

Yathiraja Vadiraja's THEERTHA PRABANDHA

Translated by
S.K. ACHAR

Rs 25 = 00



Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams
Tirupati
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YATHIRAJA VADIRAJA'S THEERTHA PRABANDHA

Translated from Sanskrit by
S.K. Achar

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Foreword

Devotion, according to Jayateertha, an apostle of the Dvaita system is the Supreme attachment to the Lord on a complete understanding of his greatness and supremacy to the love of one's own self and possessions and which remains unshaken in the face of innumerable difficulties. It flows uninterruptedly . This kind of devotion secures salvation.

The Haridasas of Karnataka who followed the Dvaita tradition in letter and spirit through their songs, poems and philosophical treatises were trendsetters in the South Indian bhakti movement. Like the Alvars who sang the Infinite Glory of Lord Vishnu in their devotional hymns, these divine bards spread God's glory through their compositions in chaste Kannada. They were literally the servitors of God and enjoyed their proximity to Him. To these galaxy of illustrious saints belong Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa, Vaikunthadasa, Vyasaraaja and Vadiraja.

Sri Vadiraja who lived during the fifteenth century was an outstanding scholar and eminent hymnist. An author of a dozen original works and of several commentaries in Sanskrit, Kannada and Tulu, Sri Vadiraja was a doughty champion of Madhva system of philosophy, whose *Yuktimallika*, *Rukminisa Vijaya*, and *Dasavatara Stotra* are the classic example of his erudition, mastery over Madhva philosophy and his unswerving devotion to Sri Hari.

Theertha Prabandha, composed by Sri Vadiraja, is a remarkable work in which he describes the well-known pilgrim centers of our country. The book can be considered one of the earliest pilgrim guides extant today. He gives an intimate account of each shrine he visited and the Presiding Deity consecrated there. The book is virtually a *Bharat Darsan* of an illustrious seer- saint five hundred years ago.

We are happy to present this masterpiece of a travelogue written by Sri Vadiraja, translated into English by Sri S.K.Achar.

Executive Officer

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams

Translator's Note

After reading repeatedly and explaining the contents of Holy *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* written by the great freedom fighter, brilliant administrator, Bharatha Ratna late. Sri Charavarhti Rajagopalacharya and published by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, to my children I felt immensely happy. I was so deeply impressed by this great work, and sincerely felt that I too should do something for our younger generation. Accordingly I decided to translate some of the small books in Sanskrit to Kannada and English to benefit the community after my retirement from the Syndicate Bank.

After translating Yathiraja Vadiraja's original Sanskrit work. "Tirtha Prabandha" to Kannada and English, I approached holy Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams for their help and guidance to publish the book. I am glad that with the holy blessing of Tirumala Venkatesha Prabhu the book is now available to the readers in different parts of the country in Kannada and English.

In this connection, I express my profound sense of gratitude to the Swamiji of Ashta Mutts Udipi for his valuable blessings, messages and guidance, Prof. U.L.Achar, M.A.B.T. who corrected the manuscript totally enhancing their quality and utility to the readers, Dr.P. Krishnaiah, I.A.S., Former Executive Officer, Dr.N.S.Ramamurthy, Former Editor and all the members of the staff of T.T.D. connected with the publication of the book.

Let other rich temples of the holy Bharat also emulate the holy T.T.Devasthanams, and promote the publication of the holy religious books useful to the Society to enlighten our younger generation and and grow as good citizens.

Lovely Lokesha Venkatesha Prabhu

No other place on earth is
As holy as Venkatadri
No other God is ever equal
To Venkatesha neither in the past
Nor in the future



Sri Venkatesha swamy duly
Adorned with diamond crown and diamond kavacha.

Lord Venkatesha came down to earth in search of his Consort and settled down at Venkatadri, to shower His grace upon His devotees. Tirumala is one among the eight Holy abodes, which the Lord chose to remain on His own. He is also the pillar of strength for the Jnana Satra started by me soon after my retirement from services of Syndicate Bank. Oh Venkatesha! please accept my Shira Sastanga Pranams.

SRI VITTALA RUKUMAYI

Pundarika Varada, Pandharapuresha. Nada Brahma Panduranga Vittala. Acharya Madhwa also offered the image of Panduranga Vittala as the Principal Deity to Pejavār, Sheeroor and Puttige Mutt for daily worship viz., three among the eight Mutts established by him eight centuries ago. Let the devotees beat the drum and declare, that Pandurang Vittal is the Lord of the entire Universe ... chorus



Please carry Hari - Nirmalya
Over the head dance and sing glory of Sri Hari 1
Beat Jaganta, pray Sri Hari
To the accompaniment of the drums and claps 2
Do say that there is none
Superior to Lakshmikanta,
And the supreme Lord is only is only Purandara Vittala 3
(English version of the Kannada
song by saint Purandara Dasa,
great devotee of Panduranga
Vittala, considered an
incarnation of sage Narada)

Sri Ranganatha Swamy

Ranga Mandiram situated in between Cauvery and Viraja Rivers, is as holy as Vaikunta, where dwells Rangesha, who is none other than Vasudeva, who can grant us supreme position, and free us from rebirth, on the earth.

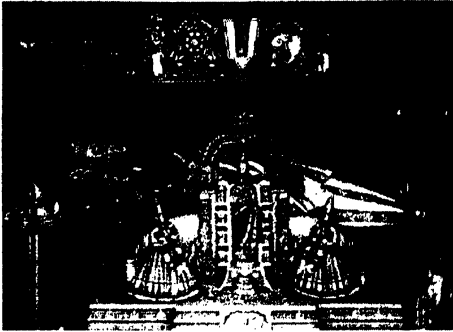
Oh eyes, be worthy by having the
darshan of Cauvery Ranga and
His Holy lotus feet,

chorus

At least once in our lives we
must take a Holy dip in
Chandra puskarini spring.

And have Holy Darshan of Sriranganathji.

1



Have a dip in holy Cauvery river
Which is as holy as the Ganga and
Again in Viraja River and visit
Vasudeva dwelling in the Holy
Vaikunta Ranga Mandira

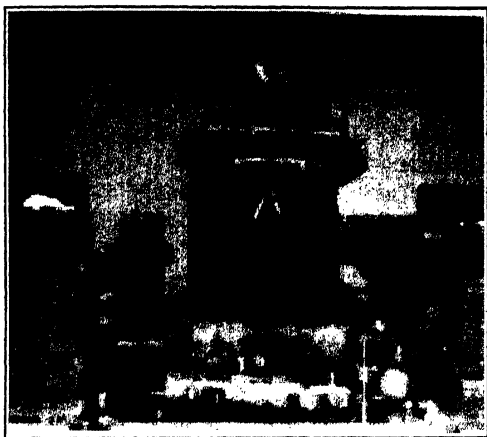
2

Ranganatha Swamy adorned
with garlands, Vaijyanthi
studded with diamonds and
pearls, moves around the car street
mounted on the chariot, please
worship holy Ranga Vittala

3

(English Version of the Kannada
Song by H.H.Sripadaraja Theertha, considered an
incarnation of Sri Dhruva.)

Homage to Sri Vadiraja

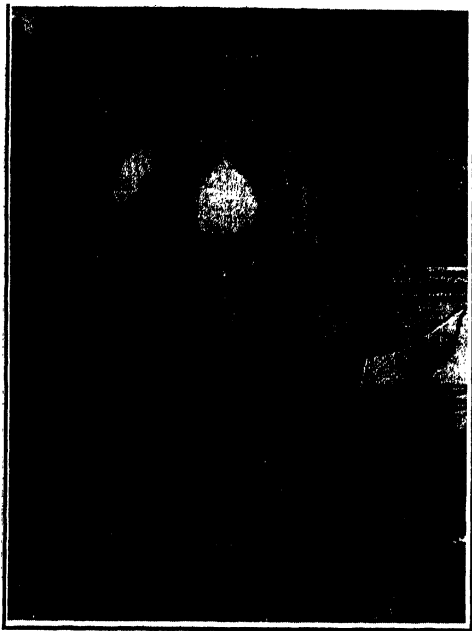


The picture shows the young saint Sri Vadiraja (1480-1600 A.D.) in Dhyana Mudra made in panch loha (five metals) and offered by him to his mother as he left on his maiden Theertha Yathra (first holy tour) and his pancha (five) Vrindavan. Sri Vadiraja entered the main Vrindavan alive on completion of his earthly mission on the holy eve of Phalguna Bahula Tadiga and disappeared from the scene for the eternal Dhyana of Sarveswara Sri Hari.



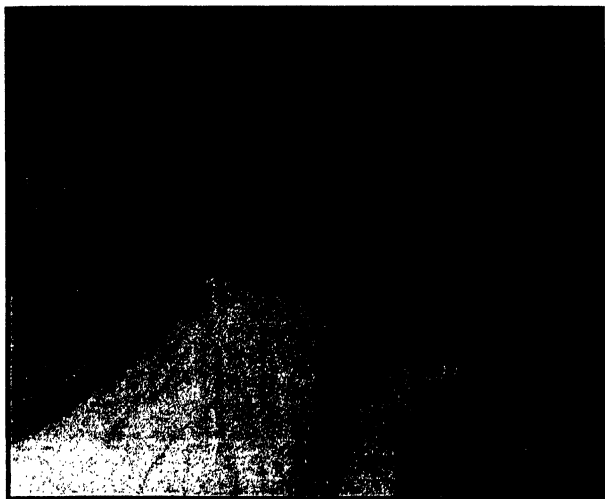
Oh lovely Balakrishna
You are the son of Vasudeva,
You have slain Kamsa and Chanura,
You cause deep bliss to Devaki
Oh Jagadguru Krishna, we ever worship you.

Kamsari Sri Krishna who is adorned with Diamond Crown Kavacha mounted with golden mantapa, who grants grace and ultimate liberation to His Devotees, has been installed by Acharya Madhva, eight centuries ago at the holy town Udupi. Lovely Balakrishna who was earlier worshipped by Mother Rukmani came all the way from Dwaraka to Udupi to get worshipped by Acharya Madhva. The holy fourteen daily pujas initiated by Sri Madhvacharya are continued till date to the lovely Balakrishna at Udupi by the successors of the Swamijis of the eight Mutts established by Acharya Madhva for the worship of Sri Krishna in rotation.



Acharya Madhva installed
Lokesha Kadagola Balakrishna
at Rajathapitha (Udipi)
for the emancipation of the mankind

Sri Narayana Panditacharya in his *Sumadhwa Vijaya* mentions that Acharya Madhva (1238-1317 A.D.) installed Sarveshwara Balakrishna made up of salagrama shila, worshipped by mother Rukmini, holding churning rod and thread, eight centuries ago, in order to encounter all evil elements who obstruct the noble souls from reaching their cherished goals with the kind grace and mercy of Kadogala Balkrishna, wind god Vayu in his three incarnations as Hanuma, Bhima and Acharya Madhwa did serve well. Sri Rama, Krishna not only to eradicate the evil elements but also to promote, and uphold pure Jnana as envisaged by the Lord Vedavyasa.



This holy book is offered at the lotus feet of
Lokesha Venkatesha Prabhu in deep reverence
to my parents to earn their lovely blessings and grace.



H.H. Sri Vidyamanya Theertha Swamiji Deeply desirous to worship Balakrishna installed by Acharya Madhva, adorned With lustrous diamond crown Oh Yathishekara Vidyamanya Guruji of Palimar Mutt, we bow to you.

His Holiness the late Sri Vidyamanya Theertha (27-7-1913 to 14-5-2000 A.D.) was a renowned scholar, senior tapasvi and great saint of the millennium. He was a holy Sangam of jnana, bhakti and vairagya in human form. and a humble servant of Sri Krishna and Mukyaprana. His Major gifts to Lokeshwara Krishna are 1) Golden cradle (1972) 2) Golden chariot (1987) 3) Diamond crown (1989). He taught Vedanta to

H.H. Sri Vishwesha Tirtha Swamiji Pejawara Mutt, Udupi

H.H. Sri Vishwapriya Tirtha Swamiji, Admar Mutt, Udupi

H.H. Sri Suguendra Tirtha Swamiji, Puttige Mutt, Udupi

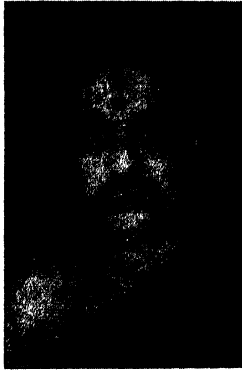
H.H.Sri Vidyadheesha Tirtha Swamiji. Paryaya Palimar Mutt, Udupi
H.H. Sri Vidyasha Tirtha Swamiji, Bhandarakere Mutt, Udupi

The Yogadeepika Gurukula was established by him earlier at Palimar Mutt. It is producing new sets of purohiths and scholars every year. His worthy disciple H.H.Sri Vidyadheesha Tirtha Swamiji is currently in-charge of the worship and administration of Sri Krishna Mutt, Udupi from 18-1-2002 to 17-1-2004. His Holiness proposes to offer a new diamond kavacha to Udupi Sri Krishna on or before Makara Sankranti, as desired by his illustrious predecessor saint scholar late. H.H. Sri Vidyamanya Tirtha Swamiji, with the help of the devotees spread all over the world.

H.H.SRI VISHWOTHAMA THEERTHA
SRI PADANGAL, SRI SODE VADIRAJA MUTT
Car Street, Udupi-576101, Karnataka.Phone.524004

MESSAGE

The great Saint Sri Vadiraja Theertha, who long ago graced the peettam of this Mutt, walked all over the country on foot a number of times, visiting all the sacred kshetras as mentioned in the sastras. Being Ruju Yogin, he belongs to the class of the greatest souls, next only to the Almighty Sri Hari. All his attributes are pure and blemishless. Naturally, any person can conclude that his pilgrimage was not aimed at gathering merits for himself, but to sanctify the *Kshetrabhimani devatas* to a higher degree and to please their Antarayamin Sri Hari. Later he composed a number of stanzas extolling the greatness of each kshetra. The collection of these stanzas goes by the name "Theertha Prabandha". Recital of these stanzas at the time of visiting these kshetras will naturally please the *Kshetrabhimani devathas*, who will shower on them their choicest blessings.



The original text is in Sanskrit, with a view to help those who do not understand Sanskrit language, Sri. S.K.Achar a well known scholar in Udupi has brought out the versions of *Theertha Prabandha* in English and Kannada languages.

It is a pleasure to note that the English and Kannada versions are being published separately. We pray the Deities of our

Mutt Sri Bhoovaraha, Sri Hayavadana, Sri Vedavyasa and Sri Srinivasa, as well as Sri Vadiraja garu Sarva Bhouma and Sri Bhootha Raja to bestow long life and prosperity on Sri S.K.Achar, the author, Executive Officer, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams. and all others connected with the publication of this great work
Theertha Prabandha

With Holy Narayana Smaranas
H.H. Sri Vishwothama Theertha
Sri Padangalu

**SRI KRISHNA MUTT
H.H.SRI VIDYADEESHA THEERTHA SWAMIJI
PARYAYAPALIMAR MUTT**

Car Street, Udupi-576101, Karnataka State.

MESSAGE

Sri Vadiraja's *Theertha Prabandha* is an outstanding travelogue in Sanscrit. Vadiraja is a genius in human form who could see philosophy in grammar, and the glory of Sri Hari in each drop of the waters of holy River Ganga.

Sri Vadiraja has authored holy "Theertha Prabandha' In four well organised chapters and this is undoubtedly a unique guide for the yathries to follow. Theertha does not mean mere water comprising hydrogen and oxygen (H_2O). It should be quite pure and holy being the abode of the various celestials to shower grace upon the Theertha Yathries, purifying their mind and the body.



It is indeed a tough task for any one to translate holy *Theertha Prabandha* to other languages, that too to a foreign language like English. We feel that it was possible for Sri S.K.Achar to do so due to the abundant grace and divine blessings of Sri Vadiraja upon Sri Achar. The translation is rendered so meticulously that the reader feels as if he is reading the original text.

We are indeed short of words to express our happiness over the sincere efforts of the Executive officer and the other mem-

bers of the staff of T.T.Devasthanams for bringing out the holy *Theertha Prabandha* in different languages to reach more and more people. It is an ocean of nectar. Let Lord Venkateswara shower His Holy grace upon this sacred venture, and reform the society through his miraculous powers.

With holy Narayana Smaranas.
H.H.Sri Vidyadeesha Theertha Swamiji
RP (IV)

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Yathiraja Vadiraja's Theertha Prabandha

PASCHIMA PRABANDHA

CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

Sri Madhvacharya installed Lord Krishna at Udupi, eight centuries ago and appointed eight young monks, for the worship of Kadagola Krishna. Eight mutts were established later on at Udupi. Among these eight mutts, Sode mutt is quite significant, for the first saint of this Mutt Sri Vishnu Theertha was the younger brother of Sri Acharya Madhva. The 19th Saint Sri Vageesha Theertha was a great tapasvi and a superb scholar. Sri Vadiraja, the author of "Theertha Prabandha" was the direct disciple of Sri Vageesha Theertha.

Sri Vadiraja's Life in Brief :- Sri Vadiraja was born of the divine couple Sri Ramacharya and Saraswathi Devi in 1480 A.D. at Huvinakere village of Kundapura Taluk, Udupi Dist., Karnataka State. He lived an illustrious and glorious life of the full span of 120 years from 1480 to 1600 A.D.i.e. from Magha Shudda dwadasi in Sharvari Samvatsara to Phalguna Bahula Thritya of the same Sharvari Samvatsara until the years completing two full cycles. He dedicated his whole life for the material and spiritual emancipation of mankind. He was ordained as a monk at the tender age of eight by his guru Sri Vageesha Theertha. On account of Sri Vadiraja's concern for deep scholarship and for human welfare, Sode Mutt came to be known as Sode Vadiraja Mutt, subsequently. Even today, we can see the ancient house where Vadiraja was born and spent his early years at Huvinakere.

Sri Vadiraja was a brilliant scholar, a creative poet, a great administrator, a social reformer, a precise thinker, and a contemporary of Sri Vyasaraja, Purandara Dasa, and Kanaka Dasa. Vadiraja has authored more than 77 books in Sanskrit viz: 1) Philosophy-7 2) Critical Notes-6 3) Poetry-4. 4) Critical Review-11 5) Stotras-49 in all 77. In Kannada he has authored 7 books, and thousands of Bhajans, bearing the mark of his tutelary Deity Hayavadana at the end of the song. He also wrote a Tulu poem on the Dasavatara of Sri Hari for the benefit of the common masses. He composed *Lakshmi Shobana* song in Kannada, which when recited in Temples or on the eve of marriages, will create a supremely divine atmosphere. His major

works in Sanskrit are 1) *Yuktimalika* 2) *Rukmineesha Vijaya* 3) *Sarasa Bharati Vilasa* 4) *Mahabharata Lakshalankara* 5) *Theertha Prabhandu* etc.,

After a full span of life of 120 years, he entered Brindavan alive on Phalguna Bahula Thritheeya in Sharvari Samvatsara completing its two full cycles, at Sode 19 k.m. away from Sirsi in U.K. Dist. of Karnataka. Among the Madhva saints., Sri Vadiraja was the first to enter the brindavan alive. The second saint to do so was His Holiness Sri Raghavendra Theertha Swamiji, who is blessing the devotees spread all over the world, standing on the banks of Thungabhadra river at Mantralaya, and also at more than 1000 Mrithika Brindavana spread all over India.

Sri Vadiraja's Theertha Prabandha :- We come to know from the life of Sri Vadiraja, that he toured all over India, from the southern end of Kanyakumari to Badrinath in the north, and from the western end of Dwaraka to Puri in the east several times, and wrote a book in Sanskrit entitled "Theertha Prabandha" a unique travelogue in Sanskrit literature. The book is divided into four well organised parts Viz. Paschima Prabandha comprising 45 holy places of the Western Region described in 99 verses. Utra Prabandha-20 kshetras of the Northern Region in 46 Slokas, Purva Prabandha-23 places of the Eastern Region in 43 verses, Dakshina Prabandha-20 places of the Southern Region in 47 Slokas, in all 108 holy kshetras, described in 235 verses visited by the saint spread in different parts of the holy mother Bharath. Vadiraja visited each place and explained the spiritual significance and glory of those places and the Deities, rivers, mountains, thereof as envisaged in our scriptures. In short, we can see the glory of ancient Indian culture in this book, the essence of which is unity in diversity. The reading of the book is virtually a Bharat Darshan, as seen by an illustrious Indian saint 500 years ago, when the modern transport system and other infrastructures for pilgrimage were not available. The whole tour must have been conducted by walk along with the other daily chores of the saint i.e. Japa, pooja, patha pravachana and writing of books etc. Such a hazardous task could be accomplished only by a noble soul like Sri Vadiraja, who had abundant blessings of Hari and Vayu. Sri Vadiraja possessed an outstanding power of grasp and expression, and he unravels in

this book the glory of our ancient culture as envisaged in the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bagavatha, the mighty 18 Puranas and enraptures us with the picturesque description of various Deities, temples, holy rivers, mountains, etc., as he visits different places. Vadiraja proceeds from Sri Krishna Temple, Udipi via West, North, East and Southern directions in pradaksinakara (clockwise direction) to Lord Krishna as well as to mother Bharat. The English version of the original Sanskrit slokas is given below for the benefit of the English knowing readers, in twenty seven chapters with necessary comments etc. The book can serve well as a travel guide too.

1. Invocation : It is common in India to start any good work including Theertha Yathra (pilgrimage) with a prayer. Sri Vadiraja also prays Sri Hari for the purity of mind and grace of God for the success of the tour.

Oh Mind, do concentrate on Sri Hari
for the thought of Sri Hari, like the waves of the Ocean of Milk
Can cool both body and mind,
Besides liberating us from all the miseries 1

In the following sloka Vadiraja prays Lord Hayagriva, for the success of his work "Theertha Prabandha"

The Ocean deep life's miseries are cleansed
By the grace of Hayagriva,
Oh kind Lord, bless me and guide
To make our Theertha Prabandha an outstanding-work 2

In the following Sloka, Vadiraja pays homage to revered Guru Acharya Sri Madhva;

The cool breeze comforts
The tourist moving with head- loads,
Oh wind God Madhvacharya
Shower thy grace upon us fully
And relieve the drudgery of the same all along 3

Vadiraja now prays to his Guru Vageesha Theertha to begot purity of mind and concentration:

Oh! our Respected Guru Vageesha Muni.
Please cleanse our mind by your

Kripajal, and shut the entry of Kali (Evil thoughts).
And present Sheshashayi Narayana to our mind 4

Vadiraja now states that he is proceeding to compose the "Theertha Prabandha":

· Our name is Vadiraja Yathi
We are authoring Theertha Prabandha,
Holy rivers like Ganga and shrines like Sriranga,
Are pictured here to the best of our ability 5

2. Parasurama Kshetra : From the scriptures we come to know that Lord Parasurama had conquered all wicked Kshatriyas and gifted the lands thus acquired to brahmins. Thereafter Parasurama created a fresh lease of land by pushing the sea backwards from Gokarna (Karnataka) to Kanyakumari (Tamilnadu) and this land is known as Parasurama Keshetra.

