

Balavin Kural

Balambika Divya Sangam

March 2013 Vol 2 Issue 11



**Mahendrapalli's
rich heritage and
story page 4**

**Who is the star
of this month?
page 14**

Bala Sahasranamam Parayanam:

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Dolai Utsava Murthy Abhishekam:

Abhishekam will be performed for the Dolai Utsava Murthy on Tuesdays/Fridays. Devotees who are interested please contact Sashikala Venkatesh (9886895627).



Dolai Utsavam:

Dolai Utsavam will be performed for Sanchara Bala, in the privacy of one's home, amidst a social gathering. Devotees who are interested, please contact

Smt. Asha Manoharan
asha.raji@gmail.com



Annadanam and Milk scheme:

Annadanam and serving of milk to nursery children, is performed at Modern English School, Malur.

Those who are interested in contributing towards this cause, please contact

Smt. Asha Manoharan
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If you would like to participate, contribute or require more details, please contact us via email. Contributions can be made in cash/cheque/DD/online transfer etc. Please give us your feedback and do share your ideas and experiences with us so that we can continue to give you the best.

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To be really happy in life, one should be in touch with suffering.

It is by getting in touch with suffering, that understanding comes and then compassion arises.

But sometimes when you suffer too much, you can't see others and you just can't forgive them.

You are afraid that if you forgave them for their cruel act, your suffering won't be adequately heard.

So you let these acts of cruelty continue.

In the midst of your pain and fear, you remember everything,

except that the other person caused you to suffer because he has so much suffering in his heart.

Without understanding and compassion, which are the fruits of the practice of calming and deep looking,

the endless cycle of resentment, anger, fear, despair and suffering will continue to turn;

and you will continue to suffer birth after birth

Temples of India - A journey through the heritage of time

- By Smt. Asha Manoharan

Mahendrapalli

The temple visit for this month is Mahendrapalli. We visited this temple after visiting Achalpuram. So, here is the route map to Mahendrapalli from Achalpuram. From Achalpuram we headed southeast on Kollidam - Alakudi road, and as we went, we passed Sivaloga Thyageswar Temple on the left at about 400m. Then we turned right onto Mahendrapalli road. We then travelled 2.5 Kms, and there right in front of us stood the temple.

The Swamy here is called Tirumeniazhagar or Somasundareswar and Ambal is called Vadivambikai. Here, the *vriksham* is Vilvam and *Theertham* is Mahendra Pushkarini. This temple is 1000 - 2000 years old, and was built by the Cholas.



Temple entrance



Surya and Chandran at the entrance

Saint Thirugnanasambandar has praised the Lord in his Thevaram hymns. The tower is always clothed with clouds, bearing testimony to the visit made by Indra.

This is the sixth temple on the northern bank of the Cauvery River which is praised in the Thevarams.



Talking about temple history

Indra was cursed by a Rishi to have eyes all over his body, because he wrongly desired Akalika, the wife of the Maharishi. He came to Earth and prayed to Lord Shiva for relief in many places and this is one among them. As Maha-Indra worshipped here, this place came to be known as Mahendrapalli. A temple was erected here later.

A mile from this temple is the seashore, and a mile north is the Kollidam river. Lord Shiva is said to have revealed a vision of the cosmic dance to the sages who were then present. It is said that Surya, Chandra, Brahma and Indra have worshipped Shiva in this temple. Near this temple is an ancient settlement called Teevukkottai and the Nataraja statue kept here is said to have been unearthed there.



Pointing at the sea nearby

The rays of the Sun fall on the Lord in the month of *Panguni*, i.e. March - April. Generally, Lord Vishnu is called *Azhagar* or handsome in Tamil and, *sundararajan* in Sanskrit in Madurai, as He is fond of dressing, but

here, handsome Shiva is praised as Thirumeni Azhagar and Mother as Vadivambikai for their beauty. Saint Thirugnanasambandar addresses the Lord as Azhagar.



In the *prakaram*, Sri Chandikeshwara graces with His consort. There is a separate shrine for Lord Vinayaka with Rahu and Ketu on both sides. Lord Muruga graces from His shrine with His consorts Valli and Deivanai. There are shrines of Sri Kasi Viswanathar, Mother Visalakshi, Meenakshi Sundareswarar, Bhairavar, Saneeswarar (Saturn), Sun and the Moon. There is no shrine for Navagrahas or the 9 planets in this temple. So is the case with most temples in this area.

Those suffering from the evil *karmas* of past birth (*poorva janma karmas*) and those facing adverse effects due to the Sun and Moon aspects in their horoscopes, have a dip in the Brahma Tirtha in this temple for reme-

dies. As the holy spring is attributed to Lord Brahma the Creator, it is the faith of the people that Brahma would amend the destiny of the devotee favourably. Devotees also pray for relief from snake poisoning and to gain excellence in their academic pursuits. Devotees pray with white clothes to the Lord and yellow clothes to the Mother for developing a cosmetic look.

