

Raghunatha and Sripadaraja/Vyasaraja

(Stories in UM publications and records)

ANALYSIS

PART 1 (SRIPADARAJA)

As compendia of data available on many issues which have been the sources of long persisting disputes and inter-matha misunderstandings, is essential for an objective opinion to be formed, a series of such analytical reviews are being prepared and posted on SVM website as well as the message chain. While all care has been taken to check and include only data from past records as available, no claim can be made of either originality or finality as new data can always be discovered (at least theoretically). But, keeping in mind some recent cases, due care should be taken in establishing the validity of the new "Finds". Like scientific theories, all conclusions arrived at have limited validity – till new data requires their modification, but none the less, the results of the analysis have their value in being closer to the objective Truth, which replace the usually parochial, imaginary and sometimes absurd stories that circulate as authentic information in the Mathas on such issues. As many times done, It is not intended here to "Prove" preconceived ideas by selectively listing supportive data and ignoring or misrepresenting other data, which oppose the conclusion. The serious reader should be able to form his own judgements – till they are shown to be wrong by authentic new material from any source. There is also a large group of persons who feel that such issues should not be even discussed – as they are already convinced of the final answers believed by their own Matha devotees, which they have accepted in their own minds as truths, but it is forgotten that there are other large groups of similar sincere persons who are also convinced of the opposite. Hence this exercise of the God given minds, intellects and discrimination is absolutely necessary!

The traditional stories around the lineage of UM ascetics was first recorded in Gurucharya, a hagiological work from Acharya Madhva down to Sri Sathyanidhi Tirtha (D. 1648 AD), which dates it to 17 th century and also says that the earlier floating traditions came to be defined and recorded during the days of Sripadaraja (1420-87 AD) and Raghunatha Tirtha (1444 – 1502 AD)". There is a Poornabodhaguruvamshakathakalpatharu – PGVKK also in Sanskrit derived from Gurucharya and Sathkathas in Kannada were published later – 1895 AD or so .The accounts in these are not always consistent and sometimes with the efflux of time and questions raised about inconsistencies or the change in the views and policies of the UM, changes are introduced in even such popular documents as Sathkathas. There is nothing extraordinary in all this – but what is missing is an attempt to relate to historical research or new evidences unearthed. One would naturally assume that the older

records are likely to reflect the true position than the later ones where changes are introduced with no specific evidence but to support some popular story or the other. Another important source of information is the Vijaya Kavyas of some of the saints – provided it is by contemporary scholars rather than those written much later to glorify them – where imagination enters in big way. Devaranamas of famous saints of Dasa parampare are also used – which should be subjected to the same tests as others as mentioned earlier, as they are subject to change of Ankitha, interpolations and Pathabhedas.

Sripadaraja is one of the greatest Shining personalities in the galaxy of the Madhva Firmament – a young lad from a poor Brahmin family, who by his sheer brilliance and industry burst in like a Nova into the sky of scholastic and social achievements in his time. His well known life story is not repeated here in detail to avoid unnecessary length of the essay and diversion from the main issues. But one must recall here his great contributions which have enriched and ennobled our society and pay humble tribute to a personality, who rose from being a simple cow herd, when he was discovered by his Guru, Svarnavarna Tirtha (also not belonging to a main lineage Matha, but with a small number of disciples). He took Bala Sannyasa at 7/8 years, an age when most would be still learning abc's and became a Peethadhipati at the very young age of 12 years. He studied under one of the greatest scholars at that time, Sri Vibhudendra Tirtha, perpetuating the scholastic lineage of Sri Rajendra Tirtha and established himself and his Matha as a new center of learning in Mulabagilu, which was also then the regional administrative center of the Vijayanagara empire. He became the VidyaGuru of one the greatest intellect - philosophers of all time, Sri Vyasaraaja, whose deeds still evoke the greatest admiration, who has extolled him with great respect, in superlative terms. Sripadaraja himself lived a life of great luxury – due to his Sukha Prarabdha, being a gift of the gods, but with complete renunciation and devotion to the Lord. It is believed that even today his remembrance brings to the devotee such worldly desires. His sage advice and spiritual guidance took Saluva Narasimha I, from being the vassal of a small state controlled by the Vijayanagara empire to the main throne itself, whose armies ranged in battles over the whole of the Southern peninsular India, kept the Muslim intruders at bay from his large empire and set the stage for the advent of Krishnadevaraya, one of the greatest kings that this country has known succeeding him. Sripadaraja was called as the King of Sripadas (ascetics) in his own life time, being the father figure and great role model for all ascetics who came up subsequently in different Mathas – such as Vyasaraaja, Vadiraja and Vijayindra. He was also the path finder and era marker for Karnatak Music in his founding of the Dasa Koota by his numerous compositions in Kannada, with new forms like Suladis, Dandakas being introduced and popularized. He was a great musicologist - musician who set his own creations to music, a divine composer who showed the path to heavenly bliss through Music. The

grace, devotion, rhythm and lilting sweet sound of most appropriate and appealing words in meaning and melody of his musical compositions is unmatched even today.

An abbreviated list of his achievements in the **divine field of Music** prepared based on the serious research carried out by a Karnatak Musicologist of repute is as follows:

(The source for this info is 'Music of the Madhwa Monks' by Dr. R. Sathyanarayana. Please note that he is quoted verbatim in some of the sentences below):

A] The Tamburi is mentioned for the first time in its career in a composition by Sripadaraya. This is in concordance with the emergence of the single tonic note in this period – the Adhara Sadja due to which a drone instrument was needed to keep track of the tonic note in a music performance.

B] Sripadaraya is indisputably the pioneer who brought about the revolutionary changes in the Talas of Karnataka Music by excluding other kinds of Talas such as Marga, Desi, Sankara, Misra etc. and using only Suladi Sapta Talas.

C] The most remarkable change brought about by Sri Sripadaraya is in popularizing the usage of new forms (types of compositions): (such as Suladi, Dandaka etc). The path blazed by him was fully followed by the great Dasa koota such as Purandara, Vijaya, Gopala, Jagannatha etc.

1) Sri Sripadaraya's 'padas' have the prototype of the Kriti and Javali forms which came later. The differentiation of Kriti and Javali, whose structures are the same, is based on the theme – social, religious and moral themes typify the Kriti and erotic love related themes are typical of the Javali. The foundation of both types of compositions are laid by Sripadaraya in his Gopi Gitas.