Oh Parasurama! to stay away from gifted lands
You, by an arrow pushed the Sea God backwards
From Gokarna to Kanya Kumari, and created fresh
earth for stay
Our birth place in Parasu Kshetra is thus blessed indeed.-6

Holy Town Udupi :Vadiraja now explains the glory of Madhva Sarovara, holy town of Udupi, and his Aaradhya daiva "Kadagola Sri Krishna" with overflowing devotion :

3. Madhva Sarovara :

Oh Holy river Ganga, You are ever present in Kashi,
You also appear in Madhva Sarovara,
For the sake of Acharya Madhva,
In Kashi one finds only Visvanath,
Here in Udupi, we have Chandresvara and Balakrishna
Holy town Rajatha peetha (Udupi) is indeed matchless
in all three worlds 7

4. Sri Krishna Temple : The greatness of eight saints who worship Sri Krishna in rotation for two years is explained below

The Eight monks are as noble as Asta Dikpalakas,
Like Fire God, they wipe out the sins of the devotees,
Like Yama they hold Danda, and like Varuna

Oh Krishna. your greatness is unmatched,
 In Matsyavatara, you saved the Vedas
 You were quite strong as Kurma,
 As Varaha you redeemed mother earth,
 As Narasimha you were terribly angry
 As Vamana, you entreated Bali to save Indra
 As Parasurama, you were thankless to your own mother
 As Sri Rama you were deeply attached to Seetha,
 As Krishna you stole milk, and butter
 As Buddha you misled the Asuras,
 As Kalki you are fast as horse - rider
 All your actions are highly wonderful
 Oh Krishna, please ever shower your grace upon us, 12

Oh Lord of Rajatha peetha Sri Krishna
 You are worshipped by Brahma and other gods
 You offer Moksha (Eternal Bliss) to the deserving
 And relieve them from the pangs of births and deaths,
 Please be our saviour during our life-time as well 13

5. Sri Anantheswara Temple : After this Sri Vadiraja prays at the ancient Anantheswara Temple situated in car street, Udupi, in two slokas. According to local history, Lord Parasurama appeared in Lingakara as desired by Maheswara in this Temple :

Oh Lingamurthy! You are known as
 Ananthapadmanabha and confirm
 The belief that Srisa dwells in the heart of Isha
 In order to demonstrate this to the world
 Parasurama appears in Lingakara here. 14

Isha (Sankara) becomes Aheesha
 (Adishesha), in the next kalpa
 To illustrate this fact Seshashayi
 Sri Hari assumes Sivarupa here. 15

Acharya Madhva left Udupi for Badari at his 79th age as he was taking classes on Aithareya Upanished for his disciples at Anantheswara shrine. It is further believed that Sri Acharya is even

now visibly present at Badari and invisibly at Udupi. He was taking classes for the disciples inside the Anantheswara in front of the Deity

Udupi is connected by train from Maharashtra, Tamilnadu, Kerala, Andhra, etc., and connected by road with all major towns of southern India. The nearest airport is Bajpe (60.km.) which is connected to Bangalore and Bombay. Visitors can stay at Birla Choultry, Sri Krishnadhama, Admar Mutt Choultry, Adokshaja Choultry of Pejavar Mutt, Indiraprasta Guest House of Puthige Mutt, Sri Vidyasamudra Choultry of Kaniyoor Mutt, Sri Bhoovaraha Complex of Sode Mutt and other lodging houses.

Apart from Sri Krishna Temple, Udupi is famous in the twin fields of banking and education. The Udupi Dist. is the birth place of several banking Institutions. Two Nationalised Banks i.e. Syndicate Bank and Corporation Bank were started in Udupi. Dr.T.M.A.Pai, the modern architect of Manipal (5 km from Udupi) started the Academy of General Education during 1947 which is now running 52 schools and colleges in different disciplines spread in Udupi, Manipal and other parts of the country. Students from all over India and abroad are undergoing various courses especially in medicine, engineering and technology at these Colleges. Kasturiba Hospital is fully equipped with all modern facilities and is catering to the health care of the community.

The Admar Mutt Education Council, Udupi, started by H.H. Sri Vibudesha Theertha Swamiji of Admar Mutt Udupi, during 1961, runs over 15 Schools and Colleges spread in Karnataka, Mumbai and Delhi.

Sri Madhva Siddanta Prabodini Sanskrit Maha Patasala (College) Udupi, started during 1904 by the Eight Swamijis of Udupi, offers education in Sanskrit up to Vidwat (post-graduation) level in Vedanta, Tarka, Jyothisha and Alankara etc.,

The holy town Udupi, which is glorified by noble saints like Acharya Madhva and Vadiraja Theertha Swamy must be visited by the devotees at least once during life.

CHAPTER-II

Sri Vadiraja who left Udipi on an all India holy tour moves in a clockwise direction to Lord Krishna and Bharat Mata. In this Chapter Vadiraja describes his pilgrimage to western India as he visits the following places and sacred rivers : 6) Pajaka kshetra 7) Kunjaru Giri 8) Yelluru Viswanatha kshetra 9) Madhyavata Mutt 10) Chintamani Narasimha kshetra 11) Netravathi River 12) Netravathi and Kumaradhara Sangam.

6. Pajaka Kshetra : Pajaka the birth place of Madhvacharya and Kunajru are situated 11km away to the south of Udipi. At the top of Kunjaru Hill there is a Durga Temple, and Parasurama Temple. Apart from this there are lot of marks left by Acharya Madhva when he spent his childhood, at Pajaka. There is a foot mark of Acharya Madhva, where he stood after a miraculous leap to respond to his mother's call. At this sacred place, Sri Vadiraj installed a shrine for Acharya Madhva, and adjacent to this, we find Mudu Mutt, where Acharya's elders had lived. Vadiraja explains Pajaka, the birth place of Acharya Madhva in two Slokas :

Who would not like to worship
Pajaka kshetra a holy place
Considered as supreme and sacred,
For, the Lord of Satyaloka Mukhyaprana
Came down here as Acharya Madhva. 16

Four sacred tanks of names,
Parashu, Dhanu, Bana, and
Gada Theerthas, enhance the
Beauty of Pajaka four - fold
and mother Durga standing on
The hills look as if she is here
To bless Her son Mukhyaprana
Now appearing as Madhva Muni here. 17

7. Kunjaru Giri : In the next three Slokas Vadiraja prays to Sri Devi of Kunjaru Hill :

Oh Durga Mata, you possess trishula
By which you have slain Mahishasura

Just as lion kills the elephant
And are now present in Kunjaru Hills
Granting solace and liberation to devotees 18

Oh Sri Devi, during pralaya you
Remain in the form of Deluge as Jaladurga,
During creation, you are found
Breathing forth the Vedas, and now you
Are found, on earth as Sthala Durga. 19

Oh Durga Mata, it is difficult to know you fully
For you inflict pain on the wicked and keep them away,
And always bless and protect the learned
Dwelling in the hearts you control our actions. 20

8. Yellure Viswanatha kshetra : Yelluru Viswanatha Temple is 24 km. away from Udupi. The Temple was closed after the day's puja, when Vadiraja reached the temple. Vadiraja therefore stood outside the Temple and prayed to Shankara. Maheshwara, pleased by Vadiraja's prayer opened the door and appeared before Vadiraja, and Vadiraja continued his prayers. Suddenly Nandi appeared and obstructed the meeting. Now Vadiraja prayed to Nandi, who was pleased, sat down. Therefore one can see and worship Vishwanatha now standing anywhere in front of Maheshwara. Vadiraja extols Viswanatha in five slokas.

Oh Maheshwara, you hold a strong Trishula
Which has slain, powerful demons like Andhakasura
You are quite handsome and are three-eyed,
And you possess a shining and powerful Japamala,
Which can wipe out the sins of the devotees,
You are destroyer of Daksadwara
Oh Sambho ! we pray to you. 21

Oh Nagabhushana Sambho!
You are decorated by serpents,
With Ganga on your head
You are quite holy and sacred
Even saints who are expert musicians
Sing of your glory and

Praise your valourous acts —
Such as Tripura Vijaya and other glories,
Parvati has set her lovely glance on you
Oh Viswanatha! we pray to you. 22

All celestials, including Indra
Worship your Lotus feet,
You bear half-moon on your head
You are Lotus eyed,
Manmatha the God of love was
Reduced to ashes by your angry look
You are the treasure house of noble
Qualities and deep scholarship
You are far superior to Mahendra
Oh Shankara, we humbly worship you 23

All Yogis like Narada and Sanandana
Do sing and praise your glory,
You are blue-necked
Oh mind, please do
Worship the supremely handsome Shankara 24

Oh Tripurari Sambho! Rudrasukta
And other Veda Mantras praise your glory,
You are always kind to devotees, who
worship you with jasmine and bilva patra
You always bless those who seek your help
Your matted locks are radiant due to
The presence of lustrous moon on your head,
And you are a great benefactor of devotees,
Kindly eradicate our evil thoughts
Oh Shankara, we worship you. 25

Vadiraja now turns to the Bull -vehicle Nandi of Shankara and
prays to him in one Sloka.

Oh fair coloured Mahanandi, you are
Used as the main vehicle of Shankara
And possesses beautiful ears, tail
Horns, feet, stomach, eyes, face
And a majesti hump on your back,

The aforesaid five Slokas are carved in front of the Temple,so that the visitors can chant them. These Slokas are also recited at the time of the local car festival.

9. Madhyavata Mutt : Madhyavata Mutt is situated in between Udupi and Subrahmanya, where the great Madhvacharya used to perform his mid day rituals, and pooja. Out of eight Vedavyasa saligrams which the Acharya brought from Badari, for worship, Acharya installed one at Madhyavata Mutt for Acharya during noon. We can even now see here the rest-house, Gautama Kunda and Gada Theerthas, where Acharya worshipped. The mutt is 3 km. away from Kavalakatte, which is on the Mangalore-Charmadi route. Vadiraja sings of Sri Vedavyasa installed by Madhvacharya in three Slokas.

10. Chintamani Narasimha Kshetra : Chintamani is near Kade Shivalaya, which is six kms. away from Uppinangady on the Mangalore-Bangalore highway. According to local history, when Lord Shankara was performing tapas, certain bad elements like Yoginis tried to divert Shankara's attention from his meditation. At this juncture, Lord Narasimha jumped up from Patala (Nether world) and saved Shankara by destroying the bad elements. Vadiraja worships Narasimha in two Slokas.

With left thigh set on the earth
And left hand placed on it,
The right thigh set upwards
With right hand placed on it
Oh Chintamani Narasimha Swamy :
You are seen on the banks of Nethravati
We do worship you with deep devotion.

30

With ears fully exposed like valiant lion
King of the Jungle, you moved
Upwards from the Nether world
With Chakra in your hand
You have slain Yoginis and
Other wicked elements and
Offered full protection to Gouri Shankara

31

11. Nethravati River : Nethravathi is the longest (viz. 160 kms) of all the rivers in D.K.District. The river takes its birth from Varaha Hills and joins Arabian Sea at Mangalore. According to scriptures, the river is born from the eyes of Lord Varaha.

Oh Nethravati you did spring from
Cheerful Tears of Sri Varaha,
And not of sorrowful tears
For you are always cool,
And would have been not so
Were you born of the sad tears of the Lord,
Again, devotion to Sri Hari is
Enhanced as one dips in thy waters. 32

Oh Nethravati as thy waters
Are coming out of Varaha's eyes,
His grace and look fall on those
Who bathe in thy waters and
They are blessed fully. 33

12. The confluence of Nethravathi & Kumaradhara Rivers: we find the confluence of Nethravathi and Kumaradhara rivers at Uppinangady town on the Mangalore-Bangalore route. Kumaradhara starts from Kumara hills. By the side of this holy sangam, there is a thousand Linga temple of Maheshwara, known as Sahasra Lingeshwara Temple. Vadiraja describes the holy Sangameshwara Kshetra in one Sloka,

Oh Viswanatha, you are ever present
In the holy town of Kashi, but here
You are present as Sahasra Lingeshwara
And the Sangameshwara Kshetra is
Indeed powerful and holy
with your gracious presence 34

Vadiraja now prays to Kumaradhara river in two Slokas :

Oh Kumaradhare, you always
protect the virtuous, please favour
Us with spiritual knowledge and
Purity our thoughts, by wiping out

All our sins, preventing us,
From engaging in misdeeds.

35

Oh Kumaradhare, let your
Bank open for us the door to
Enter Moksha, and we remain
Here for long performing our
Rituals, reciting various mantras
Praising the glory of Sri Hari.

36

CHAPTER III

As noble souls visit holy places, their sanctity is enriched further. If we view the places visited by Vadiraja from this angle our knowledge and devotion to God gets enhanced, and we become more detached, from material pursuits. Vadiraja who authored *Theertha Prabandha*, visited all the holy places in clock-wise direction, explaining the significance of each place, as enshrined in our scriptures. In this chapter an attempt is made to explain the glory of the following places presented in Paschima Prabandha, by Sri Vadiraja Swamy.

13) Subrahmanya Kshetra 14) Vedavyasa Samputa 15) Payaswini River 16) Suvarna River.

13. Subrahmanya Kshetra : Subrahmanya is situated at a distance of 166 km. from Udupi, and can be reached by bus or car from Udupi and Mangalore. It is also connected by bus from all major towns of Karnataka. Sri Vishnu Theertha Swamy, the younger brother of Sri Acharya Madhwa, and the first monk of Sode Mutt, established the Subrahmanya Mutt. Sri Vishnu Theertha is a Chiranjivi, and is said to be in Sahyachala near Subrahmanya doing penance. Subrahmanya Mutt and Subrahmanya Temple are in the same compound separated by a wall. There is one Darpana Theertha, in front of the Mutt and the Temple and the Yathris enter the temple only after a dip or footwash in the Darpana Theertha. Great scholar and refined speaker saint Sri Vidya Prasanna Theertha Swaniji is the present head of Subrahmanya Mutt. Subrahmanya is situated in the dense forests at the bottom of Sahyachala, and the Yathris become immensely happy at a mere sight of the place and its surroundings. Sri Vadiraja praises the glory of Shanmukha Subrahmanya in six Slokas:

Oh Subrahmanya, it is too difficult to praise you fully
 For a mere Angapradakshina over
 The left-overs served to brahmins here
 Will cure major diseases like leprosy. 37

Those who committed cruel crimes,
 Like brahma- hatya in previous births
 Come to earth again, to suffer for past sins
 Attacked by leprosy, but you relieve them from
 All the pains as they approach you devotedly 38

Oh six-faced Subrahmanya, you are
 The supreme commander of the army of Gods
 You are like fire to destroy
 The wicked ; neither the earthly poets
 Nor the celestials know your glory fully,
 Oh son of Shankara, Lover of Brahmins
 You are all - powerful
 As the army-chief of the Celestials
 You earned success to Gods
 Vanquishing powerful Tarakasura,easily
 Without much labour or efforts. 39

Oh Subrahmanya, son of Bhavani
 You offer food and shelter to those
 Who come to you and cure them
 From leprosy and other skin diseases,
 You purify them and remove all their miseries
 None on earth can match you, in glory and mercy 40

In the following Sloka, Vadiraja explains Adi Subrahmanya, which
 is situated near the main temple.

Oh Adi Subrahmanya, you have earlier
 Propagated Skanda-mata,
 Advocating supremacy of Shanmukha
 But in your heart of hearts, you are
 Devoted to Sri Hari and are staying
 Inside the cave, to worship Him calmly

And peacefully, undisturbed.

41

In the next Sloka, Vadiraja says that the everlasting (Chiranjivi) Sri Vishnu Threetha Swamy (the first saint of Sode and Subrahmanya mutts) and Subrahmanya Swamy are living together in Subrahmanya and are, naturally, bosom friends.

Oh Shanmuka, you are a real friend of
Sri Vishnu Theertha Muni, you are
Enemy of Tarakasura and devoted
To Lord Krishna, you wipe out the sins of your
Devotees, dwelling in Sahyachala
Please favour us with the knowledge of Para Brahma, 42

14. Vedavyasa Samputa : Vadiraja now explains the *samputa* (box) of Vedavyasa Salagrama, which is being worshipped at Subrahmanya mutt. It can neither be opened, nor the Salagrama be seen, separately.

Oh Vedavyasa Krishna, you are present
In the samputa in the form of Salagrama
But the Samputa is too strong to open
To see you out of samputa, indicating your omnipotence,
The local people are learned
And are ever engaged in praising your glory. 43

Oh Vedavyasa, you are firm
Inside the Samputa as Sri Krishna
Is firm in the heart of Madhva Muni,
Oh Samputa Narasimha Swamy
You are all supreme, strong and powerful. 44

15. Payaswini River : Vadiraja explains the glory of the river in one Sloka.

Oh Payaswini river! Lord Jagannath
Is always present in thy waters
If not, why would Mahalakshmi incarnate here
On your bank, again as Sri Durga? 45

16. Suvarna : The Suvarna river originates from Varahagiri, and passes through Vedachala or Vedagiri near Manipal, and moves along the north side of Kalyanpur. The drinking water to Udupi town is

drawn from this river. A bath in the river especially on Krishnangara Chaturdasi (viz on the 14th day of Krishna Paksha, when it falls on Tuesday) is considered as most holy.

Oh Suvarna who can explain your glory
Through Vedachala, as you pass?
Those who dip in thy waters, can hear
And feel destruction of their sins as they bathe. 46

CHAPTER IV

Sri Vadiraja is a mobile chariot of knowledge, devotion and detachment. His Holiness is a Triveni Sangam of Tapashakti, Mantra Siddhi, and Deep scholarship. In all his works we find a fine blend of extraordinary oration and spirituality. He lived a glorious life for 120 years, of which more than 112 years in sanyasa, which he dedicated for the material and spiritual emancipation of mankind. His *Theertha Prabandha* is an outstanding travelogue in Sanskrit. An attempt is made in this chapter to explain the glory of the following holy places, visited by Sri Vadiraja and as presented by Him in *Paschima Prabandha*: 17) Kumbhashi Kshetra 18) Koteswara Kshetra 19) Krodha Sankaranarayana Kshetra.

17. Kumbhashi kshetra : Kumbhashi is situated 30 km. north of Udupi. The birth place of Sri Vadiraja, Huvinakere is just 5 km. away from Kumbhashi. Even today, we can see Huvinakere Mutt, where Sri Vadiraja's parents lived. There is also a small temple dedicated to Sri Vadiraja in the Gauri field, nearby where Sri Vadiraja was actually born. His Holiness Sri Vishwothama Theertha Swamiji, the present head of Sri Sode Vadiraja Mutt, Udupi celebrates Vadiraja Jayanthi at Huvinakere Mutt, on Magha Shuddha Dwadasi, and Aradhana at Sode on Phalguna Bahula Thritheeya, every year except when he sits for paryaya at Udupi. But even during paryaya, the Jayanti and the Aradhana are held at Huvinakere and Sode Mutts by his disciples.

The place was known as Kumbhashi, during Dwapara Yuga, as a demon by name Kumbhasura, was killed by Bhimasena, with the blessings of Mahaganapathi. At the bottom of Anegudde (Elephant Hill) there is a Hari Hara temple. Sri Mahaganapathi temple is situated at the top of Anegudde. The Ganapathi temple was renovated during

May 1991, by duly performing the holy Brahma Kalasha, and the temple is now marvellous to look at.

Hari Hara temple at the bottom of the hill is built over a pushkarini. In the Garbha Griha there is a Shivalinga and a water-spring, indicating the presence of Sri Hari and Hara. There is a small well inside the temple, which contains crystal clear water, all through the year. Every visitor feels thrilled at seeing this wonderful well, which is always full. According to local history, Sage Gautama stayed here for a long time along with his disciples. He also brought Ganga to this spot for his ablutions. So the place is also known as Gautama kshetra.

At Anegudde, the idol of Vighnesha is growing up slowly. The idol of Ganesha manifested here after full decoration is quite lovely to look at. Ganesh readily fulfils the desires of the devotees. From the Kshetra purana we understand that puja, yajna etc., have been going on at this temple since Dwapara Yuga. Pictures indicating the history of the place are carved on the walls of the temple. Vadiraja explains the glory of Kumbhashi in two Slokas.

Oh Holy place Kumbhashi
Srisa and Girisa (Hari Hara)
Stay here together, you are quite holy
For Bhima finished Kumbhasura here
And by a mere visit, the devotees get cleared of their sins 47
Oh Gautama Muni, Hari Hara Kshetra Kumbhashi is thy face
The spring on either side of the temple
Are thy eyes, the place is your Tapovana
As holy as thy body, for the study of Vedas
And conducting holy prayers and penance. 48

18. Koteshwara Kshetra : Koteshwara is situated 2 km. north of Kumbhashi. There is a big temple of Mahalingeshwara here. There is a huge tank by the side of the temple. Gangadhara is present here in the form of Koti Linga. The Koti (Crore) Lingas are inside the well situated in the Garbhagudi. The name Koteshwara is derived from Koti Lingas, present in the temple. Vadiraja worships Koteshwara in two Slokas.

Oh Koteshwara Kshetra, you are
As powerful as Gangadhara!

Who dwells here in Koti (crore) Linga form
 Oh Shankara, you have hoisted the Flag
 At Kailasa after conquering Tripuras,
 Here also you have won Kandavara
 Gajaputra and Bramhavara, and get gifts
 For holding thy annual car festival
 In a Supremely colourful manner. 49

Oh sambho ! your presence here
 As Koti Lingas, was to bless crores of Muni
 Who pray for your kind grace
 Oh Supremely divine Shankara,
 Can you not fulfil our wishes
 As we are praying you all alone? 50

19. Kroda Shankara Narayana Kshetra : Shankaranarayana Kshetra is situated on the way from Kundapur to Shimoga, via Sagar. As Hari and Hara appeared jointly as Shankara Narayana, just to bless a saint called Kroda, the place is known as Kroda Naryana Kshetra. Vadiraja worships Kroda Shankara Narayana in 5 Slokas.

