



VEERASHAIVA SAMAJA OF NORTH AMERICA

June 2006

VSNA Quarterly Newsletter

www.vsna.org

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From the Desk of President ...

Dear VSNA Member,

I wish you and your family a Happy Summer! In this edition, I would like to discuss about VSNA Convention, New Member Kit and Financial Health of VSNA



As you all know, we are heading for VSNA National Convention 2006 on Cruise. We are getting good responses from members and good support from our partner – Maharaja Cruise. Our ship will be sailing on June 29th and return back on July 2nd. We have great program planned including Anubhava Ghosti, Main function, Swamiji's speeches and great entertainment program by Maharaja. We are also planning for next VSNA Conventions. I have asked few chapters to host next year convention and chapters are in the process of finalizing it.

There was a need for VSNA material like Value proposition and roadmap of VSNA. We developed a CD and distributed to all Chapter Presidents. Some chapters used the CD and presented in their Chapter meetings. We are also developing "New Member Kit" under the leadership of Mr. Vijay Gowda from NJ. He has completed the design and it is getting into printing press soon. We expect to distribute to all Chapters within a month.

We have currently invested around \$300,000 in Mutual funds like Oppenheimer, AIM, Allber etc and around \$80,000 in Money Market accounts. The remaining money is VSNA bank accounts. We are working through the Investment committee led by Mr. Nagamanohar, Mr. Dhake, Mr Ravi Bhoplapur to find better investment vehicles for better return on investment. We have evaluated Merryl Lynch, Smith Barney, TD Ameritrade, Vanguard, TRoweprice, etc. We have also developed "Investment Guidelines" and will be presented to next BOD meeting.

I am happy to announce Mrs. Bhavani Moodabagil and Mrs. Vidya Betketur as our new Editors of VSNA Newsletter. I would like to encourage you all to contribute to the Newsletter in the form of articles, Vachanas, news etc. I also highly encourage articles from the youth. Please visit our website at <http://www.vsna.org> for the newsletter, updates, forms and other resources. Thank you!

Prabhu Patil
President, Central VSNA

I am Proud of VSNA

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An Appeal ...

As you all know, in order to run any organization we need money. My goal is to increase VSNA Membership to 300 this year. Annual Family membership cost \$35.00 and Life Family Membership cost \$500.00 (you can pay in two installments). As you can see \$35.00 is not that high. You can make check payable to VSNA and mail it our Treasurer Uma Sajjan.

Personally, I am a Life member since 2000. My family and I enjoy all VSNA functions and we feel VSNA is our extended family.

This is my humble request to non-members. Please consider becoming a member and experience the great VSNA. My sincere thanks in advance.

Raj Adapur
VSNA-Secretary

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Featured Articles

Take a tour to the historic 12th century and reminisce the cultural enlightenment through the eyes of a Veerashaiva from the Western world. Learn about the Veerashaiva legacy and the heritage that we inherited as the members of Veerashaiva community through the spirited traveler. This traveler along with her sister travels from Bangalore to Basava Kalyana, with stops in Kudala Sangama, Badami, Pattadakal, Aihole and Basava Kalyana. This report is the evidence of the existence of the ancient revolution embraced by many today, yet the lack of continued support to preserve the epicenter of Veerashaivism. Learn how the united front of Veerashaivites can help make a difference to protect the essence of our luminaries for generations to come!

Come let's take the historic journey as this inspired traveler explores the origin of Veerashaivism traveling on the rugged road. To get you started, the first day's visits are printed here. To read the rest of the journey, please visit VSNA website.

KUDALA SANGAMA/BASAVA KALYANA

By Uma Ettigi, Virginia

February 2006

Karnataka with all its richness in culture and traditional grandeur is the 8th largest state of India, and the 9th largest by population. Karnataka is also known as the Capital of Agarbathi (Incense Sticks), Arecanut, Silk, Coffee and Sandal Wood. Lately it's called as the I.T capital of the world where the gross export touches \$8.5 billion/year.

Karnataka has been the culture center for hundreds of years and its testimony stands spread across the state attracting millions of tourists from all parts of the world. Her richness and hospitality can only be felt better than explained. To experience it all, one such tourist was I... Uma Ettigi, a resident of Virginia in the United States. On my recent visit to India in the month of February, 2006; along with my sister Nirmala Swamy, we set out on this historic journey.

Initially we wanted to take a conducted tour in a luxury bus with other passengers. However it did not work out. My sister, a veteran traveler decided to take a freelance trip. We decided to go ahead with the trip having full faith in God.