2) Of the known Suladis and Ugabhogas, (which have emerged from the earlier Salagasuda form), the earliest have been composed by Sri Sripadaraya, hence, he must have pioneered this change.

3) The Vrittinama is a creation of the Madhva saints and possibly of Sri Sripadaraya himself. The remarkable feature of Vrittinama is that it comprises sections which are tala bound and unbound by tala – occurring alternately.

4) Sri Sripadaraya has also composed the only 'Dandaka' or 'Uddanda' in Kannada .

5) He has also composed an antiphonal song which is a dialogue between Rukmini and Satyabhama. It uses two different ragas used alternately.

6) He has composed lullabies, Venu-gita (glories of the Lord's flute music), Gopi-gita and Bhramara-gita (based on the Bhagavata Purana).

The pioneering brilliance of Sri Sripadaraya is seen in his compositions which 'represent the first systematic attempt by a composer to expand the repertoire of classical Karnataka music with materials drawn from folk music and stage music.'

The greatness and vastness of his contribution is realized when we see this work of a life time in the field of music was done along with maintaining and raising up a Matha to

high standards, acquisition of numerous followers, teaching and launching an unique personality like Vyasaraaja, guiding and elevating to a high Kingly pedestal, a small time local chieftain and prescribing high standards of moral and spiritual achievement to society etc. All these along with the divine Madhvanama dripping with the nectar of devotion to Madhva, and the rendering of the deepest emotional responses of the devotees to their Maker and Master rendered in easily understandable kannada and supremely enjoyable music. No one who has ever listened even once to his wonderful cradle and Lullaby kind of music – JO JO and LALI geethas would ever find anything superior – but would at best find some similar to them in musical bliss. No wonder he was weighed against Gold and precious stones by the grateful emperor Narasimha I, as that was the least that he could do! How can a few words describe that great and lovable personality? Perhaps giving him all the wealth of the country could not have matched his talents and achievements.

A little before his period (1406-1502 AD) – Matha accepts 1504 AD, there was an unfortunate event in the Matha lineage of Sri Kavindra Tirtha, which has left deep emotional scars on the minds of numerous devotees since. Sri Ramachandra Tirtha (1408-1430 AD) at the time of his demise had clearly indicated his desire that his learned scholar disciple – Sri Vibhudendra should succeed him in the Peetha and had taken unprecedented and extraordinary steps to ensure this – by getting the Puja boxes buried in the ground just before his demise, in the presence of neutral persons, stopping the Samsthana Puja, till his favourite disciple returned, with instructions to them, to ensure handing it over to him. Though as could be expected, there are two versions of the stories of what actually happened, the boxes were actually taken away by another disciple Sri Vidyanidhi, the final outcome of Vibhudendra being deprived of the seat was clearly against the Guru's expressed desire when he was alive. This led to the division of the Matha into two branches – one identified with the SRS Matha today and the other as the UM. The first ascetic of the new UM branch Sri Vidyanidhi was succeeded by Sri Raghunatha (1444 – 1502 AD), a contemporary of Sripadaraja (as per the previously accepted periods). A number of stories have been preserved in UM circles, originally by word of mouth and later by written documents about many incidents involving these ascetics. Very recently, UM has revised the dates of Vidyanidhi and Raghunatha as (1435 – 1479) and (1479 – 1527) AD respectively. Sripadaraja's own dates and periods as fixed from his close association with the Chandragiri and Vijayanagara kingdoms whose history is well recorded, are clear. The purpose of this study is to examine the written records forming the basis of these stories to verify some claims which seem to be either exaggerated or untrue. As the stories are UM centric, there is a clear understandable bias for glorifying that Matha and its then ruling ascetic, which may also have the unfortunate effect of showing the counterparts like the great Sripadaraja and Vyasaraaja as inferior in some cases. The reality could have been very different. Our intention is also not to in any way try to boost up one at the expense of the other, at this late stage, which is meaningless. From all accounts Sri Raghunatha

himself had been a great personality whose contribution in repairing the breach among the Mathas and gaining acceptance in society after the earlier trauma was great and who himself was a noble ascetic with great renunciation and devotion. Nothing that follows should therefore be construed as in any way belittling him or arguing that he was inferior to his counterparts in his swaroopa, as we can never evaluate such issues without valid Pramanas.

At this stage the life story of Sri Ramachandra, Vidyanidhi and Raghunatha given in the UM website is reproduced verbatim below (Any errors in grammar or spelling have **not** been corrected as the intention is to preserve the original accurately) – (All quotes in Italics):

Introduction to Shri 1008 Shri Ramachandra Teertharu:

**|| dyumaNyabhijanAbjendUrAmavyAsapadArchakaH .
rAmachandragururbhUyAt kAmitArthapradAyakaH ||**

“Shri Ramachandra Teertharu was a great exponent of Dwaitha Vedanta. He spent a long time in Shrirangapatnam and surrounding areas propagating the Madhva Philosophy. Once he fell seriously ill and ordained one of his disciples Kambhaluri Narasimhacharya to sanyasa with a view of installing him to the pontifical seat before he passed away. He was named Shri Vibhudendra Tirtha. However, Shri Ramachandra Teertharu got well and had postponed to install him on Vedanta Samrajya of the Math. He gave Shri Vibhdendra Teertharu some minor idols and saligramas for daily worship, but none from the pooja box of the Mutt and sent him on tour for propagation of Madhwa Philosophy with specific instructions that he would send for him at the appropriate time.

However, when Shri Ramachandra Tirtha was at Yaragola, he fell ill again and the time came for formally handing over the Math. Shri Vibhudendra Teertharu, who was on the tour, could not come back to yaragola in time. Shri Ramachandra Tirtha, therefore was compelled to ordain Shri Vidyanidhi Teertharu as his successor. Shri Ramachandra Tirtha did not want to deprive Shri Vibhudendra Tirtha from the pontification of the Uttaradi Mutt. He therefore asked Dharmanna and other villagers of Yaragola to intern the pooja box after his Nirvana in a deep pit, with clear instructions that if Shri Vibhudendra Tirtha came within six months of his passing away, he would take it out and succeed him. If however he did not turn up within the specified time, the pooja box should be handed over to Shri Vidyanidhi Tirtha, who would be the next Peethadhipati and rightful successor to the seat of Uttaradi Mutt. When Shri Vibhudendra Tirtha did not turn up after six months, Dharmanna and others requested Shri Vidyanidhi Tirtha to take the pooja box to perform the usual pooja.

