

HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS (PARTS 1,2,3)

Regarding the Periods of the first five great Madhva saints

Sri Padmanabha, Narahari, Madhava, Akshobhya and Jaya Tirthas

INTRODUCTION:

The last two decades of Acharya Madhva 1298-1318 AD, followed by the five ascetics in his Peetha (1388 AD) were known for some of the epoch making developments in History, specially on the Deccan plateau. The old order of Hindu kingdoms was replaced by an unstoppable and often violent Islamic sultanate originating from Delhi, which caused general hardship to the people, specially the Vaishnava Hindus and Brahmins in particular and instead of royal patronage or at least neutrality, there was severe persecution. The features of the Kali age developed rapidly with a vengeance. How these divine Lords of the Philosophical empire of Madhva dealt with the situation on the ground is a topic of abiding interest to all Madhvas. But, for their patience, perseverance, fortitude in adversity and conviction of doctrines preached by them, the nascent Vedanta school could well have died out completely or been confined to the immediate surroundings of Madhva's area around Udupi.

The existing traditional literature built around them in the Mathas has many temporal errors as well as undue ornamentation of the stories – some times even of quasi-historic events like the reign of Sri Narahari Tirtha in Kalinga and the famous disputation between Sri Akshobhya and Vidyaranya. Part of the confusion was due to imprecise statements about the periods of their stay in the Peetha and physical locations of the events. To the extent that these are cleared by detailed study of recorded history and major events like wars, invasions, change of lineages of rulers, specific mention of these saints themselves in prevailing records, one gets a truer picture and a correct appreciation of the odds that they faced when carrying the Torch of Tatvavada forward. There are some amongst us who would like to revel in their ignorance, preferring the comfortable feeling of suspending all analysis and judgments by the blind acceptance of the written word chosen by them without any intellectual effort – usually with glaring errors and physical incongruities. This effort is not meant for such persons. On the other hand, making such an effort as this will always carry a risk of being wrong in a specific analysis due to possible errors and inconsistencies. New information and contradiction by future analysis is always to be faced – but one would hope that the important and interesting conclusions will be sustained even after future critical reviews.

As a fundamental basis of analysis of the Time factor, the following table is considered, based on the latest accepted figures by the Mathas. The dates of Vrindavana pravesha mentioned are based on Matha records as accepted presently.

The dates and places of Vrindavana pravesha of the most well known ascetics starting from Sri Padmanabha Tirtha (excluding the eight mathas of Udupi and the Acchyutha preksha/Sathyatirtha matha, are as under:

1. **Sri 1008 Padmanabaha T – 1324 AD** **HAMPI/NAVAVRINDAVANA – Kampili/Anegondi state**
2. **Sri 1008 Narahari T – 1333 AD.** **HAMPI - Kampili/Anegondi state**
3. **Sri 1008 Madhava T – 1350 AD - founded in 1336 AD).** **HAMPI (shifted) Vijayanagara state**
4. **Sri 1008 Akshobhya T – 1365 AD - state founded in 1347 AD)** **MANYAKHETA (shifted to river) (Bahamani**
5. **Sri 1008 Jaya T - 1388 AD -** **HAMPI ? / Malkheda river bank ** See below**
6. **Sri 1008 Vidyadhiraja - 1402 AD** **UNKNOWN – SVM Tradition shows Yeragola.**

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7. Sri Rajendra Tirtha - 1440 AD UNKNOWN - SVM Tradition Yeragola.
 8. Sri Kavindra Tirtha - 1399 AD HAMPI - Vijayanagara – (SRS&UM)
 9. Sri Vageesha Tirtha - 1408 AD HAMPI – Vijayanagara – (SRS & UM)
 10. Sri Ramachandra Tirtha – 1435 AD YERAGOLA (SRS & UM)
 11. Sri Jayadhwaaja Tirtha - 1448 AD UNKNOWN – SVM Tradition Yeragola.
 12. Sri Vibhudendra Tirtha – 1470 AD ?? (Tamilnadu) (SRS)
 13. Sri Vidyanidhi Tirtha - 1479 AD YERAGOLA? (UM)
 14. Sri Jithamithra Tirtha – 1475 AD ??? (SRS)
 15. Sri Raghunandana Tirtha – 1504 AD HAMPI (SRS)
 16. Sri Raghunatha Tirtha (1527 AD) Malkheda riverbank (UM)
 17. Sri Purushoththama Tirtha – 1460 AD Cave near Abbur (SVM)
 18. Sri Brahmanya Tirtha – 1467 AD Abbur (SVM)
 19. Sri Sripadaraja – 1502 AD Mulabagilu (SPR)
 20. Sri Vyasaraja – 1539 AD HAMPI/NAVAVRINDAVANA (SVM)
 21. Sri Raghuvarya Tirtha – 1557 AD HAMPI? /(conflict with item 5). (UM)
 22. Sri SRINIVASA TIRTHA – 1564 AD HAMPI/NAVAVRINDAVANA (SVM)
 23. Sri Rama Tirtha – (1584 AD) HAMPI/NAVAVRINDAVANA (SVM)
 24. Sri Sudhindra Tirtha – 1623 AD HAMPI/NAVAVRINDAVANA (SVM)

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25. Sri Vijayindra Tirtha - (AD) Kumbhakonam (SRS)
 26. Sri Raghuttama Tirtha – (1595 AD) Tirukoiluru (UM)
 27. Sri Lakshmikantha Tirtha – (1594 AD) Penukonda (SVM)
 28. Sri Vadiraja Tirtha – (1600 AD) Sode
 29. Sri Sripathi Tirtha - (1612 AD) Vellore (SVM)
 30. Sri Kamblr Ramachandra T. - (1632 AD) Vellore (SVM)
 31. Sri Lakshminivallabha T – (1642 AD) Belur (SVM)
 32. Sri Lakshminatha T – (1660 AD) SriRangam. (SVM)

The case of the Vrindavana of Sri JayaTirtha also attributed to Sri Raghuvarya by UM needs separate discussion.

12 of the first 24 cases considered here are in Hampi area, which predominated the list of locations till the 16 th century, right from the time of Acharya Madhva. It is also known that there are some more Vrindavanas “discovered” in the area, claimed by Udupi Mathas. The likelihood of more Vrindavanas being discovered in the general location of Hampi such as Kampili etc cannot also be ruled out, as a few well known ascetics vrindavanas during the period 1400 – 1450 AD are untraced yet. This feature needs further analysis, from the historical perspective. The feature of the headquarters of the Matha ascetics following the fortunes of kingdoms like Vijayanagara, such as shifting of their capital etc remarked by Dr. B N K Sharma in HDSV is also clearly Visible in the above chart. (Refce: p. 468 of Third revised Edition). This would be applicable in PRINCIPLE for all Mathas, with honourable exceptions like the present day Manthralaya kshethra

At the first instance, the period of Acharya Madhva in the last two decades (1298 – 1318 AD) will also be studied in the context of the invasions of the Sultanate of Delhi on the Deccan plateau.

During Acharya Madhva’s stay on earth, for 79 years (1238-1318 AD), described in Sumadhvajaya, his first Badari visit can be dated with some precision (based on the first of Sri Narahari Tirtha’s Orissa shasanas in 1264 AD) as being a couple of years before (when Madhva would be only 26 years of age). The date of the second Badari trip can also be inferred based on his completion of some activities like installation of Krishna Ikon in Udupi and composition of major Sarva Moola works excluding those which clearly came after the visit, though no specific clue seems to be available about the year when it took place. But, there are some indirect references in Sumadhvajaya such as his asking fifteen of his disciples together in Varanasi for a test of strength (Chapter 10, shlokas 37-40) where they are called as Young (Yunah) as compared to him and their being arrogant about their strength – by which one could deduce that Madhva was at least a generation older than them and possibly in his middle age at that time. Similar tests of strength and endurance are also mentioned in the last chapter – presumably towards the end of his stay as a visible entity in Udupi surroundings – when to the ignorant on looker, he might have manifested apparent old age. The mention of King Iswara deva, whom he met, accompanied by a large following of Shishyas is also a pointer. Thus, the second visit to North India must also have been completed in his early middle age in his forties (well before the first Muslim invasion of South India by Allauddin Khalji in 1294 AD). Subsequently, he seems to have confined his physical presence to Kerala and South Canara, which were free of internecine conflict between rulers and threats of invasions from empire building outsiders. Thus the neighbouring kingdoms where he might have had to move about outside his normal area would be mainly the Hoysala

kingdom with the capital at Dvarasamudra (Halebidu), the Kingdom of Kerala and the Pandya Kingdoms in South Tamilnadu – ruled from Madurai and containing important Vaishnava centers of Sri Ranganam, Rameswaram etc which he had visited in his very first south Indian tour. History records enormous upheavals in the adjacent areas with destruction of Temples and mass killing of Hindus by invading Muslim hordes. A brief description of the political events in Deccan area as given in two authoritative books – “The Hoysalas” by Duncan M Derrett, and “The Early Muslim expansion in South India” by K A Nilakanta Shastri is compiled here. For purposes of arriving at a global perspective, the series of books “The History and Culture of the Indian people” by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan has also been consulted. It is hoped that while some differences of opinion between events as assessed to have taken place in the historic past may persist and some personalized views may have crept in, by and large, a fair presentation, particularly of the sequence of events and personalities would be maintained with the required degree of accuracy to enable forming true conclusions.

An important observation which could be made in this regard is the relevance of the shloka 3/4 of Chapter 4 of Sumadhavavijaya – summarised below:

Madhva is contemplating taking Sannyasa -

.3. Use of force (Danda) and punishment against the haters of my master, Vishnu is the only option available to me, as I have the necessary capacity. But, as goddess Durga, the sister of Krishna is shortly incarnating for destruction of the wicked, I will not take up this work.

Note: There is reference to the forthcoming incarnation of Goddess Durga for the destruction of evil in Mahabharatha Tatparya Nirnaya 32/164.

.4. Thinking thus, Vasudeva (the future Madhva) who contemplated Hari, with the infinite names always, decided to renounce all worldly objects such as the house etc. He started to prostrate again and again before all such objects towards the immanent Hari to seek permission for becoming an ascetic.

Being aware of the forthcoming triumph of destructive forces which almost annihilated Hindu society, as per pre-ordained will of the Supreme Being known to him, the justification of adopting the role of an ascetic by Madhva can be well understood. A Madhva in other Ashramas like Brahmacharya or Grihastha would well have reversed the course of events with his unmatched powers.

Let us now look at the historical perspective:

Delhi Sultanate and Successors:

The period 1296 - 1388 (including the last two decades of Madhva till the Vrindavana pravasha of Sri JayaTirtha) was full of political events. Delhi Sultans of Khilji and Tughlaq dynasties led many campaigns of war against South India and destroyed the then existing and flourishing south Indian Hindu Kingdoms as a policy. In fact, it was the period in which the ruling Muslim kings at Delhi and their governors followed a policy of conversion, repression, murder, mayhem, rape, destruction of Hindu temples, holy places, scriptures and persecution of Hindus in India. Particularly in the period of Ghaiyasuddin (1320 - 1325 AD) the Deccan area was

subject to repeated massive invasions from Delhi Muslim forces – 1318, 1322 and 1324 AD. Even Sri Padmanabha Tirtha's area in Northern Andhra (Rajahmundry etc – there is a suggestion that he was in the court of Warangal) was severely disturbed in the continuous fighting.

The invasion of the Southern part of India by Delhi based Muslim rulers first started in the time of Alauddin Khalji (1296 – 1316 AD). His earliest campaign was against Gujarat's Hindu kingdom ruled by Karna, in 1298 AD. The famous Somnatha temple in Saurashtra was captured, plundered and its deity destroyed at this time. The well known capitulation of Ranthambor fort with the Jauhar of the ladies and final suicidal battle which killed all the defenders took place in 1301 AD. Alauddin attempted to subjugate the Kakatiya ruled kingdom of Telingana, with its capital at Warangal for the first time in early 1303 AD and failed. Next came the battle for Chittor in Rajasthan and its destruction. Alauddin had also to fight and repel repeated Mongol invasions during this period – the last being in 1306 AD.

Alauddin next sent his army to Warangal (which he had failed to subdue in 1303 AD), in 1309 AD. He reached Devagiri and got the assistance of its King and even some forces and attacked Telingana. His army reached Warangal in 1310 AD, looting and killing on the way, and besieged it with a smaller force than the defenders. King Prathaparudra however failed to defend his city-fort perhaps due to undue defensive approach and finally sued for peace. The peace deal included huge tributes of Gold, Jewellery as well elephants and horses (possibly even the Kohinoor Diamond). With the gates to the South wide open, in November 1310 AD, Alauddin's army turned its attention to Ma'bar (called as such by Muslim historians) in the deep south (capital Madurai).

This invasion in 1311 AD took the western route through Rajaputana and reached Devagiri, where the reigning king Ramachandra gave all help and support to go further south to Dvarasamudra, ruled by Ballala III, the Hoysala king. Unfortunately for the latter, he was himself in Ma'bar area (South Tamilnadu) intervening in a civil war between two Pandya brothers – Sundara and Veera Pandya, trying to recover some areas from them. When he heard of the attack on Dvarasamudra, he hurried back with his army also taking the help from the Pandyas. But, he soon lost confidence in his ability to challenge the invading army and accepted submission paying tributes and gave away a great deal of wealth to them. The Muslim army went down further south to Ma'bar. But, here the Pandya princes did not shut themselves up in forts but harassed the invaders in hit and run tactics. In this trip the Muslims sacked and destroyed the Temple towns at Chidambaram, SriRangam, Madurai and went possibly even up to Rameswaram. The invaders captured a large booty of Gold as well as elephants, horses etc. They took a son of Ballala III to Delhi, who was later returned. Though this trip was primarily for loot of wealth rather than territory, it paved the way, due to loss of morale in the rulers of the Hindu kingdoms, for subsequent Muslim invasions from the North followed by establishment of Muslim ruled states such as the Bahamani, Ma'bar sultanate etc. It also exposed a weakness in the political leadership of Hindus who would not unite against an external aggressor and frittered away large resources in wealth, military strength, individual heroism as well popular support by allowing the enemy to adopt a strategy of Offense, surprise and fast action. It is also astonishing that even when ancient temples of the Hindu tradition were being sacked and looted along with destruction of the emblems and Ikons, the Hindu kings who had supported the aggressor did not wake up to the reality that they had let loose a monster of total destruction of their own culture by their own actions.

There was a second expedition of Alauddin's army in 1313 AD, when Devagiri, Dvarasamudra and Telingana were subjugated. But the entire Yadava Devagiri kingdom could not be subjugated as the small Hindu kingdom of Kampili (Bellary, Raichur and Dharwar) asserted its independence. Devagiri re-asserted its independence again in 1315 AD. In 1318 AD, Mubarak Shah invaded Deccan again defeating Warangal and trying to occupy Ma'bar. His son Khusrav was defeated in the battle for Delhi by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq in 1320 AD. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq ruled only for 5 years – 1320 – 1325 AD. In 1322 AD, the Muslim army attacked Devagiri and Warangal again, but the expedition failed to conquer Warangal. Next year, one more expedition was sent and was only partly successful, as Prathaparudra continued in Warangal. But, there are indications that the Delhi army continued

south to conquer the Pandya kingdom based on Madurai. Rajahmundry was won by the Sultan in 1324 AD, but Bhanudeva II of Kalinga (Orissa) repelled their further progress there. The son of Ghiyasuddin was the famous/notorious Muhammed Bin Tughlaq, who ruled for 27 years – 1325 – 1351 AD.

The period following Madhva's disappearance 1318 – 1336 AD (till Vijayanagara kingdom was founded) under Mohammed Bin Tughlaq would have been extremely difficult for Hindus all over south India except the west Canara coast, where Madhva stayed. Certainly the area above the Krishna river, ruled from Devagiri renamed Daulatabad by him, would be totally hostile. This corresponds to the periods of Padmanabha Tirtha and Narahari Tirtha (1318 – 1333). The last important king of Warangal, Prathaparudra was ruling during the same period. The calamitous invasion by Tughlaq took place when Narahari Tirtha was in the pontifical seat, when the kingdoms of Warangal and Devagiri were destroyed and virtually taken over by Muslims from the Delhi Sultanate. Sri Narahari Tirtha's who had held an important political position/ruled Kalinga (Orissa) 1264 – 1293 AD, and perhaps rejoined Madhva after that period, may have confined his activity to Orissa and South Karnataka after his return, till he also attained the Feet of the Lord in 1333 AD.

Devagiri:

The Kingdom that was an important barrier to the ravages of invasion from the North by Muslims was Devagiri. As appropriately named, Devagiri (Daulatabad of the later period), the capital, 11 kms north-west of Aurangabad, was famous for its formidable hill fort. The fort is situated on an isolated cone-shaped hill rising abruptly from the plain to the height of about 190 metres. The fortification constituted of three concentric lines of defensive walls with large number of bastions. The noteworthy features of the fort are the moat, the scarp and the sub-terranean passage, all hewn of solid rock. The upper outlet of the passage was filled with an iron grating, on which a large fire could be used to prevent the progress of the enemy. The Chand Minar, the Chini Mahal and the Baradari are the important structures within the fort. In the days when Guns were not in use, the fort was considered totally impregnable.

The name Iswaradeva mentioned in Sumadhvajaya as the King who was compelling all travellers to contribute free labour for public works such as digging canals etc has been identified by some as Mahadeva, a King in Devagiri during 1261-1271 AD. There was another Mahadeva Kakatiya in Warangal in 1199 AD also. Madhva would be 23-33 years of age during the Yadava Mahadeva's period, and not yet born in the Kakatiya Mahadeva's period. The incident as narrated by Sumadhvajaya may not also be related to either, as it is not very likely that a king of a large kingdom would be personally supervising the digging of a tank – it may refer to a vassal ruler with the name Iswaradeva also, but the use of the name deva is suggestive of the Devagiri kingdom. The Heyday of the Yadava dynasty represented by their most powerful rulers – Jayatugi and Singhana (1190 – 1230 AD) and which saw illustrious persons like Bhaskaracharya, Samgadeva, Amalananda etc in the fields of Mathematics, Music and Philosophy was over by the time Madhva was born in 1238 AD. Allauddin's general, a slave called Mallick Kafur invaded the kingdom during the time of Ramachandra during the period 1294 – 1309 AD and took away huge booty and left the king at the mercy of the Sultan. The son of Ramachandra, Shankara was also killed in battle in 1312 AD and his son in law Harapala, who also tried to resist, was brutally killed in 1318 AD, ending the dynasty and the Kingdom itself. Thus the Yadava kingdom was completely destroyed and Muslim rule enforced by the time Acharya Madhva disappeared from sight. In fact, King Ramachandra by his complete submission to Allauddin and his misplaced priorities of settling old scores with neighboring Hindu kingdoms even with Allauddin breathing down his neck, was also indirectly responsible for the destruction of the famous temples in SriRangam, Madurai, Chidambaram etc in the Pandya territory in these invasions. The blame of this desecration should also be shared by Hoysala Ballala III in the south with the capital at Dvarasamudra.

