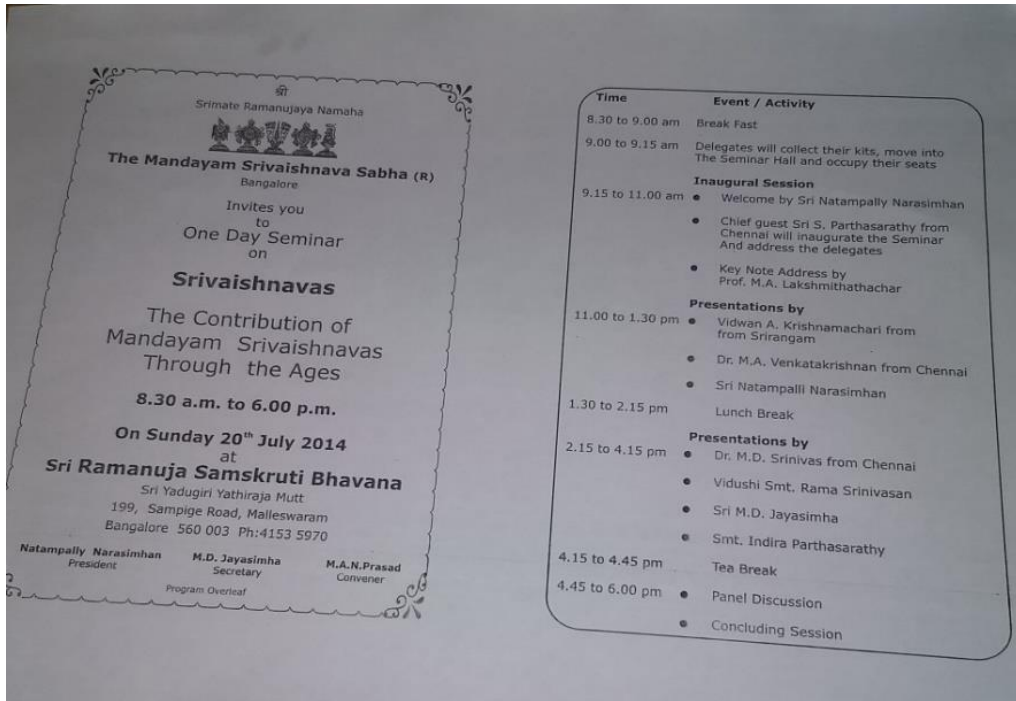
- Highlight the social concern of Ramanujacharya
- Highlight his life and philosophy
- Create Ramanuja Tours – promote conducted tours to places visited by Ramanuja. Display his life and work done by him at that location.
- Create facilities for tourists at these places
- Establish light & sound shows at select locations
- Translate the works on Ramanujacharya into local languages and publish them
- Conduct health camps, Vocational skill camps for the needy and under privileged
- Conduct festivals at the temples, Mutts in which life and philosophy of Ramanujacharya is communicated.

- Any other activity which promotes the above.

An Ad-Hoc committee, with Swami as its President was formed which would form this apex body called "Sri Ramanujacharya Sahasramanotsava Samiti". We felt that we should begin with Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Mutt which was established by Sri Ramanujacharya himself. So Swami organized a meeting of the Managing Committee of Yathiraja Mutt as also Mandayam Srivaishnava Sabha. A presentation of the concept and various activities thought of, was made. Considerable discussions took place. In the end they felt that they would rather stay with the modest celebration of the event. That was a period when the Mutt did not have a Jeeyar and by the time of Ramanujacharya's millennium, the Mutt had a Jeeyar who celebrated the event on a very big scale and in a grand manner.

Mandayam Sabha organizes a Seminar

The presentation made by Swami on "the Pride of Mandayam Community" and the discussions on building a Mandayam Wikipedia, Digital Library, etc. created a desire among members to hold a Seminar in which the contributions of Mandayam Iyengars in various fields could be covered in greater detail. The Mandayam Srivaishnava Sabha sought the guidance of Swami Lakshmithathachar, who had extensive experience in this field to help them with the seminar. Swami agreed to guide them and wanted me to be the Convenor in charge of the seminar.