When Dharmanna and others were ready to dig to take out the pooja box, suddenly Shri Vibhudendra Tirtha made his appearance and demanded to deliver the pooja box to him with out any delay. Then Dharmanna regretted to hand over the pooja box to Vibhudendra Tirtha since he did not abide by the condition imposed by his Guru Shri Ramachandra Tirtha. When Vibhudendra Tirtha persisted strongly, Dharmanna and others decide to leave every thing to the God himself, by imposing one condition that the two saints should offer the prayers one after the other and it would be taken over by him at whose prayers the earth whose under the pooja box was kept sunders. The two saints agreed to the suggestions made by Dharmanna and others. Shri Vibhudendra being the senior saint first offered the prayers for three days. Nothing had happened. On the fourth day it was the turn of Shri Vidyanidhi Tirtha. He prayed to God by chanting the portion of fifth skandha of Bhagavata Purana. After a few minutes suddenly the soil where the pooja box was kept sundered and came up a few inches above the surface of the ground.

Then the villagers of the Yaragola asked Shri Vidyanidhi Tirtha to take over the pooja box and the samsthana of the Uttaradi Mutt. Thus the Uttaradi Mutt was presided by the Shri Vidya Nidhi Tirtha, the rightful successor of Shri Ramachandra Tirtha. Shri Vibhudendra Tirtha started another math known as Kumbhakonam Math which after the advent of his sixth pontifical successor Shri Raghvendra Tirtha came to be known as Shri Raghvendra Math of Mantralaya.”

Shri Vidyanidhi Teertha

|| yadbhaktyA mUlarAmasya peTika tyaktabhUmika .
vidyanidhirdhiyaM dadyAt aShTaShaSTYabdapUjakaH ||

“**Shri Vidyanidhi Teertha** succeeded the throne of the Vedanta Samrajya of the Uttaradi Matha after **Shri Ramachandra Tirtha** and ruled for a very long period. His charama shloka mentions that he worshipped **Sri Moola Rama** for nearly **Sixty Eight** years.

The miraculous manner in which he ascended to the peetha and got the blessings of Shri Moola Rama is a great evidence of his utmost devotion and eligibility. Once **Shri Ramachandra Tirtha** fell seriously ill and ordained one of his disciples Kambhaluri Narasimhacharya to Sanyasa who was later named as Shri Vibhudendra Tirtha with a view of installing him to the throne of Vedanta Samrajya before he entered Brindavana. He gave some minor idols and Saligramas to Shri Vibhdendra Tirtha for his daily worship, but none from the pooja box of the Math and sent him on tour for propagation of Madhwa philosophy with specific instructions that he would send for him at the appropriate time.

Soon, **Shri Ramachandra Tirtha** felt that the time came for formally handing over the Math to **Shri Vibhudendra Tirtha**. He immediately sent a word to Shri Vibhudendra Tirtha. **Shri Vibhudendra Tirtha**, who was on tour at that time, could not come back to **Yaragola** in time. Shri Ramachandra Tirtha, therefore was compelled to ordain **Shri Vidyanidhi Tirtha** as his possible successor. At the same time he did not want to deprive **Shri Vibhudendra Tirtha** from the pontification of the **Uttaradi Math**. He therefore asked Dharmanna and other villagers of Yaragola to intern the pooja box after his Nirvana in a deep pit, with clear instructions that if Shri Vibhudendra Tirtha came within six months of his passing away, he would take it out and succeed him. However, if he did not turn up within the specified time, the pooja box should be handed over to **Shri Vidyanidhi Tirtha**, who would be the next Peethadipati and rightful successor to the Uttaradi Math. When **Shri Vibhudendra Tirtha** did not turn up even after six months, Dharmanna and others requested **Shri Vidyanidhi Tirtha** to take the pooja box to perform the usual pooja.

When Dharmanna and others were ready to dig to take out the pooja box, **Shri Vibhudendra Tirtha** happened to come to Yaragola and asked for the pooja box to to be delivered to him for worship. Confusion prevailed as to who would be the rightful successor of the Peetha and gets an opportunity to worship Moola Rama and other Math's dieties.

Dharmanna and others decided to leave every thing to the God himself, by imposing one condition that the two saints should offer the prayers one after the other . The Pooja Box would be handed over to him at whose prayers the earth where the pooja box was kept sunders.

The two saints happily agreed to the suggestions made by Dharmanna and others. **Shri Vibhudendra Tirtha** being the senior saint first offered the prayers for three days and nothing happened. On the fourth day the turn of **Shri Vidyanidhi Tirtha** came, he prayed Lord Rama with utmost devotion. After a few minutes suddenly the soil where the pooja box was kept sundered and came up a few inches above the surface of the ground.

Then the villagers of the Yaragola asked **Shri Vidyanidhi Tirtha** to take over the pooja box and the samsthana of the **Uttaradi Math**. Thus the Uttaradi Mutt was presided by the Shri Vidyanidhi Tirtha, who became the rightful successor of Shri Ramachandra Tirtha.

Shri Vidyanidhi Teertha travelled all over India spreading Madhwa Philosophy. He went to Simhachalam and had the darshan of Lord Varaha Narasimha Swamy. He did penance there at Simhachalam and got boons from Shri Varaha Narasimha Swamy.

He had exhibited his scholarship with the discourse of **Shriman Nyaya Sudha**. His name itself speaks of his scholarship. He had many debates with followers of other schools. He was honoured by the King on Anegundi.

During his period, extensive lands were gifted to the Matha near Raichur of present Karnataka State which are all still with the Uttaradi Mut. When his end came Shri Vidyanidhi Teertharu handed over the Math to Shri Raghunatha Teertharu and entered Brindavana at Yaragola near his Guru's Brindavana on **Kartika Bahula Chaturthi**".