Warangal:

The Kakateeya Kingdom flourished in Andhra Pradesh at Warangal (Orugallu – in Telugu and Yekashilapuram in Sanskrit) in 12th to 14th centuries, named as such as it was located on a massive rock. The city finds mention by Marco Polo, the famous explorer and had famous rulers like Ganapathi Deva (1197 – 1260 AD), Queen Rudramba (1261 – 1295 AD), and Prathapa Rudra (1295 – 1323 AD). Ganapathi Deva had a long rule of 62 years when he successfully fought against the Cholas, Yadavas, Kalinga and Hoysalas and extended his kingdom to cover Kanchi in the south and converted the Andhra and Karnataka rulers as vassals for some time. He named Rudramba, his daughter, as his successor. She was initially not accepted by all, but successfully prevailed against all opponents and also fought with Cholas and Yadavas to defend her kingdom. She nominated her grandson, Prathaparudra as her successor. Noting the date of accession of Rudramba in 1261, and the Kalinga Shasana of 1264 AD of Narahari Tirtha, which helps fixing the probable date of the first visit of Madhva to Godavari river bank indicates that Rudramba must have been ruling the Warangal state during Madhva's visit to the area on the return trip from his first visit to Badari. The city was finally destroyed in 1323 AD by Mohammed Bin Tughlaq (known as Juna Khan before ascending to the throne) (1325-1355) after repeated raids and bitter fights in which the valiant Pratapa Rudra lost the war and was captured. Prataparudra committed suicide by jumping into river Narmada (some say Godavari) while being taken away to Delhi to ward off dishonor. There are also another story and some existing ballads indicating that he was rescued by his clever minister Yougandharayana and brought back to his state. However the kingdom could not be revived and soon the State disintegrated. Considering the initiation of Sri Padmanabha Tirtha around 1262/4 AD on the bank of the Godavari river, and references to a great assembly of scholars held there, where he met Acharya Madhva, there is an indication of migration of scholars from there to South Karnataka under the Hoysala King Ballala III after 1323 AD.

Dvarasamudra (Halebidu):

The Hoysala Kingdom with its capital in Dvarasamudra (Halebidu) was the most significant political entity for the emerging Madhva lineage. Unfortunately, the once vast empire which had dominated almost the whole of south India except Kerala was slowly disintegrating in the period. The raid of Malik Kafur, the deputy of Allauddin Khilji, the Sultan of Delhi commenced in Jan 1311 AD, when he first invaded Devagiri being ruled by Yadava Sevuni king Ramachandra. Though the King died soon after, his successor gave all assistance to the invaders to come stealthily to Dvarasamudra by forced marches in just 22 days. King Ballala III was on his way to Kannanur to support one of the Pandya princes ruling the Tamil country at the time. He rushed back to his capital as fast as possible, but was still caught unprepared to resist the vastly superior invading force. After a futile resistance for just 2 weeks, he had to accept an agreement by which he agreed to give all assistance to the Delhi forces to go to Madurai, where the two Pandya princes Sundara and Veera were fighting. He had also given vast treasures and agreed to pay tribute to the Delhi Sultan. In spite of complete surprise being achieved by the invading forces, and capture of the Pandyan territory, they were not able to capture the main leaders – the two princes. But Ballala secured his immediate objective – Kannanur. After the return of the Delhi general, Ballala sent his son to meet Allauddin and was well treated by the Sultan. Unfortunately, during this invasion, many major temples at Chidambaram, SriRangam etc were destroyed and looted and a large number of priests and devotees were killed trying to defend the sacrilege. A Mosque was also built in Rameswaram. Thus, the internecine quarrels between Devagiri, Warangal and Hoysala kingdoms and the preoccupation of Ballala to capture some Tamil territory had cost a great deal – weakening of all the major kingdoms defending the south, destruction of major temples and capture of vast wealth by the Delhi sultanate.

Anegondi/Hosadurga/Hampi/Navavrindavana: - (Anegondi and Kampili Kingdoms)

This kshethra which has been rightly called by Saint Vadiraja in Tirtha Prabandha as the Capital of Madhva Siddhanta, where the eight main pillars of the Tatvavada philosophical empire have chosen to live till eternity in their Vrindavanas has a great history. As Pampa Kshethra (Hampi) on the other side of the river, it is well known

from the times of Puranas. The place played an important part in Ramayana, when Rama met Hanuman here and the Monkey rulers Vali and Sugriva had their capital.

Anegondi (Anegondi)(ಆನೆಗೊಂದಿ) is a small town, in the Gangavathi taluk of Koppala district and is located at a distance of about ten kilometers from Hospet of Hampi fame towards the left bank of Tungabhadra River (North bank). The name Anegondi is attributed to the fact that the kings of Vijayanagar had the elephant contingent of their army at this place. This place was also known as Hastinavati, Kunjarakona and Kishkinda at different points of time in history and mythology. Arabian travelers have referred to Anegondi as 'nAgunDim' and Pais, the traveler from Portugal calls it 'sEnagondim'. This is in a rocky region and acts as a natural fortress providing protection from enemies. Consequently, it was chosen as their capital city by kings belonging to different dynasties. This place has played a crucial role both before and after the formation of the Vijayanagar dynasty. Kampilaraya and Kumara Rama confronted Mallik Kafur, the commander of Allauddin Khilji at this place. Later on it was a part of Vijayanagar Kingdom. It was ruled by the kings of Araveedu dynasty after the fall of Vijayanagara. Srirangaraya of Anegondi is believed to have built the fortress and the temple at Srirangapattana, near Mysore in the 15th century. After the complete collapse of the Vijayanagara empire in 1565 AD, It was ruled successively by the Shahi dynasty of Bijapur, Mughals and Marathas during the 16th and 17th centuries, while the capital city Hampi/Vijayanagara was completely abandoned for some time. It was invaded by Tipu Sultan in 1777 AD. and later came under the British rule. They handed it over to the old lineage of kings of Anegondi who were in charge of it till 1949.

Based on a suggestion by Vidyananya, his Guru, Harihara I changed the location of the capital at Anegondi to the Southern bank near the temple of Virupaksha and surrounded by Hemakuta, Matanga and Malyavantha hills and called his new capital as Vidyanagara or Vijayanagara. It took 7 years to construct the new capital, which Harihara entrusted to his younger brother Bukkaraya, whom he appointed as Yuvaraja, completing the construction of the city and the capital was shifted from Anagondi to the newly built city in 1343 AD. Anegondi was the mother-city of Vijayanagara. Just nine years earlier, in the year 1327 A.D., the Hindu kingdom of Kampila (with its capitals Kummata about 12kms northwest of Hampi and Hosamaledurga, about 22kms south of Hampi) had fallen to Mohammed Thuglaq.

In recorded history, Hampi was first ruled by Chalukyas and was taken over by Hoysalas with their capital at Dvarasamudra (Halebidu) in the latter part of 11th century. Hoysalas were a powerful kingdom ruling an extensive empire stretching across old Mysore, parts of Andhra and Tamilnadu and Kerala. During the time of Acharya Madhva, it was being ruled by Ballala III (1291 – 1343 AD) and had passed its heyday, as it was soon to be eclipsed by the Muslim invaders from the Sultanate in Delhi and by the rise of Vijayanagara kingdom under the Sangama kings Harihara and Bukka (1336 AD).

Though small and short lived, the Kampili Kingdom was crucial in the organization of Hindu resistance against the Islamic hordes and subsequent revival in the South India. The ruler of this Kingdom in the early part of the 14th Century – Kampila Raya (also called Jambukeswara) was the son of Mummadi Singa (Singeya Nayaka) hailing from Malnad region of Karnataka, who had established his kingdom in 1280 AD with the capital at Kummata durga, a distance of 12 Kms northwest of Hampi, as a vassal of the Devagiri Kingdom. Sangama Raya, father of Hakka and Bukka, the founders of Vijayanagara kingdom is also reported to be a son in law of Kampila Raya and a treasurer of the State. The legendary Kumara Rama was the son of Kampila Raya. Kampila Raya was initially a vassal, but declared himself independent, when the Devagiri kingdom was taken over and Hoysala king Ballala III lost effective power to the Muslim invaders led by Mallik Kafur in 1311 AD. The name Kampila used by Muslim historians has been identified as the town of Kampili, which is 12 Kms east of Anegondi, which still has remnants of fortifications. Hampi/Anegondi area with its natural hilly terrain was also a good defensive forts. In the short period of its existence, the new kingdom straddling the borders of the Hoysala and

Yadava kingdoms faced constant threats from both, performing a balancing act and successfully repulsed an attack by the Yadava king Ramachandra and had also helped him later to defend himself against the Hoysalas. There were many encounters between this kingdom, which was trying to establish itself and enlarge its domain and the Hoysalas till 1325 AD, when the borders with Hoysalas were mutually settled. Kampili deva (also called Khandeya Raya) succeeded his father in 1300 AD and Singeya or Mummadi Singa died in 1313 AD.

Allauddun's general, Mallik Kafur also had a brief encounter with the new Kampila kingdom in 1314 AD when he ravaged the Kummata fort, which was its strongest defence, but had failed to subjugate the kingdom. At this stage, it comprised of the present day districts of Bellary, Dharwar and Raichur along with a small portion of Anantapur in the south and Shimoga and Chitradurg in the west. The river Krishna formed a natural boundary of the kingdom from the area to the North ruled by the Sultans of Delhi in the present Maharashtra. In 1326/27 AD, Tughlaq had taken over the Sultanate in Delhi and a sister's son ruling near Gulbarga who had rebelled against him, came and took shelter with the King of Kampili. Tughlaq used the excuse that he was not surrendered and handed over when demanded and attacked the Kampili kingdom. The Sultan's army was twice defeated by the Kampili army with heavy losses and loss of morale, but on the third attempt, supervised by Thuglaq himself staying in Devagiri, the heroic Kampili king had to shut himself up in the fort of Hosadurg (Anegondi), after losing Kummata fort. Though he held out for more than a month, he finally decided to die fighting bravely when his supplies ran out and the women folk committed mass Sathee in the fort. The fugitive Muslim was sent to Ballala III, before the final battle, but the Hoysala king Ballala III, unwilling to put his kingdom in risk against Thuglaq just for an individual, handed him over to Tughlaq, who had him brutally killed. After this war, the kingdom of Kampili ceased to exist as it was annexed as a separate province under the Sultan. Kumararama, a son of the reigning king, though well known for his bravery and other great qualities as preserved even now in folk tales, ballads etc. did not succeed to the throne, as he died earlier in battle.

According to Sri B suryanarayana Rao in his book "Yendigoo mareyada Samrajya" in Kannada, the small kingdom of Anegondi existed in the period 1179 – 1334 AD, ruled by a lineage of kings the last two being Prathapadevaraya (1271 – 1297) and Jambukeswararaya (1297 – 1334 AD). The old fort at Anegondi on the northern bank of Tungabhadra fell twice to invaders - in 1327 to Thuglaq and 1332 to Chalukya ruler Somadeva (a brief attempt at reviving Hindu rule before Vijayanagara) and the Kingdom absorbed into the larger neighbor, Vijayanagara. The last king referred to by name Kampiliraya (whose son was Kumararama) would thus be Jambukeswara raya. According to this list, the earlier 7 kings which include names like Nanda, Chalukya etc are shown as ruling from 1040 AD, and are not relevant for the purpose of our study of Madhva lineage. The recorded history of Kampiliraya being the son of Singeya Nayaka is also well substantiated by numerous references as described in his excellent book by Professor Duncan Derrett, who has studied the Hoysala lineage in considerable depth. Another book giving detailed information is "The Early Muslim expansion into South India" by Prof. Nilakanta Shastri. According to the last book, King Somadeva had succeeded in establishing control not only over Anegondi, but also nearby places like Raichur, Mudgal etc by 1334 AD itself and was actually displaced by Harihara I of the Sangama dynasty of Vijayanagara after 1336 AD. Thus Hampi/Anegondi area essentially remained under nominal Muslim rule only for 6/7 years – from 1327 – 1334 AD. And the tragic end of kampili royal lineage fulfilled a far more significant role in giving birth to the revived Hindu Warangal state, and the formidable Vijayanagara kingdom based on Hampi. If one juxtaposes the dates of Vrindavana pravesha of Sri Padmanabha Tirtha 1324 AD and Sri Narahari Tirtha 1333 AD, it is clear that Thuglaq's destruction of kampili state would have had little effect in this regard. After Vijayanagara came into being in 1336 AD, it became the epicenter of a powerful Hindu kingdom and stayed as such till 1565 AD and even later as a residual power for some time.

To summarise, the period of the last two decades of Madhva (1298 – 1318 AD) followed by the periods of Padmanabha Tirtha (1318 – 1324 AD) and Narahari Tirtha (1324 – 1333 AD) saw some of the worst destruction of organized Hindu political power, famous temples, and mass killings. The Hindu kings proved inept both

politically and militarily in dealing with the menace and the Parashurama Kshethra area and Hampi area were like Oases in the desert – along with the distant Hindu ruled Orissa. The dissolution of Hindu power started with Alla uddin Khalji's raids on Devagiri Kingdom ruled by the Yadava king Ramachandra, first in 1296 AD, even before ascending the throne for looting and for control followed by those (after occupying it) in 1307/9 AD. This was followed rapidly by the successful raids on Prathaparudra of Warangal in 1310 AD, Ballala III of Dvarasamudra in 1311 AD and culminated in the final raids on Madurai ruled by the Pandya princes and the whole sale destruction and looting of the famed temple of SriRangam, Chidambaram, and even reaching Rameswaram, where a mosque was built on a temple site. The very first raid on Devagiri had made Ramachandra totally submissive and even cooperative, and Allauddin ensured that by retaining him in the seat, the Devagiri state became an accomplice in his further ventures against other states, like using the wood of a tree cut first as the handle of the Axe. The invasion deluge was successfully resisted only by the small Kampili Kingdom in the immediate vicinity of Hampi for a few years. The invaders returned to Delhi in October 1311. In 1313 AD, he invaded again the submissive kingdom of Devagiri and finished off its existence even as a vassal Hindu Kingdom by killing its last surviving King. Alla Uddin died in 1316 AD and his governor crushed attempts by the Yadava lineage to emerge out of the ashes by killing Harapal, the son in law of Ramachandra in 1318 AD, thus integrating the Maratha areas north of the Krishna river into his delhi ruled empire . The Thuglaq dynasty came into power in Delhi in 1320 AD with Ghiyasuddin who ruled for only 5 years followed by Mohammed Bin Thuglaq in 1325 AD. They not only crushed the Hindu backlash in Devagiri, but even the capital of the Muslim empire was shifted from Delhi to Devagiri – renamed Daulatabad in 1326-27 AD and increased the Muslim population both by concentration and forced conversions. This brought increasing pressure on the neighbouring Hindu kingdoms. The other direct buffer state of Kakatiyas of Warangal was first attacked unsuccessfully by All Uddin in 1303 AD, but he was defeated by Prathaparudra. His second invasion to Warangal in 1310 AD was successful and he received great wealth as compensation from the King. He continued southwards from Warangal, by first returning to Devagiri and attacking Hoysala king Ballala III in a surprise attack, and forced him to sue for peace and agree to cooperate in his final goal – capture of Madurai of the Pandyas. Though the invaders could not capture and ensure surrender of the fighting brothers who ruled the kingdom, they captured vast booty from the temples destroyed and the cities sacked which included SriRangam, Chidambaram, Madurai etc as mentioned earlier. Allauddin's depredations had all taken place, before 1318 AD, when Madhva was still in Udupi area.

The Thuglaq dynasty headed by Ghiyasuddin was even more destructive, as unlike Allauddin who was mainly after riches, loot etc and was prepared to leave an impoverished and servile king in place, the new rulers were actuated by motives of conversion to Islam and obliterating the Hindu identity completely. The following words of Nilakanta Sastri express this situation:

“To stamp out heathenism and gather all the people in the folds of Islam, they prohibited the public exercise of Hindu religion and subjected its followers to inhuman tyranny. Hindus could not dress well, live well and appear prosperous. Vexatious taxes were imposed on them. Their seats of learning were destroyed. Their temples were plundered and demolished and the images of the gods whom they adored were defaced and smashed and used for building prayer houses of the faithful”. The imposition of Jeziya tax, on Hindus which kept them impoverished and discriminated against, as well as mass killing of even non-combatants in conquered areas, forced abduction of women and children etc were common features which the more rabid of the sultans were encouraged to practice, when guided by the religious heads.

I will also quote an interesting observation by Dr. Koenraad Elst:

“During the Islamic conquests in India, it was a typical policy to single out the Brahmins for slaughter, after the Hindu warrior class had been bled in the battle field. The Muslims could not rule the country except by systematic terror. .. If there were any uprising, it was instantly and savagely repressed. – houses were burned, the countryside was laid waste, men were slaughtered and women were taken as slaves.

“There is only one among four law schools in Sunni Islam, which allows Pagans to subsist as zimmi – disempowered third class citizens, the other three schools of Jurisprudence ruled that Pagans as opposed to Christians had to be given a choice between Islam and **Death**.”

Staggering numbers also died as collateral damage of the deliberate impoverishment by Sultans like Allauddin Khalji and Jehangir. As Braudel put it – “The levies it had to pay were so crushing that one catastrophic harvest was enough to unleash famines and epidemics capable of killing a million people at a time. Appalling poverty was the constant counterpart of the conqueror’s opulence”.

Providentially, the success of Islam in this phase of zealous extremism was limited mainly because they could not establish their numbers fast enough and the Hindus, in great majority, though led with poor strategy and militarily weak, rebounded back again and again till they threw off the yoke of the oppressors. Many brave warriors were slain with their kingdoms short lived - but they kept the torch burning and did not allow it to be extinguished. But for religious leaders, this period must have been particularly difficult as they could hardly expose themselves in public and perform their prescribed functions. Even Sumadhvajaya conveys a picture in shloka 10-15 of Chapter 10, showing a face of the Islamic forces of a King which would kill a harmless party of a few ascetics instantly – and how Madhva warded off the danger by his tact and personality.

The advent of the Thuglaqs on the Delhi throne in 1320 AD was even worse for Hindu kingdoms and Hindus in general. Earlier, the temporary surrender of the Warangal King Prathapa Rudra to Allauddin had been retrieved and he had grown in military strength and enlarged the area ruled by him. But instead of uniting the Hindus against the bigger enemy who had already beaten him once, he was squandering his own strength in campaigns against other Hindu states. In the second year of Ghaiyasuddin Thuglaq, (1322 AD) a Muslim army from Delhi was sent against Warangal which was heroically resisted by it. Though the Muslims failed to capture Warangal even after a long siege, Prathaparudra, weakened after the long siege had to sue for peace, offering to pay tributes again as before. This was rejected by the invasion commander. But luckily for Prathaparudra, thanks to some

fortuitous discord in the enemy forces, some of their units left the field and in the confusion, the besieged forces came out and scattered the invading army, which was forced to retreat to Devagiri. But, a second effort was made next year 1323 AD, which was successful and after conquering Warangal, the muslims continued on the east coast up to Rajamundry (1324 AD) and towards Orissa, where they were stopped by the Kalinga king Bhanudeva II. Ghaiyasuddin himself was killed by his own nephew Mohammed Bin Thuglaq in 1325 AD, who then took over the empire. Mohammed bin Thuglaq had a long innings – (1325 – 1351 AD) and expanded Muslim rule over almost the whole of Indian subcontinent, excepting Kashmir, Orissa, a strip of Rajasthan and the Malabar coast. It was in his time that the older political map of India was altered for good and at least for a few years, rule by the Delhi Sultan had to be accepted by all, some of whom continued as vassals under him.