We started our chivalrous, adventurous journey of 595 km from multicultural city of Bangalore to the birthplace of Veerashaivism-" Kudala Sangama" in Bagalkot district.

On February 2, we took the government bus at 8.15 pm from Bangalore Kempegowda bus stand on Platform number 2. On a daily basis, hundreds of buses operate and about 22.5 lakh (2.5 million) people travel from here to all destinations around India for trade business and pleasure. Various types of buses operate as the quality and service differs between the bus companies. It is not just people even the animals wander around here. In spite of all the commotion it is kept cleaner than the New York Subway station. The credit should go to the management for keeping it so clean. A point to be noted for future travelers.

When we left the outskirts of Bangalore, our Journey continued on National Highway route no. 4 and no. 218. The bus stopped at 2 places and soon with a sound sleep we opened our eyes to KUDALA SANGAMA around 7.30 A.M on February 3rd. On our arrival we asked the bus driver to take us to the guesthouse. I was truly delighted to observe the development of the place and I was impressed to see such a grand hotel welcoming us. We checked into a room. Freshened up with a shower and had a hearty good Idly-Vada & Sambar out of a huge breakfast menu. At the same time a wedding Group was also the guests at the hotel. There was a festive look due to the presence of the wedding group.

We then went to see Kudala Sangama, the confluence of the three rivers - Krishna, Ghataprabha and Malaprabha. The Sangameshwara temple is well built; the mantapa/temple that has been built in the same place where lord Basava merged with the water/divine is magnificent. The intelligent way of having two sets of stairs for entrance and the exit is remarkable. The Shivalinga is constantly surrounded by water coming from underneath. There is

always someone who is wiping the water away. Beautiful pooja takes place every day for Lord Sangameshwara. Both my sister and I meditated there for a while.

Then we climbed up and walked around the place. It is a refreshing scene to see how the three rivers meet. Even today I still get goose bumps when I think how our Basaveshwara must have walked into the currents of water after he left King Bijjala's kingdom. I realized how hurt he must have felt with the accusations he had to endure in spite of the revolutionary acts that he did. Even Carl Marx couldn't do what Lord Basava did in the 12th century.

While we were walking we saw the big chariot being paraded in the streets as the yearly teru. (Procession) The CHARIOT HOUSE is an attractive building. We walked to the open amphitheater that is built with beautiful architecture. It's called SABHA MANTAPA.

There is also BASAVA ASHRAMA, which is a unique building. The knowledgeable sayings of the Shiva Sharana saints are written everywhere around town whether on a temple, a bridge or a pillar. Reading all these writings we walked to the DASOHA BHAVANA. They were serving delicious spicy free food to visitors.

continued ...

Please visit the VSNA website for the rest of the journey to Kudala Sangama. www.VSNA.org

My Experience as a Confused Lingayath

Growing up with Hindu Beliefs

By Sateesh Kavi
Michigan



No matter how fulfilling life becomes, there are always certain regrets when one looks back.

I was probably 7 or 8 years old when we were celebrating the Ganesha Festival at home. I asked my parents "why is this festival celebrated?" my Dad replied Ganesha is the God of Auspiciousness, "we need to worship him before we start any work". I asked him again why we have this festival. My Dad replied, "This is the day when Ganesha was reborn." I asked him "why was he reborn?" My Dad responded "Ganesha was initially created out of mud by Parvathi and she regarded him as her son, but Shiva who was Parvathi's husband did not know this. Shiva came back home to find this little kid guarding the house, Shiva wanted to enter the house, but Ganesha did not let him in and he told Shiva that he cannot go in since his Mom was bathing. Shiva got angry & beheaded Ganesha, Parvathi came outside and was angry with Shiva. Shiva wanted to cool Parvathi down and he ordered his aides to bring the head of any living thing that was lying on the north side. The aides bought back the head of an elephant, which was attached to Parvathi's son, and the boy was reborn as Ganesha.

I shuddered with fear hearing that story, Ganesha was a little boy who was trying to do his duty, but Shiva would not listen to him and killed him and later he ordered his aides to kill another living thing. I asked my Dad "What kind of a person was Shiva? He killed two living beings because he could not control his anger." My Dad scolded me and said that I should not talk about Lord Shiva like that as he was almighty and we were staunch believers of Shiva, Ganesha, Nandhi, etc. I asked my Dad again "who is God?" He responded "don't you remember the Vachanas, Basavanna told that God is kind, formless, etc." I told him "yes I remember the vachanas, but they say that there is only one God and the god is kind and formless and my Istalinga is just a representation of that, but I also see the image of Shiva and you say he is a God, Ganesha is a God, etc, and by the story that you just told me Shiva is not kind and he is not formless". My Dad got angry again and said "you are still a little kid, you don't understand all this now, you will understand it when you grow up".

