

# THE IMPORTANCE OF GANESHA, THE LORD OF FIRST WORSHIP

## HINDUISM AND LORD GANESHA

Hinduism is the oldest religion in the world. Anyone can practise Hinduism - there is no conversion required. One of the many glories of Hinduism is the wide variety of divine manifestations that have been conceived. The Hindu pantheon is rich in deities, all of whom represent the same divine Brahman and are powerful pathways to salvation.

“The more you know of the Hindu religion, the more you will honour and love it. The more you study it, the more it will enlighten you and satisfy your heart.”

- Sri Swami Sivananda

Among the many deities worshipped by the Hindus, Lord Vinayagar enjoys the pride of place. It's not because he is considered to be superior to the great Gods - Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu and the Goddesses.



The initial worship is to Lord Vinayagar, the remover of obstacles, before worshipping any other deity for he occupies a special place in the hearts of the people.

## VINAYAGAR, THE LORD OF FIRST WORSHIP



Lord Vinayagar, also known as Lord Ganesha, is the embodiment of OM, the primordial (from conception of time) sound and symbol of God. He is the delight of the Gods and is loved by humanity. He can be the playful God of the young and the great guru of the old. He is the Lord of auspiciousness and the beginning of all.

Whatever the name by which he is addressed, all prayers to Lord Vinayagar ask for the removal of obstacles which block the path of progress. Worshippers ask for success in all their endeavours.

The greatest unifying force in Hinduism is Lord Vinayagar, son of Shiva and Goddess Parvathi. But the merciful Lord Vinayagar belongs to all mankind although He may not be known to them by this name. He is Mother Nature who is the dispenser of good health and fortune. The Hindus perform countless poojas in his almighty and compassionate name in every continent.

In homes, temples and little shrines, his help is sought and obtained. Lord Vinayagar is endowed with a massive build and is believed to contain all matter and mind within him. He is the ultimate personification of materialism. All believers perceive the physical world as the body of Lord Vinayagar.

# THE UNIVERSALITY OF LORD VINAYAGAR

To the holy and enlightened, Lord Vinayagar is not merely a symbol. He is real and exists in the hearts and minds of people everywhere and in every particle, in every atom.

Our Lord belongs to the world and not only to Hindus. He has myriad names but as the Divine One, is revered and worshipped throughout the world.

To many Chinese, he is Ho Tei, the big-bellied God of Happiness.

The Tamils call Him Pillayar, Noble Child while the Tibetians address him as Ts'org-bdag.

The Japanese recognise him as Sho-ten. His Mongolian name is Totkharour Khaghan.

The Greek refer to him as Jamus. In many parts of the West, he is the amply endowed Santa Claus.

Even the Buddhists and Jains venerate him. The references are endless and infinite throughout the world.

Temples have been erected in his honour in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Tibet, Burma, China, Japan, Trinidad & Tobago, Hawaii, the Pacific Islands, North Africa and Europe.



Lord Vinayagar is omnipresent in this physical world. His devotees believe that nothing happens in the world without his sanction and take comfort from this sacred fact.

Good or bad, all actions flow from him and therefore will always end in a beneficial way. The Lord is believed and trusted to see them through this life.

*Adapted from The Sri Senpaga Vinayagar Temple Singapore Devotee's Guide*

# SRI VAKRATHUNDA VINAYAGAR TEMPLE: A BRIEF HISTORY

BY KAMSAJINI THILLAINATHAN & SHAN PILLAI

The journey of Sri Vakrathunda Vinayagar coming to Melbourne and making it his home is an interesting one.

## *1980s: How it all began*

The history of the Temple began in 1989 when some 100 or so members of the Hindu Society of Victoria (HSV), who were disappointed with the lack of progress in building the HSV temple (now Shiva Vishnu Temple), walked out of the HSV AGM and decided that they were going to build a Vinayagar Temple.

Amongst this “breakaway” group a core team of people set up the Pro-Tem committee and along with other likeminded individuals, thus, began the gigantic task of building the Sri Vakrathunda Vinayagar Temple in Victoria.

The team was a mix of old and new migrants, from various countries and from all walks of life, young and old, professionals and others. The only binding thread was that all of them had the incredible passion and desire to build a Ganesha Temple. All members of the team were full time employees or had their own businesses to run, yet they found the time and energy to make this happen.