His conquests included the rebel principality of Sagar (near Gulbarga) in 1326/27 AD, the flight of the muslim ruler first to Kampili and then to Hoysala kingdom leading to the annihilation of Kampili state along with the sacking of Anegondi, the last surviving truly independent Hindu kingdom after Allauddin in 1327 AD. Ballala III at Dvarasamudra (Halebidu) was the next target and had to sue for peace and accommodation agreeing to pay tributes and confine his activities to minor political gains in the Pandya kingdom such as getting Kannanur. Prathaparudra of Warangal had also lost his life and kingdom in 1323 AD, even when Ghaiyasuddin was rulling. Thuglaq also annexed the fort at Simhaghar (8 miles south of Poona). He had also created new administrative units in Bengal and North Bihar. Gujarat continued under Muslim rule. The Orissa kingdom under eastern Ganga dynasty had held up and with some skirmishes with the Muslim Bengal and occasional efforts by Delhi sultans to subvert, it had continued as an independent state till 1361 AD, when it lost to Bukka of Vijayanagara and lost some territory in the south.

The huge empire built up by military conquests however started breaking up even in his own life time. The Muslim governor at Madurai declared independence in 1334/35 and the Sultan's attempt to retake it proved a failure. The Hindus in Telengana rebelled in a confederacy under Prolaya nayak and Kapaya nayak in 1330/35 AD. The latter succeeded in getting the support of Ballala III of the Hoysalas in Dvarasamudra and freed Warangal and the northern districts of the Madurai Muslim ruled sultanate. Thuglaq's attempt to take control over the Kampili area also misfired when the new governors appointed by him Hakka and Bukka themselves turned rebel and established the new kingdom of Vijayanagara in 1336 AD. Thus except the old Devagiri kingdom, called Daulatabad by him, the other conquests could not be held on to and the earlier status-quo was gradually restored. The Anegondi kingdom was however never restored as it took the new identity of the Vijayanagara with the capital at Hampi.

The further developments of a political nature after the Vijayanagara came into being will be discussed separately in another section.

Before we go into specific force- majeure events in the periods, brief mention may be made of the catastrophic nature of the two Muslim invasions into the south by Allauddin and Thuglaq, by quoting some historical accounts:

The SriRangam temple was a Vaishnava center which had existed for centuries. Sumadhva Vijaya (5.47) mentions that Acharya Madhva visited it in his first south Indian tour, when he was perhaps only in his teens (1356/57 AD).

5.47. Ananda Tirtha, the great intellect, next came to Sri Ranga. He offered his devoted prostrations to Ranganatha Swamy, immanent in the Icon there, who is like an ocean of loveliness, rests on Shesha, grants auspicious boons to the good people and is served by the cool breeze passing over the cauvery river.

Considering the comparative nearness of SriRangam to Udupi area, it is likely that when Narayana panditha wrote the composition, the temple was still intact, as any serious disruption would have been noted in some manner, in the writing. Malik Kafur, the slave general of Allauddin invaded Madurai area of Pandyas successfully in 1311 AD (just 7 years before Madhva disappeared). Vedanta Deshika, the great ascetic of Sri Vaishnava faith was living there. The invasion is mentioned in his life history thus -

His (Vedanta Deshika's) Exodus to Tirunarayanapuram

In about 1327, (date given here is wrong), during the Muslim invasion of Srirangam by Malik Kafur, the General of Allauddin, Sultan of Delhi, there was a great commotion. The Srivaishnavas who were Satvic by nature were no match to the Muslim plunderers. Fear gripped the minds of everyone as to what might happen to the temple and the Lords Archa murthis. The Acharyas deliberated under the guidance of the Centenarian Master, Sudarsana Bhattar. It was decided that one group under Pillai Lokacharya (who was equally advanced in age) was to take the Utsava Murthi and His consorts covered up in a palanquin to Tirupati. The party under Sudarsana Suri was to stay put at Srirangam, after erecting a stone wall in front of the Sannidhi of Moolavar to cover him from the sight of the marauders. Swami took Sudarsana Bhattars two sons and the manuscripts of Sruta Prakaasika (the elaborate commentary on Sri Bhashyam chronicled by Sudarsana Bhattar during the Kalakshepams of Nadadur Ammaal) to safety at Tiru narayana puram via Satya mangalam. But, before he could do that, the muslim army attacked them and massacred many of them. Swami hid himself with his wards in the midst of corpses and spent the night. In the morning, they moved towards Satyakalam village in Karnataka en route to Tirunarayana puram.

Malik Kafur is reported to have captured a vast booty of wealth carried on 512 elephants, and 5000 horses, and the jewellery alone was 500 Maunds!. Thousands of priests who tried to protect the temples had been killed and the temple itself was deprived of the Utsava Murthy as well as the main deity, by hiding the latter behind a stoned up recess. The fate of other temples in Chidambaram etc was similar. They also destroyed the towns and harried the countryside, completely disrupting normal life.

His basic policy towards Hindus is summed up by the following quote: "The Sultan demanded from learned men rules and regulations, so that the Hindu should be ground down, and property and possessions, which are the causes of disaffection and rebellion, should not remain in his house."

Mohammed bin Thuglaq was undoubtedly a great military commander as well as good administrator, but extremely cruel and capricious. In keeping with his policy of expanding his rule over the whole of India, he maintained very high levels of taxation, which was collected ruthlessly, by punishing the revenue collectors brutally and causing famine for several years. His policy of total ruthlessness and cruelty towards his opponents irrespective of who they were – mother, brother, defeated kings, even Muslim divines who differed from him surrounded him with death, destruction and fear, in which no one was sure about his position with him. (Part I completed and Part II - To be contd).

HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

Regarding the Periods of the first five great Madhva saints

Sri Padmanabha, Narahari, Madhava, Akshobhya and Jaya Tirthas

PART II

In the first part, the Political and military environment around the Deccan in the periods corresponding to the reigns of Acharya Madhva and his first five successors till the end of the reign of Sri Teekacharya was visualized based on authentic history. It would have been seen that unlike Shankara, whose period was essentially one of conflict with Buddhism, which was also coming to a decline due to the efforts of orthodox Hindu Vedanta schools like Mimamsakas, and even Ramanuja in the twelfth century who, though personally affected by persecution by Shiva worshipping Tamil Hindu kings and entrenched Jain rulers, had a comparatively peaceful environment, Madhva chose a period to incarnate when Hinduism itself was being given mortal blows – being weakened enormously to the point of absolute disaster by the Alien rulers in the Northern Indian states and suffering new and initial onslaughts in the Deccan area, which destroyed the traditional political structures completely. Sumadhvajaya, in spite of its lack of adequate information on Historical and geographical issues mentioned therein, does bring out many such points by its descriptions of Madhva's actions. It is necessary to study the micro-historical developments in closer detail in order to explain many issues which appear inexplicable today – such as Why was Tatvavada's development was confined to Northern and western Karnataka in this stage and with fringe effects in adjoining states of Andhra, Tamilnadu and Maharashtra and did not spread significantly into Northern India at all? This could be done by trying to study in juxtaposition the recorded stories of the ascetics of Tatvavada along with the detailed historical events pertaining to the places where they chose to play their role. It is also remarkable that the areas which they chose were precisely those where Hinduism subsequently held its own for centuries – Orissa, Western Karnataka (in particular South Canara) and the nucleus of the growth of Hindu power, which saved it from total destruction – Hampi, which perhaps is an indication that, subject to the grand design of the Supreme Being for Kaliyuga for growth of religions negating the true knowledge of the Vedanta, pockets of community existence of good persons with faith and devotion in their hearts were also being created by the divinities incarnating in the lineage of Madhva. In this regard, the last two decades of Acharya Madhva and the periods of the first two peethadhipatis after Madhva - Sri Padmanabha and Sri Narahari Tirtha could be viewed from the angle of political developments, wars and state of Hindu society based on the information gathered here and some conclusions could be arrived at on the plausibility of prevailing stories and beliefs. Before studying the evidence of Sumadhvajaya as a history, some thought may be given to its own credibility and accuracy, which fortunately has been discussed by the author himself as follows:

Sri Narayana Pandithacharya, the author is credited with the following works on this subject:

1. Sumadhavijaya - the main work with 16 cantos, which is a detailed contemporary account.
2. Anumadhavijaya - A condensation of the above work.
3. Manimanjari - This short work of 8 cantos is an introduction to Sri Sumadhavijaya.
4. Bhava Prakashika - This is a gloss which throws further light on places, names, incidents etc of Sri Sumadhavijaya with their Tulu names.

The basis adopted has been described in BhAvaprakAshika. The poet says :

"PrAyEna naikamAthrOkthah kathithA iha sarvashah
 mayA drushta dhruvam ithi prOktha prayena Poorushaihi"
 "DvayOrvakthOrvirOdhEthu sveekruthA prabalasya Geeh
 KavyAshrayE vA gurukirthayE vA prOktham svayaivApi maneeshayA vA
 ThasmAnnashsa kushAgreeya dhiyapyavashyam"

Translated as: **Only those events which have been seen by their own eyes by reliable persons have been included and when ever there were any differences, they were carefully evaluated to choose the correct version based on the evidence. Nothing has been included only for poetic reasons based only on imagination or to extol the reputation of the Guru. He makes a request therefore to the intelligent readers not to doubt the veracity of his statements.**

He also says :

"CharyA drushtA naraih kAshchith vismruthA devamAyayA
 AvismruthAshcha purushaih nAsmAbhih sakalA shruthAh
 shruthAshcha Kashchin naiva ukthAh devaguhyathvanishchayAth"

Only some of the events were seen by others, and many were forgotten due to the action of DEvamAyA. All the events remembered were not told to the poet. Even among the events which he came to know, he has not included some as they are extremely secret (Guhyathama).

Sri C M Padmanabhachariar says - "It is probable that a biographical sketch of Sri Madhva was composed in his own time. Some one of his learned disciples seems to have kept a diary of his tours and sketched his doings from time to time, recording all the important events of his life'. There is also a mention in Sumadhva vijaya in the tenth and sixteenth cantos of disciples of Sri Madhva reciting many poetic compositions in front of an eager assembly of devotees. Many of the superhuman miracles are described in this Canto, and there is a possibility that many of the verses were "borrowed" into this canto subsequently. These cantos are written in several metres and using a number of Alamkaras, rhythmic construction.

If one goes through Sumadhavijaya, one finds that there are three distinct types of descriptions. The first is essentially mythology where the faith and beliefs are presented as

reality with a poetic imagination. This is seen in the description of the earlier Avatharas of Vayu, the meetings in Badarikashrama with Veda Vyasa, Narayana forms of the Lord or the blissful state of the liberated souls in Vaikunta etc. The source of information for these can only be either the sacred texts or Acharya Madhva himself. The former are generally available and form part of the doctrines of Tatvavada.

The second set is where the information is essentially hear-say, indirect and where the poet is lacking clear information about the order of events, period, details of the persons present etc. But, these events have survived in group memory by virtue of the impact that they made on the gathering. It is also likely that some of this information was already composed as stories or poetry by others and preserved even before the composition of the Sumadhvavijaya itself, though none of them are available today as separate compositions. Thus we see that the stories pertaining to the childhood, Sannyasa, etc of the Acharya are written in the style of recountal of past events furbished with poetic imagery. There is also an entire chapter (Number Ten), where the stories are clearly attributed by the author to another disciple of Acharya Madhva who recited a Kavya like composition containing some events of Acharya's tour of the North ending up in Badarinath. The shlokas have various poetic embellishments like Rhyming, repetition of words and phrases, which are some times split into different combinations of root words etc. All these have a ring of truth in them, with no element of undue exaggeration or untruth just to glorify the Acharya. Such important events like the establishment of the Krishna temple in Udupi, the first and second visits to Badarinath, the defeat of various Buddhist and Advaita scholars in debate, the acquisition of the great successors of Acharya Madhva after their acceptance of the new school etc are dealt with in this manner, clearly indicating that the personal contacts of the poet of Sumadhvavijaya itself came long after all this happened.

The third set is clearly based on information which the poet Sri Narayana Pandithacharya has received first hand in the immediate past or present. In the twelfth chapter, there are descriptions of Advaita veterans and leaders of society getting worried about their flock getting denuded by the growing acceptance of Tatvavada. Some names like Padma Tirtha (from Chola country), Pundareeka Puri are mentioned specifically as contemporaries who were involved. The places in Thaulava country where the important events took place are also clearly mentioned along with very detailed descriptions of the daily life of the Acharya, the incident of the theft of his archives by Padma Tirtha, and their subsequent recovery at the intervention of the king.

Sumadhvavijaya, though composed by a sincere and younger contemporary admirer, also has many serious limitations in the quality and amount of information that it conveys about his total life. The very construction of the work indicates that it may have been composed in two stages – the first up to chapter 15 which may have been done during the period of Madhva and possibly even presented to him, by the young poet who must have witnessed the great disputation between him and his own Father – Thrivikrama panditha and the second – last chapter which seems to have been an add-on with a loose structure perhaps composed after Madhva's disappearance and including some older and newer incidents which supplement many of his great deeds already described earlier in Chapter 10. Otherwise, there seems to be no reason as to why the earlier incidents of Visit to Gomathi river with a

dialogue with a Shudra King, and lifting the huge rock in Kalasa could not have been included in Chapter 10 itself. In this chapter also, the author attributes the narration of these incidents to another scholar-disciple of Madhva.

The work has the following shortcomings.

1. It is specific and clear only with regard to the details such as place names, events etc in Madhva's last few years, spent in Kerala and South Canara, after the author's father – Thrivikrama Panditha came in contact with Madhva. Many major events like the two earlier Badari trips, the installation of the Krishna Ikon in Udupi and conversion/initiation of important disciples like Sri Padmanabha who succeeded Madhva have been covered only in very general terms. But the disputation with Thrivikrama Panditha is given in great detail. Another important disciple - Sri Narahari Tirtha, who was the second successor to Madhva is not even mentioned. The complete second trip to Badari which must have been a comparatively long event including visits to Varanasi, etc has been compressed in just three shlokas at the end of Chapter 9. (See below). Even where some names of places or persons is mentioned there is no clue to the periods or order of events, or locations where the events occurred.
2. With regard to geography, it is specific only with regard to Kerala and South Canara. All other events even in other parts of South India as well as in the remote North have unspecified locations. Even where such locations are mentioned, there is very little data about the main events which should have happened – and some minor details living on as anecdotes with the retinue are mentioned. For instance, Varanasi, the famous pilgrimage center and abode of great scholars is mentioned only as a location of a contest in strength between Madhva and fifteen disciples, without any mention of the visits to famous temples such as Bindumadhava and Vishveshvara (Note the contrast with the visit to Ananthapadmanabha or SriRangam temples).. It is also remarkable that Royal recognition and giving of Gifts is mentioned nowhere in Madhva's time and no record exists of his visiting the courts of any great kings of the day. The mention of the three rulers is based on casual meetings, with Madhva not seeking any favours or assistance.
3. Traditionally some places of North India have been always visited by ascetics going for Tirtha Yathra (ex. Tirtha Prabandha of Sri Vadiraja). Even if one assumes that Madhva's first Badari Yathra outwards was constrained for time, there is no reason to conclude that during his two northern Yathras, specially during the return trips, he did not visit places like Mathura/Vrindavana, Dwaraka, Pushkara, Naimisharanya, Prayaga, Gaya, Navadvipa in Bengal, Mithila in North Bihar, Jagannatha Puri, where his own disciple Narahari Tirtha was an important personality, Tirupati, Sri Mushnam, Pandarapur etc., just because the names are omitted in Sumadhvavijaya. In some cases, proof that he did visit exists based on Sthala Purana etc as in Sri Mushnam. While indirect evidence in the form of Mathas described as coming into being during the visits of ascetics like Shankara to Badari, Ramanuja to

Mathura/Jaganatha Puri etc exist even today, there is no similar relic of the past related to Madhva, whose visits were centuries later – which does not concord well with his bold and transparent projection of his own school of philosophy. The entire trip to Badari and back on the second occasion, when he had already established his school and had a retinue of great scholars as his disciples headed by the redoubtable Sri Padmanabha Tirtha and which should have been used as an occasion to spread the message and acquire a large following is just covered by THREE shlokas in Sumadhvavijaya.

Extract from Sumadhvavijaya Chapter 9 – shlokas 53/55.

Acharya Madhva goes Badari Kshethra second time and returns to Udupi (53 – 55).

.53. Madhva, with great knowledge crossed many rivers (like Krishna, Godavari etc), which support living beings with their water, mountains such as Vindhya etc. and reached Badarikashrama, dear to VedaVyasa easily, in the same manner as he took Sannyasa.

The same words mean also:

Madhva, with great knowledge crossed many Shastras which support living beings by guiding them to achieve Swarga etc. and having also crossed many rituals appropriate to different Gothras like Vishvamithra, and easily reached Sannyasa Ashrama, which is very dear to God.

Note: Acharya Madhva had taught that the same Vedas which superficially give the knowledge required for getting Swarga etc. also give the knowledge required for securing Moksha, the final emancipation. He had given up all the rituals appropriate for Brahmacharya, Grihastha and Vanaprastha for persons belonging to different Gothras of Rishis and accepted Sannyasa, which is dearest to God.

.54. Sri VedaVyasa being fully pleased with the compliance of His desire by Acharya Madhva gave him in a special manner the unique Sahabhoga (appropriate to the status of Chathurmukha Brahma), which He (as Rama) had given earlier to Hanuman (the earlier incarnation of Madhva), which is not given to anyone else, as He had nothing more appropriate to give him.

Note: On this occasion, Madhva presented his Brahma Suthra Bhashya to VedaVyasa, as his offering. This was accepted with great pleasure and Madhva was rewarded with a unique gift which is obtained only by the highest Rju class of souls.

.55. Madhva, who is like the ocean of great deeds and is all knowing prostrated to his Guru, VedaVyasa and received humbly His appropriate orders, which are beneficial to the world. He returned to Udupi along with his disciples and was greeted with great happiness by his devotees. He offered his prostrations to the Lord Ananthasana.

Note: The description of the second visit to Badari kshethra consisting of only three shlokas, is silent about the events on the way. Some of these are described in Chapter's 10 and 16 later. They may have been grouped together in the form of a recitation of Acharya Madhva's great doings, which may have been attempted even earlier to the writing of Sumadhvavijaya, by other disciples. It may be possible that some of them in shloka form have been used verbatim in Sumadhvavijaya.