As a kid, I went to a Christian school and we had a Kannada class with vachanas in my 9th grade. The teacher who was teaching it was a Nun. She read the Vachanas and said that Vacahanas are so

meaningful, but she finds it hard to believe that the people do not necessarily follow through on vacahanas. That struck a chord in me, and as a Lingayath I was upset. I stood up and asked her what she meant. She explained to me that she was not trying to hurt my feelings, but was just appreciating the meaning that vacahanas gave. The simple vachana such as 'Kala beda Kola beda' is very similar to Jesus Christ's teachings and also the other vachana 'Jadadhagala mugilagala' very clearly explains the concept of God which even Jesus did not do. She told me that Basavanna did a great service to the society, but people in Karnataka do not even realize his contributions to the society and today his followers have created castes, creeds, customs, etc. I told her "Lingayaths are just a caste within Hinduism so we have to follow Hindu customs." She just laughed and told me, "You need to read more vachanas and really understand them". I was surprised that a Christian Nun would tell me that but I did not delve on it and eventually gave up on it.

Our family would hardly make an important decision without consulting an astrologer, so it was vital that any major undertaking that we made had to be done on good muhurthas and also we had to consult the astrologer to figure out whether it would be a success. Everything seemed to go fine with the consultation until my Dad consulted the astrologers on a new business that he wanted to venture in. Some of them told that the venture would succeed and some of them told it wouldn't, my Dad of course used the one that was favorable for him, and he convinced himself that Lingayaths do not have to believe in all that. Unfortunately the business failed and someone told him that the muhurtha was not good and some bad thing is going on and we had to have some puja performed to make it go away. Needless to say my Dad kept going back to astrologers and temples and hasn't given up still. I was confused and asked my Dad "what is the right thing to do? Do we believe in astrology or do we not? Do we believe in puja or do we not; do we believe in going to temples to multiple deities or do we not? What is a Lingayath supposed to do? We say our body is a temple but we still go to physical temples. We say that our IstaLinga represents the god, but we still go to temple. We say that Basavanna is a philosopher and reformer but we think he is a avathara of Nandhi" Needless to say that my Dad never gave me the answer.

I am still seeking answers. We have to confront situations of the age-old practices some times. I have this concern that some of these situations will lead to same questions to us from our children that I asked growing up. It is up to us whether we want to continue being confused or provide clarity in our practices.

Basavanna & other Sharanas passed away in 12th century, but are considered immortal through their teachings, and as "Lingayaths" we still follow our actions of caste system within Lingayaths and other practices that we have not given up even after centuries.

My question is: Where is our savior for Lingayathism? One may recall (in Ten Commandments) Moses dealt with a situation when his followers started worshipping idols and made animal sacrifices, etc. Moses looks at that and thunders to them and punishes them with number of years in search for a home. Not that I want us to be punished, but we do need someone to show the clear path to Veerashaivism.

VSNA Chapter News ...

Veerashaiva Samaja of Michigan (VSMI) Celebrates their 25th Anniversary!



Congratulations to VSMI on their 25th anniversary.

The Veerashaiva Samaja of Michigan, commonly known as "the Detroit Chapter" of VSNA, was established in 1980 by the Veerashaiva Samaja of North America (VSNA). It has been a glorious 25 years for the Detroit Chapter in which the Detroit chapter had numerous achievements and it called for a grand celebration. The office bearers with the support of many members set out to organize a function that would not only be fitting to what the chapter has achieved but would itself be a function that would be forever etched in memory.

The office bearers created the following committees to handle different responsibilities. The entertainment committee lead by Shridevi and Shashidhar Shivayogimath(Vice President, VSMI) organized the entertainment, the food committee lead by Karuna Hiremath and Deepa Settur arranged the grand feast and the decoration committee lead by Harina Sudhakar decorated the hall with the mark of celebration. Shyla and Ravi Shankar(President, VSMI) were involved in the overseeing the whole operation.

The function began with a speech by president Ravi Shankar followed by Basava pooja. Sheela Neral, Seema, Mukta Konanhalli and Veeramma sang the welcome song. There were speeches by our seniors, Mr. Gadgeppa Doddamani, Dr. Sharda Hulbanni, Jaykumar Palegar and G. Shankar. Some highlights of the entertainment include a fashion show by kids choreographed by Ashwini Nagraj and excellent dance by Soumya Vasure, Natasha Konanhalli, Teja Neral and the Maitri group- with artists Mamatha Kavi, Ashwini Nagaraj, Nina Ganesh, Nandish, Sheela Neral, Ashwini Patil, Savita Prashant, Rashmi Vasappa, and Deepa Sappanawar, choreographed by Mukta Konanhalli and Deepa Sappanawar. Ashwini Patil presented the history of VSMI on a slide show. The chapter felicitated the seniors by recognizing their contribution with cake cutting on the stage. A token of appreciation was presented to all participants.

