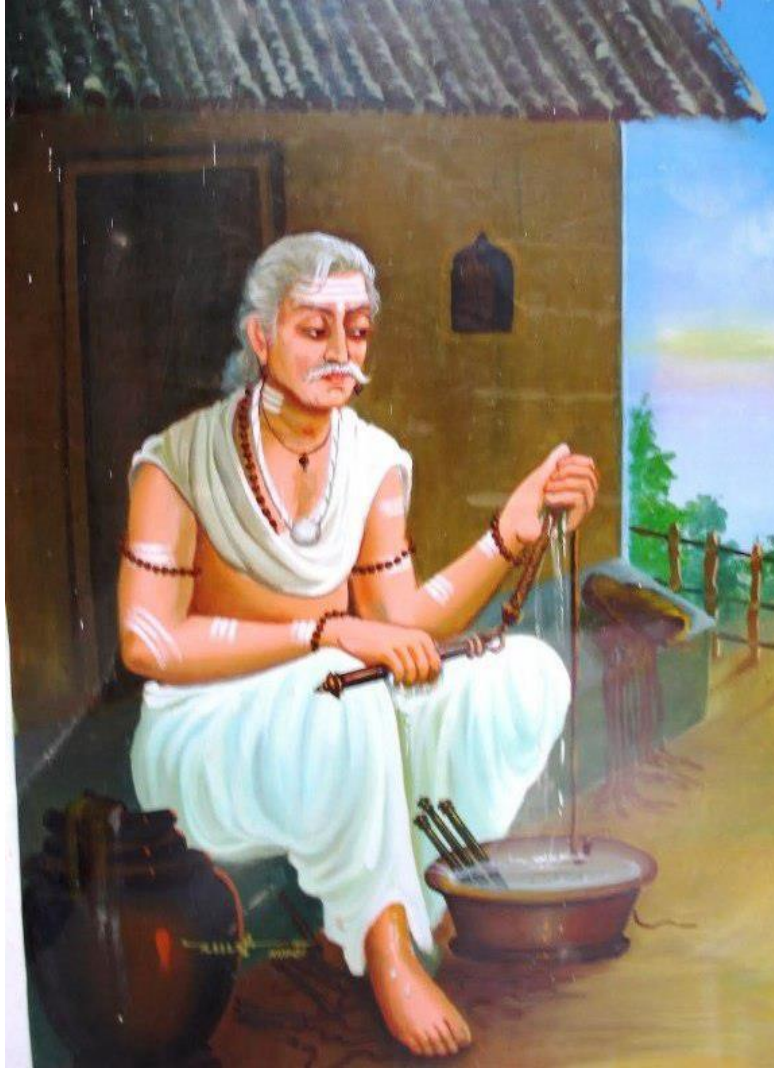


# Madara Chennaiah:

Compiled by Harish R Hiremath  
For narration in Chat with Chocolate Program for VSNA Children



Guru Basavanna held Madara Chennaiah in very high regard and remembered him in one of his vachana with great respect “Chennaiahna Maga naanu, Chennaiahna Maneya dasana maga nanu, Chennaiaya is father of my grandfather, Father of fathers is our Madara Chennaiah. He is great than shiva himself”.

Chennaiah lived in Kanchi and following our Veera Shaiva way living. He was living in the kingdom of Karikala chola, great king of chola dynasty, a great shiva bhakta and was ruling Kanchi. He got “Periya Purana” written and supporting all the shiva devotees and writers.

Chennaiah was bringing grass to horse stable of Karikala chola and this was taking care of his lively hood. People who used to cut the grass and bring to stables were called “Kabadigaru” and he was the leader of this group of Kabadigaru. He used to go to forest, cut the grass, tie it as a bundle and bring it to the stable keeping it on their head.

Chennaiah used to be involved in the work and used to see the god in all his actions until he ties his bundle. Afterwards, on the banks of Kaveri, he used to form the linga from sand, like a Sand Sculpture, collect some flowers, place some leaves on the ground and used to sit for linga Pooja, just like all of us did. After his work, he used to come to home where his wife normally prepared Ambali (ragi in the form porridge). MC used to offer the

ambali with his pure devotion to lord shiva and then used to eat it. It is said that, by looking at this ambali and pure devotion of Chennaiah, even shiva mouth was getting watered.