It may be noted that no attempt is made of any classification of the sequential, temporal or regional order of events and deeds, even visit-wise, let alone define the period. One can only conclude that as all the events were very old as far as the author of Sumadhvavijaya was concerned, only salient incidents which were related by a few disciples in answer to his queries or widely remembered by the entire entourage of Madhva due to the great impact on their collective minds could be included – and even they perhaps could not give him accurate details about place names or dates. Even among those included, it is likely that the details such as the local scholars met or disputed with, visits to specific nearby places including temples, etc would have been either not remembered or not even recorded as being too numerous. The memory of events of the first visit which should be at least 50 years back would be even more sketchy as many of the disciples who were with Madhva at that time might have been even inaccessible later. Even those of the second visit were already so much in the past that they would also be remembered without clear recollections. In fact, in shlokas 127-140 of Chapter 15 of Sumadhvavijaya, which appear to be a direct cognition by the poet, he mentions that there were already two further generations of disciples in Madhva's entourage – indirectly conveying the ages of his bands of disciples and also mentions that they were from many places – (with a hint of different mother tongues, customs and traditions) and included also other Varnas apart from Brahmins. No other rational explanation is possible for the apparently disjointed arrangements in the descriptions of Madhva's biography, unless totally esoteric readings of the mind of the poet are invoked, which is unnecessary.

Without delving in detail into this aspect further, it is reasonable to conclude that:

- i. Sumadhvavijaya does not cover all Madhva's visits or all events during his visits even when they are mentioned.
- ii. One has to supplement the information contained therein with additional data gleaned from other sources, where necessary to get a clearer and fuller picture of Madhva's life.
- iii. The event descriptions as available are generally true and free from hyperbole, though couched in poetic language and seen through the eyes of a great admirer and devotee, and thus mixed up with the underlying beliefs based on faith and devotion.
- iv.

Based on Sumadhvavijaya, one can recall in brief some of the important events in Madhva's life and their estimated time sequences. Some additional information would be available in Sri Hrishikesha Tirtha's Sampradaya Paddhathi. As our purpose here is limited to the quasi-historic elements of his life story, we can skip over the childhood parts as well as the parts describing his genius, his personality and philosophical debates and stick only to events concerning his contacts with the political and social milieu of his time. Whatever has been stated about his tours should be looked at with great care to interpose other proven data about rulers, places and constraints of a military nature existing at the time. The historic events considered may not directly refer to Acharya Madhva, but give some inferences based on circumstantial evidence and probabilities – so that while one cannot be certain, one can achieve a degree of confidence which is strengthened by the totality of the picture arrived at – which will be akin to theorizing in science.

The Period of Acharya Madhva could be broadly divided into 4 parts based on his role and contributions to the outside world. These are:

1. His Boyhood – lasting till his accepting Sannyasa when he was only 10 years old.
2. His Initial period of asceticism till he first visited Badari Kshethra and returned to Udupi (when he would be about 25 years of age).
3. His period of composition of main Sarvamoola texts, including his second visit to Badari. (His age would be 60)
4. His final period of stay mostly in places near Udupi when he consolidated his work and established his lineage and disciples. .

These periods would correspond to i. 1238 – 1248 AD (10 years), ii. 1249 – 1264 AD (15 years), iii. 1265 – 1300 AD (35 years) and iv. 1301 – 1317/8 AD (17 years). The historical events, personalities who were in position during these sub-periods can be compiled based on Indian History as well as Local histories and anecdotes as available – both with regard to rulers, socially important personalities as well as his religious and philosophical contemporaries and adversaries. The impact of his personality on them as well as on the different places he visited and stayed in should be studied with far greater effort than what I am able to bring to bear – specially in studying local data, which I am unable to do.

Some preliminary observations could how ever be made:

1. Acharya Madhva was unique among the major Vedic school torch-bearers in not leaving behind in general, any records of significant interactions with Kings, Emperors, Pontiffs etc. Those which are in available records are usually chance meetings and even adverse – like Ishvaradeva, Shudra King on the Gomathi river, Kudupusthur Shankaracharya, etc. Only one King is mentioned in Sumadhvavijaya as having been favoured by Madhva – Jayasimha, who honoured Acharya Madhva. The Sringeri Pontiff (Sri Vidyashankara – 1228 – 1333 AD - who is a noted personality in the Advaita tradition) with a very long rule on the pontifical seat which is claimed to be established by Shankara himself, and who was in Shringeri, only 90 km away from Udupi and was a full contemporary does not find any specific mention, though Madhva and his direct shishyas have ranged over a far wider territory including the main area of his influence in their conversion activity. The direct encounters with Advaita scholar/ascetics who are named appear to be with representatives – Kudupustur Shankaracharya, who met him in Ananthashayana in his younger days, Padma Tirtha and Pundarika Puri, who tried to oppose Madhva after consultations and organised efforts of the Advaita groups in the days when Tatvavada was spreading fast in South Canara/Kerala and finally Thrivikrama Panditha. The incident of meeting the Thurushka king on the north bank of the Ganges is also strictly limited by

Madhva having impressed him and his entourage enormously but Madhva finally left with dignity and respect from the scene, receiving no favours of any kind. This is in sharp contrast to other prophets like Ramanuja etc where expansion of their following was assisted to a considerable extent by Ruling personalities converted by them to spread their message – Ex: Bittideva/Vishnuvardhana of Hoysala Dynasty, Orissa king Anantavarman chodaganga etc. There is also no record of any donations of land, wealth etc being received by Madhva – the first available such record of any gift for a Madhva Disciple being given to his main shishya – Sri Padmanabha Tirtha.

2. As is only to be expected, the available records of persons becoming his disciples/ followers are only limited to a very few outstanding scholars, who have shown their mettle in the field of Tatvavada itself after conversion – such as Sri Padmanabha, Thrivikarama Panditha and the first peethadhipatis of the Mathas started in his time. The large mass of new adherents who must have flocked to his banner, have left no imprints in history indicating the reasons for their conversion. But, one fact seems to stand out – They were won over by his philosophical expositions coupled with an extremely strong personality rather than by any other pressure – such as Political authority, Coercion, money power etc. This method had the in-built constraint that only persons who felt strongly about the quest for the True Vedanta system and thereby went on their own to Madhva and his shishyas for study and acceptable answers were included. This was also remarkable especially as the prevailing Advaita system was well entrenched by its continued unchallenged existence for centuries, Established Guru Parampare in different parts of the country, authoritative compositions with an aura of supreme complexity and esoteric grandeur, generally considered beyond the intellectual reach of ordinary persons. The massive nature of this Inertial barrier can be noted even today – even after Ramanuja, Madhva and some other rival schools have made their mark, and have been in existence for centuries, the general Hindu public still refer to the Four Shankaracharyas as the supreme authority on the Vedic religion and the lay persons still refer to present ascetics of other schools also by the same name - Shankaracharya.
3. One extremely important factor is the systematic destruction by Rabid and uncivilized Islamic hordes of Hindu culture and Ethos accompanied by hitherto unprecedented levels of brutality and cruelty to human beings over the whole of India during the period starting around 1000 AD. It started with the repeated invasions of Turks led by Ghazni lasting about 25 years which covered most parts of the Northern areas including the strongest Hindu powers at that time, every time returning to Ghazni with enormous Loot and destruction of all famous temples at the time such as those in Somnath, Mathura, etc. Not only did the numerous Hindu kingdoms fail to stop or defeat him, or even unite against him, but many of them became submissive enough to actually assist him in future military operations against fellow kingdoms to save themselves. The areas of the present day Afghanistan and West Punjab

were thus occupied by the invaders and never recovered into the Hindu fold. A serious sustained effort at building a locally based Muslim empire began with Muhammad Ghori who invaded the Delhi/Ajmer based Chahamana kingdom ruled by the King Prithviraj in 1186 AD. Though Ghori was defeated repeatedly, finally in 1192 AD, he defeated Prithviraj and killed him in battle. The Hindu predominance was effectively lost at this time as far as Northern India, Gujarat and Bengal was concerned. Subsequently the establishment of the Muslim Sultanate Kingdoms in Delhi and their partly successful attempts at gradually subjugating the remaining Hindu kingdoms in Orissa, and Southern India gradually eroded Hindu influence, limiting them into smaller kingdoms lasting for brief periods, with no possibility of a strong Hindu revival for the whole of the sub-continent. There was an almost complete subjugation and fears of obliteration of Hindu Dharma after the destructive invasions of the Deccan by the Khaljis and Tughlaqs from Delhi. Except for the South Canara region, which did not suffer any direct Muslim invasion at any stage, all other parts of the country suffered massive and systemic annihilation of Hindu religion – its intellectuals, libraries, temples and even masses of common people. Instead of being the proud citizens of their respective kingdoms (whose identities were being obliterated), they were persecuted with punitive taxes, forced to convert to Islam and driven to penury and suffering. It would be noted that Shankara obviously predated this adverse period, and even Ramanuja predated the invasions of Deccan, while Madhva had to carry out his tasks in the prevailing hostile or disturbed atmosphere. The continued adherence to the Hindu fold of the majority of people as well as vigorous efforts made to sustain/revive the Hindu empires of Orissa, Vijayanagara and later in the Maharashtra came about due to the strong philosophic underpinning of restoration of confidence in themselves, devotion in Hindu gods and sense of sustained identification of the people in their traditional ways and culture, broadly indicated by the concept of Sanathana Dharma, brought about by a new group of Hindu Holy men such as Acharya Madhva, Vidyananya, Vyasaraaja, Ramadas etc with wider dissemination by the popular poets and authors – Dasa koota, Vachana sahithya etc. One important aspect of Acharya Madhva's choice of the place and timing of his incarnation would thus be explained by a study of the national scene.

4. The three Acharyas who established the leading schools of Vedanta basing themselves on the well defined traditional Varnashrama dharma of the Geetha as axiomatic did not try to include the unschooled common people in their scheme for intellectual dissemination of their systems. Thus, except for Ramanuja, who had an earlier Parampare of Tamil prabandhams, and is reported to have accepted non-thraivarna persons as Srivaishnavas, their compositions were limited to Sanskrit and their debates were with similarly equipped scholars. Sumadhvavijaya descriptions thus contain only Vidvath goshtis where Vakarthas were held with opposing scholars, even in many villages. Madhva did not also attempt to set up regionally based institutions as

Shankara had done and thus except for the Ashta Mathas of Udupi, there was only one matha after Madhva headed by Sri Padmanabha Tirtha with an pre-ordered succession. The later proliferation of Madhva mathas appears to have come about by other ascetics also ordained by the Peethadhipatis, as well as disputes about the ordained successor in some cases.

The social and economic support base of all Vedanta Mathas was a well structured society generally accepting the Varnashrama system, with the king's lineage identifying itself with a great lineage like Surya and Chandra Vamsha, even in cases where they were clearly not even Kshathriyas. Thus Yadavas (belonging to Krishna mythologies), Shaivas, etc also got accepted socially as rulers and they in turn supported the structure of the state supporting Hindu religious institutions. The severe blows which the Hindu psyche received over the centuries of Muslim unprovoked and irresistible assaults on their sacred structures like temples, the visual evidence of the sacred Ikons which had been worshipped for centuries, having been attributed with powers beyond imagination being degraded and destroyed in front of their own eyes, the concentrated decimation of the intellectual leaders - the Brahmin community by forced conversion or outright slaughter, the continuous impoverishment of the Hindu society by confiscation of their wealth, punitive measures and attacks on their women and children, the horror stories of massacres of entire populace by victorious invaders, the obvious worldly benefits received by the erstwhile Hindus converted to Islam, etc succeeded in almost complete demoralisation of the keepers of the traditional knowledge and scriptures – especially as it continued over centuries with no hope of any redemption. Thus the social acceptance by all classes of the intellectual leadership of the community by Brahmins was slowly watered down and almost destroyed. The effects of such a process are seen even today in free India, even when such destructive forces are not at work, by the different castes trying to establish their own Peethas for purely political reasons and trying to imitate the older traditional seats of Shasthraic learning. The deliberate destruction of records and libraries added to the sense of lack of confidence in the traditional systems of education and training and adopting the new ones imposed by the Victorious alien rulers readily as more suitable – as has happened even with the beginning of the English rule.

To be continued.

PART III

Regarding the actual period of Acharya Madhva

Introductory note

There were some discussions on the period of Acharya Madhva in web lists when it was asserted that the period 1199-1278 AD was considered as the final accepted dates based on a seminar conclusion presided over by the respected Sri 108 Pejawara Swamiji in 2006 in Poornaprajna Vidyapeeta. A booklet called "Srimadhvacharyara Kalanirnaya" by Dr. Vyasanakere Prabhanjanacharya was presented formally and discussed on this occasion. There was general consensus among the scholars present that the dates proposed in the booklet (KN) were appropriate and the Swamiji also upheld the view. However, he also mentioned that such discussions should continue in future also, keeping the door open for further reviews.

The monumental work History of the Dvaita School of Vedanta of the noted scholar Dr. B N K Sharma (HDSV) had earlier considered this issue and had favoured the period 1238-1317/8 AD as appropriate. The respected author had not only rejected the dates of KN, but had also criticized the same in his life time. But, a complete review of KN was perhaps not done.

I became interested in the subject, though poorly equipped to deal with such a sensitive subject. A formidable list of noted scholars with superior faculties have preceded me in this effort – such as Salem Subba rao, Aufrecht, C N Krishnaswamy Iyer, R G Bhandarakar, Dr. Buchanan Rice, R S Panchamukhi, C M Padmanbahacharya, H Krishnashastri, B N Saletore, C R Krishna rao, Dr. B N K Sharma, Bannanje Govindacharya and Manjeswara Govinda Pai, to name a few. I would have, given the choice, avoided sitting in judgement on such talent and experience, being poorly equipped and with limited access to sources. But, I found during some literary research on Indian history and its impact on Madhvas as well as the Orissan sources on Sri Narahari Tirtha, the second successor of Acharya Madhva, that there were a number of unjustifiable acts of omission and commission, which had crept into our Matha authored stories and some efforts were needed to weed them out. I had put forward some data and conclusions in this regard on the web – "Acharya Madhva and his disciples" earlier, with the focus on Sri Narahari Tirtha. As I was trying to extend the scope of my studies logically into authentic historical records (unfortunately limited to my ability to get information

from the web and a few books – without physical verification or inspections), I found that the issues raised in Kalanirnaya need a definitive answer which must be adopted for formulating a sound and acceptable quasi-historical picture of the establishment and development of the Madhva school. Hence, this attempt at a critical review of this booklet.

My findings are:

The dates and periods adopted by HDSV are quite in order and fully justified. On the other hand, the convoluted explanations necessary for fitting in the dates 1199-1278 AD adopted in KN, lead to many absurdities, some of them partly acknowledged in the booklet itself. The logical derivations and evidential structure of KN has many weaknesses in comparison to the better grounded HDSV data, though the latter also needs some further studies in a few areas, where KN has shown some conflicts. **Thus, I would consider that the dates 1238-1317 AD should continue to be adopted as correct and would do so for my own studies.**

I place all the results, which have been evolved after a dispassionate study and without any bias, for the constructive criticism of scholars, including the author of KN, whom I hold in high esteem. Tomorrow is the auspicious day of the Janmadina of Sri LakshmiNarasimha incarnation, whose Ikons were also established by Sri Narahari Tirtha 1281 AD (731 years back) as Yoganarasimha in SriKurmam, and whose Shasana in this regard quoted here forms an irrefutable bedrock of evidence for these dates. The extraordinary personality of Sri Narahari Tirtha (also named by Acharya Madhva after Lakshmi- Narasimha) is highlighted here and his Vrindavana in Chakratirtha near Hampi, should be an object of great veneration to all Madhvas irrespective of Matha affiliations. The tremendous contribution made by the Saint needs to be properly understood, acknowledged and gratefully remembered on the occasion. I hope and pray that his Antharyami – Mukhyaprananthargatha LakshmiNarasimha will guide us all in the right direction towards true knowledge (Yathartha).

NAPSRao

HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

Regarding the Periods of the first five great Madhva saints

Sri Padmanabha, Narahari, Madhava, Akshobhya and Jaya Tirthas

PART III (Summary)

The following is brief summary of the points made in the enclosed note. Details may be studied at leisure.

There are two sets of dates under consideration for Acharya Madhva's stay in the world of humans.

1238 – 1317 AD originally proposed by C M Padmanabhacharya in 1909 AD and supported since then by many serious research scholars like C R Krishna rao, Dr. B N K Sharma and Bannanje Govindacharya.

1199 – 1278 AD proposed in Kala Nirnaya (KN) in Kannada by Dr. Prabhanjanacharya.

This note considers the evidence and logical arguments in favour of either and also analyses the Shasanas of Sri Narahari Tirtha in some detail in this regard. The evidence offered in KN is also evaluated to determine the best option likely to be the Truth.

Traditional accounts of Sri Narahari Tirtha's stay in Orissa and his significant role in that area are mentioned and the shortcomings as well as gross errors in them are shown along with evidence.

The theory offered in KN that one should accept the period 1199 – 1278 AD based on the evidences quoted is critically examined. It is shown that there are many consequential absurdities such as very long lives exceeding a hundred years for prominent disciples of Madhva, prolonging the stay of his successors in the Peetha without any evidence etc. which vitiate the conclusions decisively. Further, the period clearly indicated by the detailed analysis of the 12 Shasanas of Sri Narahari Tirtha spread over a forty year period 1264-1303 AD which are contemporary to the events and unambiguous, rule out the alternative dates completely. The evidence offered in KN which is considered as opposing this conclusion is also analysed in detail to point out errors in fact, or logic, and possible interpretation of data to fit with the first set of dates.

The analysis includes the following additional information – Historical evidence obtained from authoritative books of reputed historians, complete details of the Shasanas as published by the Manthralayam Matha on all Madhva Shasanas, additional points noted from Sumadhvajaya etc. The data given in KN from the Kaifiyaths is accepted without further examination at face value.

The importance of this issue lies in the decisive impact of its conclusion on the life, further role and activities of three of Acharya Madhva's major disciples as well as the light it throws on the extraordinary role of Sri Narahari Tirtha at a crucial time, which is not being given proper appreciation by traditional accounts. Many false elements have found their way into his life history and need to be weeded out.

This study is meant to be a balanced analysis without any bias and is not to be construed as only critical of KN which is authored by a great scholar who has done yeoman service to Madhva cause, solely motivated to glorify Acharya Madhva. This is only part of a process of review of data, evidence and logic which is always the methodology adopted for deciding such issues with scope of further review at all stages. It is submitted with the hope that it will receive objective and dispassionate consideration. The author is happy to acknowledge his obligation to all past authors including KN in preparing this analytical review. Though with very limited knowledge and expertise on such studies, the author hopes for acceptance of his humble offering in the spirit of enshrined in the immortal words of Sri Teekacharya: "Param srimathpoornapramathigurukarunyasaranim prapannah maanyasmah". The comparison with the great saint is inappropriate and is strictly limited and stops within the scope of these words.