Introduction to Shri 1008 Shri Raghunatha Teertharu:

| raghunAthaguruM naumi vidyAnidhikarodbhavam .
kUrmo varuNaga~Nge ca yasya pratyaxatAM gatAH ||

Shri Raghunatha Teertharu was eleventh great scholar and saint of Shri Uttaradi Matha who received the patronage of Shri Krishnadevaraya of the Vijayanagar. This was an eventful epoch in the history of the Matha, when several incidents revealing the highest status of Shri Uttaradi Matha occurred. The outstanding personality of Sri Raghunatha Teertharu among the Vaishanava pontiffs of the school of Madhvacharya heralded a glorious renaissance in the religious history of the Vijaya Nagar empire and also constituted an important landmark in the history of Dwaitha vedantha. He was a contemporary of Shri Vibhudendra Teertharu and Shri Lakshminarayana Teertharu alias Shripadaraju, Shri Vyasrayaru and Shri Purandara Dasaru. He was like an emperor in the spiritual realm of unlimited prowess.

Shri Raghunatha Teertharu, the immediate disciple and successor of Shri Vidyanidhi Teertharu, was ordained to Vendantha Samrajya at Yaragola. He was formerly known as Vishnu Shastri. He was an embodiment of vyagya and travelled all over India on foot by carrying his samsthana deities on his shoulders. He toured extensively and defeated many a scholar in scholarly dispute and strengthened the cause of Madhva Vaishnavism. He had under his tutelage as many as twenty eight monks who were called Shripadas. This was the most illustrious period of the Uttardi Matha. Re-emphasising the divine message of Shri Madhvacharya the exponent of the Dwaitha Philosophy, Shri Raghunatha Teertharu exhorted the devotees to love Shri Hari and live happily.

Shri Raghunatha Teertharu was the leading figure in the social and religious revolution of the times. His magnetic influence spread to all classes of people, By severe penance and high learning His Holiness developed mystical power and became honored everywhere by all classes of people including the great saints who lived during his regime.

A story goes that once in a village on the bank of River Krishna, a lady whose husband was hopelessly ill, desired to die along with her husband. At that time she heard the greatness of Shri Swamiji who is having extraordinary spiritual power and divine vision and who is touring in the surrounding places. She immediately rushed to the place where Shri Swamiji was camping and had the darshana of His Holiness. He blessed her to have eight children. With the divine blessings of the Swamiji her dying husband fully recovered and she had eight children by him.

In the process of his regular tour, once he came to Koppara in Karnataka, a place of worship of Lord Narashima swamy. There he camped for some time. Shri Vibudendra Teertharu met Shri Raghunatha Teertharu and presented his pupil, Shri Laxminarayana Teertharu in order to obtain recognition by the highly learned Swamiji. Shri Vibudendra Teertharu ordered his student to submit an exposition of the first Adhikarana of Shriman Nyaya Sudha. Shri Swamiji was pleased at exposition of Shri Laxminarayana Teertharu and bestowed on him the title Shripadaraja.

Later, Shri Raghunatha Teertharu went towards "Nivritti Sangama", where His Holiness spent some time. When Swamiji grew very old, he ordained Shri Raghuvarya Teertharu on the pontifical throne of the Shri Uttaradi Matha and made him his assistant. He visited Navabrindavana situated on a rock in the middle of the river Tungabhadra. Shri Raghunatha Teertharu worshipped the samsthana idols with the help of Shri Raghuvarya Teertharu on a rock. At the time of Nirmalya Visarjana, one of the five Vyasa mushties fell in the river. All efforts were made to recover the Vyasa mushti but it was not recovered. He fasted for seven days. On the night of the seventh day Lord Vedavyasa comforted him in a dream saying that many stones in the form of tortoise will come up in the water and that form of tortoise which will revolve while pouring milk on it is the Vyasa mushti which fell into the water. Accordingly, the next morning many Kurma shaped stones were floating in the river and out of them Shri Raghunatha Teertharu took the one which revolved, while performing the Kshiraabhisheka. Thus he restored the lost Vysa mushti, that is the Kurma Saligram for which Abhishekam with milk is being done even today in the Matha.

This strange movements of the tortoise were witnessed by Shri Vyasarayaru, Shri Purandara Dasaru, Shri Raghuvarya Teertharu, and the king of Vijayanagar Shri Krishana Devarya. They were struck with wonder that he was such a mystic pontiff. On this occasion Shri Krishana Devarya honoured his Holiness Shri Raghunatha Teertharu.

Shri Purandara Dasa in one of his kirtanas gives an account of the pooja of Shri Raghunatha Teertharu. How devoted was Shri Raghunatha Teertharu towards God, how great a mystic of unflinching penance swamiji was, how fortunate the swamiji was in his devoted worship of Shrimad Acharya's devatarchana containing the 28 sacred Murthi's in the following verses:

Madhvarayara Devatarchaneyu (Pallavi)

Prasiddha Raghunatharu Pujisuva Sobaga (anupallavi)

The pooja box of Shrimad Acharya, containing 28 sacred Murthi's is being possessed and adored by the saints of Shri Uttaradi Matha in succession till this day.

Thus Shri Raghunatha Teertharu stands as the most ruling guru of all vaishanava in particular and of all satwic adhikari in general. He enjoyed a long and eventful pontifical throne of Shri Uttaradi Matha for 59 years and entered the Brindavana near the Brindavana of his beloved guru Shri Jayateertharu at Malkhed, Gulbarga Dist, Karnataka.

Our present analysis is limited to reviewing the stories attributed to Sri Raghunatha and Sripadaraja/Vyasaraja. These stories are sourced from various UM documents – some old dated 17 th century and some in later documents. We have no intention to review the other aspects of the greatness of Sri Raghunatha as recited above. The story concerning Sri Vidyanidhi given here is not universally accepted – specially by the devotees of Sri Vibudendra – now called SRS Matha. A separate analysis of the evidence in this regard has been made and is available in the website srivyasaraja.org. under the title Sri Vidyanidhi.