Chennaiah continued this without any expectation for 60 years just enjoying the devotion. No one knew about it, other than shiva himself. For everyone, he was ordinal grass cutter for chola raja, coolie, belonged to schedule cast, just a labor. Even Shiva felt it is unfair, his best devotee, topmost bhakta, have remain not known to anyone. He wanted to make him known to world and he did something because of that today we know him, and you are listening about him.

Hence, one day evening when Chennaiah was offering ambali, lord shiva went ahead and drank the ambali to his hearts content. In the morning, Karikala chola came to Shivalaya with all very nice food, did his usual Pooja and offered the god all the nice food. Then he as usual went back of a screen and waited for Shiva to eat the food as he used to do. Chola felt very bad and thought that he lost the favor of lord shiva and his sorrow was so great, he pulled his sword and got ready to offer his own head.

Immediately, shiva came out of linga and stopped him. He told that as he ate ambali from Madara Chennaiah, his stomach is full and didn't feel hungry Hence, could not take the food again.

Chola raja was surprised that shiva took ambali of someone and refused the best food offered by him. He wanted to meet Chennaiah. He started searching for him in the streets of Kanchi and along with him his soldiers are also started searching.

Looking chola raja at his door along with his soldiers, Chennaiah was surprised. To his astonishment, Chola raja came inside and fell to his feet. He felt ashamed and objected chola raja for falling his feet. It is extremely rare. During that time king was considered as living God and he falling to the feel of ordinary labor that to untouchable is unheard off!

Chola raja tells him, for whom shiva's blessings are there, his caste is the greatest, my head is the right place at your feet. You are not untouchable, who doesn't believe in his work and lord shiva is untouchable – of lower cast.

Instead of becoming happy, Chennaiah became very sad and angry with Shiva. He didn't like his secret devotion was made public like this. He didn't like Chola raja falling into his feet and thought he is the cause for this great sin. He got took his kitchen knife and got ready to cut his own head. Immediately, Chola raja stopped him and consoled him.

Not only that, but Chola raja also made him to sit on a Ambari (chair on elephant) and took him on a procession all over Kanchi. Even though born as Untouchable, by his work, secret devotion, worshipping without any expectation, MC became a great man. He has written many vachanas with his pen name "Nijaatma Rama". Later Chennaiah came to Kalyana, was part of the Anubhava Mantapa and lived with all Sharanas. The following is one of most popular vachana about the our varnashrama cast system.

<p>If words and actions are firm there is no pollution of race or birth. If words are good and action words that is pollution without liberation. Can any one be said to be highborn If one is thieving and engaged with other's wives? Righteousness is caste, unrighteousness is pollution. This duality should be understood and known. Don't be a mere servant to awl, scissors, and lower millstone, Know Nijaatma Raama. [Vachana No.1930] <sup>[1]</sup></p>	<p>ನಡೆನುಡಿ ಸಿದ್ಧಾಂತವಾದಲ್ಲಿ ಕುಲ ಹೊಲೆ ಸೂತಕವಿಲ್ಲ ನುಡಿ ಲೇಸು ನಡೆಯಧರ್ಮ ಅದು ಬಿಡುಗಡೆಯಿಲ್ಲದ ಹೊಲೆ ಕಳವು ಪಾರದ್ವಾರಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಹೊಲಬನರಿಯದೆ ಕೆಟ್ಟು ನಡೆವುತ್ತು, ಮತ್ತೆ ಕುಲಜರೆಂಬ ಒಡಲವರುಂಟೆ? ಆಚಾರವೇ ಕುಲ, ಅನಾಚಾರವೇ ಹೊಲೆ, ಇಂತೀ ಉಭಯವ ತಿಳಿದರಿಯಬೇಕು ಕೈಯುಳಿಗತ್ತಿ, ಅಡಿಗೂಂಟಕ್ಕಡಿಯಾಗಬೇಡ ಅರಿ ನಿಜಾತ್ಮರಾಮ ರಾಮನಾ.</p>
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