NAPSRao

HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

Regarding the Periods of the first five great Madhva saints

Sri Padmanabha, Narahari, Madhava, Akshobhya and Jaya Tirtha

PART III (Details)

The period of Acharya Madhva is now generally considered well settled and most of the events in his life could be dated with an accuracy of a decade or so. But, there is still considerable difference of opinion among noted scholars on the actual dates. This matter got highlighted recently in discussion on SVM list, when some persons felt that the revised dates proposed by Dr. Prabhanjana Acharya in a booklet in Kannada called "Sri Madhvacharyara Kalanirnaya" in 2002 AD was the last word on the subject having been discussed and accepted by a team of scholars headed by Sri Vishweshwara Tirtha of Pejawara Matha in Poornaprajna Vidyapeeta in 2006. Some contrary facts were also offered in discussion, including the strong criticism by Dr. B N K Sharma in his research papers after the book was published. As it is necessary to be precise about Madhva's dates, I will put forward all the main criteria and arguments known to me, in favour of the dates given in History of Dvaita school of Vedanta (HDSV) of Dr. B N K Sharma and Dr. P Achar (whose book will be referred here as KN). It will be seen that many events in Acharya Madhva's life will need reinterpretation and even the life spans and the Peethadhipathya of his immediate successors will undergo major changes based on the alternative adopted. To keep the total discussion short, relatively minor points as well as detailed arguments will be kept aside and only the ones which MUST be considered will be listed briefly here.

It is well known that Past events are made known by records preserved over time – These take the form of quasi-historical literature like Biographies, Travel accounts of visitors etc. Great events of victory in war or construction of monumental structures are also preserved for posterity by suitable memorial structures like Pillars, mausoleums, temples etc containing their description or Gift deeds to persons or institutions for posterity. Engravings in stone, Copper plates etc were also used. The events as well the construction/manufacture of the memorial structure were mostly contemporary, though some times past events were also referred to. The best records are engravings in stone available over the years in permanent structures like temples which have a history of antiquity as well as continuous usage. In such cases, one has to make sure of the language used is interpreted correctly and sometimes make allowances for exaggeration. The Shasanas pertaining to Sri Narahari Tirtha in Orissa and Andhra Pradesh today are thus the best solid evidence which has been preserved in stones of holy structures like the temples. Fortunately, the languages used and script

etc also do not pose any problems in their correct interpretation – being almost current Kannada, Telugu and Sanskrit. Thus taking all the factors into consideration, the Narahari Tirtha Shasanas are not only the best evidence available, but are also beyond refutation by production of any other type of conflicting evidence – Niravakasha, with the onus of disproving them on the opponent – that too only by a different consistent interpretation. ***Sri Narahari Tirtha himself, who has got a few of the Shasanas recorded for posterity is such a divine figure of eminence and capability which is shining even through the lapse of 8 centuries that no unkind words or thoughts can ever be expressed about their intentions or accuracy.***

When there are evidences, which have been validated properly earlier as genuine seem to provide a conflicting picture, the very first step is to study the following features of the evidence:

- i. Whether it is contemporary to the event period. (those coming later are subject to greater inaccuracies due to various causes).
- ii. Whether it is primary or hearsay or secondary.
- iii. Whether there is internal consistency.
- iv. Whether it can be dated accurately.
- v. Whether it can be understood without doubts about its contents – including interpretational problems of snippets or part relics only being available.
- vi. Whether it is subject to exaggeration (like some events like Victories in war)
- vii. Whether there are inter-dependencies like Circular arguments, mutual support etc.
- viii. Whether it is capable of an unique interpretation or multiple meanings
- ix. Whether it is consistent with a large majority of other evidences.
- x. Whether it leads to incongruities like abnormal life spans, departure from traditional values or beliefs (usually based on some truths)
- xi. Etc.

It will be seen that while the Sri Narahari Tirtha Shasanas are the best evidence, others used in Kalanirnaya to support an alternative date, do not have the same degree of validity and are also subject to many of the defects and shortcomings mentioned above. But, such an evidence of superlative import has been only cursorily dealt with in KN. While the evidence is admitted as genuine, the purpose of its examination and even anxiety is only to try to show that this evidence does not oppose the suggested dates - 1199 – 1278 AD, which is based on some other ground like the literal interpretation of a shloka in Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya towards which, it is clearly biased. But, unfortunately, this does not enable proper conclusions to be drawn either about the relative significance of this date or the clear pointers favouring the later set of dates – 1238 – 1317 AD. This will be examined in detail here. Almost all the records relied upon in KN are later statements, conjectures and even unsupported guesses, with the evidence seen from the

view point of a counsel presenting evidence on behalf of his client – but there is a difference of opinion, whether it needs to be interpreted as done by Sri P Acharya and some others, with literal meaning, disallowing all other possible interpretations.

Common ground as generally accepted by all:

The older dates which have been proposed in the past by previous analysts on various grounds can be grouped in the following categories:

- i. Matha records,
- ii. Individual studies.

Most of these dates falling in the period (1025 – 1120) to (1121 – 1199) AD came up without taking the vital factor of the Kalinga Shasanas, which were first discovered and published in 1850 AD in the Vlzag Gazetter. Dr. R S Panchamukhi and Dr. B N K Sharma studied these. It is now accepted by all that these Shasanas precisely define the dates of Sri Narahari Tirtha, a direct shishya and the second successor of Acharya Madhva and thus indirectly give greater precision to Madhva's own dates.

The older dates have all been virtually given up even by the conservative Matha administrations and only two sets are in the field. Both claim to take the Kalinga Shasanas into account. These are:

- I. 1238 – 1317 AD originally proposed by C M Padmanabhacharya in 1909 AD and supported since then by many serious research scholars like C R Krishna rao, Dr. B N K Sharma and Bannanje Govindacharya.
- II. 1199 – 1278 AD proposed in KN by Dr. Prabhanjanacharya.

The fundamental basis for the assigning of the birth year as 1199 AD is the definitive statement by Acharya Madhva himself regarding his incarnation in Kaliyuga (present age) as per Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya – chapter 32 – shloka 128, being interpreted strictly literally to mean the exact .year of birth and not a general statement pertaining to the century (4300 years).

The end year is derived based on the traditionally accepted “life” (stay in the visible world) of 79 years. It is this period **which has been claimed as finally approved** by distinguished scholars of the Poornaprajna Vidyapeeta in 2006. Other points accepted axiomatically by all sides is the order of succession of the main Peetha of Acharya Madhva – first, Sri Padmanabha Tirtha traditionally considered as having graced it only for 7 years followed by Sri Narahari Tirtha, who is assigned a stay of 9 years - giving a total period of 16 years by both of them after Acharya Madhva. The final year of Sri Narahari Tirtha is also accepted as 1233 AD by all. There are some disputes about whether Acharya Madhva initiated the next two ascetic- successors of his Peetha – Sri Madhava Tirtha and Sri Akshobhya Tirtha or whether they were initiated by Sri Padmanabha Tirtha. The final date of Sri Akshobhya Tirtha is

also accepted as 1365 AD. This issue does not affect the period of Madhva directly unless one chooses to change his assigned period of 79 years – which is irrelevant here for the study as both KN and HDSV accept 79 years.

Before making a detailed study of all the available Kalinga Shasanas, let us look at the traditional accounts of Sri Narahari Tirtha's life:

- a. *Sri Narahari Tirtha's poorvashrama name was Shyama Sastry, an advaita follower, whose father was in a senior administrative position in Kalinga kingdom. The son took the same position (perhaps a similar career) after his father had retired. This had happened even before he met Acharya Madhva.*
- b. *Shyama sastry met Acharya Madhva on his return trip from Badari and took up Sannyasa (Ascetic vows) as Sri Narahari Tirtha with his direction. When he wanted to follow his Guru in his travels, Madhva told him: The Kalinga kingdom is now leaderless, as the king has died. The queen is pregnant. You should stay on here till the baby boy is born and grows to proper age and crown him as the king.*
- c. *When you have fulfilled your responsibility to the kingdom thus, you should bring me with the permission of the King, the Idols of Moola Rama, Lakshmana and Seeta originally worshipped by Brahma himself.*
- d. *Thus, when Narahari Tirtha returned to Kalinga and was engaged in penance there in a cave, the royal elephant garlanded him. He thus became a minister in Kalinga. After the royal baby was born and came of age, he crowned him and came back to Acharya Madhva along with the Idols as desired. As soon as the saint left Kalinga, the treasury of Kalinga was burnt to ashes.*
- e. *Madhva worshipped the Idols for 80 days in Udupi and disappeared from human sight.*
- f. *Sri Narahari Tirtha ascended the Peetha after Sri Padmanabha Tirtha and ruled for 9 years and entered his vrindavana near Chakra Tirtha in Hampi.*

It is obvious that the stories have been developed with the perspective of Sri Narahari Tirtha's role in the Peetha and the Orissa events are mostly imaginary and/or based on corrupted hearsay. It is interesting that even today, most traditional speakers at all levels keep repeating the same stories in their discourses taking the accounts given in compositions like Gurucharithe, Sripoornabodha-guruvamsha-kathakalpatharu, Sathkatha etc even after the errors and distortions have been highlighted by researchers of eminence with proof. This is because of the unquestioning faith usually associated with the Sanskrit language compositions of antiquity coupled with a stubborn attitude of keeping their minds closed to all facts and information which deviates from their chosen theories propagated over the centuries.

The real story disclosed by the Shasanas as well as the Historical records inclusive of those from Orissa (Kalinga) which was the field of activity of Sri Narahari Tirtha has already been briefly discussed in my “Acharya Madhva and his disciples” available on the Internet. A brief summary of the distortions is as follows:

- A. The service of Sri Shyama sastry in Kalinga was hereditary (Shasana of 1281 AD) and continued even after he was initiated into the ascetic order as Sri Narahari Tirtha by Acharya Madhva with his specific permission. The event of the King who died with the son yet to be born and Sri Narahari Tirtha having been chosen by the palace elephant to look after the kingdom till the baby was born and grew up to age etc is totally imaginary and ornamented – as it partially obscures and distorts the fact that the ascetic Sri Narahari Tirtha had functioned as a temple administrator, local chieftain, a Governor of a province and the ruling regent of the State over a very long period of 30 years plus.

- B. The Shasanas available show clearly that Sri Narahari tirtha was active in Orissa/Kalinga/SriKurmam more than a decade before the death of King Bhanudeva I in 1278 AD, when the period of his regency rule of Kalinga started. The date of his first meeting Acharya Madhva was prior to 1264 AD, the date of his first Shasana, as accepted by all. While Acharya Madhva, a Sarvajna, would have known about all the past and future developments, the story of his directing Sri Narahari Tirtha to go back *immediately* (see b above) after the latter’s initiation and become regent/ruler of Kalinga is thus ***totally fictitious***. As a matter of established fact, Sri Narahari Tirtha is a unique personality among Madhva saints, who served Orissan society ably for 3 decades and more - a full time career – after becoming a Sannyasi at a young age, in all capacities, including that of the head of the state and commander in chief. He also served the lotus feet of his master with distinction and became a successor to the great Madhva Peetha. At the same time, his being a great scholar with fifteen compositions to his credit, indicate his authority in the interpretation of Shastras, which could have been derived only from the great Madhva himself. One can easily visualize his greatness and the importance of his contribution, which is unsurpassed by anyone else. All this is reduced to a children’s story of a palace elephant garlanding a meditating ascetic by chance and his acting as an agency for bringing a set of Idols, the fictitious account being fabricated long after, due to total ignorance of the actual Orissa events. Even the Matha founded by him seems to have been forgotten by main stream Madhvas after a century or so and its existence seems to have been noticed only recently.

Orissan history also records the movement of Idols but only after he had completed his term of regency in 1290/91. There are also reasons to believe that he might have stayed on for at least 2/3 years more, if one goes by shasanas available till 1294 AD. In fact, according to this record, the Idols could not have reached Acharya Madhva at all, before he left finally for Badari – if we take the figure of KN – 1978 AD, when Sri Narahari Tirtha was just commencing his rulership. Acharya Madhva's visit to Orissa area to meet Sri Narahari Tirtha is also accepted to be at least 15/16 years earlier – thus rendering the entire story including the pregnant wife of the dead king an obvious falsity. Thus the KN dates (1199 – 1278 AD) have a major Badhaka pramana (discrepancy) in explaining the movement of the Moola Rama Idols from Orissa to Udipi, which it stipulates as having taken place a few months before Acharya Madhva's final departure to Badari kshethra. The suggestion of KN that they were moved in 1278 AD is full of flaws of facts and logic (**Dosha-dushtam** and **heyam**). For example:-

- i. The ruling Orissan King Bhanudeva I was dying in 1978 AD with no heirs ready to take over and Sri Narahari Tirtha was already in a crucial senior position looking after the country as the Rajaguru – he could hardly leave Orissa for a personal trip of a few months in those days to distant Udipi to take the Moola Idols. It is well known that at such times, enemy states would try to take advantage of the situation and attack, apart from palace intrigues and general tendency to become lax in public order. Thus his coming to Udipi in 1278 AD is impossible.
- ii. His 1281 Shasana which specifically mentions the Madhva Guru Parampare in detail does not contain any indication of Madhva's final departure from the world of humans in 1278 AD, a major traumatic event which must have occurred three years earlier as per the KN – see detailed comments, which follow later. On the other hand, the shasana implicitly refers to him as a living person.
- iii. Sri Narahari Tirtha had accepted Tatvavada of Madhva as the true Vedanta system after meeting him and embraced the ascetic's life, about 14 years earlier – before 1264 AD, but continued in Orissa (See detailed notes on shasanas dated 1264 and 1271 AD). If Madhva received the Idols from him and disappeared after a few days, in 1278 AD, when could Sri Narahari Tirtha ever study with his master? All the rest of his life – till 1333 AD (55 years later) would be without Madhva being available – which would never be acceptable either to the Guru or the Shishya. How would one explain his succession to the peetha 46 years later, which must have been approved by

Acharya Madhva himself, without any substantial interaction between them and his obvious scholarly authority to compose Teekas on the Sarvamoola compositions. This peculiar inexplicable situation has arisen only because, his meeting Madhva according to KN is in Madhva's "After 60" years (1262/63) and the latter stayed only for about 16/17 years after that – during which time Sri Narahari Tirtha was known to be fully occupied in Orissa!

- iv. Sumadhvajaya (Chapter 9 – shlokas 13-20) is clear that the visit of Acharya Madhva to Godavari river bank was on the return trip of the first visit to Badari which followed soon after his southern tour – at which stage he had composed only two compositions - Geetha Bhashya before starting on the trip and Brahma Suthra Bhashya in Badari itself. It also specifically mentions his meeting Sri Shobhana Bhatta there at this time, though it is silent about Sri Shyama Sastry. This trip must necessarily have taken place when Madhva was still very young – in his early twenties – say 1220/21 or so, if Madhva was born in 1199 AD. This natural setting for the meeting with Sri Narahari Tirtha either near Orissa or in Orissa itself (Puri Jagannatha) used as such in HDSV, has to be discarded (as done in the KN), as otherwise, he would also be of the same order of age as Madhva (slightly younger as proposed by HDSV). His other activities in Orissa seem to start around 1264 AD (first shasana) when he would already be around 60 years of age, like Madhva himself. This puts his claim in 1281 shasana that he protected the SriKurmam temple and fought the Shabaras in battle in serious doubt and will also put him in power as a regent only when he was nearly 80 years of age, which continued till he was a ripe 90 plus years of age. He left Orissa when he was 93 years and came and stayed with Sri Padmanabha Tirtha, till he took over the Peetha when he would be more than 120 years of age and ruled for 9 more years. To avoid this impossible and ridiculous scenario, KN proposes (page 35) his probable birth date as 1234 AD and his meeting Madhva when he was around 30 years of age. This meeting must necessarily have taken place in another occasion – as it could not be the first visit of Acharya Madhva to Godavari river. This is again conveniently assumed in KN as the second Badari visit. Unfortunately this ties us in knots, when we consider the recorded meeting with Sri Shobhana Bhatta during the first Badari visit, and who is accepted to be of the same age as Acharya Madhva. Some of the **unrealistic results of this assumption** have been implied in KN itself :

a. **Sri Shobhana Bhatta did not become an ascetic for 37 years (1221-1258 AD) after meeting Acharya Madhva in Godavari river bank and accepting his philosophy.** He had to continue as a Grihastha and also did Tatvaprachara as the chief exponent of Tatvavada with an authority second only to Madhva for such a long period in that Ashrama. His importance in Tatvaprachara is unequivocally stated in Sumadhvavijaya, which described his first meeting with the Poorvashrama name.in 9 th Sarga and shlokas 17- 26. The next mention there is in the 15 th Sarga, shlokas 120 – 126, where he is called by his ascetic name only, the identity being defined by his coming from the Godavari river bank, with no mention of when and where he took the vows of Sannyasa. The KN scenario is clearly untenable. So much for the Kaifiyath quoted in page 18 of KN stating that Sri Shobhana Bhatta was given Sannyasa Deeksha in 1258 AD and named Sri Padmanabha Tirtha by Acharya Madhva in Kanvatirtha near Kasaragode !. On the other hand, it appears normal that Sri Padmanabha Tirtha had been initiated a few months or a year or two after his first meeting and named with his ascetic name to facilitate his extensive and independent travels over different parts of Karnataka, the place of his origin. Even the possibility that he might have been formally declared as Acharya's successor in 1258 AD, though he might have already been initiated as an ascetic earlier (assuming that the Kaifiyath had distorted this event) does not seem to fit in – as with the alternative date of 1238 AD as the birth date of Madhva, they would both be only around 20 years of age in 1258 AD. If we take 1199 AD, as Madhva's date of birth, the long interval between their first meeting and this day continues to haunt us, as surely Madhva would not have taken such a long time to make his successor known.

By adopting the 1238-1317 AD period for Madhva, the meetings of both Sri Shobhana Bhatta and Sri Shyama Sastry can be stipulated as coming up in the first visit return from Badari – around 1260 AD, when Acharya Madhva was 22 years (see HDSV). Sri Bhatta could be perhaps slightly older than the great genius Madhva – say 30 years of age, to fit in with his unique and monumental scholastic attainments described by Sumadhvavijaya – chapter 9 shlokas (17, 18), while Sri Shastry would be younger than Madhva by one or

two years. ***The assumption in KN that Sri Bhatta was younger than Acharya Madhva by as much as 11 years (DOB of 1199 - Madhva vs 1210 - Bhatta) – (page 34), is grossly incorrect*** as it disregards the fact that Madhva himself could not have been more than 20/22 years of age at the time of their meeting on the Godavari river bank, during his first return trip from Badari. This conclusion about Madhva's age at the time is independent of the actual birth date of Madhva and is derived from the ages of his Sannyasa (9 years - 1208 AD as per KN), his south Indian tour completed in his teens, and immediately followed by his Badari trip as well as his meeting Sri Bhatta during his return on the unquestioned authority of Sumadhvajaya itself. On the other hand, Sri Bhatta's scholastic attainments befitting his stature at the time needed at least some minimum age, as he was considered the leader of the entire assembly of scholars facing Madhva. Their initiation could be close to the visit itself – possibly immediately after Acharya Madhva's return to Udupi by 1261/62 AD and Sri Narahari Tirtha would be directed to return to Orissa by Madhva himself. Thus the problem of the large time gap in Sri Shobhana Bhatta becoming Sri Padmanabha Tirtha vanishes into thin air!