Maha Shivratri is celebrated with great pomp and show in the month of February - March, Margazhi Tiruvadira in December-January, Panguni Uthiram in February - March and Thirukarthigai in November - December. Devotees come in thousands during these festivals, otherwise the temple is empty and quiet.

Power of Breathing

- By Smt. Roopa Varadarajan

Breathing defines life, it is breathing that determines if there is life-force in a body or not. It is one of the most involuntary processes of our bodies. We do not even realise that every nanosecond it is our breath that helps and aids our body functionalities. Every living organism in this universe breathes, no breath equates to no life. Maybe that is why; breathing is one of the most important aspects in any form of spiritual practice.

Many philosophies has given this life force different names , in Japan and China it is known as Qi and Chi respectively, in Hawaiian culture it is called Mana , it is known as lung in Tibetan Buddhism and in the Indian Philosophy this life force is known as prana. This prana refers to both the macro and micro substratum of life. Prana might be divided into different levels like Prana, Apana, Uddana, Vyana and Samana, however these together control and possess the human body and psyche. The word Prana by itself is a combination of two syllables namely 'Pra' and 'Na'; of these 'Pra' denotes being, and Na refers to 'a force in constant motion'; therefore the word Prana itself means being in constant motion. There are numerous techniques to channelize this vital force in the body, we will discuss about Pranayama in this article.

Pranayama is a unique process that has been discovered and practiced for centuries now. It refers to the process by which internal pranic or vital life force storage is increased. In Yoga, Pranayama forms the fine network of channels through which prana flows. The Krishnamacharya Grnatha Mala Verse 3 states: "Care for your eyes, and ears and then the nostrils and the tongue, the heart, stomach, navel, womb, thus every part of the body."

The verse simply means that prana is present in every part of the body, and not just the nostrils and the eyes and ears; therefore the practice of Pranayama includes all parts of the body. Like it is said in the Upanishads, the Maha Prana is source of all consciousness, Pranayama works towards channelizing the different kinds of

prana as one vital force, thus bringing universal consciousness.

The most influential forms of prana are prana and apana, prana refers to the energy field that moves upwards, whereas apana refers to the energy field that moves downwards. With all this involuntary actions, the capacity of prana in the body can be increased with breath control. Once you become aware of your breath, you can create calmness in the mind, body and soul. Some power breathing techniques include breath expansion, contraction of breathing, the localisation and visualisation of breathing through different parts of the body.

You can achieve complete vitality and improvement of the body's vital organs with the mastery of prana or flow of life force. This is known to even help various functions like circulation, digestion, respiration and the endocrine system.

Yogic Breathing

Yogic breathing refers to a technique where you slowly expand all the lobes of the lungs in both vertical and horizontal fashion. This is a relaxed method of breathing, that helps calm the mind and release endorphins, which are neurochemicals of the brain that help us cope with pain. It also helps eliminate anxiety and fear. This will leave you in a very calm, relaxed and energised state of body and mind.

Helpful Tips for Getting Started

It is best that you be your judge and understand your body before beginning any practice, which you initiate on your own. In case during the practice if you feel any form of discomfort or lightheadedness, it is essential that you stop immediately. It is however advisable that you do any form of practice with the guidance and supervision of a yoga master, teacher or instructor.

- Never force or restrict your breath. Do the best that you can. The more you practice, the longer you'll be able to perform the exercises, and eventually, you'll be able to use more of your lung capacity.

- Patience and practice are most important in any practice. Pranayama should be done with great care and awareness. Try to stay focused on the journey, not the destination! Over time, you will start to notice the benefits of the practice.
- Precautions: If you are pregnant, or suffer from diabetes, high or low blood pressure, heart conditions, epilepsy, or vertigo; please consult your health care provider before performing any of these breathing exercises.

The practice breathing is based on four parts:

- Inhalation (Puraka) – the smooth inhalation of air or prana.
- Internal retention of prana (Antar-Kumbhaka) – after inhalation controlling the retention of air within the lungs.
- Exhalation (Recaka) – exhalation of air from the lungs
- External retention (Bahya-Kumbhaka) – controlling the retention of empty lungs after an exhalation.

From poor breathing habits, relearning into efficient and effective breathing habits takes time, patience and commitment. One of the easiest way to begin with yoga exercises is Sukhasana, which can easily done without any guidance or help. To practice Sukhasana, you need to sit in a meditation pose with the back straight and legs folded. Slowly pull your stomach inside without straining, this in turn will help the spinal cord relax and straighten and bring in calmness and peace. It is important that you concentrate on your breathing during this practice.