Shankara Narayana Kshetra, where Kroda Yogishwara Muni
 Performed austerities, does shine
 On the banks of Shuktimathi river,
 Ramesha (Hari) and Umesha (Hara)
 Though they appear in one form,
 Are indeed different from each other 51

Oh Shankara Narayana ! Vedas explain your glory
 As Atma is different from Paramatma
 Shankara is different from Sri Hari. 52

Oh Shankara Narayana, hundreds
 Of Vedaslokas explain your glory
 You are ever present in the hearts of Yogis
 Who sing songs of your glory and fulfill their desires, 53

Oh Shankara Narayana swamin
 As we see you with Trisula and Sudarshan
 The moon and crown shining on your head
 Lotus - like face, hands and feet
 We devoutly pray for your blessings. 54

Oh Shankara Narayana, you possess
Beautiful things, a fine navel
Handsome chest with serpent and necklace
Your body is as white as a conch
Ever spotless, we worship you.

55

In the last two Slokas, Sri Vadiraja explains the glory of Shankara by a reference to Trisula, half-moon, and serpent, and simultaneously worships Narayana with the reference to Sudarshana, necklace, crown etc.

CHAPTER V

In the Treta yuga the divine cow Kamadhenu fulfilled the desires of those who prayed to her. Likewise Vadiraja is the Kaliyuga Kamadhenu who grants the wishes of the devotees who pray to him devotedly. Bhavi sameera Sri Vadiraja, who was a superb scholar, a supreme devotee of Tirumalesha, moved around the country, explaining the glory of holy places like Sriranga, Udupi, Pandarapur and Tirumala and sacred rivers like Ganga, Godavari, Krishna, Cauvery etc., as glorified in various puranas in his book known as *Theertha Prabandha*. An attempt is made in this chapter, to explain the glory of the following places as narrated by Vadiraja in his "Theertha Prabandha".

20) Mukambika Kshetra, Kolluru 21) Sahyadri 22) Harihara.

20. Mukambika Kshetra, Kolluru : Kolluru is 80 km. away from Udupi. Buses are plying regularly from Mangalore to Kolluru via Udupi and Kundapur. Apart from this, there are direct buses from all the major towns of Tamilnadu and Kerala to Kolluru. One can as well travel from Tamilnadu / Kerala by train upto Mangalore / Udupi and thereafter by bus/car to reach Kolluru. We have to pass through dense forests to reach Kolluru. Devotees from Tamilnadu, and Kerala visit the temple daily. There is a Shivalinga here with a golden mark. At the request of Kolamuni, Mother Uma appeared here along with her consort Shankara, and slew Mukasura. The place is therefore known as Kolapur or Kolluru. Kolluru is a great Shakthi and Siddikshetra. Later on, Adi-Shankara, who came here installed Sri Chakra and the idol of Mukambika. Sri Vadiraja sings the glory of Mukambika in two Slokas.

Oh Mukambika! Your graceful looks
 Will fulfill the desires of all devotees,
 You protect those who pray to you
 But sinners who enrage you become dumb. 56

In the foot-ball match, the ball moves
 On either side, and sometimes upwards
 When hit strongly : likewise , Sri Devi
 Fought with her enemies moving
 In different directions with utmost
 Valour and skill till all were slain. 57

21. Sahyadri : Kolluru Kshetra is at the bottom of Kutachadri Hills. On Kutachadri there are lot of plants, creepers and herbs, of high medicinal value. There is a Sarvajna Peetha where Adi Shankara sat for penance. Kutachadri Mountains are part of Sahyachala, spread from Ratnagiri to Kanyakumari. Vadiraja describes the same in one Sloka.

Oh Kutachadri, though you are part of
 Sahyachala, you never tolerate the sinners
 Static and immovable, you are.
 Please purify our thoughts
 Rooted firmly in our minds, 58

22) Harihara : Harihara is situated on the Bangalore-Mumbai highway on the banks of Thungabhadra river. The temple is 1 km. away from Harihara Railway Station. Thungabhadra is flowing behind the temple. Harihara is also connected by road to Shimoga, Hubli, Bangalore, Bellary etc. The car festival at this ancient shrine takes place on the full-moon day of Magha Masa. Major events relating to the temple are carved over the stones around the temple. Hari and Hara are seen in the same idol in the Garbhagudi. The right side of the idol is Shiva, wearing Rudrakshi - crown on the head and with Trisula in the hand. The left side of the Vighraha represents Mahavishnu, having Chakra on one hand and showering blessings with the other hand.

History of the place : The place was earlier known as Guharanya, where lived a demon, Guha by name. He performed severe austeri-

ties, and secured a special boon from Brahma so that no God can ever kill him singly. After getting such a powerful boon he started harassing Sadhus, saints and celestials. The Gods then approached Brahma for relief, who advised them to go to Kailasa, where Shankara suggested that they may go to Vaikunta and seek help from Narayana. Sri Hari then assured help to Gods and came to Kailasa, and then in order to honour the rare boon granted by Brahma, taking Shankara on his right side, appeared as Harihara before Guhasura. After a severe fight Harihara stood over the body of Guhasura after defeating him. Guhasura then prayed to Haihara to stand perpetually in the same form over his body. Harihara agreed to to this, and we can see Narayana and Shankara, as Harihara in the same form as they appeared to slay Guhasura, even today at Sri Kshetra Harihara. Vadiraja explains the glory of Harihara in five Slokas.

Oh Murari ! Ever living joyous with
 Mahalakshmi, Oh Neela Megha Shyama
 You possess, the supremely powerful Sudarshana
 Oh Tripurari ! Parvathi's darling Shambho.
 You possess powerful Trishula and
 You are a great Guru, Oh Shankara
 We offer our salutations to you both (Hari and Hara) 59

Oh Sri Hari please favour us with
 Eternal devotion upon thy lotus feet
 And liberate us from various miseries
 Oh Shankara, please detach us from all material pursuits
 And attach our minds to spiritual matters. 60

Guha is unconquerable singly
 Either by Hari or Hara, as blessed by Brahma !
 Hence Narayana and Shankara join together as Harihara,
 To slay Guhasura with their combined strength. 61

Hari and Hara offer a joint fight
 Against Guhasura, to keep up
 The boons of Brahma in letter and spirit,
 But in reality are different from each other. 62

Hari is different from Hara
 As Paramatma is different from Atma

Though they are present here together
 For Sri Hari is the sustainer of the
 Universe created by Brahma, while
 Hara destroys the same, at the end of each Kalpa 63

CHAPTER VI

Sri Vadiraja is one of the four strong pillars of Madhva Philosophy. The other three are 1) Sri Jayatheertha (Teekacharya) 2) Sri Vyasaraja Swamy (Chandrikacharya) 3) Sri Raghavendra Swamy (Parimalacharya). Sri Vadiraja was a great scholar, a creative thinker and a reputed writer, next only to Acharya Madhva. He lived a glorious life of 120 years of which more than 112 years he lived as a saint which no other Yathi ever lived or enjoyed, according to Madhva history. He changed the Paryaya puja system of Lord Krishna from two months to two years and the same procedure is being carried on at Udupi by the eight swamijis in rotation without any interruption even today as stipulated by Sri Vadiraja, five centuries ago. Sri Vadiraja is the Kaliyuga Kamadhenu to the devotees, during his life time and beyond, which is evident from the fact that hundreds of devotees visit Soda every day to earn his blessings. In this chapter an attempt is made, to describe the glory of the following places visited by Sri Vadiraja as presented in the Theertha Prabandha in western chapter.

23. Bidirahalli Aswathanarayana : From Harihara, Vadiraja enters Bidirahalli (Venugrama) and sings the glory of Aswatha Vriksha, standing on the banks of Thungabhadra river in four Slokas.

Oh noble devotees, there is no need
 To visit Pushkara, Prayaga, Kasi, Gaya
 Badarikashrama and Ramasethu, situated far away
 To earn the blessings of Sri Hari
 For one can get the same fruits
 By holy visit to Aswathanarayana
 Ever present on Aswathavriksha
 Situated on the banks of Thungabhadra. 64

Oh Aswatha Vriksha, thy roots
 Are the lotus feet of Narayana
 The mid-portion, His stomach

The top part are His faces, and
Thy branches are His countless hands
Sri Devi and Bhudevi are present
Oh either side in the form of plants. 65

Oh four-faced Brahma present at the
Bottom of the tree, bless us with children
Oh Sri Hari ! present at the centre
For ever protect us, from all hardships
Oh Shankara present at the top
Banish all ills from our bodies. 66

The ever-moving leaves of Aswatha Vriksha generating
Pure and cool breeze passing through
Thunga river, are like fingers, vibrant and lustrous
To wipe out all our sins. 67

24. Bidirahalli Someshwara : Sri Vadiraja now explains the glory of Someshwara Temple situated at Bidirahalli village, in one Sloka.

Oh Shankara, you look radiant
Smeared with pure Vibhuti
Upon thy forehead, deeply loved by Parvati
With holy and cool breeze moving
Along the Thunga River : You are here
To bless the people. We do worship you fondly 68

25. Bankapura Kesava : From Bidirahalli, Vadiraja comes to Bankapura, and sings the glory of Lord Kesava in one sloka.

Oh Bankapura Kesava, you possess
Sankha on the upper right hand
Lotus on the lower right hand
Sudarshana on the upper left hand
And Gada on the lower left hand
Always worshipped by Brahma, Hanuman,
Lakshmana and other celestials ; do
Shower prosperity upon thy devotees
Brushing aside all their miseries. 69

26. Varada River : Vadiraja now explains the glory of Varada River which flows through Uttara Kannada District in one sloka.

Oh Varada river, you drive away all sins
Of those, who bathe in thy holy waters and offer
Boons to the Devotees of Sri Hari true to
Thy name Varada (giver of gifts)
We do humbly bow to you.

70

27. Banavasi Madhukeshwara : Banavasi is 25 km. away from Sirsi. In the past, Banavasi was the capital of the Kadamba kings. There is an ancient temple, by name Madhukeshwara, on the banks of the Varada river. As Shankara appeared here, to bless a demon, Madhu by name, this place is known as Madhukeshwara, Vadiraja sings of Madhukeshwara in one sloka.

Oh Madhukeshwara, by a single arrow
You have burnt Tripurasura to ashes ;
You are protecting all devotees
And are superior to Indra and
Other celestials ; you blessed Demon Madhu.
Please ever protect us.

71

28. Dharma Ganga River : Thereafter Vadiraja takes a dip in Dharma Ganga river and explains the greatness of the river in one sloka.

Oh Dharma Ganga, holy Ganga
Is ever present in thy waters,
Moving fast with powerful waves
You eradicate all our evils
Please do attach to our minds
Only noble and virtuous deeds.

72

29. Shalmali River : Vadiraja now explains the glory of Shalmali river, which joins the Arabian sea near Gokarna in two verses.

Holy Ganga is entering you
On the eve of Gangastami
Oh Shalmali, you are deeply
Loved by your husband Sea-God
Keep us always happy, please.

73

Thy water is normally saltish
It becomes sweet on the eve of

Gangastami, for use by all
when holy Ganga enters you
On every eve of Gangastami.

74

CHAPTER VII

Sri Vadiraja who had the full grace of Hayagriva, was the embodiment of Knowledge, Devotion and Detachment. He dedicated his whole life for both material and spiritual uplift of all mankind. He went on holy tour of Bharat and explained the glory of holy places as enshrined in Sruti (Vedas) and Smriti (Scriptures). Even today we can see a lot of people, visiting Mantralaya, Sonda, Udupi, Pandharapur, Tirumala and Sriranga to get rid of various miseries, problems and troubles confronted by them. Sri Vadiraja had installed Shivalingas in holy places like Dharmastala, Sonda etc., and dispelled the wrong notion that Vaishnavites are haters of Shankara. In this article, an attempt is made to explain the glory of the following places, as presented by Vadiraja in the western chapter of 'Theertha Prabandha' written by him: 30) Soda Kshetra 31) Manjuguni Venkatesha 32) Yana Bhairava.

30. Soda Kshetra : We have already informed the readers that Sri Vadiraja was born in Huvinakere village near Kundapur. Udupi - the abode of Lord Krishna was the main centre of his activities. He selected Soda 19 km. from Sirsi, a taluk head-quarters of Uttara Kannada district, for his final rest. He did a lot of work at Soda even up to the time he entered the Brindavan. Sirsi is on the Mangalore-Hubli route. On Bangalore-Bombay train route. one can reach Sirisi via Haveri. As we alight from the bus, at Sonda, we first see Rama-Trivikrama Temple, installed by Sri Vadiraja. On the western side of the temple, we find the main building of Vadiraja Mutt of Sode. As we move down a little to the west, we find a big tank, known as " Dhavala Ganga " which is used for taking bath by the Mutt staff and the visitors. Towards north of the Dhavala Ganga, we find the Moola Pancha Vrindavan of the revered saint Sri Vadiraja Swamy. On the eastern side of the Brindavan, we find a small temple of Sri Bhutaraja, an ardent disciple of Vadiraja. There is a place known as Tapovana, 6 km. away from Sonda, where Sri Vadiraja performed austerities. The annual car festival at the Rama Trivikrama Temple, takes place on the full-moon day of Phalguna month. On Phalguna Krishna Tadige

(3rd day), Vadiraja entered his Brindavan (final rest place) alive. The car festival at RamaTrivikrama Temple and Aradhana of Yathiraja Vadiraja are celebrated on a grand scale every year. Sri Vadiraja performed four paryayas at Udupi and directed his disciple Sri Veda Vedy Theertha who was getting old, to perform the fifth paryaya of the Mutt at Udupi. Gururaja (Vadiraja), however, performed his fifth prayaya at Sonda. He also constructed the temples of Gopala Krishna, Anjaneya and Chandreshwara etc., around Dhavala Ganga Pushkarini to perform daily rituals. He got RamaTrivikrama standing on a golden chariot brought from Badari, through his trusted disciple Bhutaraja and installed the same at Soda. As one of the wheels of the chariot fell down on the way we now find the temple standing only on three wheels. Moreover, the golden temple now looks as a stone-temple on account of the present Kaliyuga. Sri Vadiraja, who founded the temple at Sonda, and worshipped RamaTrivikrama for a long time, explains the greatness of Trivikrama in two Slokas.

Holy Ganga ever flowing in Badari
Sends Trivikrama through Bhutaraja
to Sonda, for worship by Vadiraja
Further comes down to Sonda
And is ever present, in Dhavalaganga
To keep her father Sri Hari and
Brother Brahma quite happy.

75

Oh Trivikrama, you are quite handsome
You possess a lovely mace, chakra
Shanka, lotus and akshamala
In thy hands : you love thy devotees
And were installed by Yati Vadiraja
We do always adore you.

76

Huvinakere and Soda Kshetra. the twin holy places, are well known for their pictures Que beauty, and for the calm and serene atmosphere. These places must be visited by every devotee, at least once in his life, and he is bound to move up spiritually to greater heights by such holy visits.

31. Manjuguni Venkatesha : Lord Thirumalesha is the Lord of

Saptagiri. Once he moved to different places hunting for fun. He ultimately got tired, and therefore rested on the eastern banks of Somaghanashini river. After some time, a brahmin, by name Tirumala, came there and was deeply attracted by the pure water of the river, Therefore he remained there, performing austerities etc. One day, he heard an Asharira Vani (incorporeal voice) directing him to construct a stone temple at Manjuguni village viz. 10 km. to the north of the river bank, and to install and worship Venkatesha now resting on the river bank. Accordingly, Tirumala installed Lord Venkatesha at Manjuguni and worshipped him there with the help of the local brahmins and others, as directed by Asharira Vani. Manjuguni is situated on the way to Gokarna from Sirsi. Guru Vadiraja worships Manjuguni Venkatesha in two Slokas.

Oh Venkatesha ! You are present
 Here, at this lovely Manjuguni village
 Standing on this hill cave
 You possess, shanka, chakra, bow and arrows
 Do shower wealth and prosperity
 Upon thy devotees, effacing all their sins
 Oh Lakshmi pathi Venkatesha, we do worship you 77

Oh Venkatesha ! you have come down
 To holy Manjuguni Village,
 With foot-wear on thy lotus feet
 To slay the wicked, armed with shanka
 chakra, bow, arrows etc., after
 Touring the entire world, and
 Stopped here to enjoy the deep, floral
 And natural beauty all round the place. 78

32. Yena Bhairava : Yena hill is situated in Kumta taluk of Karwar District. The annual festival is held here during Sivarathri. There is a picture of Shankara inside the cave on the Yena Hill. According to the local history, Shankara entered the cave, on being driven away by Bhasmasura. Water drops can be seen falling on Siva's head, though no water source is found nearby. There is a temple dedicated to Ganesha at the bottom of the hill. On the way to Yena, we find, a small hill consisting of lime stones. It is believed to be the last

remains of Bhasmasura, who was turned to ashes, by Maha Vishnu, appearing as Mohini, to slay the former. Yena Bhairava was appointed as kshetra pala, in order to protect Manjuguni Village. Vadiraja worships Yena Bhairava in one Sloka.

Upon hearing the voice of Bhairaveshwara
Our sins are driven away, like deers which run away
On hearing the roars of the lion
Oh Bhairaveshwara, allow us to worship you. 79

CHAPTER - VIII

The revered Saint Vadiraja Swamy moved around the holy places and sacred rivers of the country in a clockwise direction starting from the Sri Krishna shrine of Udupi. During this process, Vadiraja recorded the cultural heritage and glory of ancient India, as seen by him, 500 years ago. He gave hybrid brinjal seeds to the residents of Mattu Village near Udupi, to earn their livelihood. This variety i.e Mattu Brinjals are grown locally even to day and are far more delicious in taste and superior in smell to any other variety of brinjal grown elsewhere. He contributed greatly to the glory of Kannada and Sanscrit literature, for commoners as well as scholars through his various works in Kannada and Sanscrit languages. In this chapter an attempt is made to explain the glory of the following places as presented by Vadiraja in the Western Chapter of Theertha Prabandha composed by him: 33) Gokarna Kshetra 34) Kolhapur Mahalakshmi 35) Tapati River 36) Narmada River.

33) Gokarna kshetra : Gokarna kshetra is situated on the Arabian Sea, Kumta Taluk of Uttara Kannada District. It is one of the top seven holy kshetras of this region. The other six are 1) Udupi 2) Subrahmanya 3) Kumbhashi 4) Koteshwara 5) Shankaranarayana and 6) Kollur all in Udupi and Dakshina Kannada Districts. Gokarna is connected by bus from all important towns of Karnataka. A big temple, dedicated to Mahabaleshwara, facing the Arabian sea, established during Tretayuga is found here. There are Ganesha and Kashi Visalakshi temples on either sides of the main Maheshwara temple. There is a gigantic tank spread over four square kms, known as Koti Theertha. Well-read Brahmins and scholars live around the temple. The annual car festival at the temple takes place on the eve of

Sivarathri. According to the local history, the ten-faced demon king Ravana, performed severe austerities to please Shankara, Ravana asked for "Atma Linga" of Shamboo, when Siva appeared before him. Mahabaleshwara, pleased by the deep prayers of Dasanana, offered His "Atma Linga" to him, but advised him to move swiftly to his kingdom non stop. Shankara further told Ravana that he would be unconquerable, as long as he possessed the "Atma Linga" gifted by him. Ravana, on his way to Lanka along with the Atmalinga reached Gokarna at the time of sunset. He had to stop there to perform Sandhyavadana and other rituals. In the meanwhile the celestials who were sore over the special privilege conferred upon Ravana by Shankara, prayed to Ganapati to obstruct Ravana and avert the movement of Atma Linga from reaching Lanka. Ganapati now presented himself before Ravana as a young boy. Ravana handed over the Atmalinga to Ganesha and proceeded to perform the Sandhya rituals. Ganesha held Amtalinga for some time. Thereafter he repeatedly called Ravana thrice, requesting Ravana to take back the Atmalinga. As there was no response from Ravana, Ganesha kept the Linga over the earth. Ravana then came back to collect the Linga from Ganapati and found the Linga firmly rooted in the earth. All his efforts to retrieve the Atmalinga became futile. He became furious; deeply annoyed and upset he hit Ganesha over his head for the disgrace done to him. Ganesha was pushed forty steps backwards by this, and stood in that position as he is seen today. At this juncture, Shankara appeared and conferred the first honour upon Ganesha viz. "Let the devotees, coming to Gokarna, first worship Ganesha before they come to me, in order to get full benefits of Gokarna Yatra". This Atmalinga brought by Ravana and installed by Ganesha is being worshipped at Gokarna as Mahabaleshwara. Vadiraja explains the glory of Umapathi in three Slokas and that of Vignesha one Sloka.

Mahabaleshwara, powerful and radiant
 Standing at Gokarna tells secretly to
 Mother earth, that he stands here to
 Fulfil the desires of those, who serve Lord Narayana
 And His devotees faithfully and sincerely. 80

Gokarna Kshetra on the shores of
Arabian Sea is shining with the
Presence of illustrious Umapati
Shankara garlanded by serpents. —

81

Oh Parvathi's Lord, Mahabaleshwara !
You possess lovely beatiful colour
Of full moon as on Purnami day,
Here you are present in Lingakara
Like the ear of a cow, you have destroyed Mara,
Please bless us with your grace.

82

Vadiraja now worships Ganesha in one Sloka :-

Oh Gouri's son Ganesha you are also known
As " Vignesha " for you obstruct the
Misadventures of the wicked, and
Remove all hurdles on the right path
Is amply demonstrated at Gokarna by
Blocking Ravana to move over to
Lanka with the "Atmalinga", at the request of the celestials
For ever shower your blessings upon us.

83

34. Kolhapur Mahalakshmi : Kolhapur is 58 km, away from Miraj and is connected by train / bus from all important towns of Karnataka and Maharashtra. In Skanda Purana, the place is known as "Karaveerapura". The temple is situated behind the old place. The temple is gigantic and is built with black stones. According to Venkatachala Mahatmya " Mahalakshmi got annoyed, when sage Brighu hit Narayana's chest in his venture to assess the supremacy among the great trio viz. Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. Mahalakshmi instantly left Vaikunta and came down to the earth and stayed at Kolhapur.

Lotuses are grown here in plenty
Around Panchaganga and other tanks
It is little wonder, then if Mahalakshmi
Chose to remain here for she is fond of
Lotus, which is Her rightful and natural place of stay

84

Oh Mahalakshmi, you are born
 In the Ocean of milk, and are
 Mother of Brahma and other celestials
 Who constantly worship your lotus feet
 You are Goddess of glory and prosperity
 You bless those, who pray to you devotedly
 You shower riches upon them,
 You are the darling of Narayana
 Please offer us peace and plenty.