The date for the seminar was finalized as 20th July 2014 and the topic chosen was "The Contribution of Mandayam Iyengars Through Ages". The speakers in the seminar were finalized. Swami Lakshmithathachar would give the key note address. There would be a panel discussion on "Looking ahead – A vision for future". The lectures were so arranged that initially the contribution of Srivaishnavas would be covered and it would be followed by the contribution of Mandayam Srivaishnavas. Eminent speakers were invited. The Seminar was compered by me. The Seminar proceedings were webcast so that one could see it from anywhere in the world.

The seminar was well attended and well participated. Participants felt that we need to organize more of such events in the days ahead.

VAAK enters into a joint venture with SVCE

Sri Venkateshwara College of Engineering (SVCE), Bangalore was interested in establishing a research unit based on ancient Indian knowledge and approached Virtual Academy of Ancient Knowledge (VAAK) in this regard. The two organizations got

together and a research centre called Centre for Advanced Research in Technology (CART) was set up at the college, to conduct research on all ancient scientific and technical concepts, using modern science and technology.

Research work was started in the areas of water treatment with Tulasi, Vetiver and drumstick for lowering the levels of fluoride in water. Of these three substances vetiver was found to give very promising results in reducing the fluoride levels in water.

Other areas of research were metallurgy, 'Naadi Vignana, encryption based on ancient Indian texts and "Siribhuvalaya", etc.

The VAAK's team consisted of Swami Lakshmithathachar, Dr. Alwar, Dr.Dwarakanath, Dr. M.A.R.Iyengar, Sri M.A.Parthasarathy, Sri. M.G.Narasimhan and myself.

In Naadi Vignana, the pulse felt at the wrist indicates the Vata, Pitta and Kapha levels of the individual. By studying this, the physician is able to diagnose the patient's illness. The aim of the research was to develop an instrumentation which could measure this pulse and build the software which could interpret the readings or waves of the pulse.

In Encryption, various ancient texts were used to create a system of coding and decoding. They were able to create certain coding systems which were effective. They planned to make a presentation of it to DRDE.

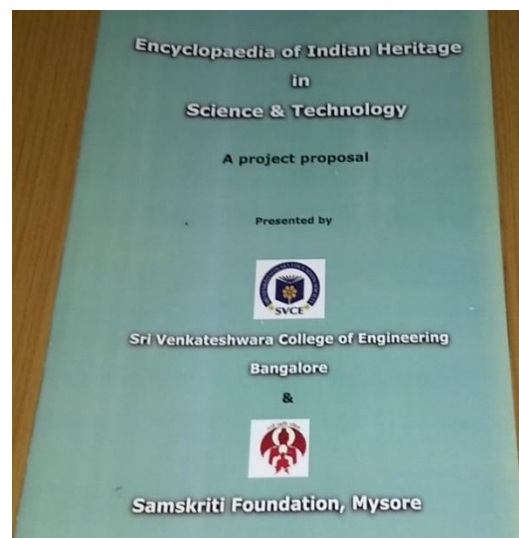
SVCE set up a separate research wing in its premises. Unfortunately there were too many changes due to resignations / job changes etc., leading to disruptions in the work being carried out.

During this period, a project on "Encyclopaedia of The Heritage of Indian Science and Technology" as propounded in Ancient texts in India was submitted to the Karnataka govt. It proposed

to present in twelve volumes a comprehensive picture of Ancient knowledge of science that was prevalent in India.

Since the college had an MBA programme, it was suggested to them to conduct a seminar on "The management principles espoused in our ancient texts".