The first task at hand was to decide how we were going to come together and how do we fund this massive project. We did not want to build a Society where membership was easy and members who had no passion for the temple could come and change the Constitution of the Society.

After several months of discussion, we landed on the current Constitution, wherein there is a Board of Trustees, (anyone paying \$20,000), Life Members, (people who pay \$5,000) and Ordinary members (\$1,000). It was also agreed that the Trustees had to put the money first towards the purchase of the property.

### *The Committee consisted of:*

**President:** Mr. Nirmalan Pillai

**Vice President:** Dr. N Shanmuganathan

**Secretary:** Mr. P Senthoooran

**Treasurer:** Mr Shanmugaratnam Pillai

**The Building Committee Chairman:** Mr. M Maheswaram

**Pooja Committee Chairman:** Mrs. P Somasundaram



### ***Committee Members:***

*K Sivagnanam  
K Thanabalasingam  
K Balendra  
V Canagalingam  
S Somasundaram  
Dr S Selvendra  
Mrs M Selvendra  
Dr G R Rajendra  
A Dhanabalan  
K Kamaleswaran  
K Somasundaram  
T Sritharan  
V Thuraisingam*

#### **Management Committee Sri Vakrathunda Vinayagar Temple**



- Standing L-R : Mr Shanmugaratnam K. Pillay (Treasurer),  
Mr Sivagnanam K. Pillay, Mr J. Maheswaran,  
Mr K. Thanabalsingam, Mr M. Maheswaran,  
Mr K. Thuraisingam, Mr K. Balendra,  
Mr V. Canagalingam
- Seated L- R : Mrs P. Somasundaram, Mr S. Somasundaram,  
Dr. K. Shanmuganathan (Vice President),  
Dr. S. Selvendra, Mrs M. Selvendra
- Absent : Mr Nirmalan K. Pillay (President),  
Dr G.R. Rajendra, Mr P. Senthoooran (Secretary),  
Mr A. Thanabalan, Mr K. Kamaleswaran,  
Mr K. Somasuntharam, Mr T. Sreetharan,  
Mr V. Thuraisingam

## ***1989: A trip to India***

- ***Twists and turns***

The next task was to find a Ganesha idol and a place to build the temple.

It had already been decided that a Vinayagar Vigraham and the necessary implements required for conducting poojas was to be purchased to set up the first Vinayagar Temple in Victoria.

Coincidentally the then-Treasurer Mr. Shan Pillai and his wife Parameswary Pillai and his mother in law Mrs. A Subramaniam were going to India on a pilgrimage, and they offered to obtain the said items whilst in India.

They set out on their trip in late September 1989. On arrival in Chennai, they placed an order and the promised delivery time was 25th October 1989.

As they were not certain if the first statue should be granite or Panchalogam, they consulted several priests in Australia and Singapore and all of them said that as there was no temple built yet, we should only have a Panchaloga Vigraham. They identified a Stapathi who will make these Vighraams and contacted him to make the Vighraam for delivery before their return to Australia.