- b. He continued in the Peetha after Acharya Madhva from 1278 AD to 1324 AD – for 46 years, as assumed in KN as against a traditionally accepted 7 years. (This serious departure from a tradition which is obviously more significant than a Kaifiyath, is simply recommended for acceptance in page 35 of KN).

With the 1238-1317 AD period for Acharya Madhva, and the suggested age difference between them of 8 years (a) above, he would be born in 1230 AD and would enter his Vrindavana in Hampi in 1324 AD – at a ripe age of 94 years. No change in the duration of his traditional period of 7 years in the Peetha after Madhva is necessary.

- c. **Sri Padmanabha Tirtha lived for 114 years** as per KN – 1210 to 1324 AD, (wrongly computed and given as 103 years in page 34 of the KN) outliving Acharya Madhva, who was a contemporary, by 46 years. Such a long life would have left some memories (even in kaifiyaths) – as it is so rare, as in Sri Vadiraja's case – but despite lack of evidence,

KN simply recommends its acceptance as “***it is not impossible***” for a person described as “Yogimauli” in Sumadhavijaya. Note that if Sri Bhatta was older by 8 years to Madhva as proposed earlier in (a), **his life span is 133 years (1191 – 1324 AD)**. In any case, **it is absurd to suggest that he was younger by 11 years, as compared to a 21 year old person**, but still was considered as a great scholar and doyen of the assembly. Even as a great concession, **if we consider both to be of the same age, his life span has still to be 125 years (1199 – 1324 AD)**. KN has tried to show that he is younger to reduce the duration of his life to a plausible level – unfortunately overlooking the Sumadhavijaya evidence itself. This data alone is adequate to rule out the 1199 AD birth date for Acharya Madhva, which is so obviously incompatible with 1324 AD vrindavana pravesha of Sri Padmanabha Tirtha.

Instead of all these contrived explanations, 1238 AD birth of Acharya Madhva gives him a normal life span of 94 years (as shown in b above). Another revealing way of looking at this issue is to note that once Sri Padmanabha Tirtha’s Vrindavana pravesha date is accepted as 1324 AD, he could not be born before 1224 AD (for a maximum normal life of a centurion) and Acharya Madhva could never be 25 years older to him, when they met on the Godavari river bank during the first return trip from Badari Kshethra, as he was himself less than 25 years of age at that time as per Sumadhavijaya. **In such a case, the meeting could not even be physically possible – as the future Sri Padmanabha Tirtha was not yet born.**

All these distortions of normally accepted figures for his reign have occurred only because of the insistence on 1199 AD as the birth date of Acharya Madhva, which is not basically compatible with the dates given by Sri Narahari Tirtha’s Shasanas and Sri Padmanabha Tirtha’s initiation given in Sumadhavijaya.

With 1199 AD as the birth date of Acharya Madhva, KN is obliged to stipulate a date of birth for Sri Shyama Sastry as in 1234 AD (page 35), his meeting Madhva in 1260 AD when the latter was more than 60 years old and not during the Godavari river bank visit described in Sumadhavijaya etc. His life span is assessed as from 1234 – 1333 AD – 99 years, but most of his life he spent away from Madhva who went away for his final visit to Badari in 1278 AD except for some brief period after the first meeting in or near about Orissa around 1260 AD. Similarly, if

one considers that Sri Vishnu Tirtha, his Poorvashrama brother was just 8 years younger than Madhva (based on Madhva's Sannyasa at the age of 9 years) as per Sumadhvajaya has a period of 106 years (1207 – 1313 AD), before he ascended Kumara parvatha as per tradition. An interesting observation based on KN dates in this regard is that out of the Madhva shishyas mentioned in Sumadhvajaya, at least Sri Sathya Tirtha and Padmanabha Tirtha could be contemporaries of the same age or older than Acharya Madhva. Among the Ashta matha ascetics, only 3 seem to have final dates around 1290 AD, while the other 5 are all dated 1307 – 1316 AD. All these should have been initiated shortly after Krishna Prathishta in Udupi dated 1238 AD as per the kaifiyaths. Thus, five of them were able to worship Lord Krishna in Udupi for 70 years plus, while the longest did so for 78 years. This would only be possible for Bala Sannyasis, while the other three who went almost 20 years earlier could be married. Even in the case of these ascetics, one should have to assign very long life times. *The basic problem one should note, is that because Acharya Madhva's birth date is being pushed back by 39 years (from 1238 to 1199 AD) all persons who are his real life contemporaries and whose dates of final journeys are settled have this figure added on to their lives – elongating their lives unduly.*

With 1238 AD, all the actions of Acharya Madhva, and Sri Narahari Tirtha etc fall into place in normal sequence and order and their lives are normalised. Of course, some Kaifiyath data like the date of Krishna Prathishta will have to be discarded or re-evaluated on other evidence

- v. One has only to visualize the unlikely scenario of Sri Narahari Tirtha bringing the Idols to Udupi, in 1278 AD (in the middle and peak of his career in Orissa and when things were most critical in that state) and after seeing them worshipped by Acharya Madhva for a few weeks and his disappearance, go back to Orissa to become the regent, with the intense pangs of separation of Madhva's departure – and rule Orissa for at least 12 years etc – if one takes the KN figures, to realize that all this seems totally farfetched conflicting with the Orissan evidence, of his bringing the Idols AFTER his regency (1291 AD).

It would seem almost a direct indication by providence that the year 1278 AD, was the exact year when King Bhanudeva I died as per history and Sri Narahari Tirtha became the regent in Orissa far away from Udupi to show that Acharya

Madhva would not have selected that EXACT year to go away to Badari. One should also keep in mind the difficulties of travel as well as time required for all the actions needed to accommodate all the events stated to be done at that time by Sri Narahari Tirtha, if one still holds on to 1199 AD as the birth year of Acharya Madhva. In my view this is a Niravakasha Pramana which rules out this date. Once this specific year is discarded, the need for the literal interpretation of the Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya shloka is also abandoned and other evidence would be used for the purpose.

There is one more serious discrepancy which becomes unsolvable with the 1199 AD date, which shows that a **Kaifiyath without corroboration is a dangerous prop to lean on.** As mentioned earlier, Sri Padmanabha Tirtha was ordained in Kanva Tirtha in 1258 AD by Acharya Madhva as per the Kaifiyath records. Sri Narahari Tirtha was Ashrama junior to him as accepted and hence must have been ordained later than 1258 AD but before 1264 AD, when his first Shasana has been recorded. The Kaifiyaths are silent about his initiation and **where** he was initiated. If we accept the version of the initiation of Sri Shobhana Bhatta, nearly four decades after his meeting with Acharya Madhva, which should have taken place in 1220 AD or so, even before Sri Shyama Sastry was born (1234 AD), the latter's meeting Acharya Madhva must be a separate incident decades later occurring near about Orissa itself. It is highly unlikely that Acharya Madhva made a special visit to that area in the period 1258 – 1264 AD and this meeting could have come about only during the return visit from the second Visit to Badari, which should be assigned this date. As there is no Udupi based record of his initiation either in 1258 AD or later, he would have been initiated near Orissa itself. This poses problems in accepting that Sri Padmanabha Tirtha who was initiated in Udupi (Kanva Tirtha) after Madhva's return from the second trip, was Ashrama Jyeshta.

If one notes the involved explanations of a huge delay between Madhva's first and second trips (1220 and 1257/58), and the second trip postponed decades after the Krishna Prathishtana when all the participants were in their fifties and sixties which is unlikely and the unsolved problem of Ashrama Jyeshtathva of Sri Padmanabha Tirtha to Sri Narahari Tirtha, etc it is clear that the source of this difficulty is the assumption of the dates of Madhva's visits to Badari, as related to Sri Narahari Tirtha's Shasanas. **When Madhva's period is considered as 1238-1317, the problem disappears as there need be only one visit to Godavari river bank, around 1259/60, when Acharya Madhva met both the successors and could have converted and initiated them either there or in Udupi on suitable occasions.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE IN SUMADHVAVIJAYA:

Sumadhvavijaya mentions the meeting of Sri Shobhana Bhatta and Acharya Madhva in the Godavari river bank in shlokas 17 – 19 of chapter 9. No indication exists whether he was initiated into Sannyasa there, though his acceptance of Madhva Shastra was complete and he himself started giving Pravachanas extensively before many gatherings of scholars about its superiority and its being the only one capable of giving Moksha. He himself was a great scholar in Vedas, Nyaya, Bharata and the Puranas. His listening to Madhva Bhashya from Madhva himself is also mentioned. Then the return to Udupi is mentioned without any details of the trip. Sri Padmanabha Tirtha's name again comes up not as Shobhana Bhatta, but as Sri Padmanabha Tirtha who was the second great shishya mentioned by name after Sri Vishnu Tirtha in Shlokas no. 120 -126 of chapter 15. This section is included in the description of several Madhva shishyas in the chapter after the detailed account of debate with Sri Thrivikrama Panditha and the composition of Anuvyakhya at his request. There is no mention of initiation of any of the ascetics whose names are mentioned in this chapter. ***Sri Upendra Tirtha's ascetic name is mentioned in Bhavaprakashika as having accompanied Acharya Madhva in one of his Badari trips in Chapter 10. Shloka 21, showing that he must have been initiated before the second Badari Visit and at around the time of Installation of the Udupi Krishna Ikon – (1238 AD as per KN).*** In shloka 127, it is also clearly stated that Acharya Madhva had disciples other than Sri Vishnu Tirtha and Sri Padmanabha Tirtha who had taken the vows **both before and after** these two and the names of the 7 other founder ascetics of Udupi Mathas are mentioned – though the derivative meaning based on the words used also refer to various great qualities of even other Madhva disciples such as Renunciation, Devotion etc. This evidence clearly shows that Acharya Madhva did not necessarily initiate all the ascetics in Udupi/KanvaTirtha etc only after coming back from Badari after the second visit. Particularly, the initiation of Sri Narahari Tirtha, Sri Upendra Tirtha and probably Sri Padmanabha Tirtha also which must have taken place elsewhere, (not withstanding the kaifiyath) – as only that would have authorized him fully to be the main speaker about Tatvavada immediately after initiation, even during Acharya Madhva's stay on earth, which is clearly stated in Sumadhvavijaya.

- vi. There are other serious incongruities regarding the dates of Madhva's other successors like Sri Akshobya Tirtha etc which will not be discussed here.

In addition to the SriKurmam shasanas, Dr. P Acharya has also listed the following in his book – KN.

A. Kaifiyaths of the eight Mathas of Udupi:

These were recorded by Colonel Mckenzie in 1806 AD. Dr. P Acharya observes that they were internally consistent and represented valuable data preserved over the centuries which have not been given due regard

for fixing Madhva's dates He has himself gathered the following information on the subject of Acharya Madhva.

Date of birth Kalayukthi samvatsara magha shudda saphami – shalivahana shaka 1121 (corresponding to 1199 AD)

Final departure to Badari – Iswara samvatsara magha shudda navami – shalivahana shaka 1200 (corresponding to 1278 AD).

An additional information that Acharya Madhva initiated Shobana Bhatta in Kanva Tirtha (near Udupi) as Sri Padmanabha Tirtha in Pingala Vaishakha shudda Saphami – Shalivahana shaka – 1180 AD (corresponding to 1258 AD).

These statements were believed to be true when they were recorded as authentic Matha history in Udupi. Though I have not studied these records personally, and will take the word of the author of KN, the question has also been mentioned in general terms by Sri C M Padmanabhachar also in Chapter III of his book. He has observed as follows:

“Prima facie, one would certainly feel convinced on the strength of the Matam list – but certain points that bewilder the enquirer and cast doubts on the point.

The Matam list contained no Shaka date at all but the Jovian years alone such as Vilambi, Pingala etc. The corresponding Shaka date is conjectured.

The names of the Samvatsaras according to our calendar when Acharya Madhva was born have been variously given as Kalayukthi, Vilambi etc by various pramanas. **KT argument that the Kaifiyaths support the position of literal interpretation of the Mahabharata Tātparya Nirnaya shloka is no additional weightage of validity for it, as the former is based on the latter and in any case, a secondary evidence** which has been seen to be wrong in many cases. The arguments are essentially circular in nature – the Kaifiyaths which assume the birth date of 1199 AD also support it and are hence held valid!. Please read the studies of Sri C M Padmanabhacharya and Dr. B N K Sharma in this regard.

B. Sampradaya Paddhathi of Sri Hrishikesha Tirtha

This text which has been accepted as authentic in conveying many matters of detail about Acharya Madhva's life history as a supplement to Sumadhvajaya contains a shloka which says that before Madhva left for Badarikashrama he gave direction to the eight heads of the Udupi Mathas as well as the great ascetic Sri Padmanabha Tirtha about their future duties (after his departure). Combined with the dates of final departures of the 8 Udupi ascetics, which have all been given as happening between (1290 – 1313 AD) as per the kaifiyaths, it is concluded that Acharya Madhva must have departed for Badari before the earliest of these dates – 1290 AD. The possibility that any of them had gone before Madhva is ruled out on account of statements in Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya.

This conclusion is obviously based on the accuracy of the dates of the departure of the eight Madhva shishyas recorded in the Kaifiyaths, which may be consistent only with the 1199 AD date of departure of Acharya Madhva. Here again, **there is no additional weightage of evidence, except to show the internal consistency of the kaifiyaths, which by itself does not conclusively prove their validity or accuracy. The support claimed for the date 1199 AD is thus not from Sampradaya Paddathi, but again from the Kaifiyaths**, as the shloka could well be true with another consistent set of dates also. In any case, if its authorship by Sri Hrishikesha Tirtha who went first is accepted, it can not speak about the dates of other ascetics who outlived him. Another publication by Dr. Prabhanjanacharya called Udipi Ashtamathagala Parampare – records that all the eight disciples seem to have departed in remote places where there would seem to be no relic left or even specific places known – such as Kashi, Bhagirathi river, Prayaga, Krishna river bank, Himalayan peak, and Dhasnushkoti etc. Considering the shorter Paryaya system prevalent in their time and their living within the precincts of the Krishna temple itself as generally accepted, one would have to treat the dates of departure of these disciples given in Kaifiyaths with some caution. In any case, these could change completely when the basis of computation changes, as it did with the old Muttam records, which had spoken of a century earlier as Madhva's dates. The very vagueness about the places of their final resting indicates that the dates also could be vague. Further, there is no proof for a specific 1199 AD and its corresponding 1278 AD – as the latter could be any time till 1190 AD. **The evidentiary value of these records is thus secondary compared to Sri Narahari Tirtha Shila Shasanas recorded at the concurrent time and authenticated by historical research.**

- C. The date of Sri Hrishikesha Tirtha's final departure to heaven.
- D. The date of Sri Vishnutirtha climbing up the Kumara Parvatha.

Both these are covered by the analytical comments made above in B. It is also stated in KT that Sri Hrishikesha Tirtha had lived for 12 years after Acharya Madhva according to some old records in Palimaru Matha. This could be true without necessarily accepting the date of 1290 AD for his final departure, which seems to be based on Acharya Madhva's final departure in 1278 AD. The dates of kaifiyaths are thus seen to be based on 1199 – 1278 AD, which is in turn is firmly based on a literal interpretation of Mahabharata Tātparya Nirnaya shloka.

The logic is thus essentially a circular argument as, if we accept the literal interpretation of the shloka, all these Kaifiyath statements are true and if the kaifiyath statements are valid, the date is 1199 AD!. Thus all these

arguments only convey the known fact that Kaifiyath evidence is based on the 1199 – 1278 AD period of Acharya Madhva, as recorded by Mckenzie.

E. One Shasana in Beluru attributed to Sri Padmanabha Tirtha.

This Shasana is dated 7 th May 1277 AD according to KN and is also included in Vol 1 of Madhvamathagala Shasanagalu in Kannada referred to earlier. The logic appears to be that Sri Padmanabha Tirtha had stayed there for some time as per the wording of the Shasana. The further statements made in the book KN about Acharya Madhva having visited Beluru etc do not seem to be in any way useful to determine the birth/departure dates of Acharya Madhva except that he was still there at that time – 1277 AD. This fact is neutral to both alternative dates of departure of Madhva – 1278 AD and 1317 AD and hence this is not relevant evidence for the choice.

F. Old records of Sri Subrahmanya Matha.

This set of data from the Subrahmanya matha quoted in KN consists of

- i. As written in a piece of palm leaf about Chandogya Bhashya in the Matha, the Idol of Narasimha was handed over by one Narasimha tirtha (Bhattacharya) in Siddharthi samvatsara (corresponding to the 4340 years of Kaliyuga. KN concludes that 4340 is perhaps incorrect, but the nearest Siddharthi samvatsara corresponds to 1259 AD. As Madhva would only be 21 years of age at that time, his date of birth can not be 1238 AD. But, if one takes the earlier date – 1199 AD, Madhva would be 60 years of age. The next Siddharthi after 60 years cycle falls in 1319 years, falling outside the range of the later period.

The dates given here are internally inconsistent as stated by the KN itself. The assumption of “4340” years as valid, will make Acharya Madhva about 40 years of age when the event took place assuming that he was born according to the literal meaning of 4300 years after Kaliyuga beginning. The conclusion that “Siddharthi” alone is valid, while the number is invalid has no real basis, except that it supports the conclusion which KN is seeking to prove. Relying only on this pramana will be unjustified except as an additional support to a fact already established separately. It is also a matter of unproven opinion and a hazardous statement that Acharya Madhva could not have won the debate and received the Idol at the age of 21 years (based on 1238 AD birth date), while he could do so when he was 60 years of age (based on 1197 AD birthdate). All indications show that Acharya Madhva was about to start his Badari first journey around this period and there are records of Madhva

having defeated many disputants even much earlier in the South Indian Yathra..

- ii. A rare copper inscription dated 1272 AD in the Matha records that a gift was given to Sri Aniruddha Tirtha, disciple of Sri Vishnu Tirtha, the poorvashrama younger brother of Acharya Madhva. Madhva would only be 34 years of age by this time, if the later set of dates is considered, but would be 73 years of age with the earlier set.

This Shasana is not mentioned in the list of Shasanas quoted in the books vol I and II of Madhvamathagala Shasanagalu. One hopes that it has been studied by experts and validated specially regarding its date.