There is no mention of the studying phase for Raghunatha with some other ascetic, and he presumably studied with Vidyanidhi. There is no basis in record for the belief that Raghunatha was superior to Vibhudendra or Sripadaraja in scholarship or any other achievement. In fact, the old documents such as Sathkathas emphasise his great devotion to God and renunciation, along with emphasis on Moola Rama worship, rather than his great scholarship. There is also no linkage of names of great scholars following Raghunatha, as his teachers/disciples, comparable to Sripadaraja and Vyasaraaja, whose erudition is well known as of epoch making standards, nor are there any superlative reports about Vidyanidhi's scholarship. Neither of them seem to have authored any compositions as far as recorded. Sathkathas record that Sri Raghuttama, the great UM scholar-author and disciple of Raghuvarya, who was the direct successor of Raghunatha, had a Vidyaguru Varadacharya from outside the Peetha, who was not an ascetic, and due to his own greatness and blessings of Hari-Vayu, and benediction of his Guru in a dream, he achieved his great scholarship standards manifested later on. This is no reflection on the greatness of the Yathis - Raghunatha and Raghuvarya, whose devotion and Vairagya are described to be of exemplary character. The fact that the task of tackling the criticism of Advaita Siddhi was taken up by the Shishyas of Raghuttama and not by the direct lineage shishyas of Vyasaraaja in his own matha, also shows that UM had built up great families of scholars by that time. It also shows a very healthy approach towards propagation of Tatvavada, when all the Mathas cooperated in the task of defending it.

Before we examine the truth or otherwise of the stories which have been prevalent for a long time (perhaps since 2 or even 3 hundred years) we should try to fix up the periods of the respective saints based on the latest available data.

The demise date of Sri Akshobhya, now commonly accepted as 1365 AD was being shown as 1245 AD in the earlier UM records like Sathkathas. On the premise that only cyclic year names perhaps could be accepted as valid, the demise date of Sri Vidyadhiraja, the common ancestor of both SVM as well as SRSM and UM was being stated by some UM sources (like Gurucharya, Gurucharitha) as Angirasa - 1392 AD, giving him only 4 years reign. His Charama shloka says nothing about his period of reign or highlights of accomplishments of his period, except to call him as Vidyadhishapadasaktha and Vidyakaushalya-samyuthah as per the prevalent version in SVM and Madyadvaityandhakara-pradyothanam in UM, referring to his great scholarship and "ceaseless disputation with Advaita" as concluded by HDSV, which says: "His literary and other activities must therefore have taken more of his time than barely three or four years as pontiff. Gurucharya of UM also refers to his having ordained his first disciple Rajendra Tirtha after many years (BahUthithe kale)". He himself seems to have been ordained one year before Sri JayaTirtha's demise (1388 AD). As JayaTirtha himself is believed to have been only below 50 years of age at the time of his demise (based on

his having taken the vows around 25/30 years of age and his stay in the Peetha for 23 years (1365 – 1388 AD), if Vidyadhiraja's period is taken as only 4 years and also taking into account the latter's direct entry from Brahmacharya to Sannyasa, if also assumed, his demise is too premature, for which there is no basis in tradition. His ordaining Rajendra first, sending him out for Tatva prachara and his ordaining Kavindra later, when he fell ill and Rajendra did not return in time etc are historic facts.

Extracts from the current UM website is quoted for ready reference here:

7.	Shri Vidyadhiraj Teertharu	1388 – 1392	Vaishakha S 3	Jaganathapuri (Not Available)
----	----------------------------	-------------	---------------	-------------------------------

These dates as well as his Vrindavana location etc are also from UM data.

“|| mAdyadadvaityandhakArapradyotanamaharnisham .
vidyAdhirAjaM svaguruM dhyAyAmi karuNAkaram ||”

“Shri Vidyadhiraja Teertharu, the immediate disciple and successor of Shri Jaya Teertharu, who occupied the throne of Vedanta Samrajya of the Uttaradi Matha. His initial name was Krishna Bhat before he was initiated to Sanyas by Shri Jaya Teertharu.

Once when he went on tour to northern India he came to River Bhima. He thought of going to Kashi for a holy dip in river Ganges. The Goddess Ganga told him in a dream that he need not travel all the way to Ganges and that she would appear to him in the river Bhima itself the very next day. The Goddess Ganges appeared in the Bhima river and the Shri Vidyadhi Raja Teertharu offered pooja to the goddess and had a holy dip in Bhima along with his disciples. He toured all over India for the propagation of the Dwaita vedanta.

It was during the time of Shri Vidyadhiraja Teertharu that the first bifurcation of the Madhava Matha took place. According to a tradition Shri Vidyadhiraja Tirtharu ordained Shri Rajendra Teertharu, one of his disciples, to succeed him to the pontifical throne when he was ill. But when he got well soon after, he did not install him to the Vedanta samrajya of the Matha. Shri Rajendra Teertharu, therefore, went on travel to propagate the philosophy of the Madhva.

A little later Shri Vidyadhiraja Teertharu fell ill again and felt that the end was near, when Shri Rajendra Teertharu was on tour. He sent his disciple to locate Shri Rajendra Teertharu before he passed away unfortunately he could not be located early enough. In this critical juncture and in order to avoid the consequence of the Vedanta Samrajya of the Uttaradi Matha being without a successor, Shri Vidyadhiraja Teertharu was forced to ordain another disciple Shri Kavindra Tirtharu as the successor of Shri Vidyadhiraja Teertharu and handed over the entire samsthana and all the properties of the Matha to him. This included all the idols which were handed over to Shri Padmanabha Teertharu by Shri Madhwacharya and subsequently were acquired by the saints of Uttaradi Matha, the pontificate and the entire

Samsthana. There was no division of these assets. The Uttaradi Matha thus continued to be the Moola Samsthana of Shri Madhwacharya, presided by Shri Kavindra Teertharu.

Works by Shri Vidyadhiraja Teertharu:

The inscription of Madras presidency Volume 2 of Udipi taluk No. 241 narrates that the Shri Vidyadhi Raja Teertharu received a gift of 200 cents of land from Devaraja Maharaya for the Uttaradi Matha.

He composed three major works -

1 'Chandogya Bhashya Tika'

2 'Gita Vritti'

3 'Vishnu Sahasranama Bhashya'

Of these works the 'Vishnu Sahasranama Bhashya' is the most important one. Vishnu Sahasranama occupies a high place in Madhva thought and Shri Vidyadhiraja was the earliest commentator on it. The opening verse of the commentary is an invocation to Lord Vishnu, Vyasa and Madhva. The substance and significance of the thousand names of the Lord are well brought out by the author. According to Madhva, each of the thousand names offered innumerable interpretations. However, Shri Vidyadhiraja Teertharu deals only with the etymology of the names and gives no importance to the grammar involved."