The evening concluded with a grand feast and with a token of love, compassion and unity in the form of a memento from the central VSNA which is a wall clock with Shri Basveshwar's photo in the background.

Shashi Shivayogimath, Vice President (VSMI)

Dubai celebrated Basava Jayanthi with fervor and devotion!



Veerashaiva sharanare tamagellarigu Sharanu sharanarathi!

Veerashaivas of Dubai got together on May 5th for the first time in U.A.E (Dubai) to celebrate Basavajayanthi. It was a very successful event with attendance of nearly 200 veerashaivas gathered from U.A.E and celebrated in Dubai. The pooja started with naming Basavanna with the cradle program followed by cultural entertainment from many talented artists both young and adults. People rejoiced the memories and tatvas of Sharana Basavaana. More details at www.gulfvarthe.com

Report by
Devendra Gajipur

I am Proud of VSNA

Kids Corner...

Name Search. A few well known Veerashaiva names are hidden in these box full of words. You should be find at 10 names, circle them as you find them. Find them all and send your answers to the editor, we will put your name in the next issue of the VSNA Newsletter.

C H O W D A I A H G R F Q L S
H A B A S A V A N N A O W K D
A C O L L E E K Q C S G E J O
N E N T M N D K D R O A R H J
N F E O T J R A E A P N T O D
A R T A L L A M A P R A B H U
B S W P A A D A T J S G D P G
A U O Q K B L H S M A A S N G
S V N W K K I A U D M M A M A
A R S D A S V D Y N N B Z B L
V T A S M E Z E P B B I T V E
A E C T M O P V O C R K Y C Y
N N I M A C H I D E V A U X U
N V O U Q Y T N R Y Z L I Z S
A B R A N I C H E N N A M M A

Answers will be posted in the next newsletter.

Learning to Speak Kannada...

What is your name?	Nimma hesaru yenu?
Where are you from?	Neevu yava urinavaru?
When did you come?	Neevu yavaga bandiri?
What time is it now?	Eega samaya yeshtu?
Please come inside	Dayavittu valage banni
Please sit down	Dayavittu koothukolli
Please have some coffee	Dayvavittu coffee thogoli

Vachana of the Quarter

ಮನಸ್ಸು

ತನ್ನಿಚ್ಚೆಯು ಸುಡಿದಡೆ ಮೆಚ್ಚಿದೀ ಮನವ್ವು,
ಇದಿರಿಚ್ಚೆಯು ಸುಡಿದಡೆ ಮೆಚ್ಚಿದೀ ಘನವ್ವು
ಕೊಡಲ ಸಂಗನ ಶರಣರ
ನಚ್ಚದ ಮಚ್ಚದ ಮನವ ಕಿಚ್ಚಿನೊಳಗಿಕ್ಕು.

tanniccheya nuDidaDe mecchodee manavu,
idiriccheya nuDidaDe mecchadee manavu
koDala saMgana sharaNara
nacchada macchada manava kicchinoLagikku.

Strange is this Mind!

Strange is this mind –
which appreciates when something
pleasing to it is uttered;
which appreciates not when something
displeasing to it is uttered!
Thrust that mind into fire
which believes not, appreciates not
The devotees of kudalasangamadeva!

Why Join VSNA?



VSNA is a non-profit, tax-exempt, religious organization founded in 1978 in USA. The VSNA's mission is to preserve and foster Veerashaivism (Lingayatism) in the North America and to impart the Lingayata spiritual heritage, its universalistic, democratic values to the posterity through the teachings of Basavanna and his contemporaries.

VSNA provides the following services to its members. The services include New Member kit that has Welcome Kit Materials like brochures, programs, Help, CDs etc., Kids and Youth Program Kits that has reading material for kids and youth. New Service like *Helpline* is a supporting network that helps members who need it.

For more details contact us ...

Prabhu Patil – President of VSNA
S. Chandra Mouli – VP of VSNA
Raj Adapur – Secretary
Uma Sajjan – Treasurer



Veerashaiva Samaja of North America: *Our mission is to preserve and foster Veerashaivism (Lingayatism) in the North America and to impart the Lingayata spiritual heritage, its universalistic, democratic values to the posterity through the teachings of Basavanna and his contemporaries.*

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