According to Kaifiyaths mentioned in KN (page 13), Acharya Madhva took Sannyasa when he was 9 years of age (Anumadhvacharithe gives 11 years of age.). Acharya's younger brother Sri Vishnu Tirtha was born a year earlier to his Sannyasa as this was the precondition which he had accepted for parental permission for Sannyasa. The brother grew up and fulfilled his duties to his parents in their old age and death, and became totally renunciate and asked to be admitted to Acharya's group of disciples. We also know from Sumadhvavijaya that there were two earlier stillborn male children, followed by a surviving elder sister to Acharya Madhva (who should have been at least 13 years older as Madhva himself was born after his parents made a special service to Lord Anantheswara for his birth for 12 long years, after all this had happened). Thus, when Sri VishnuTirtha was born at least 8 years later after Vasudeva (Madhva) – the parents would have been married at least 24/25 years and hence well past middle age. . It is therefore unlikely that the parents survived much beyond 20 years age of the younger brother. Thus Sri Vishnu Tirtha's Sannyasa could be around his age of 21/22 years, when Acharya Madhva could be around 30 years. There is no improbability in highly evolved and great person such as Sri Vishnu Tirtha having a shishya younger to himself called Aniruddha Tirtha within a 3/4 year period after this. The names Aniruddha Tirtha and Badarayana Tirtha are mentioned in Sumadhvavijaya itself in Chapter 15, shloka 115/117. In any case, KN itself mentions that indications of dates in numbers could be wrong in such documents, even when the document itself is validated. **Thus unless there are other confirmatory evidences this Shasana alone is inadequate to rule out Madhva's later period, specially when the later date is proven by strong and valid Niravakasha pramanas, Sri Padmanabha Tirtha's age data and the Kalinga Narahari Tirtha Shasanas.**

G. Shasanas in Udipi Krishna matha

- i. Gift to Sri Vidyamurthy Tirtha in 1357 AD. The ascetic was the fifth from Sri Hrishikeshha Tirtha.
- ii. The same Shasana also mentions Sri Vidyadhiraja Tirtha of Krishnapura matha who is the sixth after Sri Janardana Tirtha, the first Madhva disciple of the Matha.

This Shasana appears in the Book Madhvamathagala Shasanagalu – the donor being Harihararaya II of Vijayanagara. The date has been determined as 1396 AD. The date of 1357 AD mentioned in KN is incorrect also noting the reign period of Harihara Raya II, which is easily confirmed from Vijayanagara History. Thus the argument that the later date of Madhva is impractical based on 1357 AD of the Shasana loses all merit.

- iii. Another Shasana in the same location mentions gifts to the temple by a chief of Barakur kingdom called Mallappa Odeyar, a vassal of Vijayanagara empire This is assumed to be dated 1366 AD, Parabhava samvatsara. The recipient was a Puthige ascetic called Sri Yadavendra tirtha, the fourth after Acharya Madhva.

This Shasana has some serious doubt about the date as only the Samvatsara has been mentioned as given in item 31 of the Madhvamathagala Shasanagalu, Vol II. The earlier date ascribed to it in KN appears to be less likely and a date of 1530 AD, when a Mallappa Odeyar ruled Barakur state has been accepted corresponding to the 14th Peethadhipati of Shiruru matha at that time, by the editors of the book. Thus this argument of the Puthige Matha pontiff of the fourth generation was not likely to be there in 1366 does not seem to be valid. In fact, even assuming the earlier set of ruler and Swamiji for arguments sake, the date of Puthige Matha Swamiji Sri Yadavendra is shown as 1385 AD in the book (not 1366) and the earlier Mallappa Odeyar ruled Barakur in around 1385 AD. The error in KN is based on the wrong assumption of the date of Barakur king of the earlier period. Unless Dr P Acharya produces his own evidence to justify his statement, if he differs from the contents of the book given above, no conclusion as he has drawn can be acceptable. If it is based on Kaifiyaths only, the dates could be unreliable.

Perusal of the list above shows that with the exception of one copper plate Shasana of Subrahmanya matha mentioned earlier, which may partially be in favour of the earlier set of dates if proved to be valid and the dates are also established, there is no undisputed record of events by contemporary persons – as are the Shasanas of Sri Narahari Tirtha in Kalinga. All the rest are hearsay, secondary and derived from a literal meaning.

These data which Sri P Acharya relies on such as the Kaifiyaths are made much later than the events themselves and that too, after the data has passed through many sources and generations and thus may be indicative of sequencing or order but may not be precise with regard to time to the same degree as the contemporary stone shasanas. It is therefore necessary to analyse the Kalinga Shasanas to get as much information from them directly as possible. As there is no dispute regarding the contents and admissibility of the Shasanas, they should provide the best evidence based on which both the proposals can be evaluated for a firm conclusion.

Analysis of Sri Narahari Tirtha Shasanas:

Before understanding the historical contents of the Shasanas and the role of Sri Narahari Tirtha in Kalinga/Orissa, a brief recapitulation of the history of Eastern Ganga dynasty will be useful.

*The Eastern Ganga dynasty was raised to an unprecedented level of prosperity by **Anantavarman Chodaganga (1078 – 1150 AD)**. Vaishnavism took an important new personalized form in **1135 AD with his construction of a temple for Lord Purushottama (Jagannatha) at the seashore of Puri**. Anantavarman occupied Utkala and shifted his capital from Kalinganagara to Kataka (the modern Cuttack). Like his predecessor, he was earlier a great devotee of Siva and had assumed the title Parama Mahesvara. But when Sri Ramanuja visited his kingdom and stayed at Puri, there was a change in Chodaganga, who became a Parama Vaishnava. The next important ruler of the dynasty who patronized the Vaishnava religion was **Anangabhima III (1216-1235 AD)**, who described himself as a deputy of the Lord Purushottama. Purushottama at Puri became the official state deity of the Ganga empire. **In 1230 AD, Anangabhima consecrated a temple for Purushottama in his newly founded capital Abhinava Varanasi-Kataka (the modern Cuttack) and donated land to several Brahmanas.***

*The next ruler, **Narasimha I (1238- 1264 AD)**, the son of Anangabhima III also followed the Vaishnava ideology of his father. He was a great warrior who fought and drove out Muslim forces completely from Orissa and even occupied Southern Bengal (Radha) reaching the Ganga river maintaining his rule there till 1253 AD. The Kapilas Inscription compares Narasimha I with the great Boar (Vishnu in his Varaha incarnation) that raised the Vedas and world from the ocean. He was the first king of Orissa who used the title **Gajapati** or the Lord of the Elephants. This title became the most popular royal title in Orissa under later Gangas, and under the Suryavamsis. **The world famous Konark temple was built during his rein in the 1264 A.D.***

*His successors **Bhanudeva I (1264 – 1278 AD and Narasimha II (1278 – 1306 AD)** had an uneventful reign for 27 years. During this time Narahari Tirtha the disciple of Ananda Tirtha had great influence in Orissa. He had been appointed as a Governor of Kalinga. During the rule of Bhanudeva I, **Chandrikadevi, daughter of Anangabhima-deva I, constructed the Ananta Basudev temple at Bhubaneswar in 1278 A.D** It was on the same year that Bhanudeva I died and his son Narasimhadeva II, an infant was crowned as the prince. Narahari Tirtha worked as regent for twelve years (1278-1290 AD) taking care of the kingdom.*

Narasimha II is known to have fought against the Muslims of Bengal the results of which were indecisive. He had a peaceful and long reign of 28 years starting from 1278 to 1306 (inclusive of the regency period of Sri Narahari Tirtha) and ruled Orissa independently after 1290 AD for sixteen – 16 years.. He was succeeded by his son Bhanudeva II.

Bhanudeva II had a short period of rein (1306 – 1328 AD). The only eventful thing during his period of rule was the successful defense of the Orissa frontier from the attacks of the Muslim General Ulugh Khan and Ghiyasu'd-din Tughluq in 1321 A.D. Narasimhadeva III succeeded Bhanudeva II in 1328 A.D. Very little information is obtained regarding his political activities. He was succeeded by his son **Bhanudeva III** in 1352 A.D. In 1353 Shamsud'-din Ilyas Shah invaded Orissa but he retreated after obtaining few elephants. It was by that time that Prince Sangama, the nephew of Bukkaraya I of Vijayanagar, invaded Orissa and defeated Bhanudeva III. As a result of this victory Bukkaraya occupied southern portion of the Ganga kingdom. In 1361 A.D., Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq invaded the Ganga kingdom. He defeated the forces of the Gangas and occupied Varanasi Kataka. Bhanudeva III fled away and took shelter with his family and courtiers in an island probably inside Chilika Lake. Sultan Firuz Shah destroyed the temple of Purushottama built by Anangabhimadeva III and disgraced the idols. Bhanudeva III made a treaty with the Sultan by offering twenty big elephants and agreeing to give annual tribute. This began the declining phase of the Ganga kings. Bhanudeva III died in 1378 A.D. and was succeeded by his son Narasimhadeva IV. During his rule Khwajah-i-Jahan, the Sharqi Sultan of Jaunpur invaded Bengal and Orissa. It was probably a mere raid.

Madhva's visit to JagannathaPuri: There is no mention in Sumadhvavijaya of any such visit. But, as many such places where he did visit or must have visited are not mentioned, and with the close association for three decades of Madhva's immediate disciple and second successor – Sri Narahari Tirtha to Orissa, it is almost certain that he must have visited Puri. A Shasana in Telugu script and language has also been discovered and published in the Madhvamathagala Shasanagalu (Vol 2) – No. 14 (Page 31) that describes the gift of 12 Goldem coins to Simhachala temple for designated purposes by Sri Jagannatha Tirtha in November 1373 AD. The reference to Narahari Matha in the Shasana to which the donor belonged shows that Madhva sampradaya Mathas did exist after Madhva/Narahri Tirtha period – in 1264-1300 AD. Many Orissan authors mention Madhva as one of the religious leaders who visited Jagannatha Puri (which had been visited by Shankara – leading to the establishment of the Puri Peetha, Ramanuja in the time of Anantavarman Chodaganga, which led to the King becoming a Vaishnava and reconstruct the temple complex and others such Nimbaraka, Vallabha etc, whose Mathas still exist in Puri. An extract of Orissa Review (Dec 2005) article by Braja Paikaray – Monasteries of Srikshethra (Puri is referred to), page No. 35 available on internet mentions as follows:

The Monasteries represent various religious sects of Hindu religion namely Vaishnavism i.e. Sri Sampraday or Ramanuja, Ramanandi, Kavir Panthi, Vallabhachari, **Madhabachari**, Nimbarka, Gaudiya Radha Vallabhi etc., Saivism i.e. Dandi, Dasnami, Avadhuta, Naga etc. and Sakta cult alongwith miscellaneous sects of Nanak, Satanami and Sunyavadi etc.

A careful check of the origin of the existing Mathas may reveal the further development of the Sri Narahari Tirtha matha which might have lost its identity or name and had been absorbed into another with a local name.

The approximate period of Sri Narahari Tirtha as depicted by his Shasanas his period (1264 – 1303 AD) was covered by the rules of Narasimha I (1238 – 1264 AD) when he was a young man perhaps not yet initiated, (except for the just preceding period of 1264 AD Shasanas), Bhanudeva I (1264 – 1278 AD) and Narasimha II (1278 – 1306 AD). It is in the beginning of the rule of Narasimha II, that Sri Narahari Tirtha was the regent for 12 years, till 1290 AD or so. The Land was a very favourable Vaishnava kingdom, with major temples considered as Architectural marvels being constructed almost every 4 to 5 decades by each important and powerful ruler of the dynasty. Sri Narahari Tirtha referred to as an ascetic Donor in the first Shasana is described later with further appellations such as Munivara, Mahamuni, Munindrasimha, etc. The donor becomes the state or the ruler whose wishes Sri Narahari Tirtha wishes to fulfill. It would be seen that the nature and value of the Gifts do reflect this background. Sri Narahari Tirtha's stature in Kalinga or Orissa society and Kingdom grew rapidly right from 1264 AD, the date of the first two Shasanas, as in 1271 AD, he was already the administrative head of the SriKurmam temple reporting directly and acting on behalf of the powerful King Bhanudeva I. This position is confirmed by the next Shasana of 1281. His protecting the SriKurmam temple areas in wars from the Shabaras must have also been in this period. His appointment as Governor of Kalinga followed even before 1278 AD, as it preceded his becoming the powerful Regent of the child king, Narasimha II. His regency lasted 12 years at least till 1290 AD. The continuous growth in stature in Public life and assumed responsibilities except possibly in the first couple of years after initiation indicates clearly that **Sri Narahari Tirtha would not have been able to spend any significant time with his Guru Acharya Madhva in the entire period 1264 – 1291 AD.** It is clear that he must have been pursuing an active career under the King Bhanudeva I. The process being entirely normal for an active State actor, the story of the Royal elephant garlanding him, while engaged in meditation and thus his becoming a Ruler which appears in compositions like Sathkatha and its earlier sources is meaningless embroidery of the ignorant – who were totally out of touch with the real state of affairs in Orissa and tried to find some cause for the apparently sudden elevation of an ascetic. Such stories have been ascribed for other locations also. Similar needless embroidery has been made for his being stopped by the royal servants when he left Kalinga/Orissa kingdom with the Moola Rama Idols, as it is inconceivable that a person who was himself the very ruler and had served the dynasty with distinction for decades would leave stealthily with the Idols, which the new King, whom he himself brought up properly and handed over power in time without any objection, would engage themselves with such stupid actions. **None of such stories are mentioned any where in Orissa sourced material.**

An important aspect of this data is that it rules out firmly, Sri Narahari Tirtha being away from Orissa during 1278 AD, ascribed by some as the year of final going to Badari by Acharya Madhva. The following events took place in that year as per Shasanas:

- i. King Bhanudeva I died leaving behind the state without an orderly transfer of power to a successor except for his minor son Narasimha II, who though already born was an infant who needed twelve long years to attain maturity. As the death of a King invited enemies to attack and destroy or at least loot the Kingdom, it would be necessary to immediately take charge of the security and administration of the country, and ensure that both internal and external enemies are watched and kept in check. It is quite likely that the dying King, knowing the delicate situation which would arise after his death, had already made arrangements for his take over regency for a designated period of 12 years – again demonstrating the unique position of Sri Narahari Tirtha at that time in Orissa.
- ii. The major temple of Ananta-Vasudeva in Bhubhaneswar was inaugurated perhaps a little before the King's death.
- iii. Sri Narahari Tirtha had already been elevated as the Governor of Kalinga part of the Kingdom, as a prelude to his taking over the rule of the entire state. He was obviously, the chief advisor to the dying King and enjoyed the regard and faith of the ruling classes as well as the Public, by virtue of his previous long service with total selflessness. He fulfilled their expectation ably by not only completing his allotted task exemplarily but also in handing over to the rightful claimant the throne kept safe for him without any demur.
- iv. His authority after elevation can be gauged by his constructing in three years time, in 1281 AD the extension to the SriKurmam temple served by him in the past and installing the images of Rama, Lakshmana etc. Only Rulers would have had the authority to do so.
- v. The language of the Shasana of 1281 AD, clearly supports the picture that Acharya Madhva was still available at that time. If he had vanished from the visible world in 1278 AD, the Shasana would have been worded differently, with the events being narrated in the past tense.

It is noted at first that all the Shasanas – in SriKurmam, Simhachala are written in Kannada script, while some of the Shasanas are in Sanskrit and some in Telugu languages. Use of Kannada script indicates that it was the official language of the area, though the use of Sanskrit was based on religious considerations and Telugu might have been the spoken language of the area. All of them refer to Sri Narahari Tirtha as Nruhari Muni, Narahari Tirtha Sripada, Narahari Sricharana, Narahari Thirthakhya Munivara, Narahari Tirtha Mahamuni, Narahari tirtha munindrasimhagirindra, Narahari padamgaru (in Telugu). There are 7 Shasanas in

SriKurmam and 5 Shasanas in Simhachalam. The time sequence of the Shasanas is as follows:

1264 AD – 2 Nos, 1271 AD – 1 No., 1281 AD – 1 No, 1282 AD – 2 Nos, 1289 AD – 1 No, 1292 AD – 3 Nos, 1293 AD – 1 No, 1294 AD – 1 No, 1303 AD? – 1 No. = Total 13 Nos.

Nature of the Shasanas – The first two were small in value – 3 gold coins to feed Brahmins/Srivaishnavas on Krishna Janmashtami day and there is no reference to any King etc showing that it was Sri Narahari Tirtha' own charity. The 1271 AD describes giving away temple owned land (presumably received as a Land grant in Konnigrama Village) to 45 Brahmin families with a Dakshina and Thambula by Narahari Muniswara, also indicating his increased stature as an ascetic and his continued residence in the Temple area. The object is also stated as for the welfare of Bhanudeva I called as a Sachiva here. Some of the names of the Brahmins is also listed and shows that they would have been Thrimathasthas, including some ladies, out of which 15 were Vaishnavas and some were also connected to administration and the army in senior capacities. This clearly indicates that Sri Narahari Tirtha was by now an Administrative head of the Temple reporting directly to Bhanudeva. He also recovered a previously lost grant of a village Kudupi in favour of the Temple. The period 1264 – 1271 does not appear to have had a large absence from Kalinga of Sri Narahari Tirtha.

The Shasana dated 1281 AD, is the longest giving the complete lineage of the line of ascetics and gives many important details of his life. This Shasana is also the very first after Sri Narahari Tirtha took over as regent to rule Orissa, when the previous King Bhanudeva I died in 1278 AD. It was fifteen years after the first Shasana in 1264 AD, and perhaps 17/18 years after he first met Acharya Madhva and was initiated by him. It would be interesting to ascertain what Sri Narahari tirtha was doing during the period 1271 – 1281 AD – from the time of his previous Shasana.

Let us first look at the main contents of the Shasana itself written in Sanskrit language and Kannada script.:

- i. It contains the name of Sri Purushotthama Tirtha (referred to as Achyutha Preksha in Sumadhvavijaya), called as the Guru of Acharya Madhva and extols him for his learning and ability in dialectic disputation.
- ii. It mentions the name AnandaTirtha Bhagvathpadacharya who has composed a great Bhashya, which enables aspirants to reach the lotus feet of the Lord of Kamala (Vishnu), whose disciple is acknowledged to be Sri Narahari Tirtha Munivara – who is virtuously ruling in a hereditary manner the people of Kalinga.
- iii. Narahari Tirtha fought Shabaras valiantly in battles to protect the SriKurmam temple

- iv. The new Praasada (structure) which has been built in front of the SriKurmam deity by him has been used to install the deity Yogananda Nrusimha on this day.

The Shasanas can be subdivided into the following types:

1. Where Sri Narahari Tirtha is himself a donor.
2. Where some one else gave a gift to the Temple for the specific purpose in his presence.
3. Where the lineage of Sri Narahari from Acharya Madhva is clearly mentioned.