His author-ship of the three compositions also rules out his period of reign being as short as 4 years. It also rules out the Angirasa Samvatsara basis, as the next one will be too far away – after 60 years. B N K Sharma himself assigns him a reign of 24 years, without indicating the detailed reasons for choosing the figure. The SVM tradition gives him a period of 14 years. It may be conservative and prudent to accept the SVM figure, based on tradition with his demise date as 1402 AD instead of 1392 AD, which also fits him in its lineage neatly without conflicts.

Based on their own present figures, the lineage of SVM and UM following him will thus be as follows:

<i>SVM (SPR and SRS also shown)</i>	U M (latest)
=====	=====
JayaTirtha – 1365 – 1388 AD	JayaTirtha – 1365 – 1388 AD
Vidyadhiraja – 1388 – 1402# AD	Vidyadhiraja – 1388 – 1392* AD
	Kavindra – 1392 – 1399* AD
	Vageesha – 1399 – 1408* AD
Rajendra – 1402 – 1440 AD	Ramachandra – 1408*– 1435#AD
<i>Vishnudasacharya – (1390 – 1440 AD)?</i>	
<i>Vibhudendra – 1435 – 1470 AD</i>	
<i>Jithamithra – 1470 - 1475 AD</i>	
Sripadaraja - 1420 – 1487# AD	Vidyanidhi – 1435 – 1479* AD
Jayadhwaja – 1440 – 1448 AD	
Purushotthama – 1448 – 1460 AD	
Brahmanya – 1460 – 1467 AD	
Vyasaraja – 1467 – 1539 AD	Raghunatha – 1479# – 1527# AD
Srinivasa – 1539 – 1564 AD	Raghuvarya – 1527 – 1557 AD
Rama – 1564 – 1584 AD	Raghutthama – 1557 – 1595 AD

The figures given in UM current website date are also reproduced below for ready reference:

6.	Shri Jaya Teertharu	1367 – 1388	Ashadha K 5	Malkhed
7.	Shri Vidyadhiraj Teertharu	1388 – 1392	Vaishakha S 3	Jaganathapuri (Not Available)
8.	Shri Kavindara Teertharu	1392 – 1399	Chaitra S. 9	Navavrindavana (Anegundi)

9.	Shri Vagisha Teertharu	1399 – 1407	Chaitra K. 3	Navavrindavana (Anegundi)
10.	Shri Ramachandra Teertharu	1407 – 1435	Vaishakha S 6	Yaragol
11.	Shri Vidyanidhi Teertharu	1435 – 1479	Kartika K 4	Yaragol
12.	Shri Raghunatha Teertharu	1479 – 1527	Margashira K 1	Malkhed
13.	Shri Raghuvarya Teertharu	1527 – 1557	Jeshtha K 3	Navavrindavana (Anegundi)
14.	Shri Raghuttama Teertharu	1557 – 1595	Pushya S 11	Manampoondi (Tirukoilur)

Explanatory Comments:

Bold figures indicate data with strong validity proofs, based on history.

(*) indicates likely errors – nature of errors explained separately

(#) indicates alternative figures – explained separately.

Data for saints other than SVM/UM lineages given in Italics.

The table given above shows the periods of the UM pontiffs and the corresponding SVM/SPR/SRS Mutt pontiffs arranged to show their contemporariness – as far as possible, along with the lineage amongst them. Only key persons whose interactions are historically reported have also been shown. The figures actually shown in UM group are from their website figures dated 2006/7 and the figures in SVM and other Mathas are accepted figures from their sources.

The likely erroneous values are explained below with reasons.

The alternative values indicate those which had been adopted in the past by UM and changed for which the reasons are not clear or those where such values seem to be justified as argued by other sources.

SVM Table:

Vidyadhiraja – (1402 # AD) -- 1412 AD (from HDSV)

Sripadaraja – Demise 1487# AD (from HDSV) - traditional 1502 AD.

HDSV bases it on the date of Saluva Narasimha's campaign and his moving from Chandragiri to Hampi after winning the wars in Kalinga and elsewhere. The value of the year has been fixed without explicit indication of specific basis. But allowing for accession to Peetha at the age of 14 years as is commonly accepted following the demise of his Guru, Sri Svarnavarna Tirtha in 1420 AD, Sripadaraja would be 81 years of age in 1487 AD and would be 96 years of age in 1502 AD. His Aradhana is being observed in Jyeshtha shuddha thrayodashi every year, as per tradition in the Matha records.

UM Table:

Vidyadhiraja – 1392* - Not compatible with life stories, authorship etc.

Kavindra/Vageesha – periods acceptable but dates need change.

Ramachandra – change 1435 AD for Demise -1430 AD (old)

Vidyanidhi – change (1435-79) – old (1430 – 1444) AD. *** (see comments)

Charama shloka figure conflict. High degree of guesswork and uncertainty (Estimates of period by different analysts – 8 to 68 years).

Raghunatha – change (1479 – 1527) - old – (1444 – 1502) AD (UM only)

Raghuvarya – change (1527 – 1557) – old –(1504 – 1557) AD (UM only)

Most of the stories regarding Sripadaraja's contacts with the corresponding UM pontiffs have their origin in this record prepared with the life periods of UM ascetics as the basis. This earliest record *Gurucharya* is useful not only because it is clearly documented but also as a source of many valuable points such as the seniority of Rajendra and Vibhudendra stated there, when discussing the bifurcations of the original united Matha. The normal approach will be to accept it as valid *pramāṇas* unless *badhaka pramāṇas* are discovered.

Comments:

*(The lineage periods of UM has been somewhat confusing during the period 1388 – 1557 AD (from the date of demise of Sri Teekacharya to the beginning of Sri Raghuttama's reign, as is seen by numerous variants of periods, figures of dates etc, offered by different studies and sources. Only the duration of the periods of Kavindra, Vageesha and Raghuvarya have been held constant. The usual bench marks of Shasanas by kings etc fixing the dates for specific ascetics may not have been there. Further, the primary cause of the unsettled picture is the period of Sri Vidyanidhi varying between 8 years to 68 years in traditional circles of UM, and the latest figure being taken now as 44 years. This problem has also been pointed out by B N K Sharma, in his essay called **Sathyameva Jayathe** and a summary has been given in our note on Sri Vidyandhi Tirtha posted in srivyasaraja.org. The earlier studies were based on his being assigned a period of 1430 – 1444 AD, after Sri Ramachandra and just before Sri Raghunatha. Now, the period of Sri Raghunatha Tirtha which was being taken as 1444 – 1502 AD - period (as per Sathkatha, Gurucharya etc and by B N K Sharma based on other solid evidence of contemporary pontiffs like Sri Sripadaraja (1420-87 AD), Vyasaraaja (1467-1539 AD) etc.)), is being changed to 1479-1527 AD and that of Sri Vidyanidhi changed to 1435-1479 AD. The basis of this change is not known, **but it has the effect of making Sri Vidyanidhi rather than Sri Raghunatha, the contemporary pontiff for Sripadaraja, with Raghunatha becoming a counterpart of Sri Vyasaraaja** as would be evident from the table above. But there are no stories regarding Sri Vidyanidhi and Sripadaraja as contemporaries so far known. In fact, according to these dates, Sripadaraja will be an Ashrama Jyeshtha even to Vidyanidhi also by a number of years – what to say of Raghunatha. There is no such uncertainty regarding Sripadaraja, whose story is also consistent and clear, but is also fixed in history by the records of the King of Chandragiri called Thaulava Narasimha I and his not only having the saint as his Guru, but also performing a Rathnabhisheka in 1476 AD to him. **With the latest dates as per website of UM, by the time Sri Raghunatha ascended his***

Peetha in 1479 AD, Sripadaraja was about 73 years of age and perhaps staying only in Mulabagilu. This is also supported by his deputing Sri Vyasaraja on the grounds that he was too old to accompany the King of Chandragiri to Vijayanagara (Hampi) in 1486 AD, and his assigning his Vidya shishya to look after the kankarya of Tirupati temple after 1486 for 12 years. The stories of his being named as Sripadaraja by Sri Raghunatha who would be extremely junior in age and Ashrama ascension as well those of their joint travels etc will all have to be considered as physically impossible, with the new dates of Raghunatha given in UM Website.

The Historical perspective:

Bukka Raya I who played a major part in establishing, extending and administering the Vijayanagara empire founded in 1335 AD died in 1377 AD (when Sri JayaTirtha was in the Peetha). He was succeeded by Harihara II who ruled till 1404 AD (up to the time of Sri Vidyadhiraja). Harihara had to fight numerous challenges to his authority and succeeded in putting down rebellions with a firm hand. In the neighbouring Bahamani kingdom, the founder Muhammad Shah died in 1375 AD and his son Mujahid Shah, invaded Vijayanagar in 1377 AD. This war was indecisive as he failed to capture the fort of Adoni even after a siege of 9 months and he was forced to return to his capital Gulbarga without any success. He was assassinated in 1378 AD. At this critical juncture, Harihara invaded Konkan and Northern Karnataka with a large army. Goa was captured in 1380 AD along with saphtha Konkans making him the master of the west coast. In the east, his armies extended his rule till Srisailam and Warangal. The conflict was again renewed in 1398 AD but did not alter the status quo. Harihara II ruled for 28 years till 1404 AD with his sons and relations commanding key positions. After his death, the succession was disputed and there was a struggle for 2 years and finally Devaraya I took over in 1406 and ruled till 1422 AD. He was a great organizer in whose time the borders were consolidated, and men of learning and arts were encouraged. The period 1388 AD (Demise of Sri JayaTirtha) to 1422 AD (Rajendra and Ramachandra) thus corresponds to a congenial period for Hindu ascetics as far as Vijayanagara was concerned, but the continued preference for Yeragola and Manyakheta etc in Bahamani kingdom by these ascetics seems to be a puzzle. This could be an indication that their presence in the Bahamani areas starting from Sri Akshobhya's time was not made too difficult to continue by the political and administrative powers and the Akshobhya Matha in the old Manyakheta town was intact and prospering. This seems to have continued till 1450 AD, the times of Purushottama and Brahmanya Tirthas of SVM, who left the Bahamani places permanently. . Devaraya II took over in 1422 AD and ruled till 1446 AD. He was initially in charge of Tulunadu and became co-regent with his father later. He had also to fight a series of wars with the Bahamani states, and Orissa. He suffered some reverses, and lost Kondavidu area to Orissa. It was at this time when the Bahamani capital at Gulbarga was shifted to Bidar. South Canara was also kept free of Muslim occupation. In 1428 AD he reestablished his authority over the lost Andhra territory near Rajahmundry from Orissan Gajapati – Bhanudeva IV. There was peace till 1435, but a war broke out with Bijapur Bahamani state again regarding Raichur and Mudgal doab, when Muslim forces were repelled. This was again repeated in 1443 AD. Devaraya II also won a battle against Ceylon and exacted tribute from them. He also defeated Kapilendra

of Orissa, who had succeeded Bhanudeva IV and maintained the rule of Reddis, his allies in Rajahmundry. Devaraya II thus ruled a large empire extending from Ceylon to the river Krishna, and bounded by the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. He patronised arts, literature and philosophical debates. He was succeeded by Vijaya for a short period of 2 years, and Mallikarjuna who ruled till 1465 AD. In 1450 – 54, however, Kapilendra of Orissa drove Vijayanagara out of the Reddi area and Kondavidu, south of the river Krishna. His son continued the southern advance capturing Kanchi, Tiruchirapalli etc. But their stay in the conquered areas was very short as they had to fall back in just 2 years. Virupaksha, a cousin succeeded Mallikarjuna and ruled till 1485 AD, at Vijayanagar, though his authority was really confined to a small part of the large empire. The Saluvas (Narasimha I) controlled the eastern sea board and the southern part was ruled by successors of Mallikarjuna. West coast was ruled by Tuluva and Konkani nobles, limiting the authority of the nominal emperor to Karnataka and portions of western Andhra.

After 1470, when Kapilendra died, the Bahamanis were free of fear of his attack and invaded Konkan, North Karnataka and Goa and even Belgaum. The Tulus resisted further advances of the Muslim forces into their areas. It was at this juncture that Saluva Narasimha I, based in Chandragiri, took over the task of re-establishing the empire which was disintegrating under the weak and vacillating leadership of Virupaksha. Initially in 1456 itself when he had succeeded to the family estates, he had established his rule over Chandragiri, Chittor, the two Arcot districts and Kolar. From this base, he gradually expanded his hold over the whole empire.