Breathing Technique :

For this technique you can either sit on a chair or on the floor, in a relaxed and comfortable position . Once you feel that you are in a comfortable position, close your eyes. Place your right palm on the abdomen and slowly bring your attention to your breath. As you inhale, feel the breath enter through your nostrils, and feel the breath and the abdomen expands as you inhale. Feel your entire body rising without any strain, feel the ribs and chest expand as well. There should be no strain as you draw in your breath, and inhale slowly till you feel that your collar bone is expanding. Once you reach a saturation level,

begin to gently exhale, begin from the collar bone, down to the ribs, and finally from the abdomen.

You can begin this practice with six deep breathes and gradually increase to ten and twelve times. It is also essential that you focus on your entire body as you keep your awareness on your breathing. It is one of the most easy and essential breathing techniques, which can be practiced several times in a day. Not only does this technique help you keep your mind on your breathing, it also helps in keeping your mind calm and relaxed.

A word of caution: The breathing should be relaxed and easy and not forced. It is important that you stay relaxed and keep your awareness on the moment. Observe if you are impatient and see if your mind is wandering, if yes then bring it back to the breath, Focus on filling the body with air like you would a pitcher of water. Observe the breath.

Dolai Utsavam



Sangam Annadanam Initiative at Modern English School, Malur



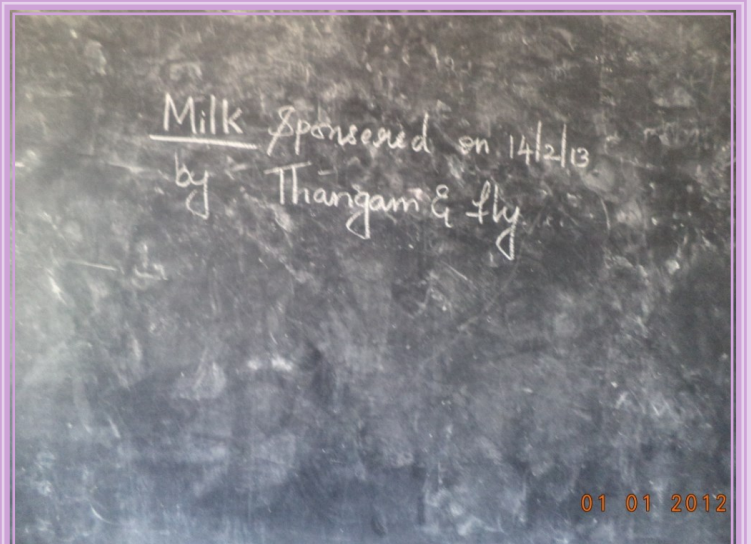
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May Bala shower Her blessings on you and your family”

Kindly donate generously for this noble cause. It is only Rs.5000/ for individual sponsorship and any amount for group sponsorship.

-President
Smt. Asha Manoharan

Sangam Milk Scheme Initiative at Modern English School, Malur



Kindly donate generously for the milk scheme. We feed 30 kids in the age group of 3 - 7 years and it costs only Rs.300 per day.

Balambika Yuvasena Initiative at Modern Education Society, Malur



STAR OF THE MONTH

February 2013



Modern Higher Primary School (Malur) student Kishore Kumar of class VII received the February 'STAR OF THE MONTH' award.

Sangam Secretary Smt. Mythili Sundararajan presented this award to the student at their Annual Day celebration.

The selection criteria for this award are based on reading/writing skills, obedience, helping nature of the child, coordination of the child with other children, good habits, in time to school, neat uniform and good behavior.

CONGRATULATIONS Kishore Kumar

WE ARE VERY PROUD OF YOU!!!!

Bala Prastha

Mahatma Gandhi went from city to city, village to village, collecting funds for the Charkha Sangh. During one of his tours he addressed a meeting in Orissa. After his speech a poor old woman got up. She was bent with age, her hair was grey and her clothes were in tatters. The volunteers tried to stop her, but she fought her way to the place where Gandhiji was sitting. "I must see him," she insisted, and going up to Gandhiji, touched his feet. Then from the folds of her sari she brought out a copper coin and placed it at his feet. Gandhiji picked up the copper coin and put it away carefully. The Charkha Sangh funds were under the charge of Jammalal Bajaj. He asked Gandhiji for the coin, but Gandhiji refused. "I keep cheques worth thousands of rupees for the Charkha Sangh," Jammalal

Bajaj said laughingly, "yet you won't trust me with a copper coin." "This copper coin is worth much more than those thousands." Gandhiji said. "If a man has several lakhs and he gives away a thousand or two, it doesn't mean much. But this coin was perhaps all that the poor woman possessed. She gave me all she had. That was very generous of her. What a great sacrifice she has made. That is why I value this copper coin more than a crore of rupees."



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