85

35. Tapati River : Tapati river originates from Vindhya hills and join the Arabian Sea near Surat town. According to mythology, Yamuna and Tapati, daughters of Sun-God, quarrelled among themselves and cursed each other to appear as water on earth. At the end of their quarrel. the Sun-God, deeply moved by the adverse developments among his daughters, blessed them saying that the water of Yamuna be as holy as that of Ganga, and of Tapati as holy as that of Narmada, when they appear on earth. On the banks of Tapati river near Surat town we find a temple known as "Aswini Kumareswara Temple", where Shankara blessed Aswini Kumaras. Vadiraja explains the glory of Tapati river in one Sloka.

Oh Tapati, upon Darshan,
 Bath, sip of thy holy waters,
 All sins and miseries are cleared,
 Which is contrary to thy name tapata (heat),
 As, in reality, you are ebullient (hot)
 Only to sins and sinners and not to the good,
 Whose sins you burn away, true to thy name Tapati

86

36. Narmada River : According to Skanda purana, sins accumulated in one hundred births are cleared by just one bath in the Narmada river. The existing trees on the either side of the river, get elevated in their subsequent births. The river originates from "Mekala Giri" of Amara Kanta village, situated in between Vindhya and Satpur Hills. According to scriptures, there are thousands of temples, tanks, water-springs etc., on the banks of the Narmada from its origin till the river joins the Arabian sea. The water of the river is quite pure.

Vadiraja describes the glory of the holy river in one Sloka.

A mere bath in her holy waters
Narmada will bring us all
Celestial pleasures, true to her name
Oh devotees, please therefore
Worship holy Narmada, and live in bliss for ever 87

CHAPTER IX

Saint Vadiraja is a devoted worshipper of Lord Hayagriva, who grants deep knowledge and scholarship to those who pray to him. Lord Hayagriva is ever present in the Brindavan of revered saint Vadiraja in order to dispel the darkness and difficulties faced by his devotees. We also understand from the life of Vadiraja that he stayed for a long time at Dwaraka and performed severe penance to propitiate Lord Hayagriva and got His special blessings, which enabled Sri Vadiraja to explain the glory of 1) Chakra Theertha 2) Gopi Sarovara 3) Shankoddhara Theertha; which were already submerged under the Arabian Sea, after Sri Krishna disappeared from Dwaraka, and were not found in Dwaraka during his visit. In this chapter an attempt is made to explain the glory of the following places as presented by Sri Vadiraja in the Western part of his Theertha Prabandha. 37) Prabhasa Kshetra 38) Banaganga Theertha 39) Dwarakapura 40) Gomathi River 41) Chakra Theertha 42) Shankoddhara Theertha.

37. Prabhasa Kshetra : Prabhasa is one of the holiest Kshetras in Bharat. It is also known as Somanath on account of the famous Somanath temple. Somanath is 5 km. away from Veraval Station. Kapila, Hiranya and Saraswathi rivers join each other, here before they enter the Arabian Sea. Sri Krishna, hit on the leg by Jaravyadha, came here and disappeared from the world at the holy confluence of the three rivers. The sangam is known as "Dehotsarg Theertha" as the Lord left His mortal coil here. Vadiraja explains the glory of the holy sangam in one Sloka.

Holy Kapila, Saraswathi and Hiranya
Rivers join each other here
Before entering the sea at Prabhasa,

Thereby enhancing the glory of the Kshetra
True to the name "Prabhasa"
The place is shining by the divine
Confluence of three holy rivers.

88

38. Banaganga Pushkarini : Banaganga is 1.5 km. away from Veraval Railway Station and 3 km. away from Somanath Temple. The spring was created, when Lord Krishna threw away the arrow hit on his leg by Jaravyadha. Vadiraja explains the glory of the tank in one sloka.

Oh Banaganga, you were born
When Lord Krishna threw away
The arrow that hit his leg
Thy water is as pure as Ganga
And drives away all the sins
Of those who worship you.

89

39) Dwaraka Kshetra : Dwarakanath Temple is 1.5 km. away from Dwaraka Railway Station. One can reach Dwaraka by Road/Train from Mumbai / Ahmedabad. It is one among the seven Mokshaprada places of the country. The others are 1) Ayodhya 2) Mathura 3) Maya 4) Kashi 5) Kanchi 6) Avanthikapuri.

Sri Krishna after slaying Kushasura created a new town Dwaraka over the Kushastali Island, situated in the sea, through Vishwakarma. Later he came along with all the Yadavas, leaving Mathura, to stay at Dwaraka. It is also believed that Dwaraka town was submerged under the sea, after Sri Krishana's earthly mission was over. Gomathi river which is flowing by the side of the temple. joins the Arabian sea at Dwaraka near the temple. Vadiraja explains the glory of Dwaraka in three Slokas.

Lord Trivikrama leaps upwards
From the kingdom of Bali
Situated in the Nether Worlds
And appears in Dwaraka Kshetra
After slaying Kushasura,

Let the unmatched holy Dwaraka
Fulfil all our desires. 90

Oh Trivikrama ! with just three –
Paces, you did cover
Earth, heaven and Nether Worlds,
Oh Sri Krishna ! You are quite powerful
And supreme, you have converted
Kushastala into Darbhastala
By slaying Kushasura, in order to promote
The growth of Darbha, required by
Brahmins to perform holy rituals. 91

Oh Trivikrama, you possess a mace,
To punish the wicked ; but still you
Eradicate the sufferings, of those who pray you
Ever dynamic, you are omnipresent on
Earth, heaven and Nether Worlds.
But yet you are firmly rooted
In the minds of Yogis, devoteed to you. 92

40. Gomathi river : As said earlier, Gomathi river, which is flowing by the side of Dwarakanath temple joins the Arabian Sea, slightly ahead of temple. Vadiraja praises the glory of the holy river, loved by Lord Krishna In two Slokas.

Oh Gomathi, thy water is quite holy
For you are daily washing
The lotus feet of Lord Krishna,
And clear the sufferings of Devotees
Oh darling of the Sea-Lord ! We worship you. 93

Thy husband Sea-God, is embracing you closely
Through his milky moving waves
As he loves you deeply, and you thus enjoy,
The close company of thy husband all the while 94

41. Chakra Theertha : After Sri Krishna's earthly mission was over, Chakra Theertha was not visible and must have submerged under the sea. But Chakra Theertha must be on the Sangam (conflu-

ence) where Gomathi river joins the Arabian Sea, near Dwaraka Temple, where we get Chakrankana as we bathe at the holy Sangam.

Who can explain the glory
Of Chakra Theertha, for
By mere touch of the holy
Waters of Chakra Theertha,
Ordinary stones are converted as Chakrankana,
And become fit for worship like Salagrama. 95

42. Shankoddhara Theertha : Sri Krishna slew a demon by name Panchajana and obtained a conch by name " Panchajanya " from Shankoddhara Theertha. We also come to know from the *Bhagavata*, that Sri Krishna killed Panchajana entering the deep sea, and came out with Panchajanya to offer the same as Gurudakshina to Guru Sandipana Acharya. Sri Krishna also restored the life of his dead son Vadiraja explains the glory of the holy Theertha in one Sloka.

Oh holy Shankoddhara Theertha
Though you were surrounded by
Demon Panchajana Sri Krishna
Came to you, in order to slay
the wicked Panchajanan and
To save Panchajana, hidden by the demon 96

CHAPTER X

Sri Vadiraja was a humble servant of Hayagriva. He is Bhavi Sameera viz. the future wind-god to assume the position of Lord Brahma, the creator of the entire universe in the next Kalpa. Vadiraja directed his disciple Sri Vedavedya Theertha to perform the fifth paryaya of Lord Krishna. At Sonda creating a mini Udipi, by installing Sri Krishna, relating to Sode Mutt at Udipi, while he performed the same Hnauaman, and Eshwara Temples at Sonda for daily worship. Those temples built by Sri Vadiraja can be seen even today at Sonda, on the southern banks of Dhavalaganga Pushkarani, opposite to his Brindavan. In this chapter an attempt is made to explain the glory of (43) Gopichandana (44) Siddapuri and Bindusarovara (45) Theertharaja Pushkara, as narrated by Vadiraja in the Western chapter of Theertha Prabandha.

43. Glory of Gopichandana: All Vaishnavas, particularly followers of Sri Madhvacharya, bear 12 upward marks of Gopichandana over their bodies soon after bath. We have earlier said that Kadagola Sri Krishna worshipped by Rukmini came to Udupi in a ship from Dwaraka duly wrapped in Gopichandana. It is also available at Gopi Sarovara. Vasudevahrada at Dwaraka, and also at Gopitalab, situated near Gopinath temple, 20 km. away from Dwaraka. Vadiraja explains the importance of Gopichandana in one Sloka.

The upward marks of Gopichandana
On the forehead are quite powerful
And can alter the fate ordained by Vidhatha
The more marks of Gopichandan
Affixed just for decoration can bestow,
Upon the bearer, deep scholarship
The upward marks of Gopichandan
Really shine as glorious paths to
Vaikunta, eradicating all types of troubles.

97

44. Siddapuri and Bindu Sarovara: Siddapuri is one hundred kilometres away from Ahmedabad on Ahmedabad - Delhi route. River Saraswathi is flowing near the town. There is also a tank known as Bindu Sarovara. This is a holy place according to Hindu Mythology. According to local legends Mahavishnu performed severe penance here to please Mahavishnu. Mahavishnu was born here as Kapila to the divine couple Maharshi Kardama and Devahuthi as prayed for by them. Bindu Sarovara was made up of the cheerful tears of Kapila. Kapila also bestowed deep knowledge and eternal bliss on His mother Devahuthi. Lord Parashurama, who came here later, got rid of all His sins arising of killing of his mother, by taking a holy dip in the Bindu Sarovara and by offering oblations there. As Parashurama was absolved of His matruhatyadosha here the place is known as Matrugaya. Pinda Pradana is normally offered, for three generations of parents viz. mother, grand mother and her mother-in-law from father's side. Vadiraja explains the glory of Siddapuri and Bindu Sarovara.

A mere Darshan of the shining
Siddapuri offers Moksha to the visitor,
As simple efforts and minor deeds.

Performed here, yield very rich dividends.
True to the saying that little drops of
Water make a mighty Ocean.

98

45. Pushkara kshetra : Pushkara is one among the eight holy abdes on the earth, where Mahavishnu chose to remain as Varsha after slaying Hiranyaksha to bless the devotees. Pushkara is as holy as (1) Kurukshetra (2) Ganga (3) Gaya (4) Prabhasa. Pushkara is 11 km. away from Ajmer on Ahmedabad-Delhi route. There are three holy tanks dedicated to (1) Brahma (Jesta Pushkara) (2) Vishnu (Madhya Pushkara) (3) Maheshwara (Kanista Pushkara). Madhya Pushkara dedicated to Mahavishnu is more prominent than the others. A dip in the spring is considered holy on the eve of Kartika purnami. There is a Varaha temple signifying the glory of Mahavishnu. According to local history, a demon by name Vajranabha used to kill all children here. Brahma on being requested by the celestials to end the menace slew Vajranabha by using lotus held in his hand as a weapon. But when the lotus thrown by Brahma, fell on the earth after slaying Vajranabha, there appeared a spring known as Pushkara. The place became famous as Pushkara, as it was created on account of the fall of Pushkara (lotus) on earth. The other two Pushkaras emerged from the platform, where Lord Brahma performed a Satrayaga later. Vadiraja explains the glory of Pushkara in one Sloka.

An impossible creation by mortals
Pushkara Theertha, holiest among the holy
Was created by the noblest soul
Vidhata, the four-faced Brahma
Further, Sri Varahaswamy enhanced
The holiness of Pushkara, by
Coming down to stay here
Before entering the Ocean of Milk
The permanent abode of Mahavishnu.

99

Vadiraja now concludes this Western chapter of Theertha Prabandha. The places visited in this chapter are 45, which are explained in 99 Slokas. Vadiraja who started his holy tour in a clockwise direction covers the glory of all holy places, rivers, mountains etc., of the north in the next Northern Chapter of Theertha Prabandha.

UTTARA PRABANDHA

CHAPATER XI

Vadiraja was a staunch devotee of Sri Vishnu Theertha, who was the younger brother of Acharya Madhva and the first religious head of Sode Mutt. In all his works, Vadiraja advocated the supremacy of Mahavishnu as sworn by him, when he was initiated to sanyasa, by his mentor His Holiness Sri Vageesha Theertha Swamy at the tender age of eight. Another major feature of Madhva cult is that all the subsequent saints in the line like (1) Jaya Theertha (2) Vijayadwaja Theertha (3) Vyasaraja Theertha (4) Raghoothama Theertha and (5) Raghavendra Theertha, not only upheld the views of Acharya Madhva but also supported them strongly either by their new works or by writing notes on Acharya's original works. Vadiraja now travels in northern direction, and in the Northern Chapter of *Theertha Prabandha*, he visited 20 places, which are described in 46 slokas. But in this chapter, the glory of (1) Krishna River (2) Pandharapura Kshetra and (3) Godavari River are explained.

1. Krishna River : The river is also known as Krishnaveni. It is one among the great rivers of South India. The river originates from Mahabaleshwara 120 km. from Pune. Bhima and Tungabhadra rivers later join Krishna river on their onward journey and Krishna joins the Bay of Bengal near Vijayawada. The river is seen flowing in full swing, at Vijayawada city, at the bottom of Kanaka Durga temple and provide sample water to the city and suburbs for drinking and agriculture. According to Raghavendra Swamy, Krishna river is next only to Ganga and Godavari in greatness. Vadiraja describes the glory of Krishna river in four slokas.

Oh holy river Krishnaveni !

You wash away our sins

Heaped up in crores of births,

On a mere Darshan ; we humbly worship you 1

When Guru enters Kanyarashi ;

Holy Ganga along with three and half

Crores of sacred Theerthas will be present in

Thy waters to remain there for a year,

As one bathes on such holy occasions,

All sins are turned into virtues

Like, iron is converted to gold

On treatment by Siddarasa. 2

Oh holy Krishnaveni ! though you are
Krishna and Veni rivers combined, you are popular as
Krishna only, which reminds us of
The divine presence of Lord Krishna
In each drop of thy waters. 3

Oh most auspicious Krishnaveni
Please eradicate all our earthly
Miseries, and tag our minds
On to the lotus feet Sri Hari. 4

2. Pandharpur : Pandharpur is in Maharashtra and is at a distance of 60 km. from Sholapur. Pandharpur is a great source of divine inspiration particularly to the saints of Karnataka and Maharashtra. Purandara Dasa, Jagannatha Dasa from Karnataka, Saint Jnaneshwar, Namadev and Tukaram from Maharashtra, have composed several songs in praise of Panduranga. Lakhs of songs composed by Purandara Dasa in Kannada are dedicated to Purandara Vittala at the end of each song. According to local history Panduranga, pleased with the dedicated services rendered by Pundarika Muni, to his parents, appeared before him even as his services to his parents were going on. Pundarika then placed a brick for Panduranga to stand on, and continued the seva of his parents. After his parents were completely attended to, Pundarika turned to Panduranga. Panduranga then asked Pundarika to seek boons. Now Pundarika prayed the Lord to remain in the same place and form and to bless the devotees. Panduranga agreed to this and remained at Pandharpur with hands set on His hips to bless the devotees, as prayed for by Pundarika. Pandarinath is Nada-Brahma, fond of Bhajans. Bhima river here is known as "Chandrabhaga river" as it flows here bearing the shape of half moon. The river joins the Krishna river later on at Raichur. Any one can worship Pandarinath, by touching his lotus feet. Vadiraja sings of Pandarinath in four Slokas.

The cool breeze passing through
The pure and sacred waters of Bhimarathi
River, wipe out the sins of devotees
We worship the holy Pandharapura
The lovely abode of Panduranga,
Who appeared before Pundarika

To shower His blessings upon the world.

Oh Vittala ! you stay on the banks of
Bhimarathi, unclothed, bearing Shanka and Chakra
On thy hands, to tell thy devotees
That they too shall stay on the river banks
Bearing conch and chakra mudras
On their hands, touching thy feet to prosper in life.

Oh Vittala ! your compassionate look,
Can destroy all our sins
Thy lotus feet is for ever
Worshipped by Mahalakshmi
Oh Panduranga ! son of Nandagopa
Please protect us, for ever.

Oh Vittala your holy worship
Eradicates all our miseries
You are never tired of
Showering your grace upon those
Who pray for thy grace,
Your lotus feet are quite radiant
Like the golden rays of the rising son
We do worship you, oh Lord.

8

3. Godavari River : Godavari river originates from Tryambaka Hills, which is 25 km. away from Nasik Road station, on Mumbai-Delhi route. The river joins the Bay of Bengal near Rajahmundry, after covering a distance of 1500 km. *Padmapurana* and *Varahapurana* explain the origin and glory of the Godavari. It is the biggest of all the South Indian rivers and is also known as the Southern Ganga. According to puranas certain misguided disciples of sage Gautama, drove a weak cow to his Ashrama. But when the sage just tried to drive it away to save the sacred plants of the ashrama, required for the daily rituals, the cow collapsed. Gautama then prayed Shankara, and got Ganga flow over the dead body of the cow through Darba from the head of Shankara, and brought the dead cow back to life, Thus the sacred Ganga waters falling from the head of Paramashiva, that gave life to cow came to be known as Godavari. Andhra Pradesh is today considered as the granary of India, mainly on account of vast water resources the state gets from major rivers like Krishna and Godavari. Vadiraja sings the holy Godavari in 3 Slokas.

Oh Godavari ! Brahmins, saints
Celestials and temples are found
In abundance on both of
Your banks, the cool breeze
Coming out of thy waters are
Quite holy and strong enough,
To drive away all our sins
Thy sweet waters quench
The thirst of all living around
Oh glorious Godavari, do please protect us

9

Oh Gode ! you shower full prosperity
To those who bathe in thy waters
The holy bath is all the more sacred
When Guru enters Simharashi
As holy Ganga along with
Three and half crore sacred
Theerthas are present then in thy waters,
But we are not satisfied with ordinary boons
We devotedly pray you to grant us
Detachment from worldly pursuits
Deep devotion on Sri Krishna
And liberation from rebirth again.

10

In the next Sloka, Vadiraja traces the origin and flow of the river in three phases in Triyambaka Hills.

Oh Gode, on the top of Triyambaka
Hills you are seen as Davalaganga,
You are again found in
Varaha Theertha and Narasimha
Theertha, as two separate springs
On the bottom of the hill, you are again
Seen in Kushavarta, where Gautama spread Darba
To take you to the earth, oh Gode, please grant us peace. 11

The famous Tryambakeshwara temple is situated on the Tryambaka Hills.

CHAPTER XII

His Holiness Sri Vedy Theertha, the direct disciple of Sri Vadiraja explains in his *Vadiraja Stotra* that Sri Vadiraja was a noble soul, who had the blessings of Hari and Guru in full measure. Vadiraja

dedicated his whole life for the material and spiritual emancipation of mankind. He was a creative poet for all classes as well as masses. While his Sanscrit works are meant for scholars, all his compositions in Kannada / Tulu, bearing " Hayavadana " stamp are for the masses. He composed a poem on " Patience " and according to Vadiraja, there is no greater penance than patience, to succeed in life. In this chapter, an attempt is made to explain the glory of (4) Yamuna River (5) Triveni Sangam (6) Prayaga Madava (7) Holy Ganga River as presented by Vadiraja in his " Theertha Prabandha".

4. Yamuna River : The origin of Yamuna River is ten thousand feet above sea level, at a spot known as " Yamunotri " on the Himalayas. Yamunotri is 158 km. away from Dehradun. The water of the river is by and large cold. However, there are certain hot springs, which are used by yatri for bath and cooking. The Yamuna is also known as Kalindi. Yamuna is the daughter of Sun God, sister of Yama (God Of death) and wife of the Sea God.

Vadiraja explains the glory of the Yamuna river with in one Sloka.

Oh Yamuna ! you never send those
Who worship you to Yama, but instead send them
To the Ocean of milk the abode of Narayana,
And as a devoted wife, truly
You are partial to thy husband.

12

5. Triveni Sangam : Triveni Sangam or Prayag is the holiest among all holy places. According to scriptures, those who take a holy dip at the sacred confluence of the holy Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati get liberated from rebirth on the earth. There is a Vatavriksha at Prayag, which will wipe out all our sins. Maha Vishnu takes rest on this holy tree during Pralaya. Kumbha Mela is held once in twelve years and ardha Kumbha Mela, once in six years. Harsha Vardhana, used to empty his treasury by granting alms to the poor and needy on these holy occasions. Prayag is also known as Allahabad, which is connected by train from Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Benaras. Male devotees who come here get shaved before taking a dip at the holy Sangam. They have to then offer Pinda Pradan to their deceased elders. The new couple, when they visit the place for the first time, have to perform Veni Dana (offer of hair) at the Sangam, with all the rituals, which are conducted by the local purohits. Vadiraja explains the glory of the holy Sangam in one Sloka.

Oh holy Triveni ! our sins are
Driven away, and we are liberated
From all miseries, with just a
Dip at the holy Sangam, like
The ice which melts away on the
Appearance of the Sun on the eastern sky.

13

6. Prayaga Madhava : According to Skanda Purana, Lord Brahma performed a yajna during the period of creation after pralaya here. Hence the place is known as Prayag. Vadirja explains the glory of Prayaga Madhava in one Sloka.