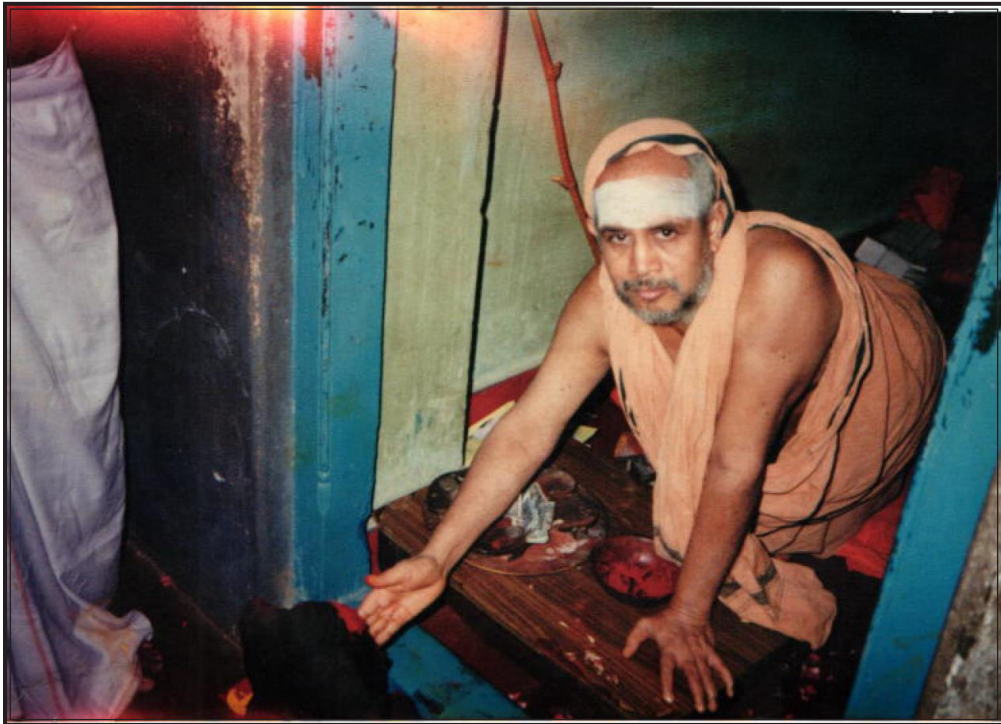
Special instructions were given to the Stapathi that he had to prepare two Panchaloga Vighraams and both will be taken to Kanchi Mutt, of which only one will be selected by the Kanchi Swamigal.

Upon returning to Chennai from their pilgrimage, Mr. and Mrs. Pillai, despite the Stapathi's initial assurances, discovered to their great disappointment that the statues had not been completed and only the implements had been moulded.

### ***A solution presents itself***

Mr. and Mrs. Pillai visited the family of Sri Gnanasekara Kurrukkal and were introduced to their friend, Suresh who suggested that they all should visit Jagadguru Sri Shankaracharya Swamigal at Kancheepuram to explain their predicament and seek their guidance. It was more for their own peace of mind that they decided to make this trip.

The entourage arrived in Kancheepuram on the evening of 3rd November and met with Sri Jeyandra Saraswathi Swamigal. To their amazement, Swamigal ordered his assistant to request the Kancheepuram Stapathi to bring the Vinayagar statue that he had just been completed. Swamigal blessed the granite statue and gave a letter to the Indian authorities stating that the statue was for consecration in Australia. This was a great help in taking the statue out of India.



*Sri Sankaracharya blessing the Vinayagar statue.*



Phone : 2315

Sri Chandramouleeswaraya Namaha

SRI SANKARA BHAGAVADPADACHARYA PARAMPARAGATHA  
His Holiness Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetadhipathi

**Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya Swamigal**

Srimatani : Samasthanam,

KANCHEEPURAM - 631 502.

Camp : Kanchi pnam.

Date : 3-11-89

To whomsoever it may concern.

This new Idol of Sri Ganespaty  
With the blessings of Sri Kanchi  
Kamakoti Peetadhipathi Jagadguru  
Sri Sankaracharya Swamiji, specially  
made for consecration in Australia is  
being transported to Australia on  
behalf of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam

For SRI KANCHI KAMAKOTI  
JAGADGURU SANKARACHARYA SWAMI MUTT.

*R. Subramanian*  
MANAGER.

- **Another Lord Vinayagar statue is ready**

Upon returning to Chennai, Mr and Mrs Pillai were surprised to learn that the Panchaloga statue that had been initially ordered, had arrived. The next day at 4am, (the date that of their departure back to Singapore) the two Panchaloga Statues were taken to Kancheepuram so that the most appropriate statue for the Temple in Melbourne could be selected. This time Sri Chandrasegara Saraswathi Swamigal of Kanchi Mutt was meeting devotees, and after much thought he selected the Panchaloga Vinayagar that is now our single faced Utsava Moorthy.

After the selection, Pillais returned to Chennai from Kancheepuram and bought suitable carry on cases for the two Vinayagars and took the flight back to Singapore. As they were carrying the statues blessed by Kanchi Swmaigal, Air India upgraded the flights of the Pillais from Economy class to Business class (Pillayar wanted to travel Business).

On their return journey, as the Pillais were going via Singapore, the two statues were kept in Singapore's Sri Senpaga Vinayagar Temple after leaving India. It was during this time that the eye-opening ceremony for both the statues was performed, by the famous Visvanatha Kurukkal and a local Stapathi. This attracted some local publicity.



