

Shri Raghavendra swamiji



Shri Raghavendra swamiji

Raghavendra Tirtha (*Rāghavēndra Tīrtha*), also referred as Raghavendra Swami, (c.1595 – c.1671) was a [Vaishnava](#) scholar, theologian, and [saint](#). He was also known as Sudha Parimalacharya (*Sudhā Parimaḷācārya*). His diverse oeuvre include commentaries on the works of [Madhva](#), [Jayatirtha](#), and [Vyasatirtha](#), interpretation of the [Principal Upanishads](#) from the standpoint of [Dvaita](#) and a treatise on [Purva Mimamsa](#). He served as the pontiff of the [matha](#) at [Kumbakonam](#) from 1621 to 1671.^[1] Raghavendra Tirtha was also an accomplished player of the [veena](#) and he composed several songs under the name of *Venu Gopala*.^[2] His shrine at [Mantralayam](#) attracts [lakhs](#) (hundreds of thousands) of visitors every year.

Raghavendra Tirtha was born as Venkatanatha in the town of [Bhuvanagiri, Tamil Nadu](#) into a [Deshastha Madhva Brahmin](#) family of Gautama Gotra of musicians and scholars.^{[3][4]} His great-grandfather Krishna Bhatta was a tutor to the [Vijayanagara](#) emperor [Krishnadevaraya](#). His grandfather was Kanakachala Bhatta,^[5] and his father Thimmanna Bhatta (also known as Thimmannacharya) was an accomplished scholar and musician.^[6] After the fall of the Vijayanagara Empire, Thimmanacharya migrated to [Kanchi](#) with his wife Gopikamba. Venkatanatha had two siblings—Gururaja and Venkatamba. Venkatanatha's education was taken care of by his brother-in-law Lakshmi Narasimhacharya at [Madurai](#) after the early demise of his father, and he subsequently got married.^[7]

In 1624, Raghavendra Tirtha became the pontiff of the *Kumbhakonam Matha*, which was earlier known as *Vijayendra Matha* or *Dakshinadi Matha*, now known by the name of [Mantralaya Sri Raghavendra Swamy Matha](#). [Uttaradi Math](#) along with [Vyasaraja Math](#) and [Raghavendra Math](#) are considered to be the three premier apostolic institutions of [Dvaita Vedanta](#) and are jointly referred as *Mathatraya*.^{[8][9][10]}

After a short stay at [Kumbakonam](#), he went on a pilgrimage to [Rameswaram](#), [Ramnad](#), [Srirangam](#), and [Mathura](#). Later, he moved westwards to [Udupi](#) and Subramanya, and then to [Pandharpur](#), [Kolhapur](#) and [Bijapur](#). At [Kolhapur](#), he is said to have stayed for a long time and at [Bijapur](#), he supposedly defeated many [Advaitins](#) and converted them to [Dvaita](#) fold.^[11] After that, he returned to [Kumbakonam](#). By 1663 he left for [Mysore](#) where he got a grant from Dodda Devaraya Odeyar. Finally, he chose to settle down in [Mantralayam](#).^[12]

Raghavendra Tirtha died in 1671 in [Mantralayam](#), a village on the bank of river Tungabhadra in [Adoni](#) taluk in [Andhra Pradesh](#).^[12]

Works

Forty works have been attributed to Raghavendra Tirtha.^{[12][13]} Sharma notes that his works are characterised by their compactness, simplicity and their ability to explain the abstruse metaphysical concepts of [Dvaita](#) in understandable terms.^{[2][13][14]} His *Tantradipika* is an interpretation of the [Brahma Sutra](#) from the standpoint of [Dvaita](#) incorporating elements from [Jayatirtha's Nyaya Sudha](#), [Vyasatirtha's Tatparya Chandrika](#) and the glosses by [Vijayendra Tirtha](#).^[14] *Bhavadipa* is a commentary on Jayatirtha's *Tattva Prakasika* which, apart from elucidating the concepts of the source text, criticises the allegations against [Madhva](#) raised by [Appaya Dikshita](#) and grammarian [Bhattoji Dikshita](#). Raghavendra Tirtha's expertise in [Purva Mimamsa](#) and [Vyakarana](#) is evident from his works on Vyasatirtha's *Tatparya Chandrika*, which runs up to 18,000 stanzas. He wrote a commentary on *Nyaya Sudha* titled *Nyaya Sudha Parimala*.^[15] Apart from these works, he has authored commentaries on the [Upanishads](#), first three chapters of [Rigveda](#) (called *Mantramamjari*) and [Bhagavad Gita](#). As an independent treatise, he has authored a commentary on [Jaimini Sutras](#) called *Bhatta Sangraha* which seeks to interpret the Purva Mimamsa doctrines from a Dvaita perspective.^[16]

Conversation with Sir Thomas Munroe in 19th century

Shri Raghavendra swamiji

While Rayaru had his Brindavana Pravesha around 1:30 pm in the 17th century, it is recorded in the Gazette of then Madras Presidency that he gave darshan and spoke to [Sir Thomas Munroe](#), a civil servant of British Government and discussed with him the restitution of the Inam Lands to the government which was being proposed then, meaning that Mantralaya would have become part of the restituted lands. After such a conversation, which Sir Thomas Munroe dutifully transcribed, the restitution was withdrawn