Oh Ocean of Mercy Prayaga Madhava !
Please dwell in our hearts
For your holy remembrance can
Bestow on us the full fruits of performing a MahaYaga. 14

7. Holy Ganga River : The holy Ganga is the holiest of all the rivers in India. Ganga originates from Gangotri on the Himalayas and after covering a distance of 2400 km. joins the Bay of Bengal at Kolkata. The holy river provides adequate water for agriculture, industries, drinking etc., wherever she flows. Gangotri is 92 km. away from Uttara Kashi, the actual place of origin is Gomukha 30 kms. away from Gangotri. Actually the Ganga emerges from the feet of Narayana at Naryana Hills, then she enters Shivalingi Hills and comes to the earth at Gomukha having been escorted by Bhagiratha. A Darshan, a sip and dip in the Ganga from origin, till her merger with the sea is considered as totally holy. Vadiraja sings the glory of the Ganga in eight Slokas;

Oh holy Ganga ! you are found
Moving on Heaven, Earth and
Nether worlds ; initially the fourfaced Brahma
Holding you in his Kamandal
Worshipped the lotus feet of Narayana
With thy waters ; you then moved to heaven
Again you were found on the matted locks of Shankara
Before you leap to the earth. 15

Oh Saraswathi ! Thy water is pink
Oh Yamuna ! You are blue black
Oh Ganga ! You are snow white
In fact, the tricoloured waters are

- Shining at the holy Triveni Sangam at Prayag. 16
- Oh heavenly river Ganga !
 Why are you harsh on us?
 What offence have we done
 To you or Sri Hari all the same
 We pray you sincerely to shower
 Your blessings upon us, as you had done to
 Sixty thousand sons of Sagara. 17
- Despite their having offended Sri Hari
 Oh holy Ganga ! from Satyaloka
 You have come down to the earth
 Covering a distance of
 Twenty five crore yojanas,
 Now that we are praying you
 Sincerely standing quite close to you
 Please pour your blessings
 And wipe out all our sins. 18
- Oh Ganga are your powers
 Dried up by saving the sixty thousand
 Sons of Sagara? Is there no place
 Left for us at the holy Vaikunta?
 Are we not the flowers of Maha Vishnu?
 Please bestow your blessings upon us. 19
- Oh holy Ganga ! You are not mere water
 You possess lotus feet, with
 Beautiful thighs, waist-belt
 Thin stomach, strong breasts
 Decorated with necklace, bangles
 sleevering with beautiful
 Face shining like the full moon
 And you shower thy holy grace
 Upon those who worship you
 With deep devotion and dedication. 20
- Oh holy Ganga ! Your father
 Narayana is unable to part with you
 Is ever present in thy waters
 At Vyasarama as Vedavyasa at Badari as Narayana
 At Alaka-Bhagirathi Sangam as Gopalakirshna

At Tapovana as Hrishiksha at Hardwar as Srihari
 At Pryaga as Venu Madava at Kashi as Bindu Madava
 Finally He dwells in the Ocean of Milk
 Which is the abode of your husband
 Narayana is thus present, in thy waters all the way
 From origin till you merge with the sea. 21

Oh sacred Ganga ! with mere Darshan, sip, dip
 And prayer, you wipe out all the sins, and shower blessings.
 Which one can never get even by, performing
 crores of yagas 22

CHAPTER XIII

Sri Vedavedya Theertha, in his *Vadiraja stotra* speaks of his mentor, Sri Vadiraja as a great Vaishnava and the future Brahma and is great enough for worship even by Indra and other celestials. As one reads his *Theertha Prabandha*, one can see a fine blend of poetry and philosophy. Vadiraja who possessed unique power of grasp and expression, presents before us various holy kshetras and rivers and explains their glory, as mentioned in our scriptures. He was a genius saint who could see philosophy in grammar, and the divine presence of God in the waters of holy rivers. In this chapter an attempt is made to explain the glory of 8) Kashi Kshetra (Bindu Madava and Vishwanath) 9) Gaya Gadadhara and 10) Phalgu River.

8. Kashi Kshetra : According to our scriptures, there are seven holy kshetras viz. 1) Ayodhya, 2) Mathura, 3) Mayapuri, 4) Kashi, 5) Kanchi, 6) Avantikapuri, 7) Dwaravathi ; and a holy visit to any of them can liberate us from rebirths. Kashi is well known from very early times. We find a reference to Kashi in *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* also. Though Kashi is well known as a Shiva kshetra on account of Vishwanatha, it is equally a great Vaishanva kshetra, for Shankara was liberated from Brahma Kapala which remained struck to his hand for twelve long years, on reaching the holy town Kashi, the abode of Bindu Madava. The holy Ganga of the heaven , nether worlds also is found on the earth here. Hence, Vishwanath decided to remain here, after praying to Bindu Madava. Kashi is also known as Varanasi, as the town is situated in between Varana and Asi rivers, and is quite holy on account of the presence of Hari Hara and the holy Ganga. Kashi is also a great educational centre. Kashi is directly connected by train from Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai.

Vadiraja describes the glory of Kashi, Hari and Hara in four Slokas.

Shankara who lives with
His lovely consort Parvati
On the silver mountain at Kailasa
Is also present in this great
Crematorium known as Varanasi
Along with all his Ganas (servants)
As Viswanatha, to offer salvation to the devoted souls 23

Bindu Madhava : The Bindu Madhava temple is situated on Harischandra Ghat, near Panchaganga. Vadiraja worships Bindu Madhava, who blesses a saint by name Bindu in one sloka.

All the miseries in life get cleared
And vanish like water drops
On Darshan of Bindu Madhava
Oh Lord ! please do protect us. 24

Kashi Viswanath : Kashi is also well known as a great crematorium. A death in Kashi is said to cause liberation from rebirth. Vadiraja explains the glory of Viswanatha in two slokas.

Oh Viswanatha, the nails of
Your feet are quite radiant
Like the full moon, you possess a deer
The spotless moon on your forehead
Your face looks quite radiant
By the holy presence of Ganga
And the serpents tucked on your
Matted locks ; Oh Mrutyunjaya ! Please ever protect us 25

Oh Mahadeva Gangadhara !
The holy Ganga is seen on your head
Devoted to Narayana, you partake food
Offered to Narayana sitting on
Tiger skin, you are praying Sri Hari
Your feet are engaged in visiting
Holy Vaishnava kshetras
You thus look quite attached to Sri Hari. 26

9. Gaya Gangadhara : We can reach Gaya by train, from Delhi, Kolkata and Benaras. It is one among the holy places known as *Tristal* (Three holy places) viz. Kashi, Prayag and Gaya. Gaya is

situated on the banks of Phalgu river. There is a Vatavriksh, Vishnupada over Dharma Shila. One has to offer pinda pradana to the departed souls at three places viz. 1) Phalgu river bank, 2) Vishnupada, 3) Akshaya Vata.

History of Gaya Kshetra : We come across "Gaya Kshetra Mahatmya" in *Mahabharata* and *Vayu purana*. A woman by name Dharmavathi, daughter of Dharma was cursed to become a stone by her husband. But she performed severe austerities in the same form, and got a boon to the effect that Narayana and other celestials remain ever present with her. At the same time, there was a demon, by name Gayasura, who also performed severe penance, and got a boon to the effect that his body be superior to all other holy places. But he continued the austerities, even after getting such a rare boon. The celestials repeatedly performed yagas over Gayasura, who stood up again and again soon after the yagas were over. The celestials then placed Dharmavathi Shila over Gayasura. Even then Gayasura got up. Then Sri Hari laid his lotus feet just over Dhamashila, kept over Gayasura and remained at Gaya as Gadadhara. It is the firm belief that from the pinda pradana offered here, the departed elders get liberated from rebirths. Mahavishnu takes His " Buddha Avatara " from Gaya, Vadiraja explains the glory of Gadadhara in three Slokas.

Oh holy kshetra Gaya ! We worship
Your glory for, pinda pradana offered
Here only once, can liberate
The departed souls, from rebirth on earth. 27

Oh Gadadhara ! You possess
A beautiful smile on your face
You are worshipped by the celestials
You offer lot of peace, to thy devotees, and grant
Boons to all those who worship thy lotus feet
Oh Gadadhara, please,
Contain our pride and save us from distress. 28

A holy visit to Vishnupada, at Gaya Kshetra
Is equal to a journey to Vaikunta
The til offered here drives out all sins
The pinda pradana offered here, drive away Yama
And his servants, the mantrakshatas, offered here make.
Men immortal, the prayers offered here, make one divine

10. Phalgu river : The river is seen in front of Vishnupada Temple. The river originates from Kolahala mountain near Gaya. The river is dreis up during summer. But we can get water for pinda pradan etc., by digging the earth. According to *Mahabharata*, the river though looks like an ordinary river, has extraordinary powers. Vadiraja explains the glory of the river in one Sloka.

Oh Phalgu ! though you look like
 An ordinary river, you possess
 Extraordinary powers to remove
 Sins accoumulated over hundred births
 And yet, you are simple true to
 Your name, despite possessing, powers to lift us above 30

CHAPTER XIV

Sri Vadiraja Theertha in his *Vadiraja Stotra* mentions that Sri Vadiraja was always engaged in the worship of Hayagriva, and advocated the supremacy of Sri Hari in all his works. The entire life of Vadiraja was dedicated to perform Japa, Tapa, worship of God holding classes, discourses, pilgrimages and writing of books, to benefit society at large. He was a great scholar ; still he could explain the glory of our scriptures, in simple poems so as to be understood even by the common man. In this chapter an attempt is made to explain the glory of (11) Mathura (12) Vishranthi Theertha (13) Vrindavan (14) Ayodhya (15) Naimisharanya, (16) Hastinapur and (17) Kurukshetra as presented by Vadiraja in his *Theertha Prabandha*.

11. Mathura : Mathura is one among the seven most holy Kshetras, that can relieve us from rebirth on earth. It is Srikrishna's birth place. The holy town was built by Shatrugna during Treta Era, after laying Lavanasura, with an arrow presented to him by Srirama,. Child Dhruva performed severe penance here, for six months, before he secured the grace of Sri Hari. Sri Vishnu Chakra saved Ambarisha from the wrath of sage Durvasa at this holy spot. Govardana hill which Lord Krishna lifted to protect the yadavas from heavy rains lashed by Indra is situated 22 kms. from here. Vadiraja explains the glory of Mathura in one Sloka.

The detached devotees storm
 This holy town, the names of

Sripathi are strong weapons,
 The holy springs are strong forts
 The worship of Sri Hari is the armour
 To combat all sinful desires from within.

31

(12) Vishranathi Theertha : Of all the 24 holy bathing ghats on the banks of Yamuna, at Mathura town, Vishranthi Theertha or Vishram Ghat is the holiest. This is because, Lord Krishna after slaying Kamsa took some rest at this spot. Vadiraja explains the glory of the holy spring in two Slokas.

Oh Vishranthi Theertha ! Lord Krishna
 Chose your bank for rest, as you are
 Capable of driving out the sins,
 Your water is quite holy that
 A dip in thy holy waters
 Will liberate us from rebirth
 Oh holy spring please, fulfil our desires.

32

Oh holy spring, thy name is, Vishranthi !
 But contrary to thy name, you never rest, as you are
 Ever engaged in wiping out the sins of the devotees
 You are far superior in holy powers
 As one gets far more merits than by performing
 One crore Ashwamedha yagas
 Upon a dip in thy waters.

33

13. Vrindavan : Vrindavan is 5 km. from Mathura. Vrindadevi, daughter of the king of Kedara, performed severe austerities to secure Krishna as her husband and got a boon to that effect. So the place came to be known as Brindavan. Sri Krishna spent his younger days here, and had his rasa-kreedha at Vrindavan. Vadiraja explains the glory in one Sloka.

The creepers at Brindavan possess
 Fragrance thanks to the divine
 Flowers like Mandara, Parijatha
 Are ever seen here, the black
 Waters of the Yamuna are as holy
 As Ganga, by the divine presence
 Of Lord Krishna who gave holy
 Darshan to men, women and children
 Besides all animals and birds here.

34

14. Ayodhya : Ayodhya is 34 kms. away from Lucknow, the capital of U.P. and is connected by train from Benares, Mugalsarai and Lucknow. Ayodhya is the first among the top holy seven kshetras. While Mathura is the holy abode of Lord Krishna of Dwapara Era, Ayodhya is the holy Rama kshetra of Treta Era. Rama-Janma Boomi, where Hindus propose to construct a Rama temple is at Ayodhya. Vadiraja sings the glory of the place in one Sloka.

A devoted wife fondly remembers
The Lotus feet of her husband,
When the latter is away
Likewise Ayodhya was ruled by Bharata
As trusted deputy of Rama
Through His sacred padukas.

35

15. Naimisharanya : Naimisharanya is 100 kms. away from Lucknow. According to scriptures, Suta Puranika gave discourses on *Bhagavatha* and *Mahabharata* to Shaunaka and other 80000 saints. Different reasons are attributed for the name of this place. According to *Varaha purana*, Sri Hari killed the demons within minutes, hence this place came to be known as Naimisharanya. According to H.H. Vijayadwaja Theertha of Pejawar Mutt, a type of plant, known as "Nimisha" grow here in plenty. A few others maintain that a saint by name "Nimisha" lived here for a long time. Vadiraja describes the glory of the place in one Sloka.

The creepers of Krishna Katha
Planted by Suta Puranika
Upon the minds of Shaunaka
And others have spread here densely
Naimisharanya is thus quite sacred and illustrious

36

16. Hastinapur : Hastinapur is 35 km. to the south of Meerut, which is on the Delhi-Hardwar Road. Hastinapur was the capital of Pandavas for 36 years after the Kurushetra war. Pandavas performed an Ashwamedha yaga here, which lasted for 15 years. Acharya Madhva observed one chaturmasa at Hastinapura, as he lived there for 36 long years during his previous birth as Bhima. There is a reference to this in *Sri Madhva Vijaya* ;

The yogis get sanctified
And secure control over
Enemies within, like lust and anger

Only after severe austerities
Likewise, Bhima slays the
Strongest army of Duryodana
With matchless valour, and ultimately
Dharmaraja takes the reins of
Hastinapur, ending the misrule of Duryodana. 37

17. Kurukshetra : One can reach Kurukshetra by bus or train from Delhi and Hardwar. The great saint Viswamitra became Brahmarishi here. The great Mahabharatha battle between the Pandvas and Kaurvas was fought here. Geethacharya Srikrishna delivered his Divine message "The Geetha" to mankind through Arjuna here. the Vishnusahasranama originated here. During solar / lunar eclipses, Sri Krishna used to visit the place to have a holy bath in Brahma-Sarovara. *Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya* mentions a yaga which Sri Krishna performed for 12 years here. Acharya Madhva on his way to Badri visited Kurukshetra and identified the weapons used by him in his earlier birth as Bhima during Mahabharata war to Sri Satya Theertha and other disciples. There is a gigantic tank here known as " Brahma Sarovara " Even today, lakhs of people take a holy dip in Brahmasrovara during festive occasions and eclipses. Vadiraja describes Kurukshetra in one sloka.

Farmers after levelling the land
Plant the seeds, and after
Proper cultivation, the crops secured are heaped up
Likewise Bhima, slays the elephants
Horses and army of Kaurava
And Arjuna on this smooth earth
Plants the seeds through arrows
Abundant crops by name "fame"
Spread in all directions. 38

CHAPTER XV

Sri Vedavedya Theertha in his *Vadiraja Stotra*, describes his Guru Sri Vadiraja as a pillar of strength, and as a valourous lion to silence the arguments of his opponents. A brilliant poet and a great scholar Vadiraja wrote classics like " Yuktimalika " and " Rukminsa Vijaya " Even his " Theertha Prabandha " touches philosophy and scriptures. Each word used by the saint is very significant here as they reveal the mystery hidden in our *sruti* (Vedas), *smriti* (Scriptures). Vadiraja

is able to see the glory of God in each drop of the waters of holy Ganga. in this chapter we find a brief description of (18) Shambhala (19) Shat (six) Prayagas (20) Badri kshetra as narrated by Vadiraja in the Northern chapter of *Theertha Prabandha*.

18. Shambhala : Shambhala kshetra is situated in Moradabad district of Uttar Pradesh. The holy town was known as "Satyavrata" during Kritayuga as Mahadgiri during Treta Era, as Pingala in Dwapara and as Shambhala in Kaliyuga. Sri Hari will take his tenth avatara as Kalki at this holy place to eradicate all evil. There are 68 holy springs and 19 sacred wells here. There is a holy Pushkarini viz. Ganga sarovar, which becomes as holy as Ganga, when sun, moon and Brihaspati enter Pushya rashi. Sri Hari then appears as Kalki, to slay the wicked. Vadiraja explains the glory of Shambhala in one Sloka.

Oh devotees, donot fear Kali
Visit the holy kshetra Shambhala
Which will fortify the world
As Sri Hari will appear from
Here as Kalki shortly to eradicate all evil.

39

19) Shat (six) Prayagas : We have to pass through the six Prayagas, to reach Badari, which is 300kms. away from Rishikesh. In olden days one had to reach Badari only by walk. But now one can reach the place. by bus except during winter, The temple normally close during winter in November and open in April on the eve of Akshaya Thadige. Vadiraja who visited the place 500 years ago, must have done so by walk along with his troupe with all his daily holy rituals like Japa, Tapa, Puja, Pata, Pravachana etc., as other travel facilities were not available then. The six Prayagas are;

1) Deva Prayaga ; Deva Prayaga is 68 kms. from Rishikesh, at the holy confluence of Alakananda and Bhagirathi.

2) Rudra Prayaga : Rudra Prayaga is situated at the holy confluence of Alakananda and Mandakini, 138 kms. away from Rishikesh.

3) Karana Prayaga : Karna Prayaga is at the holy confluence of Alakananda and Pindara rivers 173 kms. away Rrshikesh.

4) Nanda Prayaga ; Nanda Prayaga is at the holy place where Alakananda joins Mandakini, 192 kms. away from Rishikesh.

5) Vishnu Prayaga : Vishnu Prayaga is at the meeting place of Alakananda and Vishnu Ganga, 250 kms. away from Rishikesh.

6) Keshava Prayaga : Keshava Prayaga is situated at the holy confluence of Alakananda and Saraswathi rivers. 5 kms. from Badari

Prayaga means holy confluence of two or more rivers. Vaciraja now explains the glory of all the six Prayagas in one sloka.

Oh sacred fast moving rivers
Passing through six Prayagas
Please eradicate our six enemies
Within and sanctify our minds.

40

20. Badari Kshetra : Badari is the most honest kshetra in Bharat. We come to know of the glory of the place, in *Harivamsa*, *Mahabharatha* and *Bhagavata*. Sri Hari's holy presence is felt in four ways here. Sri Hari first appeared here as Hayagriva, from the Yajna kunda, when the fourfaced Brahma performed a yaga here, and the four Vedas emerged out of the breath of Hayagriva. Again Sri Hari is present here as Narayana. Again Sri Krishna came here and granted solace to two devils viz, Ghanta Karna and Karna. In *Harivamsa*, Sri Krishna says: I shall for ever protect Badari. Fourthly, Lord Vedavyasa is always present here. Acharya Madhva during his yatra, came to Badari a number of times. He wrote *Geetha Bhashya* at Badari and offered the same to Badari Narayana. Acharya Madhva once observed deep silence at Badari, which means devoted performance of Japa, Tapa, discourses, and not to resort to conversation either by tongue, signs of writing. Acharya Madhva used to have early bath at the dawn of the day just before sunrise, in Alakananda river, in her ice cold water. We see even today that most of the people take bath in Tapta Kunda (hot spring), and offer ablutions to sun god, by taking out water of Alaka through a vessel, as the Alaka water is too cold even to touch.

It is also believed that Acharya Madhwa is present invisibly worshipping Lord Krishna at Udupi, installed by him eight centuries ago, and visibly present at Badari serving Lord Vedavyasa. Vadiraja explains the glory of holy Badari, situated at the top of Bharat, but at the bottom of Himaginri in six slokas.

All the celestials and apsaras
Are attracted towards Badari

And often come to visit
Holy and beautiful Badari
Situating on the top of Bharat
Oh Badari ! You are most supreme
Among the holy kshetras. 41

Oh Badari Narayana ! Please fill our minds on
The holy thoughts of your glory
Please grant us strength
To contain the six enemies within,
Please cleanse our minds
So that we may look upon other
Women, as our mothers and sisters
Please grant us noble qualities
Deep knowledge and supreme pleasure. 42

Oh four armed Badari Narayana
Your are seen here in Padmasana
With chakra and shanka, on the upper hands
With lower hands, set upwards between the
Thighs in dhyana mudra, Narada and other yogis
Sing thy glory, your lovely looks will drive 43

Away all the sins of the devotees
Fourfaced Brahma performs
A holy yaga at Vasudhara
On the top Nandachala
From whence, emerges Alakananda
And from the yagakunda appears
Hayagriva and from his breath
Come out the four holy Vedas
Which get echoed, as Alaka river moves on 44

In the next sloka, Vadiraja explains the glory of his tutelary Deity
viz. Lord Hayagriva.

Oh Vidhata Brahma, you are
Fully aware that Sri Hari as Matsya
Saved the Vedas, oh holy celestials
You know full well that Sri Hari
As Kurma saved Mandara Hills
From sinking, while churning the sea
Oh Bhudevi! Sri Hari saved you

By coming out as Varaha, oh Prahlada
 Sri Hari came as Narasimha, to save you
 Oh Mahendra, Sri Hari came as
 Vamana and became Trivikrama !
 To save thy position, oh Brahmins, Sri Hari
 Came as Parasurama, to slay wicked kshatriyas
 Oh king of ocean, you are aware that Rama
 Prepared a bridge, over you and slew Ravana
 Oh Arjuna you have seen, the Vishwarupa of Sri Krishna
 Oh Shankara ! Sri Hari has helped you
 By slaying Tripurasura, Bhasmasura and other yoginis
 Oh celestils you know fully well
 That Sri Hari will again emerge
 As Kalki to eradicate all evil, to establish Dharma,
 Oh devotees, please worship Sri Hari
 And get permanent liberation. 45

In our last Sloka we have
 Explained the glory of Lokesha
 Sri Hari, please accept, this Sloka as also
 Theertha Prabandha, prepared by us. 46

(After effectively narrating the glory of Sri Hari in the above Slokas. Vadiraja concludes his Uttara Prabandha comprising of 20 Kshetras, in 46 Slokas. Vadiraja next moves in the Eastern Direction, and explains the glory of holy kshetras in the Eastern chapter (Purva Prabandha)

Purva Prabandha **CHAPTER XVI**

Sri Vedavedya Theertha in his *Vadiraja stotra* mentions that his mentor Guru Sri Vadiraja is the Kamadhenu of Kaliyuga and fulfils all the desires of his devotees. Sri Purandaradasa in one of his poems mentions that he likes to worship the kind hearted Vadiraja who is to be the future Hanuman, in the next Kalpa to slay the wicked.

Kanakadasa presents the same view by saying that he is an ardent servant of Trivikramadasa i.e, of Sri Vadiraja who built Trivikrama temple at Sonda for his daily worship. As stated earlier, Vadiraja now turns from the North to the Eastern part of holy Bharat. In the eastern chapter Vadiraja visits 23 holy kshetras and explains their glory in 43 slokas. In this chapter an attempt is made to explain

the glory of 5 places visited by the revered Saint, in the eastern part of holy *Theertha Prabandha*, as shown below ;

1) Gangasagara Sangama. 2) Puri Jagannatha. 3) Srisaila. 4) Ahobala.
5) Bhavanashini river.

1. Gangasagara Sangama ; The sacred confluence where the holy Ganga joins Bay of Bengal is 150 kms. away from Kolkata. Vadiraja describes the glory of the holy sangam in one sloka.