A newsletter of VAAK called "VAAK-Vilasa" was brought out. Swami was the editor in chief for it and Dr.M.A.R.Iyengar and I were the executive editors. The newsletter was mailed to all research institutions and scientists.



Around this time Svyasa University had built up facilities for measuring various parameters of health and was doing a lot of research work on yoga. It invited Swami Lakshmithathachar to collaborate with their institution and do some research on yoga. We went to their institution to see the facilities they have created and discuss the area in which we could work together.

Later, in the 14th Convocation of Svyasa University, held on 12th January 2017, Swami Lakshmithatachar was conferred a Honorary D.Litt degree. Sri Prakash Javadekar did the honours.

Centenary Celebrations of Mandayam Sabha - Seminar

The year 2016 was the centenary year of Mandayam Srivaishnava Sabha. Its Centenary Celebration Committee,

under the Chairmanship of Sri Natampally Narasimhan, had drawn up a very grandiose plan to celebrate the occasion. One of the events planned was a seminar. I was chosen as the Leader for this activity.

The Seminar was held on 3rd September 2016. As it was our centenary year, we decided to focus on the changes in our life style over the years and chose the subject of the Seminar as "The Sojourn of Mandayam Srivaishnavas - Yesterday Today and Tomorrow". The themes were - the factors that make us proud as a community and the values that we wish to live up to and hand down to our next generation. Based on this, the speakers were given the following topics for presentation:

- Yesterday - Our hoary past that makes us proud
 - Values we have inherited from our elders
- Today - Mandayam Srivaishnavas in various professions
 - Migration to other countries and its impact on our traditions
- Tomorrow - Mandayam Srivaishnavas in the forefront of Technology
 - Need to develop an inclusive outlook retaining The core values of our tradition.

The keynote address was given by Swami Lakshmithathachar and the valedictory address was by Smt. Dwaraki Krishnaswamy. We had members from both India and outside, present papers. This was to get different perspective to the topic. Eminent Mandayams like Dr.M.A.Alwar, Dr.M.P.Srinivasan, Sri. Ram Srinivas, Dr. M.A.R.Iyengar, Dr.M.A.Srinivasan and Dr.M.K.Srivas presented the papers. I was the compere. A booklet on the papers presented was also made available to the members at a later date, through the sponsorship of Palalli M.A.Narayana Iyengar Charities.

The seminar was a grand success and well participated.

National Seminar on Contribution of Vedanta Desika to Mathematics, Science & Technology

Seminar on Ramanuja at NIAS

National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) wanted to conduct a one day Seminar on Ramanuja and approached Samskriti Foundation to join them in this effort. We were happy to join them in this regard.

We had a series of meetings with them and worked out a schedule of things to do. Cost estimates were drawn. But somehow, there were delays and the Seminar did not take place.

To celebrate the 750th year of Sri Vedanta Desika, Samskriti Foundation organized a national seminar on Sri. Vedanta Desika titled "Contribution of Sri. Vedanta Desika to mathematics, Science and Technology" on 24th June 2018, at JRD Auditorium, NIAS, I.I.Sc campus, Bangalore. The Seminar was sponsored by Tata Communications, Singapore, Mysuru Consulting Group and Information Sharing and Analysis Center, Noida.

Valedictory Function
Sunday, 24th June 2018
Time : 4.30 PM

Divine Presence
H.H. Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana-Ramanuja Jeeyar Swami
Pontiff of Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Mutt, Melkote

Valedictory address
Dr. M.N. Venkatachalaiah
Former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India

Chief Guest
Dr. M.S. Vijayaraghavan
Former Advisor, Prime Minister's Office, New Delhi

President
Prof. E.S. Dwarakadasa
Chairman, Organizing Committee, Trustee,
Samskriti Foundation and Former Prof., I.I.Sc, Bengaluru

All are Welcome

Programme

- ▶ Vedic Invocation
- ▶ Introduction & Welcome
- ▶ Seminar Summary
- ▶ Remarks & Observations
- ▶ Valedictory Address
- ▶ Presidential remarks
- ▶ Asirvachanam
- ▶ Vote of Thanks
- ▶ Shanti-patha

