

SUNDAPALAYAM SRI RAMABADRACHARIAR

Great poets and geniuses have born in this country and have left valuable and innumerable works of very high order. One such is our poet Sri Ramabadra Kavi.

Sri Ramabadrachariar was born in 1840 in the village Sundapalayam, near Coimbatore. He was the middle son of three to his parents, all of them well educated. This village was famous in those days for hosting and honouring Vaishnavite scholars. Our Ramabadra Kavi's father used to invite pandits of not only Vishistathvaitha but also Dwaitha and Adwaitha sects. Young Rambadran used to interact with the visiting pandits and scholars and enriched his knowledge well in Sanskrit, Vedas, Upanishads and Sastras.

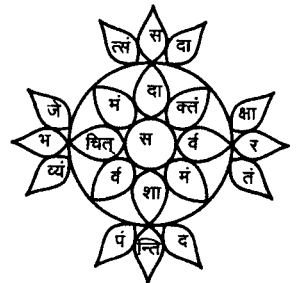
In 1868, when he was 28 years his family moved to Srirangam. He made further advancement in studies under the great famous saint known as Periyandavan. Within short time, even his co-disciples has to admit his superiority over them in general demeanour and bearing, quick grasp. learning, and attitude towards other inmates of the Ashram. For over eight years under Sri Periyandavan, in the traditional manner, he mastered samprayada grantha and dharma sastras. He was one of the eight prominent shishyas of Shri Periyandavan known as "Ashtathickgajangal". At the same time his elder brother mastered Divya Prabandhams under Sri Periyandawan. They returned back to their village Sundapalayam in 1876 and both began to impart what they learnt to their kith and kin, till their end of lives.

Sri Ramabadrachariar was proficient in music and astrology also. I understand that he has authored about 25 works on or connected with vedic religion (e.g. Hayagriva Manithraya Maalika, Sangathi Rathna Maalika, Chitrakavyam, Udurasi Dhasagam.) His work on the details and order of rituals in daily routine - Aahnika, is famous as authentic and even now somethimes referred to for guidance in Srimad Andavan Ashramam and Sri Ahobila Mutt institutions.

His poetical works are noted for their versatility, purity, elegance and grace of language, originality in thought, rich imagery, majesticity of expression, aptness in the choice of words, word play, sweetness in recitation and adaptability to music. Many of his poems are intended for and capable of being imbedded in pictures. There are puzzles, riddles and cross words in poem form. All these are being reflected in the work "CHITHRAKAVYAM". From the Banda Prakaranams, it can be infered that he must be a good artist also, as the drawings are freely drawn on the note books, without any erasing or correction, most of which are reporduced as such in the printed book, thanks to the computer technology.

He had also composed many musical compositions, folk songs on a variety of subjects fit for being sung on religious and socio-religious occasions like temple festivals and marriages. e.g. Oonjal Song, Aarthi Song, Ethsarigai, Mangalasanam, Odam etc.

In 1895, he made pilgrimage to various sacred places and well known shrines (Thirupathigal), finally to Kancheepuram, near Madras. Here he stayed for over a year and made further studies under another great scholar of that time by name Sri Pillaipakkam Gopala Chariar Swami, who later adorned the famous Acharya Peetam of Sri Ahobila Mutt



as the 37th Jeer Swami.

Though born in a very rich family, he lived a simple and orthodox life following piety and austerity. By his good nature and perfect humility, he was popular in the Coimbatore and adjoining Districts and respected by all. He lived upto the very high traditions set by his forefathers and in some respects even excelled them. Perhaps these must have made both Srimad Periyandavan and Srimad Pillaikpakkam Alaghiasingar Jeer to invite Sri Ramabadran to become the next peetathipathy of their respective Mutts. But Sri Ramabadran declined both the offers with all humility, stating that he has not yet reached the level to accept the big responsibility offered.

He married his cousin sister's daughter Alamelu. His wife was also renown to be a very good and kind natured woman, dutiful to her husband and devoted to her children. They had five sons and three daughters. Sri Ramakavi did not live to a great age. He died at the age of 65 in the year 1904 leaving his wife, sons, daughters besides numerous sishyas and admirers. After eight years in 1912 his wife joined him in heaven.

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