Oh king of all holy Teerthas
You embrace the holy Ganga
With the full warmth and love,
You are found more active
In moon light, when your friend
Moon appears over the sky

1

2. Puri Jagannatha Kshetra : Puri is directly connected by train from Secunderabad, Tirupati, Chennai and Kolkata. Rameswara, Dwaraka, Badari and Puri situated in the four corners of the holy Bharath are the four sacred Dhamas of the South West, North and East respectively and considered as the holiest kshetras of our country. Puri is also known as Purushottama kshetra and Shankha kshetra. The famous Konark Sun Temple is 100 kms. away from Puri. There is the mighty Lingaraj temple at Bhubaneshwar. Normally people visit Puri Jagannath temple after taking holy dip in the sea and Chandra Theertha. Puri is also famous for Jagantas (bulls), which resound Omkara, when played during the puja. In the previous Era, Puri was known as "Neelachala" where existed the temple of " Neelamadhava ". When Neelachala was submerged in the sea, the celestials took away Neela-Madhava to heaven. Later on Indradyumna, king of Malava found a holy wood on the banks of the sea. Out of this sacred wood, Indradyumna got the idols of Sri Krishna, Balrama and Subhadra prepared by engaging the services of celestial carpenter Vishwa Karma. Jagannath Krishna, Balabhadra and Subhadra who are present in the idols, bless the devotees, here as prayed for by Narada. Vadiraja explains the glory of Jagannath in one sloka.

Oh supreme Lord Jagannatha!
You are ever worshipped here
An axe requires a wooden hold for support
Likewise, we need your full support
To banish our total ignorance.

2

3. Sri Saila Mallikarjuna : The six-faced Kumara Swamy, son of Parameswara once left Kailasa for Sri Saila. The parents Siva and Parvathi, also came down to Sri Saila, to be with their son. This matter is found in *Shivapurana*, *Skanda-purana* etc. Sri Saila is directly connected by bus, from Kurnool, Nandyal, Ongole etc., Vadiraja explains the glory of Sri Saila in one Sloka.

Oh Mallikarjuna Swamy, you are seen here shining
Amidst the dense forests of Sri Saila
Like the lovely moon who is shining
Over your thick matted locks.

3

4. Ahobala Kshetra : Ahobala is directly connected by bus, from Cuddapah, Kurnool, and Nandyal. One has to travel through dense forests to reach Ahobala. Ahobala is 35 kms from Nandyal. The temples are situated at three levels viz. 1) Lower 2) Middle and 3) Upper Ahobala. There is the Bhavanashini river and many other holy springs at Ahobala. Ahobala is said to be the holy place where Sri Hari came out of the pillar as Narahari, to save young Prahlada, by slaying Hiranyakashipu. We also come to know from the holy scriptures that Sri Rama came here during his exile for fourteen years. Even so Arjuna came here, during his holy tour etc. Vadiraja explains the glory of Ahobala Narasimha swamy in five slokas :

Light dispels darkness
Likewise, those who pray radiant
Ahobala Narasimha Swamy,
Will emerge successfully
Crossing all hurdles and darkness faced by them

4

Oh Narasimha! You appeared here
From the pillar to save Prahlada
We are as ignorant as the pillar
Oh Narasimha ! You are seen
Here on the banks of Bhavanashini,
Please bestow your mercy on us.

5

Oh Narasimha, you bear
The head of a lion, yet,
Bodily you look like a man,
Which indeed is a wonder
Not found nor heard elsewhere,

By coming out of the pillar
You have amply demonstrated,
That you are really Omnipresent.

6

Lord Narahari took out
The intestines of Hiranyakashipu
And wore the same as garland
After slaying him, by His
Powerful nails, the whole world resounded
His thunderous roar, Narahari
Showered His benign grace upon
Young Prahlada. Oh Narasimha !
Salutations to thy lotus feet.

7

Oh Sri Hari you come out
In this dense forest, as Narasimha !
As only lion can fight the wild elephants,
Likewise, you bestow deep knowledge
And peace upon those who are devoted to you, but blot out
The wicked, though they are mighty and large.

8

5. Bhavanashini River : Vadiraja now touches on the glory of Bhavanashini river, which is seen in Ahobala in one Sloka.

Oh holy Bhavanashini !
You are daily washing
The lotus feet of Narasimha,
Again you provide pure water
For his Abhisheka (holy bath),
And yield the lotus for his decoration,
Please shower your blessings on us.

9

CHAPTER XVII

Sri Vadiraja who was a genius in human form was blessed with outstanding power of grasp and expression. He had abundant blessing from Hari and his Guru in full measure. Above all, he could present any complex idea, in simple and effective manner, which even a common man can understand. When he commenced his holy tour, he had prayed Wind God Vayu, to reduce the hardships of the travel through his cool breeze. All the slokas composed by the holy saint explain the glory and supremacy of Sri Hari. Vadiraja also expresses his deep regards to Acharya Madhva, the founder of Dvaita

philosophy, by upholding the latter's viewpoints wherever necessary. In this chapter, an attempt is made to explain the glory of the following holy places, as presented by the revered Saint, in the Eastern chapter of *Theertha Prabandha*.

6. Nivrati Sangama : Nivrati Sangama is situated at the holy confluence of Krishna and Thungabhadra rivers. On account of the construction of a dam under the Srisaile project, the holy kshetra is now submerged. Most of the existing temples at the site were earlier shifted to safer places, by constructing new temples on the same model. H.H. Sri Satyapramoda Theertha Swamiji, Ashrama Guru of H.H. Sri Satyatma Theertha swamiji, the present head of Uttaradi Mutt, shifted the original Brindavan of his guru, H.H. Satyanidhi Theertha, to the Kurnool branch of Uttaradi Mutt, with all the available materials/remains, found in the Mula Brindavan. Vadiraja explains the glory of the holy Sangama in one sloka.

Nivrati Sangama situated on the holy confluence of
Krishnaveni, Malapahari, Bhimarathi, Thungabhadra
And Bhavanashini Rivers, is quite powerful and holy
Wipes out sins and offers bliss to the devotees. 10

7. Thungabhadra River : The water of Thungabhadra is quite sweet to drink. Thunga and Bhadra rivers originate from Varaha Mountain. After moving separately, they merge at Kudli and move together as Thungabhadra river, and join Krishna river at Nivrati Sangama, after covering a distance of 800 kms. The Varaha Hills the origin of the river is only 16 kms. away from Sringeri, where Adi Shankara established the Sarada Peetam. The chains of holy places like Harihara, Bidirahalli, Hampi, Navavrindavana and Mantralaya are all situated on the holy banks of Thungabhadra river. At Kalasha village of Chickmagalur district, we can even today see a giant rock, of the size 20' x 16' x 10' weighing about 50 tons, placed as a bridge across Bhadra river by Acharya Madhva. There is reference to this in *Sri Madhva Vijaya*. The matter in brief along with picture of Acharya Madhva bearing His Danda and Kamandala (sacred stick and water pot) are carved on the rock, Vadiraja describes the glory of the sacred Thungabhadra river in two slokas.

We worship the holy Thunga river
Shining with beautiful waves,
Who drives away all our ignorance

And is devoted to Sri Hari
 We also worship the Bhadra river
 who can grant liberation to us
 From rebirth on the earth, by clearing our sins. 11

Oh Thungabhadra, you possess
 The sweetest water amongst the sacred rivers
 All over our Bharat, or else why Sri Varaha Swamy
 Gives birth to you from his mouth
 Unless you are sweet and pure. 12

8. Hampi Vittal : Hampi is situated at a distance of 15 kms. from Hospet. Hampi was the capital of the Vijayanagara kings. King Krishnadevaraya was blessed with noble saints like Vyasaraja, Vadiraja, Purandara Dasa, Kanakadasa etc., as his advisers to run his government smoothly. At Hampi, we can see even today Vyasaraya Mantapa, Chakra Theertha, Yanthroddaraka Anjaneya Swamy, installed by Sri Vyasaraja Swamy and Purandara Mantap etc. The other temples like 1) Ugra Narasimha Mandir, 2) Vittal Temple 3) Kodanda Rama temple and 4) Virupaksha Mandir, possessing outstanding architectural beauty. It attracts tourists from all over the world. Vadiraja sings the glory of Hampi Vittal in one sloka.

Oh Krishna, you are present here
 As Vittala, your mother caught,
 You while you were stealing butter,
 Again, you entered the hearts of
 Scholars and washed their sins
 Again when you went to Pandharapur
 Holy Pundarika recognised you
 As the one who stole the hearts of Gopikas,
 Now that we have seen you here
 Please liberate us from bondage once for all
 or else, we are going to disclose
 All your frivolous actions to the whole world. 13

9. Virupaksha Mandir : Virupaksha temple is situated on the banks of Thungabhadra river, near Hemakuta Hills. Vadiraja sings the glory of the Mandir in one sloka.

Oh Indudhara Shankara !
 The mighty supremo of Hampapura,
 You are shining at the bottom of Hemakuta Hills

Please shower peace and prosperity upon all devotees. 14

10. Pampa Kshetra : Pampa Kshetra is known as Southern Kashi. Vadiraja explains the glory of the place in one sloka.

Holy Pampakshetra drives
Away all the sins of the devotees
If the world "*Papam*" (sins)
Is reversed, it reads as "*pampa*"
Likewise as we utter "*Pampa*"
Our sins get totally effaced.

15

11. Hampadevi : There is a place known as " Pampa sarovara " on the banks, of Thungabhadra river, where there is a shrine dedicated to Goddess Durga. Vadiraja worships Durga Mata in one sloka

Sri Devi, you look beautiful
Duly decorated with pearls and bangles
Necklaces of various styles
Quite pure that you are, you possess
Eyes which are quite radiant,
You are like Yama to the wicked
You did slay Mahishasura, by your powerful Trishul,
You are seen here in Bala Hampa
Kshetra, please shower your grace upon us.

16

12. Anegondi : Vadiraja describes the glory of Navavrindavan where there were eight Bridavanas during his visit, in one sloka. Vadiraja compares the eight Swamiji's of Anegondi as eight giant elephants (asta diggajas), who carry the burden of this mighty universe:

Anegondi is the holy place for Madhvas
The entire weight of the world
Is borne by Asta Diggajas
Likewise, the entire burden of
Powerful Madhvasastra, is borne by eight powerful
Disciples of Acharya Madhva
Such as Padmanabha Theertha and
Vyasaraaja Theertha, who are here always present

17

CHAPTER XVIII

Sri Vadiraja was a great scholar and a devoted tapasvi. He wrote several books in Sanscrit and Kannda and thus reached both scholars and laymen. While his scholarly works like ' Yuktimallika', and

'Rukminisha Vijaya' are meant for the classes, the Kannada songs composed by the saint bearing 'Hayavadana' stamp at the end are esoteric meant for the masses, as they reveal the philosophic thoughts, hidden in the scriptures, in a simple manner. He was a creative poet and an original thinker. He was a mobile chariot of devotion and dedication and visited the whole of Bharat performing japa, tapa, puja, paata-pravachana to the disciples. This chapter is intended to explain the glory of 13) Jaya Theertha, 14) Thirumalesha Srinivasa Prabhu as pictured by Sri Vadiraja in the eastern chapter of *Theertha Prabandha*.

13. Jaya Theertha : We have already written that Sri Vadiraja is one among the four strong pillars of Madhva philosophy. The other three are 1) Sri Jaya Theertha (Teekacharya) 2) Sri Vyasaraja Theertha (Chandrikacharya) 3) Sri Raghavendra Theertha (Parimalacharya). Sri Jaya Theertha ruled the kingdom of Vedanta philosophy for 23 years from 1365 A.D. to 1388 A.D. Sri JayaTheertha having written the commentaries for 18 out of 37 original works of Acharya Madhva is popularly known as Teekacharya meaning commentator. Jaya Theertha apart from writing commentaries on the 18 great original works of Acharya Madhva such as 1) Brahma Sutra Bhashya 2) Anuvyakyana, 3) Nyayavivarana 4) Gita Bhashya 5) Gita Tatparya etc., had to his credit three original works i.e. 1) Pramana paddhati 2) Vadavali 3) Padyamala. The commentary of Jaya Theertha on Acharya Madhwa's Anuvyakyana is the famous "*Sudha Grantha*". Raghavendra Theertha Swamy of Mantralaya came to be known as Parimalacharya, after having written "*Parimala Grantha*", viz., a commentary on JayaTheertha's great classic '*Srimaanyaya Sudha*'. There is a famous saying in Sanscrit that 'Either one should master the great classic Sudha or rule Vasudha' (Earth). Jaya Theertha's original Brindavan is in Malkheda of Gilbarga district. Vadiraja explains the glory of Jaya Theertha in one sloka.

Oh JayaTheertha Muni, you are more popular as Teekacharya
 For you have authored scholarly
 Commentaries on the original works of
 Acharya Madhva, blessed as you are
 With sharp intellect, you wrote excellent notes
 For the benefit of the future readers
 Oh Jaya Muni ! you are really
 A great commentator par excellence.

18

14. Venkatachala kshetra (Tirupati) : Tirupati is one among the eight holy Kshetras chosen by Lord Vishnu on his own to appear on earth to bless all devotees. Tirupati now also known as Venkatadri was called Seshadri during Dvapara Era, Anjanadri in Treta and Vrishabhadri in Krita, and is thus famous in all the four Eras. The glory of Tirupati is explained in *Varaha Purana*, when Satrayaga was going on, on the banks of Sarasvati. Sage Narada raised the point, as to who among the Trimurtis is supreme? In order to find the truth, Sage Bhrigu returned to Vaikunta after being insulted by the four faced Brahma and five-faced Shankara. In order to probe further into the fact finally, the sage now turned to Vaikunta and stamped his foot over the chest of Maha Vishnu. Sri Hari worshipped the holy saint by washing his feet. On account of the warm welcome extended to Brigu, by Narayana, Bhrigu informed the other saints that Narayana is the supreme among the Three. However Mahalakshmi was very much annoyed by the action of Her Lord, and came out of Vaikunta and settled down at Kolhapur. Being unable to bear the pangs pf separation. Narayana came to Venkatadri and settled down there in order to bless His devotees. Tirumala Hills appeared like Saligrama Shilas to noble souls like Ramanujacharya, Vyasaraja and Vadiraja as they approached the Hills for the darshan of the Lord. Sri Vadiraja like his illustrious predecessors, moved on his kness to avoid touching the Hills by the feet as the hills looked like Saligramas. Vadiraja offered a garland of Saligrama to Lord Venkatesha for decoration which can be seen even today. There are hundreds of holy withus in Tirumala, of which Swami Pushkarini is the most important. Vyasaraja, Vadiraja, Purandara Dasa and Kanaka Dasa visited Tirumala a number of times and wrote several songs in praise of Tirumalesa. At the request of the king of Chandragiri, Vyasaraja performed the worship of Lord Venkateswara for 12 years from 1486 to 1498. We can see the Vyasaraja Ahnika Mantapa, on the southern banks of Swami Pushkarini, with an idol of Hanuman installed on it. Vadiraja sings the glory of Tirumalesa in eleven Slokas, which is the most eloquent tribute to the glory of any one Kshetra.

Oh Venkatesha ! The shining
 Venkatachala is thy holy abode
 You are worshipped by all celestials
 Let the lovely and powerful shadow
 Of holy Kalpa-vriksha Venkatesha
 Always protect the devotees.

19

Standing as you do
 A top the Tirumala Hills
 You are extending your —
 Lovely looks upon all the
 Devotees from far and wide. 20

Such of the devotees who bear
 Shanka and Chakra mudras
 And worship His lotus feet devotedly
 Get their miseries cleared, is demonstrated
 By Venkatesha Prabhu by bearing Shanka Chakra
 In His hands standing as
 He does with left hand, held over the left waist and
 Right hand, pointed to His lotus feet, 21

Oh Neela Megha Shyama, you are
 Greatest of all the celestials,
 You receive offering from your devotees
 Who become richer by your graceful
 Blessings day by day. 22

Oh Venkatesha ! You move sitting on your
 Vehicle Garuda, embracing Sridevi and Bhudevi
 You shower your mercy upon your
 Devotees, we worship your lotus feet. 23

Oh Venkatesha ! you rest over Adisesha
 Seshachala is your holy abode
 When you appeared on earth as Rama to slay Ravana,
 You chose Sesha, to be with you as your lovely brother
 Lakshmana, which clearly indicates
 That Adisesha, is totally dedicated to you 24

Shankara, Sun, Moon and other celestials are your servants,
 In fact, you are worshipped
 By Vidhatha, the four-faced Brahma
 You are the most Supreme among all the Gods. 25

Oh Venkatesha ! you are present
 In Seshachala between two ranges
 You are the greatest among the
 Celestials, the Vedas proclaim
 Your glory fully, we always worship you. 26

Oh Venkatesha ! you extend
 Your kind grace to the needy
 You are quite handsome, you remove
 All hardships, and are totally unmatched. 27

Oh Venkatesha ! you shower
 Your mercy upon all, you possess
 All noble qualities and merits
 Venkatachala is your holy abode
 We worship you devotedly all along. 28

Oh Venkatesa ! you have
 Showered your abundant blessings
 Upon Acharya Madhva, you destroy all the demons
 Like fire, you bestow deep
 Scholarship on thy devotees
 Oh Venkatesha, we bow to you for ever. 29

CHAPTER XIX

Sri Vedavedya Theertha, the direct disciple of Sri Vadiraja in his *Vadiraja stotra*, mentions that Yathiraja Vadiraja was always engaged in holy tours and the worship of Hayagriva. Vadiraja's services for the spread of spiritual knowledge are unmatched. He has produced a number of eminent scholars. Prominent among them was his younger brother, Surothama Theertha the revered saint of Bhandarekere Mutt, Barkur. Sri Surothama Theertha wrote commentaries on "Yuktimallika" and "Pashanda Matha Khandana", written by Vadiraja. Sri Narayana Acharya, another disciple of Vadiraja wrote commentaries on "Rukmineesha Vijaya" and "Theertha Prabandha". Another disciple Sri Raghunathacharya wrote a brief biography of Vadiraja.

In this chapter, we explain the glory of the following places as presented by Vadiraja in his Eastern Chapter of *Theertha Prabandha*.
 15) Suvarna Mukhari River 16) Kanchi Varadaraja swamy 17) Shiva Kanchi Ekambareshwara 18) Kanchi Kamakshi 19) Arunachaleshwara.

15. Suvarna Mukhari River :- Suvarna Mukhari river can be seen near Tiruchanur. Sri Kshetra Kalahasti is situated on the banks of the river. Vadiraja sings the glory of the holy river in one sloka.

Oh Suvarna Mukhari river ! the faces of those
Who consume thy holy waters shine like gold
And they are ever dedicated to Sri Hari
With their head and heart fully purified. 30

16. Kanchi Varadaraja :- Kanchi is one among the seven Mokshaprada- Kshetras. When the four-faced Brahma, the creator of this universe performed a satrayaga Lord Narayana emerged out of *yajna kunda* as Varadaraja, to bless the celestials. We can reach Kanchi from Chennai either by train or by road. Kanchi is also famous for pure silk sarees and dhoties. Vadiraja worships lovely Varadaraja Swamy in three slokas.

Oh Varadaraja Swamy ! you are a great lover
That is why you have chosen to remain
At Kanchi Kshetra, the waist of thy Consort Bhudevi
You grant boons to Brahma, and others
You are supreme, of all the Gods. 31

Oh Kanchiswara Varadaraja
Swamin ! we are not seeking
Riches or any material pleasures
We pray for your divine mercy, which we consider as far
Superior to all other earthly benefits. 32

Oh Kanchi Varadaraja Swamy
You are present here at this
Holy Agrahara, surrounded by Brahmins
Emerging out of the holy Yajna Kunda
As prayed for by Vidhatha, the four-faced Brahma 33

17. Shiva Kanchi (Ekambaresvara) :- The temple of Ekambaresvara is very prominent in Shiva Kanchi. Once Parvati created utter darkness in the three worlds, and was cursed by Shankara. Later, She came to Kanchi, and worshipped Shiva Linga made out of sand, beneath a mango tree. Maheswara, pleased with Parvati's penance, joined her. The same mango tree, which is more than 3500 years old, where Uma worshiped Mahesa can be seen even today. The tree yields different types of fruits from different branches. Vadiraja glorifies Kanchi Ekambaresvara in one sloka.

Shankara is embraced closely by his consort,

Ever loving, smiling Uma beneath
The mango tree, beckons Mahesha as if he is
Driven towards her by Manmatha, the God of Love 34

18. Kanchi Kamakshi :- Sri Kanchi Kamakshi Temple is just two furlongs away from Ekambaresvara Temple. By the side of Kanchi Kamakshi Temple, we can see Kanchi Kamakoti Mutt. Vadiraja worships Kanchi Kamakshi in two slokas.

Oh Kamakshi, being unable
To enjoy your beauty fully
With just two eyes, Shankara
Possesses three, in order to derive
Deep satisfaction, we worship at your lotus feet 35

Oh Girije !Shankara has
Burnt Manmatha to ashes
For disturbing him from his austerities
However, he is pleased with you
And got Ganesha and Shanmukha from you,
Ganesha dispels all obstacles
Mahesha arranged breast-feeding
To Shanmukha, through Krithika
And other celestials, and has
Taken abundant care to keep
You ever youthful and beautiful. 36

19. Arunachalesvara Kshetra :- Arunachalesvara is also known as Tiruvannamalai. Among the five types of Lingas, one Agni Linga is present here. Arunachalesvara is considered one among three Gopurams, brought to earth by Nandikesha from Kailasa. There is a pathway to offer pradakshina to Arunachalesvara at the foot of the hill. On the auspicious eve of Kartika Purnami, people heap large quantity of camphor over a big vessel and light it during the night. Thousands of people visit the temple to enjoy the dazzling lights of holy Kartika purnami. One can reach Thiruvannamalai, from Chennai, either through Villupuram, or Vellore via Katpadi. Vadiraja worships Arunachalesvara in one sloka.

Oh Shankara ! decorated by serpents
You are dressed beautiflly
To the satisfaction of thy consort
Parvati, please save the good

But destroy the wicked, you are
Far superior to Sun god, Indra
And other celestials, you are
Able to eradicate all earthly miseries
Oh Arunachalesvara, please do protect us.

37

CHAPTER - XX

Sri Vedavedya Theertha in his *Vadiraja stotra* mentions that his revered Guru Vadiraja was a very powerful and illustrious Saint and dedicated his entire life for the glory of mankind. The name Vadiraja, meaning king of arguments is literally true as he silenced all his critics belonging to different schools of thought. He was a great poet of a rare calibre and an author of a number of books and was the most illustrious of the eight Swamijis of Udupi. His great classic work "Yuktimalika" consists of 5379 slokas. Vadiraja covers the most sensitive areas of Vedanta Philosophy very effectively in all his writings. An attempt is made in this chapter to explain the glory of 20) Tirucoiluru, 21) Vriddachalesvara 22) Srimushna Bhuvараha 23) Kumbakonam, as presented by Vadiraja in Eastern Chapter of his, *Theertha Prabandha*.