Chairman & Members of the Organizing Committee

National Seminar on Contribution of Sri Vedanta Desika to Mathematics, Science & Technology

Date : Sunday, 24th June 2018
Venue : **JRD Tata Auditorium**
National Institute of Advanced Studies
I.I.Sc Campus, Bengaluru

Principal Sponsors :
TATA COMMUNICATIONS

Co-Sponsors :
Mysuru Consulting Group
Mysuru

Information Sharing and Analysis Center, Noida

All are Welcome

Organized by :
Samskriti Foundation (R)
An organization engaged in the preservation and propagation of the Cultural & Scientific Heritage of India
Web: www.samskriti.org, Email: samskriti@hotmail.com

RSVP : Coordinators: 9880156970 / 9900161271
samskriti@hotmail.com

The event was inaugurated Dr. Shailesh Nayak, Director of NIAS. Dr. N. Kannan delivered the Key-Note address. The first technical session was chaired by Prof. M. Vidyasagar FRS. Dr V Kannan,

Dr N Kannan, Dr M. A. Lakshmithathachar, Sri M G Narasimhan and Dr Ranjani Parthasarathy presented papers related to Vedanta Desika and Mathematics, cryptography and semantic analysis.

The second technical session was chaired by Dr. M. S. Vijayaraghavan. Scholars such as Dr V S Karunakaran, Dr M A Alwar and Dr P Narasimhan presented papers related to cognitive sciences, verbal testimony and technology.

In the divine presence of H H Sri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeer Swami of Sri. Yadugiri Yathiraja Mutt, the Valedictory session was held. Prof. S. Ranganathan, NIAS, Bangalore, Prof.S Sadagopan, IIIT Bangalore, Prof.V S Ramamurthy, former Secretary, DST, Govt. of India, Bangalore, Sri. Dushyanth Sridhar, Bangalore gave their valuable remarks about the proceedings. Valedictory Address was given by Hon'ble Justice M N Venkatachaliah, former Chief Justice of India, Bangalore.



Seminar in progress



Swami presenting the memento

I was the Organizing Secretary of this National Seminar. The participants had a high praise for the content and conducting of the seminar.



Swami and Narasimhan presenting Vedanta Desika's contribution to encryption



Swami presenting the memento

Research work at SRVVP

Under the umbrella of Samskriti Foundation Swami Lakshmithathachar had started another organization called Sri Ramanuja Visva Vidya Pratishtana (SRVVP) at Melukote. This organization was conducting research in various areas. It was working on "Jnana Ashwatha – The Knowledge Tree" project. Here the entire knowledge is treated like an inverted tree, starting from the root and ending in branches. It traces how from one source the knowledge branches into various areas. The structure is computer friendly and helps the user travel along the structure easily and get the details.

Apart from such a knowledge tree for various subjects, they have also worked the knowledge tree for "Tiruvaimoli". It gives an overall meaning, word by word meaning and 5 commentaries or tippanies such as Arayirappadi, Ombadanayirappadi, Pannerayirappadi, Irappithanal-ayirappadi, Muppathayirappadi and Jeeyar Arumpadam. They are also in the process of recording these being recited traditionally.

Sri Krishna Katha Sara Sangraha is a prose consists of two volumes written in classical Kannada by Maharaja Sri Krishnaraja Wodeyar. SRVVP is working on a project to convert the manuscript into a machine readable version.

This institution brings out a newsletter called "Yatishwara Sarasvati". I am one of the editors of this publication.



Swami Lakshmithathachar – A multitalented personality

Swami Lakshmithathachar was a multitalented personality. Being a Swayamacharya Purusha, he was well versed in Ubhaya Vedanta. He was an outstanding scholar in Samskrit and was awarded the president's medal. He had guided many students in their pursuit of M.Phil and Ph.D.

