

Lifting of Stone For Sculpturing the Idol of Lord Swaminatha Swami

For sculpturing the sacred idol of Lord Swaminatha Swami, His Holiness Paramacharyal and His Holiness Sri-La-Sri Arul Nandi Tambiran Swamigal of Sri Kasi Mutt advised the Samaj to lift stones from the bed of the Tamraparni river, flowing through Tirunelveli, at a place called Kurukuthurai a bathing ghat. To locate the exact place, Their Holinesses had advised the Samaj that a portion of the stone had been lifted from that place, sixty years earlier, to sculpture the idol of the Lord of Tiruchendur temple. The remaining part of the same stone could now be used for making the idol of Lord Swaminatha Swami. June 2nd 1965 was fixed as the auspicious day for lifting the specified part of the stone from the bed of the river. A team of three office bearers of the Samaj left for Tirunelveli to locate the place at the bed of the river and lift the stone. The complexity and enormity of the task could only be realized after reaching Kurukkuthurai. The bathing shat was suite extensive about a mile in length and one half of a mile in breadth. Since the last lifting of a portion of the stone, sixty years earlier, much sand had accumulated over the spot to a depth of over several feet. To locate the exact place, enquiries were made from the people of Kurukkuthurai, whether any of them had knowledge or recollection of the lifting of stone, for the sculpturing of the idol of the Lord of the Tiruchendur Temple, sixty years earlier, but to no avail. There was disappointment writ large on the face of every one of the representatives.

The team of representatives had no other alternative except to surrender totally and pray intensely to Lord Nellaiappar and Goddess Gomati Amman of the temple at Tirunelveli. On the 31st of May 1965, they decided to perform poojas to God Nellaiappar and Goddess Gomati Amman. While handing over the prasadam after the poojas, the Chief Priest of the temple noticed the deep sense of disappointment and dejection on their faces and enquired about the reasons for the same. He was apprised by the representatives of the sad failure of their sacred mission and the disappointment faced by them. He was good enough to comprehend the situation in its totality. He uttered helpful words of encouragement and advised them to meet one Shri Sundara Dikshitar, aged 85, living in South Car Street who might, perhaps, help them. It is but appropriate to quote the very words spoken by the Chief Priest:

Quote:- In the South Car Street, lives one Shri Sundara Dikshitar, aged 85. It was he who lifed the stone for the sacred idol of the Lord of Tiruchendur temple. Please go and see him and your problem will be solved. Unquote.

For the represent atives, it was a God send. They called on Shri Sundara Dikshitar the following day and explained their mission to him. Shri Sundara Dikshitar was very happy to help them trace the place from where he had earlier excavated the stone for sculpturing the

idol of the Lord of Tiruchendur Temple. He was sincerely feeling that, despite his failing health, the Lord of the Tiruchendur Temple had been prolonging his life as it were perhaps, only for helping the Samaj to locate the remaining portion of the stone for sculpturing the idol of Lord Swaminatha Swami. The representatives of the Lord were deeply moved. Translated into English, his actual observations were to this effect:-

Quote:- *"I had done half the work; for completing the other half of the work, the Lord has bestowed on me such a long life. I shall now complete the other half"*
Unquote.

He then took them along to the bathing ghat of the river and indicated the exact spot measuring 50 feet by 50 feet, and asked them to excavate the area by removing the accumulated sand from its bed. A group of 30 labourers who were engaged, toiled the whole day to dig out the sand. At a depth of about 10 feet a stone was seen. A triangular piece had already been cut out earlier and lifted as indicated by Their Holinesses; the remaining part of the stone was intact at that place to the great joy of the representatives of the Samaj. On the following day, the 2nd of June 1965, at the auspicious hour-lagnam the said remaining part was dug out and brought to the surface from the bed of the river. Can there be a better example of Divine Grace bestowed upon the sacred task undertaken by the devotees of the Samaj? The excavated stone was promptly despatched to Mahabalipuram for sculpturing the sacred idol of the Lord.