20. Tirucoiluru Trivikrama :- Tirukoiluru is a holy Vaishnava kshetra and is 40 km. away from Thiruvannamalai. Lord Narayana as requested the celestials, appeared as Vamana before king Bali, to secure three paces of land, and thereafter grew as mighty Trivikrama, pushing Bali to the Nether world. The idol of Trivikrama is ten feet tall, and has Shanka and Chakra in the two hands, There is Brahma, Shukracharya, Mrikandu etc., by the side of Trivikrama. Tirukoiluru is situated on the southern banks of the Pinakaini river. As we cross the bridge, we can see Anjaneya Temple, Moola Brindavan of the revered saint Sri Raghuthama Theertha Swamy (1557-1595) situated on the compound of Uttaradi Mutt. Vadiraja explains the glory of the holy place, whose glory has been enhanced by the divine presence of Hari (Trivikrama) Guru (Raghuthama) in one sloka.

Oh tiny Vamanamurti, you have evolved
As mighty Trivikrama Swami !
Who can explain your glory fully
You efface all our hardships
One by one; even the thousand

Faced Adishesha will find
 It tough to describe you fully
 You are omnipresent, divine and radiant
 From your sharp nails you have bored
 Into the Earth and pushed down,
 King Bali to the Nether World.

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21. Vriddachalesvara Kshetra : We can reach Vriddachalam from Villupuram via Lalgudi on the Villupuram-Trichy route. The big temple of Mahesha is situated near the railway station. Shankara presented Himself before a saint called Vibhishita, pleased by the deep penances of the latter. Vadiraja describes Vriddachalesvara in two slokas.

Oh Vriddachalesvara ! You are also
 Known as Sadyojata and possesses three eyes,
 Please shower your blessing upon us,
 So that our knowledge may develop further.
 Oh Shankara ! You punish
 The wicked and protect the good
 Oh holy Tripurari, we
 For ever worship you devotedly.

40

22. Srimushna Bhavaraha :- Srimushna Bhavaraha is one among the eight holy places which Lord Vishnu has chosen as his abode to bless the devotees. It is 60 km. away from Tirukoiluru. According to local history, Maha Vishnu took his Varaha Avatara from this holy place. Acharya Madhva spent one Chaturmasa at this Kshetra. He produced a holy spring here by digging the earth with his Danda (holy stick) like the one he had created at Kaup called "Danda Tirtha" to provide water for his Guru. Naturally, the place is quite holy on account of the divine presence of Bhavaraha and the holy tank. Vadiraja sings the glory of the holy place in one sloka.

Oh purest, omniscient, supremo of the celestials
 Varaha Murti with your strong tusks
 You have slain Hiranyaksha
 Embracing thy lovely consort Bhudevi
 You are present here to bless us.

41

23. Kumbakonam : Sri Kshetra Kumbakonam is situated on the banks of the Cauvery river. Kumbakonam is a city of temples as we do find a large number of temples in the town. The name is said to

be derived from the fact that the nectar kept on the pot by Lord Brahma, came out of its neck and spread over the town to different places. The prominent temples of the town are 1) Sarangapani, 2) Kumbheswara, 3) Nageshwara, 4) Ramāswami, 5) Chakrapani. The holy Vrindavan of H.H. Sri Vijayendra Tirtha Swami, the Parama Guru of revered Saint Sri Raghavendra Tirtha Swami of Mantralaya is in this town. Vadiraja sings the glory of Sarangapani in two slokas.

Oh valiant Sarangapani !
 Kumbakonam is thy holy abode
 Although you are seen here in
 Sleeping posture over your bow Saranga,
 You possess unmatched beauty and radiance
 We are fully aware that you
 Are none other than Narayana,
 The supreme among all Celestials. 42

Oh holy Sarangapani!
 You are ever engaged in punishing the wicked
 And saving the good, let your arrows be
 Directed to wipe out our sins and we remain
 devoted to you 43

With this Chapter, the Eastern Chapter of *Tirtha Prabandha* which starts with Ganga Sagara Sangam concludes with Kumbakonam. In this Eastern Chapter Vadiraja worships at 23 Kshetras, which are explained in 43 slokas. Vadiraja now moves towards Southern Direction, and explains the glory of the places visited in the Southern Chapter of *Tirtha Prabandha* in the next chapter.

DAKSHINA PRABANDHA CHAPTER XXI

Sri Vedavedya Theertha in his *Vadiraja stotra*, mentions that his mentor Guru Vadiraja was always engaged in the services of the Lord. *Rukmineesha Vijaya*, *Sarasabharati Vilasa*, and *Yuktimalika* are his classical works. *Rukmineesha Vijaya* as the name itself suggests is the glorious tale of Sri Krishna and Rukmini and has been considered far superior to "*Sishupala vadha*" of the great Magha Kavi. Vadiraja who was on a holy tour of Bharat in a clock-wise direction from the abode of Lord Sri Krishna of Udupi on the western coast now turns towards south, after visiting the holy places situated in the north and eastern parts of the country.

The southern chapter of *Tirtha Prabandha* commences with Sriranga Kshetra, and concludes with Thiruvananthapuram. In this southern chapter, Vadiraja visits 20 kshetras, which are described in 47 Slokas. In this chapter the pictures of the following places are delineated, as presented by Vadiraja in the southern chapter of *Tirtha Prabandha*. They are 1) Sriranga kshetra, 2) Panchaphanisesha, 3) Chandra Pushkarini.

1. Sriranga Kshetra : It is one among the eight holy places which the Lord chose to remain to bless the devotees. Sriranga is the last among the three temples dedicated to Sri Ranganatha Swamy situated in Karnataka and Tamilnadu surrounded by the river Cauvery. We also come to know from *Sri Madhva Vijaya*, that Acharya Madhva did visit the holy Sriranga kshetra in the course of his southern tour. Sriranga is an island with a length of 27 km. and breadth of 5 km. surrounded by the river Cauvery. The temple has seven gopurams and is one of the biggest temples in India. Sriranga is 10 km. away from Tiruchirapalli. The creator of the universe, the fourfaced Brahma, handed over Vimanaruda Ranganatha Swamy to King Ikshvaku. Thereafter Ranganatha Swamy was worshipped by all the kings of Raghuvamsha. Lastly, Lord Srirama handed over Ranganatha Swamy to Vibhishana for worship at the request of the latter. But when Vibhishana tried to carry Sriranganatha Swamy away to Srilanka he had to stop at Sriranga to perform *sandhya vandana* and other rituals. But Ranganatha Swamy once placed on the earth at Sriranga remained there firmly. The Lord also told Vibhishana that he liked to remain at Sriranga facing Srilanka. It is the firm belief that the immortal Vibhishana visits Sriranga and worships Ranganatha Swamy even today invisibly. The four-armed Ranganatha Swamy is seen in the reclining posture over Adishesha having five hoods. Sridevi, Bhudevi and Vibhishana are seen near the lotus feet of Sriranganatha. The great Madhva saints like Jaya Theertha (Teekacharya) and Vyasaraja Theertha (Chandrikacharya) have visited this holy shrine. The original Brindavans of several Madhva saints belonging to Sri Padaraja Mutt, Vyasaraja Mutt and Raghavendra Swamy Mutt are also seen here. The famous Jambukesvara temple where we can see Shivalinga under water (Jalalinga) is also here. Hence Sriranga is a holy kshetra both for Vaishnavas and Saivaites. Vadiraja worships the handsome Ranganatha in six slokas.

Oh Ranganatha Swamy ! You dwell here in the heart of
Cauvery River in between its branches,
You are the father of Lord Brahma —
You shower your mercy upon thy
Devotees, and are worshipped
By all celestials ; Adishesha is thy holy bed
Holy Chandrapuskarini tank belongs to you
Oh Sriranganatha Swamy, please entrench in our hearts. 1

The Vedas explain your glory
You are merciful to all devotees,
The creator of the universe
Vidhata is thy lovely son,
You are lotus-eyed ; quite benign
And are the most superior in all the three worlds and
Quite affluent; please shower thy grace upon us 2

Oh Ranganatha Swamy ! You are
worshipped by celestials and saints,
You are the Ocean of mercy ; you bless the learned
Your radiant and smiling face is
As pleasing and bright, as the full Moon,
You bestow everything sought for by devotees
Like Kalpavriksha ; please cleanse our souls. 3

Oh Lotus-eyed Ranganatha Swamy!
You are found sleeping here,
As if you have lost thy sound sleep
During Pralaya holding the mighty universe within
Are you now resting over Sesha here,
To make up for the sleep, lost during the cyclic rest,
On account of the heavy, burden held in thy stomach,
Engaging Lakshmi and others, now on different missions? 4

Oh Jagadeesha Ranganatha Swamy
You are our solace, and can
Remove all our ignorance and miseries
We are therefore sure, that
Although you are found sleeping
You are just feigning sleep. 5

Oh Neelameghasyama!
You do possess shining golden

Ornaments ; you live in the
Minds of thy worshippers, you protect the celestials
You possess abundant riches
You dwell in Rangadhama
Please grant us riches, and keep us ever devoted to you 6

2. Pancha Phanishesha : Sesha spreads his five hoods as umbrella over the head of Ranganatha Swamy, who is resting upon him. Vadiraja worships Sesha in two slokas.

Oh Sri Ranganatha prabhu!
Adishesha is thy holy bed
He is ever reciting the
Famous five Vedas, namely
Rig, Yajur, Sama, Atharva
And the panchama Veda Bharata,
Shedding the rest of the hoods,
He has retained only five of them
And two tongues to serve you devotedly. 7

Oh Sriranganatha ! You are shining
Here along with your consort Sri Lakshmi
Resting over Adishesha, We pray you most devotedly
To ever remain in our hearts as well. 8

3. Chandrapuskarini : On the fifth prakara of the temple there is a tank known as " Chandra Pushkarini " in the form of full moon. Vadiraja explains the holy spring in one sloka.

The Moon God, although
Holy Ganga is present on
The matted locks of Sankara,
Comes out and performs
Deep austerities here, at this
Holy Chandrapushkarini Tirtha,
We are fortunate to worship
The holy spring Chandrapushkarini
Which is sacred and powerful. 9

CHAPTER XXII

Sri Vedanidhi Tirtha in his *Anu Vrindavanakhyana* which is a mini-Vadiraja Stotra, mentions that Lord Hayagriva is knowledge and bliss rolled into one. He did slay Ravana, in order to establish the rule

of Law on earth. He offered salvation to a Gandarva by name Manigriva. Hayagriva was ever worshipped by Vadiraja. The mini-Vadiraja stotra was carved over a big stone, by the side of the holy Vrindavan of Vadiraja, which can be seen even today at Sonda. Vadiraja's '*Sarasa Bharati Vilasa*' strongly upholds "Hari Sarvothama Vayu Jeevothama" principle very eloquently which is the essence of Madhva philosophy and is as good as *Sumadhva Vijaya*. Another work *Sudha Gurvartha Deepika* of Vadiraja is the best among all the commentaries available on *Nyaya Sudha* written by the great commentator par excellence, the revered Jayamuni. In this chapter the glory of the following places is explained as propounded by Vadiraja in the Sothern Chapter of *Tirtha Prabandha*.

4) Cauvery River. 5) Vrishabhachala. 6) Nupura Ganga. 7) Darbhashayana 8) Rama-sethu.

4. Cauvery River : The Cauvery River originates from Sahyachala, provides adequate water to Karnataka and Tamilnadu and joins the Bay of Bengal beyond Tanjore after covering a distance of 700 kms. The Cauvery river is one among the eight most holy rivers. The actual place of origin of the Cauvery river is Talacauvery of Bhagamandla village of Coorg District. There are references to holy Cauvery in Rigveda. Mahabharata, Bhagavata, Agnipurana and Skandapurana. The famous 'Rangatraya' viz three holy shrines dedicated to Sri Ranganatha Swamy are situated on the islands situated within the branches of the Cauvery at three different sacred spots. The first Ranganatha Swamy temple is at Srirangapatna. The second temple is at Shiva Samudra. The third temple is at Sriranga. As Ranganatha is present along the Cauvery at three different places, it is considered that Ranganatha is fond of the holy river. The holy Ganga will be present in the Cauvery River, during Tula Masa. Vadiraja explains the glory of the Cauvery river, daughter of Kavera Muni, in two slokas.

Oh holy river Cauvery !
 Ranganatha Swamy is present
 In thy holy waters at three different holy spots,
 A sip of thy water is quite holy
 As Ranganatha, present in thy waters will enter our hearts
 As we consume thy sacred waters. 10

There are a ample sacred rivers
 In holy Bharat, which can offer salvation,

But you are providing adequate
 Waters for the entire Chola area
 For drinking and raising varieties of crops
 As well as liberation from earthly miseries,
 Oh Cauvery ! You are quite holy and powerful. 11

5. Vrishabhachala : Vrishabhachala is situated 20 km. away from Madura. The temple is also known as Alagar koil. The main Deity is Sundara Raja. (Sri Hari). Sridevi and Bhudevi are found on either side of Sundara Raja. The glory of the holy place is explained in Varaha, Vamana, Brahmanda and Agni Puranas. Once the God of Death, Yamadharma performed severe austerities, assuming the form of a bull, to earn the grace of Sri Hari . Sri Hari who was pleased, stands here before Yama Dharmaraja as Sundara Raja, to bless Yama. Vadiraja glorifies the holy place in one Sloka.

Oh Sundara Raja ! Yama Dharma performs
 Deep penance to earn thy grace
 You are the god of gods
 We also emulate Yama and worship you devotedly
 Please shower thy grace upon us
 And grant us liberation. 12

6. Nupura Ganga : When Narayana appeared, before Yama Dharma, the holy Ganga emerged out of his anklets, which is known as Nupura Ganga. Normally people visit Sundara Raja, after a holy dip in Nupura Ganga. Vadiraja praises Nupura Ganga in one Sloka.

Oh Nupura Ganga, you are born
 Out of the anklets of Sri Hari,
 Please clear our accumulated
 Sins, and purify our minds and souls
 So that we may remain ever devoted to Sri Hari 13

7. Darbhasayana : Darbhasayana is 10 km. away from Ramanatha puram Town. According to one version, Lord Rama slept over the holy Darbha grass here for three days to seek the consent of the sea god, to construct a bridge across him. Vibhishana had come to Darbhasayana to make friends with Rama. The temple is quite excellent in appearance, with the idol of the two armed Ramachandra. Buses are available from Ramanad to Darbhasayana. The Bay of Bengal is 5km. away from this place. Vadiraja worships Darbhasayana Ramachandra in one sloka.

Oh Sri Rama while you were at Chitrakuta
 With Sita and Lakshmana, you had slain Kurangasura,
 Who wished to tease mother Seetha
 Appearing as a crow, threw darbha-
 Charged with special spiritual powers,
 But there is no need for you
 To seek the consent of the sea god
 Now, for constructing the bridge
 To cross over to Lanka, as the entire Universe
 Including the ocean belongs to you. 14

8. Rama Sethu : Devipatanam is 19 km away from Ramasethu. Sri Rama installed and worshipped Navagrahas in the sea before starting the construction of the bridge to cross over Lanka from Rameswaram. The place is also known as Navapashana.

Navagrahas are installed in the sea 10 meters away from the sea-shore. One can get into the knee-deep sea and worship the Navagrahas when the sea is in low tide. The bridge which was 100 Yojana in length, was built by Rama from Rameswaram to Sri Lanka. The bridge was subsequently cut by Rama standing at Sri Lanka at different points, after slaying Ravana, Kumbhakarna etc. Vadiraja worships the holy Rama Sethu in six slokas.

Oh mighty Rama Sethu
 You are built by Rama and
 His faithful monkey troops,
 You look so imposing
 As though the mother earth
 Has moved upwards as bridge
 Over the sea, to help
 Sri Rama, to redeem her
 Daughter Seetha from Sri Lanka,
 Oh Rama Sethu, you are as sturdy
 And strong as the mighty mountains. 15

The purity of gold is revealed
 Only when it is appraised,
 Likewise, the mighty Rama Sethu
 Built by Rama establishes
 The matchless skill, valour
 And golden qualities of Rama. 16

Kalidasa is wrong when he says
 That the powerful wind can,
 At best uproot trees and plants,
 But not the mighty mountains
 For here Maruti, son of Maruta
 Has brought plenty of mountains,
 And has made a strong bridge over the sea. 17

In the next Sloka Vadiraja draws a parallel between the bridge constructed by Rama with the help of Hanuman, and the *Sarva Moola* works of Acharya Madhva (third Avatar of Vayudeva) and explains the glory of each one after another.

The vast sea is the holy Upanishad
 The directions of Rama are Vyasa Sutras,
 The movement of the army of monkeys
 Is the philosophy for the Vaishnavas to learn,
 Different places are *Sarva Moola* works,
 Countless mountains are
 The strong supports for the bridge,
 While the mighty bridge was
 Built by Hanuman, the powerful
Sarva Moola was written by Acharya Madhva,
 To serve the celestial supremo Sri Hari. 18

The waves emerging from the sea
 Hit the bridge repeatedly, as if to receive
 The leftover foot dust of Rama,
 Now remaining over the bridge. 19

Seetha and Lakshmana do shine
 On either side of Rama, But
 Hanuman the humblest servant
 Of Rama is standing before Him
 With folded hands, head duly bent.
 And overflowing devotion is a
 Deep fountain of happiness to Rama,
 The celestial supremo Sri Rama, further
 Silences the sea through his arrows
 To hear and enjoy the lovely
 Talks of Hanuman quietly undisturbed. 20

CHAPTER XXIII

Sri Vedanidhi Theertha in his "Anu vrindavanakalyana" a mini Vadiraja Stotra mentions that Lord Hayagriva who is worshipped by all celestials will wipe out all our troubles caused by the Navagrahas, if we worship the holy Brindavan of Sri Vadiraja, as Hayagriva is ever present there. Vadiraja also wrote "Mahabharata Lakshalankara" to fulfil an oath by his mother to the Lord. This book is extremely helpful to understand clearly the glory of "Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya ",of Acharya Madhwa. In this chapter the glory of the following places is explained, as presented by Vadiraja, in the Southern Chapter of *the Tirtha Prabandha*. 9) Rameswara. 10) Dhanushkoti. 11) Sriramapada stotra. 12) Srirama stotra.

9. Rameswara : Rameswara is the holiest Kshetra of the south. It is an island long of 18 kms and wide of 11 kms The glory of holy Rameswara is explained in *Skanda Purana*. The place was known as "Gandha Madana" previously. The pandavas during their exile, and Balarama in the course of his holy tour had visited the place. Rameswara is connected by bus / train from Chennai, Madurai, Coimbatore and Palghat etc. According to one version, as suggested by Saint Agastya, Rama desired to install Shivalinga at Rameswar to get rid of all the sins on account of slaying of Ravana, and asked Hanuman, to fetch Shivalinga from Kailasa. As Hanuma did not return at the appointed time, Rama installed a Linga made out of sand by Sita. Thereafter He also installed separately another Linga brought by Hanuman which is known as Hanumadeeswara. Vadiraja worships Rameswara installed by Rama in five slokas.

Oh Mahesha ! You eradicate
Our lust and fulfil our desires
You hold the holy Ganga on
Your shining matted locks,
You are installed by Rama
And embraced by Parvati
We worship you most devotedly.

21

Oh Sri Rama ! You are none other than
Sri Narayana : but during
Pralaya, you destroy the whole universe
Whom then you worship to get
Cleansed of the sins accumulated?

You have redeemed Ahalya
 Your holy tale can grant salvation
 You are far superior to
 Lakshmi and Brahma and free from all sins. 22

Shankara to get salvation
 Is ever reciting Rama Nama,
 Does any one any where worships
 His own worshipper or follower? 23

Shiva is guilty of Brahmahatya Dosha
 Having removed the fifth head of Brahma,
 That got stuck to his hand,
 How can then Shankara
 Clear Rama, who was not
 At all guilty of Brahmahatya Dosha? 24

The mighty Ramasethu built
 By Rama, connecting Rameswaram
 With Sri Lanka in order to slay
 Ravana, Kumbhakarna and others,
 Is strong enough to clear
 Brahma hatya dosha, now then
 Can any one say that Rama
 The celestial supremo is guilty of any Dosha? 25

10. Dhanushkoti : Dhanushkoti is 20 km away from Rameswara. As prayed for by Vibhishana to prevent the entry of hostile forces to Sri Lanka from Rameswara, Sri Rama breaks the bridge built by him at different points standing at Dhanushkoti. Major part of Dhanushkoti got submerged under the sea during the 1964-65 cyclones. Valiraja worships at the holy Dhanushkoti in two slokas.

Sri Rama, the doyen of the Raghu dyanasty
 Shelved the strong bridge
 Standing at Dhanushkoti,
 Retaining only a small portion
 Which can give adequate merit
 That one can get by visiting
 Different holy places of the country. 26

Oh dear devotees, you are
 Often found engaged in gifting

Cows, land, gold and reciting
 Vedas or performing Yagas
 Constructing tanks etc.,
 In order to get salvation
 But you can get far superior
 Merits, by a holy visit to
 Dhanushkoti, which is a
 Powerful store house of supreme merits. 27

11. Sri Ramapada Stotra : In this Vadiraja worships the holy feet of Sri Rama in one sloka.

Oh Rama, the holy touch of
 Thy noble feet has redeemed
 Ahalya, we, therefore, pray you
 For purity of the mind, deep devotion
 Dedication and knowledge,
 Instead of reigning as a king
 You underwent hardships in the forest
 On exile for fourteen long years.
 To fulfil thy father's promise
 We pray at your holy feet, to get detached from
 Earthly matters, and remain ever attached to you 28

12. Sri Rama Stotra : Vadiraja explains the divine qualities of Sri Rama in one sloka.

Oh Sri Rama, you are the
 Chief Commander of the
 Army of the monkeys
 Your arrow is set over the bow
 You have slain all the Asuras
 You are supreme among kshatriyas
 You have enhanced the joy
 Of Sitamatha, by constructing
 The powerful bridge over the sea
 Please save us at every stage of our lives. 29

CHAPTER XXIV

H.H.Sri Vedanidhi Theertha in his mini *Vadiraja stotra* mentions that those who worship Vadiraja, duly understanding him as *Bhavi Sameera* (future wind god), will be rid of re-birth again on earth. This

fact is carved over a stone kept by the side of holy Brindavan of Yathiraja Vadiraja at Sonda. Apart from writing several classics in Sanscrit for the benefit of intellectuals, Vadiraja has also written several simple works in Kannada such as 1) *Sri Krishna Bala Leela*, 2) *Keshavnama*, 3) *Bhramara Geetha*, 4) *Vaikunta Varnana*, 5) *Lakshmi Shobhana etc.*, for the benefit of the masses. All his Kannada poems bear Hayavadana stamp at the end. Vadiraja is one among the holy trio, the other two being Sripadaraja and Vyasaraaja. These three saints have enriched the Kannada Dasa Sahitya. Vadiraja also composed a poem in Tulu, on the "Ten incarnations" of Sri Hari, for the benefit of laymen. In this chapter the glory of the following places is presented by Vadiraja in the Southern Chapter of the *Theertha Prabandha*. viz., 13) Tamraparni River, 14) Mahendra Hills. 15) Kanyakumari. 16) Agastya Varnana.