Based on the data and views expressed in the book “Madhvamathagala shasanagalu” Samputa 2, the following analysis can be noted:

1. Dates and main contents:

1248 AD – written in Kannada script, but consisting of a Sanskrit text and found in SriKurma. The date is now totally illegible, though earlier records indicated this period. Its identification with Sri Narahari Tirtha is also based on the use of the word Nruhari to indicate a person – but without any qualifying adjectives like Sripada etc. It is very brief consisting of the renewal of a gift to Sri Kurma temple for offering Naivedya three times a day and for Brahmanas.

(Comments regarding its acceptance and implications of the same are given in the analysis).

If it is considered as belonging to Sri Narahari Tirtha – it is difficult to explain why the name Nruhari has been used here, as it should bear some other name, if it referred to a Poorvashrama period of the great ascetic. It is 16 years older than the 1264 AD Shasana, where he is called Narahari Sripada – and if his age at this time is considered to be even 20 years (Birth year 1228 AD), we have to accept that he lived for 109 years – based on the presently accepted date of 1333 AD for his Vrindavana pravesha. He would have met Acharya Madhva around 1260/61 AD, when he would already be around 32 years of age and he would have been regent for Kalinga during his 50 th – 62 nd years of age (corresponding to 1978 – 1990 AD). As he seems to have returned to Karnataka only after 1293 AD (65 th year), it is difficult to explain, when he studied under Madhva and wrote his own compositions. He would also have succeeded to the Peetha only in 1324 AD (when he was 96 years of age). All these factors indicate that the original assumption of the period of the Shasana as 1248 AD seems to be wrong, which is also unverifiable now. Considering that it is also a Renewal shasana, implies that the original must have been granted decades earlier, by himself which makes the situation even more untenable

This Shasana is therefore considered as UNPROVEN in its authenticity.

- (1)** 1264 AD: (Dated 19–9–1264 AD). Located on the 48th Pillar of Thiruchithra Mandira of SriKurma temple. This is the earliest verified Shasana written in Kannada script, but consisting of a Sanskrit text, also referred to in HDSV. Sri Narahari Tirtha is referred to as Nruhari Muni. The date is given as

Bhadrapada Krishna thrayodashi – and is intended for feeding Srivaishnava Brahmins in perpetuity on Sri Krishna Janmashatami day – falling in Shravana Krishna Ashtami. The wealth gift seems to be small – three gold coins – but could be part of a larger corpus already there and thus could be an additional amount for the specific purpose.

- (2) 1264 AD: (Dated 19–9–1264 AD) Located on the same pillar in the same place as the previous one. Written in Kannada script and consist of Telugu words. Identical dates as the previous one. The Gift is also the same (3 Golden coins), but the changes are – “Sri Narahari Tirtha Sripada” used here and the purpose is the feeding of SriVaishnava Brahmins on Sri Krishna Jayanthi day.

The two Shasanas prove (as stated by HDSV) that Sri Narahari Tirtha was already an ascetic bearing the same name (not Poorvashrama names). The relatively smaller value gifts show that he was perhaps still in lower authoritative positions, but also show that he had some administrative responsibility for the Sri Kurma temple, which has continued in the next Shasana also. The separate gift for SriVaishnavas shows that they were perhaps traditionally worshipping in the temple of Kurmanatha at that time, and accommodating their requirements was also necessary. The purpose of the gift shows the importance attached to Krishna.worship and fasting on Janmashtami day, as emphasised by Acharya Madhva (even at that time – when he would be only around 26 years of age, based on 1238 AD birth date). There is a long time gap between these two and the next one in 1271 AD followed by another after an even longer time gap of 10 years in 1981 AD, which throws a great deal of illumination on the relationship of Sri Narahari Tirtha with Kalinga and the Sri Kurmam temple.. These need to be explained. It is also necessary to confirm by active search that no new Shasaanas are waiting to be discovered.

From recorded history, we note that the king Narasimha I died in 1264 AD and was succeeded by Bhanudeva I. He ruled for 15 years without any major events. In 1279 AD, when he died, the infant son Narasimha II was protected and looked after by Sri Narahari Tirtha till 1290 AD, when he handed over the reins. Narasimha II ruled for another 16 years till 1306 AD and was succeeded by his son Bhanudeva II in that year. Bhanudeva II fought with Ulugh Khan under Ghiyasuddin Khalji and forced him to withdraw from Orissa and ruled successfully till 1328 AD, when he was succeeded by his son Narasimha III. Then the decline of the Orissan kingdom started.

One would be tempted to guess that Acharya Madhva would have been invited to visit the Temple being looked after by Sri Narahari Tirtha and would have done so on the return visit from Badari kshethra on the first occasion (around 1260/61 AD) which may perhaps have been combined with a visit to the famous Vaishnava Kshethra of Lord Jagannatha at Puri, which was under the control of Sri Vaishnavas from the time of the visit of Sri Ramanujacharya, a century earlier.

- (3) 1271 AD: (Dated 10-10-1271 AD) Located on the 42 nd pillar in the same place as the previous one. Written in Kannada script and consist of Sanskrit words. Sri Narahari Tirtha is described as Narahari Srisharana and Muniswara and the order of Bhanudeva 1, based on which Sri Narahari Tirtha was giving the gift is also mentioned. This shows that he was perhaps in the position of an advisor to the King, on SriKurmam Temple administration. 15 Vaishnavas and 30 other Brahmanas were given gifts of Land in a village called Konnagrama in the traditional manner along with a golden coin and Thambula. Some of the names of the Brahmins is listed, and seems to include a couple of women. The persons include a Purana reciter, administrator and army commander. Sri Narahari Tirtha is also credited with retrieving on behalf of the Sri Kurmam temple an expired donation of a village in Kudupi

This Shasana shows that by this time, Sri Narahari Tirtha was fully in administrative control of the SriKurmam temple and was directly reporting to King Bhanudeva I. Bhanudeva is called here as a Sachiva (Minister), though he had succeeded to the throne in 1264 AD – 7 years earlier as per historical record. Sri Narahari Tirtha's next Shasana in 1281 AD, was after he had become a regent in 1278. It is likely that he was staying in SriKurmam till then and was personally supervising the affairs of the temple.

- (4) 1281 AD (Dated 13-3-1281) Located on the 9 th pillar in the same place as the previous ones. This is the most informative and definitive historically, clearly relating Sri Narahari Tirtha to the Madhva lineage records maintained elsewhere. This Shasana has the following special points: -

- i. It mentions Acharya Madhva by name clearly – as AnandaTirtha Muni, the master who was being served by groups of ascetics (Munivraithaissevyapaadaravindayugala) also saying clearly that his great Bhashya which brings back those misled by others of inferior intellects into the path of well defined Bheda (The fivefold differences) extols the greatness of the Lord of Kamala and will confer attainment of His Lotus feet. It mentions specifically that the writer (of the shasana) was assigned by his Guru, the duty of protecting the people and thereby continues his inherited duties of looking after the people born in the land of Kalinga as per Dharma (Righteousness).
- ii. It mentions Purushottama Tirtha as the first Guru of the lineage who had also composed a great sacred Bhashya which was capable of defeating other Bhashyas like an Ankusha to elephants. (Though no other record exists of any Bhashya composed by Sri Achyutha preksha – Purushottama Tirtha, the element of great

devotion shown here for the Parampare is an indication of the regard which prevailed in Acharya Madhva's time to his own Guru).

- iii. The actions of Sri AnandaTirtha are stated in the present – implying his continuance among the living at the time of the Shasana (1281 AD).

Here, one can see clearly that Sri Narahari Tirtha could never have worded his Shasana in the way it is now seen to be written for posterity, if he had already seen Acharya Madhva completely disappear from all human contact three years earlier – in 1278. There would have been some indication of the event, which should have been calamitous for the ardent devotee, Sri Narahari tirtha.

- iv. Sri Narahari Tirtha was entrusted by AnandaTirtha, the excellent protector of the world himself, with the task of protecting the people of Kalinga and committed to the great duty of security of the temple of Sri Kurmam, as his chief hereditary duty, protected them with his sword from Shabaras as ordained.
- v. This new Praasada was constructed by him in front of the SriKurmam temple where the deity Yogananda Nrusimha was duly installed for worship. (This Praasada exists even today, but the Idol is missing. There is a story that the Idol may have been dropped into temple pond to save it from Muslim invaders).

History records that Sri Narahari Tirtha had already become a regent of the Kingdom with the death of Bhanudeva I, in 1278 AD, and the infant king Narasimha I was being protected by him. Thus the reference in this Shasana of 1281 AD to the ordained duty of protecting the people of Kalinga and ensuring the security of the SriKurmam temple (as his old hereditary duty which appears to have been there even in 1271 AD) with the express direction of his Guru is significant. It is also significant that unlike other Shasanas, there is NO mention of any royal personality in this Shasana at all – which supports the view that he did not have to take the approval of any other superior agency for the work.

If his Guru Ananda Tirtha had just vanished from human eyes, a couple of years earlier in 1278 AD, the language of the Shasana would have reflected this major event in Sri Narahari tirtha's life. On the other hand, the events as described appear to be those which were continuing at that time.

- (5) This Shasana in Telugu and scripted in Kannada is dated December 1282 AD (3-12-1282). A gift of "Meghanada Dharma" – contents unknown – was given to SriKurmam temple (not specified) by a Vassal chief called Narasimha, son of Yerunatuva in the presence of Sri Narahari Tirtha. The year is mentioned as the seventh year of the nominal reign of Narasimha II

(the boy king). The latter nominally came to power only in 1278 AD (with Sri Narahari Tirtha as regent), and hence the year works out to the fifth year. The error may be a case of misreading

The next set of Shasanas till the ones in 1293 and 1294 AD pertain to Simhachalam. One more SriKurmam Shasana is available dated 1294 AD. It is thus likely that his duties for the governance of the state may have taken Sri Narahari Tirtha away from SriKurmam till it became possible for him to leave Orissa and come back to Udipi to his Guru. .

- (6) This shasana scripted in Kannada and in Sanskrit and Telugu languages is dated November 1289 AD (12-11-1289). The Shasana is found in Simhachala Narasimha temple on the inner wall of the open verandah.

A donation of 23 gold coins was given by Gangadevi, wife of Ranganathabhattopadhyaya for ensuring burning of Ghee lights in front of the deity every day, in the presence of Sri Narahari tirtha. (Narahari Tirtha mahamuni).

- (7) This shasana scripted in Kannada and in Sanskrit and Telugu languages is dated November 1292 AD (20/21-1-1292). The Shasana is found in the open verandah of the shrine of Lord Narasimha at Simhachalam temple. Sri Narahari Tirtha himself is the donor of 25 gold coins and 150 sheep to the temple. The purpose is stated to be the maintenance of lamps of ghee for the deity by which the life, health and merit of the donor is ensured. The special occasion was Pushyabahula shravana nakshathra and solar eclipse on the next day. There is no mention of any king etc – His name is mentoned as Sri Narahari Tirtha munindra simha girindra – an indication of the great status and regard in public mind that he must have reached.

In another Shasana of the same year, in the same location, the donor is the King – which will be discussed separately.

- (8) This shasana scripted in Kannada and in Sanskrit and Telugu languages is dated November 1292 AD (26-7-1292). The Shasana is found in the open verandah of the shrine of Lord Narasimha at Simhachalam temple. The donor is an official called Dohatthamalla serving the son of King Narasimha II, called Jayantha, who gave a Garden for the service of the deity. In the same shasana, the king Jayantha also gave a flower garden to the temple with the inspiration of Sri Narahari Tirtha Sripadaru.

Simhachalam comes in the Telugu area later ruled by the Reddis and was also occupied by Vijayanagara a century later. The local chieftain may have been named Jayantha – as the son of Narasmiha II was named Bhanudeva II. The name of the ruler is not material for the purpose of this note.

- (9) This shasana scripted in Kannada and in Sanskrit and Telugu languages is dated October 1292 AD (25-10-1292). The Shasana is found in the open verandah of the shrine of Lord Narasimha at Simhachalam temple. The donor is Arjunadeva Maharaja also known as Narasimha Vardhana, who donated a garden with 300 trees for lighting a perpetual lamp in memory of his brother Gopala Vardhana in the presence of Sri Narahari Tirtha (Nruhari Muni).
- (10) This shasana scripted in Kannada and is in Telugu language and is dated April 1293 AD (22-4-1293). The Shasana is found on the 49 th pillar. Of the Thirchithra Mantapa of Sri Kurmanatha temple. This is stated to be on the 18 th year of the reign of Narasimha II of Kalinga. The donor is Sri Narahari Tirtha who gave 5 golden coins (Gandamada) for the sake of the annual Shuddhikarana (Thirumanjana) of the main and Uthsava Murthies and Panchamrutha Abhisheka along with some other associated sevas and offerings on Vaishakha Purnami, Jyeshtha Nakshathra perpetually. It is possible that this day and Muhurtha correspond to the Birth date and time of Sri Narahari Tirtha. Here also as in the case of (5) above, there is an error in the figure of number of years of kingship of the ruling Naarsinha II, as he came to power even nominally only in 1278 and thus only 15 years had passed. Perhaps the difference can be explained by a nominal coronation done for him three years earlier, even when his father was alive (1275 AD).
- (11) This shasana scripted in Kannada and is in Sanskrit and Telugu language and is dated April 1293 AD (22-4-1293). The Shasana is found on the 9 th pillar. Of the Thiruchithra Mantapa of Sri Kurmanatha temple. The donor is Sri Narahari Tirtha himself, described in the Shasana as Sri Nruharimuni Gunanidhi and also mentions that he is a shishya of Srimdanandatirtha Pujyapadacharya (the only other Shasana which mentions it apart from the 1981 shasana). It records the consecration of the Idols of Rama, Lakshmana and Seetha in the Kurmanatha temple by him and for establishing perpetual seva thereafter, he gifted 51 Golden coins along with silken robes, utensils etc. It is also recorded that the Tirupathi srivaishnavas who were archakas in this temple should maintain proper worship in future. Even now, these idols are receiving regular worship in SriKurmam temple.

There is one interesting conjecture possible about the role of SriVaishnavas during Sri Narahari Tirtha's time in the Vishnu temples in the area. Right from the time of Anantavarman Chodaganga (death 1150 AD) who had become a Parama Vaishnava and had accepted Ramanujacharya as his spiritual Guru, during his visit, the Archakas in all important temples were SriVaishnavas – even in the SriKurmam temple. Sri Naraahri Tirtha had to make a separate donation for them even when he was the local administrator (on a hereditary basis inherited from

his father – see Shasana of 1281 AD). Acharya Madhva had directed Sri Narahari Tirtha who earlier been an Advaita follower, to continue in his hereditary role even after he was initiated as a Madhva Sannyasi and his immediate disciple, which was completely against the normal course for an ascetic who had renounced the world and would be eager to accompany and stay with his Guru to learn the philosophical doctrines which had impressed him so deeply.. Thus he performed even martial duties against those who threatened his domain which he had sworn to protect. Though he had a rapid rise in his position and responsibility as Madhva had foreseen – from SriKurmam temple in charge to local administrator and then to Governor of a province and on to become Rajaguru and Regent of the State, and he was respected both by the rulers as well as by the people for his selfless service and capable administrative abilities, he did not interfere with the hereditary rights of worship in the Vishnu temples and allowed SriVaishnavas to continue as the priests (one is reminded of Sri Vysaraja in Tirupathi). Even in that time, the control of all such Puja related matters was from Tirupathi, which must have been a major concentration of Sri Vaishnava priests. This perhaps answers the question whether Madhva visited Tirupathi – with the obvious answer that he did – but did not try to usurp control or establish any parallel center of administrative authority. Eulogistic references in the Shasanas referring to Sri Narahari Tirtha, even when he was no longer in power, as well as the verdict of historians has established that he was widely respected even by SriVaishnavas and was responsible for the rapid spread of Vaishnavism in Orissa. It is this quality that allowed him to take the Moola Rama and Seetha Idols from the Royal treasury of Gajapathi's without any protest or conflict. One would visualize the continued interest and regard of Sri Narahari Tirtha in his erstwhile area of work, even after he came back to Karnataka and stayed with his Guru for further studies and eventually for succeeding to the August Peetha. One could also easily conclude that the wise Acharya Madhva had taken the more significant task of sustaining a traditional Hindu-Vaishnava state against the inevitable forces of disintegration for a longer period as the basis for his decision to keep Sri Narahari Tirtha in Orissa, rather than just bringing in of the Moola Rama Idols.

- (12) This recently discovered shasana scripted in Kannada in Telugu language is dated 1303 AD. The Shasana is found in the inner verandah of the shrine of Lord Narasimha at simhachalam temple. The donor is Sri Narahari Tirtha, who has offered a lamp along with an Idol to be in perpetual use, along with some donation of money, land and cows by some others. The name used is Narahari Padamgaru of Bharadwaja gothra. The date was apparently read earlier as 1325+78=1403 AD, which seems to be wrong. It is assessed as to be 1235+78=1313 AD (wrongly printed as 1303 AD) in the book Madhvamathagala shasanagalu – Vol 2 page 29.

There is some guess work in the date as the last two numbers are unreadable today and were originally guessed as 25. The second letter was originally guessed as 2, based on which it corresponds to 1303 AD. But the compilers of

the book have also suggested the last two letters as 35, but in the Arithmetic of conversion to modern calendar kept the figures as 25 only. The date is thus uncertain and indeterminate. But as the second numeral is either 2 or 3, and so is the third, the date of the Shasana must be after 1300 AD. and makes it the last shasana known. As this Shasana comes after nearly a decade from the earlier last known one of 1294 AD, it does not have much significance with regard to the continued stay of Sri Narahari Tirtha in the area, as it could just be a stray one, donated on a visit to the temple.

- (13)** This recently discovered shasana scripted in Kannada in Sanskrit and Telugu languages is dated 1373 AD (25-11-1373 AD). The Shasana is found in the open verandah of the shrine of Lord Narasimha at simhachalam temple. The donor is Sri Jagannatha Tirtha (Yathi thilaka Jagannatha Tirtha Agrapada) of Narahari Matha. The gift is 12 gold coins for offering 2 bowls of curds and 2 apoopas everyday to the temple deity.

The significance of this Shasana is the existence of the Narahari Matha at that time which did not continue or got absorbed into some other lineage or renamed later on. The date corresponds to the time of Sri Teekacharya (1365-1388 AD) and there would have been at least one shishya in the second generation in between Sri Narahari Tirtha and Jagannatha Tirtha. There is a likelihood of the first disciple of Sri Vidyadhiraja – Rajendra Tirtha who went to North India around 1390 AD must have visited Jagannatha Puri in his travels and might have been in touch with the Narahari matha mentioned here, as local base. The story of Sri Rajendra Tirtha itself needs to be properly explored as he is the man link in the chain of great scholars starting from Sri Padmanabha – Narahari - Akshobhya – JayaTirtha – Rajendra – Vishnudasacharya - Vibhudendra – Raghuttama – Sripadaraja – Vyasaraaja – Vijayindra – Raghavendra and others.

Much more investigative and analytical work needs to be done – which unfortunately we Madhvas do not seem to take seriously, preferring to stick to old fabricated stories to indirectly glorify or demean one another.