Apart from such academic background, he had a lively interest in various fields. He used to apply scientific reasoning to various observations he would come across in the scriptures and experiment with them. His study of this kind was all

encompassing. For example, he experimented with growing a forest under "Rishi Krishi Paddathi". Our scriptures refer to the vana or forest grown in the ashram of various rishis. Did these rishis cultivate them? Possibly, they left it alone and they grew as a natural process. So, Swami experimented by leaving a patch of growth naturally. A portion of its fruits were not harvested and underwent dispersion in the natural process by birds, etc. The result was the growth of a luxurious forest.

In his garden on the outskirts of Melukote, swami experimented with growing vegetables using organic pesticides. Again the results were astounding. He has on many occasions given me the vegetables he has grown there and asked me to use it and give him a feedback.

His experiments produced many products like Ayurvedic drinking water, Ayurvedic mosquito repellent, etc. In fact, this water, which was bottled by a manufacturer, was supplied to all participants at the Seminar held by The Mandayam Srivaishnava Sabha in the year 2014.

Based on the information in some ancient text, he produced a brick. It was tested and found to be complying with the safety standards.

He has developed many software programmes such as self-teaching multimedia packages for Grantha and Sharada scripts, repair of virtual manuscripts, tools for deciphering information from manuscripts, etc. He has developed soft wares like Semusi (Sanskrit noun generation and analysis), Prajna (Sanskrit verb generation and analysis), Cetana (Krudanta generation and Analysis), Panini (Sanskrit sandhi module), Bodha (Sanskrit Sentence Analyser) and Amarakosa (Sanskrit lexicon), etc.

Under his guidance, the Samskriti Foundation has catalogued over 8000 technical manuscripts in a user friendly fashion. It has also compiled over 3500 manuscripts on yoga.

He has edited many publications. The list of volumes edited by him includes many Upanishads, Sriganarathakosa, Melukote through Ages, Science and Technology in India through ages and many more.

Swami was engaged in preservation and conservation of traditional Indian breeds of Cows. I recall that few years back, he was involved with an activity to promote Indian breed of cows at TTD, Tirupati. We had collected a lot of details for making posters for an exhibition at the event.

He has held many important positions like:

- Member, Academic Council, & Visiting Professor, VYASA University, Bangalore.
- Senior Honorary Advisor, FRLHT, A centre of excellence under the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Bangalore.
- Member, Governing Council and Chief Advisor, TVS Chef Training Institute, Tumkur.
- Member, Academic Council, & Visiting Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Advanced Studies, Hyderabad

Swami Lakshmithathachar was trained in Indian classical music also.

Melukote was famous for its weaving industries and the dhotis it produced. He was once telling me that he was trying to revive the weaving industry there. His driver was from a family of weavers and swami was trying to understand the problems through him and suggest him solutions to try out.

He had the unique ability to connect a vague / rare reference in an ancient text to a modern scientific concept and experiment on it.

In conclusion

Some time back, I was not well and was hospitalized. When I was back home, he came to see me and said that I would be

alright and fully recovered in due course. I was accordingly fully recovered. One day he called me over the phone and enquired if I had the working we had done for "Vishwa Vaishnava Seva Pratishtana". I said that it should be there in my computer. He wanted me to send it to him as someone had requested for the same.

A few days later I got his call again. He wanted me to edit a monograph on Zinc. I did that and it was followed by another on copper.

Some time back I had translated Bhagavad Gita into English. It was a simple translation of each shloka into a couplet in English. I wanted to publish it now and requested Swami to write a foreword for it. He very gladly agreed and wanted me to send him the manuscript. There was something to be added to that and I thought of doing it before sending it to him. I was yet to send him the manuscript, but it turned out to be too late.

In my association with Swami Lakshmithathachar, I have learnt a lot, met many accomplished people, and interacted with leading scientists, and so on. It has been a very memorable experience.