13. Tamraparni River : The river originates from Malayachala. The river is seen at Tirunelveli town. One can have dip in the river either at Tirunelveli or at Papanashana, 46 km. away from Tirunelveli, near Ambasamudra. We can find reference to the river in the *Bhagavata*, *Kurma* and *Varaha puranas*. Vadiraja worships the holy river in one Sloka.

Ordinary shells found in the
Holy Tamraparni river are
Powerful enough to convert the
Rain water into pearls
So a dip in the holy river
Is a must for all
Devotees desiring salvation.

30

14. Mahendra Mountain : Hanuman who was assigned the task of locating Sita, takes a miraculous leap from Mahendra Hills to Sri Lanka. The hill was pressed to the bottom of the earth, due to the kick, as Hanuman jumped to Sri Lanka. In *Sundara kanda*, we come across the description of Hanuman, getting ready, to jump over to Lanka. The Mahendra is reported to be near Dharbhashayana. Vadiraja sings of the glory of the Hill in one verse.

Oh Bhudevi, the valourous Hanuman
Who is all set to land on Sri Lanka
Takes a powerful leap from
Mahendrachala, pressing the Hill

To thy bottom, as if to pass on
A message to you, that the
Hardships faced by thy lovely
Daughter Sita are going to end ere long.

31

15. Kanyakumari : Kanyakumari is 96 km. away from Tirunelveli. It is at the southern end of our country. We can see the holy confluence of 1) the Arabian sea on the west 2) The Indian Ocean on the south and 3) the Bay of Bengal on the east. On the eve of Chaitra paurnami, we can see moon rising from the Bay of Bengal and the sun setting in the Arabian sea during the evenings. Even on other days, we find thousands of people coming here both during the mornings and evenings to see 1) sunrise and sun set, 2) Moon rise and Moon set. Several holy springs are seen here viz. 1) Gayathri, 2) Savithri, 3) Papanasha etc. There are a few bathing ghats for taking holy dip at the confluence of three major seas. After taking a holy dip at the sangam, people take darshan of Ganesha, and then come to worship Sri Devi Kanyakumari. Sridevi holds a beautiful garland on her hand. She is decorated with golden ornaments studded with diamonds, during nights, and looks very attractive. Special pujas are offered during Dasara.

Local Legend :- A demon by name Banasura performed severe austerities, praying to Shankara and got a boon from him, to the effect that he should be unconquerable by all except a spinster. Mad with the power gifted by Shankara, he started unleashing terror in all the three worlds. Thereafter, all the celestials prayed Maha Vishnu, to end the menace caused by the demon. The celestials then performed a Yaga as suggested by Sri Hari, and from the Yajna Kunda, Durga Devi emerged as Kanyakumari. Mahesha then proceeded towards Kanyakumari. Sage Narada fully aware of the fact that Banasura can not be slain, unless Sri Devi remains as spinster, prevented Shankara at Suchindra from reaching Kanyakumari. As the marriage muhurta was over, Shankara decided to remain at Suchindra. The mantrakshatas brought for the marriage were thrown away at Kanyakumari near the sea-shore. We can even today see the mantrakshata in the form of red, black and white sands at Kanyakumari. Banasura, having come to know of the supreme beauty of Kanyakumari, desired to wed her, but was killed by Sri Devi in the ensuing battle. Vadiraja worships Sri Devi in three slokas.

Oh Sri Devi ! How can we
Call you Kanyakumari (spinster)?
For, you have already granted
Long life, health, health and
Salvation upon thy devotees.

32

Oh Sri Devi, we are sure that
You are not Parvati for, you have
Slain Banasura, as Sri Krishna did
You are stationed at Kanyakumari
At the bottom of Bharat, which is
Created by Lord Parasurama,
By pushing away the sea from Gokarna,
The ocean of milk is the abode of Sri Hari
But you are standing at the sangam of three oceans,
We consider you as Sri Lakshmi
On account of parallel qualities
Commonly found in you and Sri Hari

33

Oh holy Kanyakumari, the resplendent
Beauty possessed by you
Makes us conclude that you are
None other than Mahalakshmi,
Mother of Manmatha, or else
How can you radiate such matchless beauty?

34

Swami Vivekananda, the illustrious saint of our country, crossed over to the rocks, situated on the sea near the Sagam from Kanyakumari all the way swimming. The major attractions to be seen at Kanyakumari are 1) Sunrise / sunset, 2) Moonrise / moonset, 3) Kanyakumari Temple, 4) Vivekananda Rock Memorial Bhavan. Thousands of people visit the holy place daily and reach Vivekananda Rock memorial by boat from Kanyakumari and see Vivekananda Bhavan. Devipada, library etc.

16. Agastya Varnana : Vadiraja now worships saint Agastya, who lived in Vyasa Hills near Kanya Tirtha. A few demons started harassing the celestials from the hideouts within the deep seas. Agastya Muni, as prayed for by the celestials, converted the entire sea water into a drop and sipped the same through his palm, rendering hiding under the sea impossible for the demons. The celestials then slew all the demons easily. Vadiraja worships Agastya Muni in one sloka.

Oh revered Agastya Muni!
 You have sipped the entire
 Water of the sea after converting the
 Same into just a drop
 Please all along save us from
 All earthly miseries and hardships.

35

CHAPTER XXV

Sri Vedanidhi Tirtha in his *Vadiraja Stotra* mentions that one will be doubly blessed, by worshipping the holy Brindavan of Vadiraja as one gets simultaneously the blessings of Hayagriva (Sri Hari) and Vadiraja (guru) present in the Brindavan. Vadiraja has written more than 40 Stotras, in Sanscrit, such as "Dasavatara" and "Krishnashtakam" etc. Each word used by Yathiraja Vadiraja is quite expressive, and reveals the glory of Sri Hari as explained in the *sruti* and *Smriti*. Among the Sanscrit authors on the Madhva philosophy, Vadiraja is next only to Acharya Madhva. In this chapter the glory of the following places is explained as presented by Vadiraja, in the Sothern chapter of *Tirtha Prabandha*.

17. Suchindra Kshetra : Suchindra Kshetra is 13 km. awy from Kanyakumari. Mahendra, who was cursed by sage Gautama, in the Ahalya episode, got liberated at this holy place. There is a big temple here dedicated to Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesvara. There is a huge idole of Hanuman, in front of the Vishnu Temple. The place is known as Suchindra, as Mahendra the consort of Sachi got purified here. Vadiraja offers prayer at the holy place in one verse.

Oh Holy Suchindra Kshetra
 It does not add much to thy glory
 When you purify noble souls
 Like Mahendra, but you will
 Certainly add fresh feathers to thy cap,
 By showering mercy upon the common folk,
 Who serve and pray you devotedly.

36

18. Adi Kesava Kshetra : Adi Kesava Kshetra is situated in Tiruvattar which is 18 km. away from Trivandrum. The idol of Kesava is sixteen feet tall. One can have full Darshan of the Deity through the feet, stomach, and face from three different doors. As desired by a demon

devoted to the Lord, Kesava places Adishesha over the demon's body and rests over Adishesha. Vadiraja worships Adi Kesava in one verse.

Oh Adikeshava, resting over Adishesha
Your face is as radiant as the full moon
Oh Lakshmipathi, you are lotus-eyed
You are very powerful, and possess,
Sterling qualities, we worship
Thy lotus feet devotedly,
Please shower all grace upon us.

37

19. Ghrathamala River : Ghrathamala River is seen at Neyyattinkara, which is 20 kms. away from Tituvattar. On the banks of the Ghrathamala river, there is a beautiful temple dedicated to Sri Krishna. Vadiraja worships the holy river in one verse.

Knowledge dispels ignorance
As fire destroys a forest
Fire becomes stronger, as ghee is applied
Likewise, knowledge gets enhanced
As we dip in the holy Ghrathamala river.

38

20. Anantasayana Kshetra : Tiruvananthapuram is situated 85 kms. away from Kanyakumari. We find reference to the holy kshetra in *Brahamandapurana* and *Mahabharata*. There is a big tank on the outskirts of the temple. As the idol of Ananta Padmanabha is quite long, we have to take the holy darshan of the Lord from three separate doors. We find four-faced Brahma, over the navel of Ananta Padmanabha. Acharya Madhva did visit the holy place, during his south Indian tour. Vadiraja worships Anata Padmanabha in seven verses.

Oh Ananta Padmanabha Swamy!
You are worshipped by Sridevi and Bhudevi,
You are richly adorned by precious ornaments
You are resting over Adishesha
Who has spread his hoods over you
Like an umbrella, you are worshipped
By the creator of the universe Brahma
You have showered your mercy,
Upon Sage Divakara, and you are
Showering affluence on all thy devotees

Oh Thirvanantapuresaa
We worship you wholeheartedly. 39

Oh revered Padmanabha Murthy —
Are you asleep here to avoid
Vibration of the mighty universe
Held in thy navel or are you
Asleep, out of love to thy son Vidhatha?
Or are you sleeping to shower
Grace upon Adisesha? or
Is the sleep on account of overeating?
Or, on account of the dedicated
Services rendered by Mahalakshmi? 40

Deep knowledge, devotion and
Detachment are the major paths, to reach God
According to Vedas, Padmanabha Swamy
Amplly demonstrates this to all,
For to know and worship Him
Devotedly, one has to look at His
Feet, stomach and face from three separate doors 41

Holy upanishads mention
That God accords darshan at Vaikunta
Of His Lotus Feet, Stomach and Face
As prayed for by the liberated souls
Padmanabha Swamy amply illustrates
This fact by granting darshan to
The devotees through three separate doors. 42

Oh Padmanabha Swamy, resting over Adisesha,
You are slightly inert,
But you are actively protecting,
The mighty universe with utmost vigour. 43

Oh Sripathi, Trivikrama Swamy
You are resting in the cave over Adisesha,
We pray you most devotedly
To dwell in our hearts all along. 44

Oh Anantamurthy, all the
Celestials are thy servants,

You are adorned with beautiful ornaments
Your hands are amply sturdy,
You are dressed with pitambara
You are all powerful and everlasting
Please shower your mercy upon us
For writing this holy *Tirtha Prabandha*.

45

CHAPTER XXVI

CONCLUSION

We have already said that Vadiraja is a genius in human form. He has advocated "Hari sarvottama Vayu Jeevottama" philosophy very ably and eloquently in all his works. In fact, this is the essence of Madhva philosophy. Vadiraja held him in great esteem and paid adequate respects to Acharya madhva wherever essential. While Vadiraja was about to leave Tirumala, he prayed Tirumalesa Prabhu, "Oh Venkatesha Swamin, you have fulfilled the wishes of Acharya Madhva, you eradicate the evil like fire, you possess unmatched knowledge, please keep our mind ever devoted to you". As stated earlier, Vadiraja visited all the holy places of Bharat, starting from holy Udupi in a clockwise direction, via West, North, East and South. Vadiraja finally reached Tiruvananthapuram and offered his *Tirtha Prabhandha* at the lotus feet of Sri Ananta Padmanabha Swamy in two verses.

Our name is Vadiraja Yati
We have prepared *Tirtha Prabhandha*
Which is full of rhymes, rhythms
And alliterations, which explain
The glory of Sri Hari fully, wiping out
The miseries faced by us, we are able
To encounter through this holy task
Only through the deep mercy of Sri Hari
In order to earn His greater mercy
Oh Narayana ! Please accept
This humble work and shower mercy on us.

46

All the verses in this holy *Prabandha*
Explain the glory of Sri Hari
Sacred Ganga and other holy rivers
Yathiraja Vadiraja, who wrote

This holy work, is fully purified
By having holy dips in all sacred rivers
And taking darshan of Narayana
Those who recite this, get rewarded
More than they can earn by
Performing Asvamedha Yagas,
• Those who listen to this holy Prabandha
Shall be prosperous
Materially and spiritually as well.

47

The holy *Tirtha Prabandha*, composed by revered Saint poet Yathiraja Vadiraja *Tirtha Srimachharana* in Sanscrit, rendered in to English by Sagari Krishna Achar is concluded here along with the Southern Prabandha. Thus *Tirtha Prabandha* ends here. May it please Yathiraja Vadiraja and Lord Krishna, residing within Him.

Special Note : Most of the holy places in Bharat are covered in the *Thirtha Prabandha*, but a few are left out. Vadiraja might have visited them, but might not have included them in the Prabandha, may be due to divine intuition.

Parasurama Kshetra : The land created by Lord Parasurama by pushing away the sea from Gokarna, to Kanyakumari is known as Parasurama kshetra. The seven Mokshaprada places are 1) Udupi, 2) Subrahmanya, 3) Kumbhashi, 4) Koteshwara, 5) Shankaranarayana, 6) Gokarna, 7) Kollur. All these places are covered in Western Chapter of *Tirtha Prabandha*.

Sri Rama Kshetra : The seven holy Mokshaprada kshetras are : 1) Ayodhya, 2) Mathura, 3) Mayapuri (Hardwar) 4) Kasi, 5) Kanchi, 6) Avanthikapuri (Ujjain), 7) Dwaraka. Except Hardwar and Ujjain, the rest of the places are dealt with in Uttara Prabandha and Kanchi in Eastern Prabandha. A brief resume of Hardwar and Ujjain are furnished below:

1. Mayapuri (hardwar) : We find a reference to Hardwar in *Padmapurana*, *Mahabharata*, and *Naradiyapurana*. Hardwar is connected by direct train from Delhi, Punjab and Kolkata. Narada attended *Bhagata Saptaha* organised by seven saints at this place. There is a temple dedicated to Mayadevi here. We can see Sridevi with three faces holding Trishul and skull in her hands. The place came to be known as Mayapuri, as it is the abode of Mayadevi.

2. Avantikapuri (Ujjain) : There is a reference to Avantikapuri in *Skandapurana*, *Mahabharata* and *Sivapurana*. The place is also known as Avanti, Avanthika of Ujjain and is considered to be the navel of Bhudevi. Sri Krishna and Balarama had their education under Guru Sandipani Muni here. Ujjain was the capital of India, when the country was ruled by Emperor Vikramaditya. Ujjain is connected by train from Bhopal.

Local Histroy : There is a river known as Sipra which is 1.5 kms away from Ujjain Railway station. The famous Mahakali temple, from where Goddess Kali blessed Kalidasa by writing "Omkara" on his tongue to render him an immortal poet, is also at Ujjain. There is a reference to Sipra river in *Megadhoota* of Kalidasa. The famous "Mahakaleswara Temple" also known as Omkareswara temple is also at Ujjain. There is a Mantra-mahal for reciting Vedas on the sothern bank of the Sipra river.

Seven holy rivers : The great holy seven rivers are 1) Ganga, 2) Yamuna, 3) Godavari, 4) Saraswati, 5) Narmada, 6) Sindhu. 7) Cauvery. All the above rivers are described in the Prabandha. However, Saraswati river is invisible and joins the holy Ganga at Prayaga. But there is no reference to the Sindhu river, although the Sindhu river is referred to in the Vedas, as well as in other scriptures. A brief description of the Sindhu river is furnished below ;

3. Sindhu River : A major portion of the Sindhu river is in Pakistan now. The Sindhu river originates from Kailasa Hills, and passes through Ladakh, Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan and Sind before joining the Arabian sea. The river is 3200 kms. in length, and several tributaries join the same from either side. However, one can have a holy dip in the river at Kashmir.

A brief account of seven more holy kshetras which are not presented in the *Tirtha Prabandha* is given in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XXVII

Acharya Madhva is the third incarnation of the Wind God-Vayu, who served Sri Rama as his dedicated servant with overflowing devotion during Treta era. Again He was born as Bhishmasena, during Dvapara era, and slew Bakasura, Hidimba, Kauravas, Jarasandha and others as directed by Bhagavan Sri Krishna. In his third avatara, as Acharya Madhva, he served Veda Vyasa most devotedly and wrote

thirty seven works known as *Sarva Moola* giving a clearcut meaning to our holy scriptures to be understood and followed by men to attain salvation. Another common feature of Madhwa tradition is that all the subsequent saints in the line like Padmanabha Tirtha, Jaya Tirtha, 3) Vijayadhwaja Tirtha, Sripadaraja Tirtha, Vyasaraja Tirtha, Raghuthama Vadiraja Tirtha, Raghavendra Tirtha have very eloquently upheld the views of Acharya Madhva, either through their original works, or the notes written by them on Acharya's original works. In this chapter, the glory of the following places is explained, though they are not presented in detail in the Prabandha, for the benefit of the readers.

4. Jambukeswara : There are five types of Lingas. They are Bhoolinga (Earth), 2) Jallinga (water) 3) Vayulinga (Air), 4) Jyotirlinga (fire), 5) Akasalinga (sky).

There is Jalalinga at Jambukeswara, which is just one km. away from Sriranganatha Swamy temple at Sriranga. As the Linga is found inside the water, it is known as Jalalinga. The temple is quite big. As Mahesa appeared before the saint Jambuka, who performed severe penances to please Shankara, the place came to be known as Jambukeswara.

5. Sri Kalahasti : Kalahasti is on the banks of Suvarna Mukari river 33kms. away from Tirupati Railway Station. The temple is 1.5 kms. away from the Railway Station. Here it is the Vayulinga. As air cannot be touched, there is a golden mark, which is being worshipped. We also find marks of a spider, hood of a snake, and tusks over the Linga. According to legend, a spider (Sri) serpent (Kala) and elephant (Hasti) worshipped Shankara here for a long time. Hence, the place came to be known as Sri Kalahasti. A hunter by name Kannappa, also worshipped Mahesha here and got salvation.

6. Chidambaram: There is an Akasa Linga here. This place is not referred to in the *Tirtha Prabandha*. It is on Chennai-Dhanushkoti route, at a distance of 80 kms. from Villupuram. The temple is two kms. away from the Railway Station. There is a big Nataraja idol in the temple. On the right side of Nataraja there is a special mark on the wall, which is decorated by a golden necklace for worship.

Five holy Kshetras : They are 1) Kurukshetra 2) Gaya 3) Ganga 4) Prabhasa 5) Pushkara which are mentioned to in the *Tirtha Prabandha*.

Eight holy abodes of Sri Hari : There are eight sacred abodes, in holy Bharat, where Mahavishnu chose to remain in order to bless His devotees. They are 1) Srirangam 2) Srimushnam 3) Venkatadri 4) Salagrama 5) Naimisharanya 6) Totadri 7) Pushkar 8) Narayana Ashram. All the above holy places are presented in the Prabandha except 1) Salagrama and 2) Totadri. Salagramas are found in Gandaki river, which is now in Nepal.

7. Totadri : Totadri is 32 kms. away from Tirunelveli. The peetha (seat), holy stick, conch, and chakra mudras used by Sri Ramanuja are found here. Abhisheka to Lord Narayana is performed here with til oil. The same is offered to devotees as prasadam which has the special curative powers.

Twelve holy places of worship : They are 1) Gokarn, 2) Rama Sethu, 3) Himalaya, 4) Prayaga 5) Kashmir, 6) Somanath 7) Visnupada, 8) Srirangam, 9) Kedaram, 10) Tiruvananthapuram, 11) Kanyakumari, 12) Kurukshetra. All these kshetras except 1) Himalaya, 2) Kashmir, 3) Somnath are presented in the *Tirthu Prabandha*. Himayala mountain ranges are spread over a length of 3200 kms. from West to East on the north of holy Bharath and one gets adequate darshan of the Himachala, while one proceeds to Badarinath from Hardwar. Kashmir is at the bottom of Himachala. We can get adequate kumkum, keshar etc. from here. There is a Mahesha temple installed by Adi-Shankara at Srinagar.

8. Somnath : Somnath is in Gujarat. This temple was very rich in olden days and was invaded by foreign invaders like Mohammad Gajani and Mohammad Ghori, several of times. Now the temple is fully renovated on the shores of the Arabian sea. It is 5 kms. away from Veraval Station, which is connected by train from Ahmedabad.

9. Kedarnath : Kedarnath in the north is in the Himalayas at a distance of 240 kms. from Hardwar. While Badrinath is situated on the banks of Alakananada river, Kedarnath is situated on the banks of Mandakini river to the west of Badrinath. One can reach Gauri Kunda from Hardwar, by bus, van, car etc. Like Tapta Kund at Badari, there is a hot spring known as Gauri kund at the bottom of Kedarnath. One can reach Kedarnath temple which is at a distance of 14 kms, from Gaurikund, by walk, horse, pony etc. The linga at Kedarnath is 6' in length 1.5' in breadth. It is considered as

Jyothirlinga. Water, flower, ghee etc., are offered to the Linga. Five idols of Pandavas are found here. Adi Sankara's Samadhi (the final resting place) is also said to be here.

10. Anegondi : *Jayatirtha's* original Brindavan is at Malakheda, in Gulburga district. He was a commentator par excellence, popularly known as Teekacharya, having written a brilliant commentary known as *Sudha* on the *Anuvyakyana* of Acharya Madhva. Likewise, Mantralaya Prabhu Sri Raghavendra Swamiji is known as Parimalacharya, having authored *Parimala* i.e. commentary on *Nyaya Sudha* of Jayamuni. Anegondi is quite holy on account of Navavrindavana. The nine Brindavans of the saints are on an island of rocks, in between the two branches of the Tungabhadra river. The saints who are laid to eternal rest here are 1) Sri Padmanabha Tirtha, 2) Sri Kavindra Tirtha, 3) Sri Vageesha Tirtha, 4) Sri Vyasaraja Tirtha, 5) Sri Sudhindra Tirtha, 6) Sri Srinivasa Tirtha, 7) Sri Ramachandra Tirtha, 8) Sri Raghuvarya Tirtha, 9) Sri Govinda Odeyar. Tirtha,

When Vadiraja visited Anegondi naturally there were fewer Brindavans. But still Vadiraja calls the holy place as the strongest fort of Madhva philosophy, led by the mighty stalwarts like Sri Padmanabha Tirtha and Sri Vyasaraja Tirtha.

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