Thus, Vijayanagara had the Sangama dynasty ending with Virupaksha II in 1485 after which Saluva Narasimha I - from a nominal vassal state in Chandragiri from 1456 AD took control. After invading Orissa in 1469 AD and capturing Udayagiri, he followed it up with expeditions towards the south as far as Rameswaram, Trivandrum. He also conquered partly by war and partly by diplomacy, coastal Andhra right up to Krishna river - Masulipatam and the fort of Kondaveedu. As Virupaksha was a bad king sunk in vice, he was murdered by a son and who finally handed over the throne to a brother, who was also a feeble dissolute prince called Praudhadevaraya in 1485 AD, when he was expelled and power seized by Narasimha. Narasimha I died in 1490 AD after a defeat by the Orissa king at udayagiri. The next ruler was Narasanayaka, Narasimha's commander, who ruled on behalf of the young sons of Narasimha as a guardian till 1503 AD. He was succeeded by Veera Narasimha who ruled for 5 years till 1509 and then the famed Krishnadevaraya who ruled till 1529 AD. He was succeeded by his brother Achyuthadevaraya. The corresponding Bahamani states and Kalinga etc also played their role in the respective areas.

If we consider the life of Sripadaraja, it will be seen that his early years in Peetha till he was around 50 years (1456AD) were in Devaraya II 's time, which was comfortable for Hindu ascetics and perhaps most of his time was spent amongst his Matha devotees in Tamilnadu and south Karnataka. He must have come to Mulabagal and settled down there at the end of this period, when he took over the important task of tutoring Vyasaraja. He must have also developed close relationships with the local ruling prince, Saluva Narasimha I around this time, which remained

intact for the rest of his life. There is no corresponding information about Vidyanidhi and Raghunatha – except for the mention that the former was given some Inad near Raichur (which are still with UM as claimed by them!) and the latter was honoured by Krishnadevaraya in the presence of Vyasaraaja, Purandara dasaru etc as mentioned in the website data.

In this connection some of the events connected with Sripadaraya and Vyasaraaja are significant:

Vijayanagara/Chandragiri rulers - Devaraya I – 1406-1422 AD, Devaraya II – 1422 – 1446 AD

Vyasaraaja Sansyasashrama (Abbur) – **1454 AD** Sripadaraja Sanyasashrama - **1412 AD**

Vyasaraaja peethadhipathya – **1467 AD** Sripadaraja peethadhipathya – **1420 AD**

Vijayanagara/Chandragiri rulers - Saluva Narasimha I – 1456 – 1490 AD

Vyasaraaja studied in Mulabagilu – **1455 – 1467 AD**

Vyasaraaja’s north Indian tour – 1467 AD

Vyasaraaja in Chandragiri – **1480 AD**

Sripadaraja Rathnabhisheka

by Narasimha – **1476 AD**

Vyasaraaja in Tirupathi – 1486 - 1498 AD

Vyasaraaja in Vijayanagar – 1493 AD (on wards)

Vyasaraaja’s authoring his compositions – 1482 – 1494 AD

Vyasaraaja in SriRanga – 1495 AD

Honour of green flag etc from Bijapur sultan – 1500 AD

Krishnadevaraya accession and death – 1509 – 1530 AD

Vyasaraaja Rathnabhisheka – 1520 AD

Kuhuyoga parihara – 1524 AD.

The concordance of the periods of Sripadaraja, Vyasaraaja and Raghunatha is important for not only fixing up the dates and periods of events in the latter’s life, but also to verify the very feasibility of many, which would become obvious, further. One is also confronted with the choice that with acceptance of one set of dates, some events would be possible and not the others and vice versa – clearly demonstrating that the original stories with some true basis which may have come up in their lifetimes may have been embellished and embroidered with

imagination without proper care being taken, in subsequent centuries long after, adding to the confusion and reducing their value as evidence – though they have all been collected and expressed in poetic language with all sincerity.

Based on the various background information collected so far, let us now look at the stories in circulation regarding Sripadaraja and Raghunatha.

I have no information of any new evidence which UM may have based their recent change of Raghunatha's dates and to that extent my comments may need change if such evidence is made public. By a glance at the website, perhaps they have some "evidence" of lands near Raichur which were donated to Vidyanidhi and "are still in the possession of UM". The incident of the Kurma witnessed by Vyasaraja, Purandaradasaru and Krishnadevaraya, due to which Raghunatha was honoured also seems to be other important event providing such "evidence". This information had not been available till recently as it would otherwise have featured in analysis of periods and dates by earlier scholars such as BNK Sharma etc. There are two recently "discovered" devaranamas also quoted in the website, one attributed to Sripadaraja and another to Purandara dasaru, which "prove" the Moola Rama worship of Raghunatha. There is also another story which connects him with Vyasaraja regarding his submitting his famous compositions to the former for approval. None of these are "Hard" evidence which is unimpeachable and would require examination and confirmation for validity. For the limited purpose of this study, both the earlier dates of Raghunatha (1444 – 1502) as well as 1479 – 1527 AD are considered as two separate alternatives. The change in the dates of Vidyanidhi are irrelevant in this context, as no interaction has been reported so far, between him and Sripadaraja.

There is another special feature which is brought out in the old documents like Gurucharya, Sathkatha etc. The ascetic Raghunatha and his immediate disciple Raghuvarya had led a very strict life of renunciation where they did not accumulate the great paraphernalia of the Mathadhipati, which we are used to see today. They seem to have led very frugal lives away from the sources of wealth and power, as is appropriate to such ascetics called Paramahamsas. They were carrying their puja boxes on their own head and shoulders with a few shishyas accompanying them. It would not be surprising if their first Guru Vidyanidhi had also done the same. In fact, Sathkatha says that at the time of Sri Raghuttama, it was ordered by Sri Raghuvarya to the young ascetic that "This is not the time to move around carrying the God idols etc. The image of the lineage is getting adversely affected by this. We should introduce the prestige and splendor of a king's court, by having suitable officials in different places and train

them to bring up the prestige of the Peetha” etc. As a result, when Sri Raghuttama was insulted by the village chief and his teacher on a Sadhana dvadashi day, he stopped taking lessons from that teacher and introduced many new systems like different cooking for the Swamiji and others, the ritualistic ornamental umbrella and staffs etc – duplicating the honours of a King’s court. There may also have been an unstated problem caused by the division of the Matha in Ramachandra’s time, where the senior, famous and more popular Vibhudendra might have attracted a larger following, and the Vidyanidhi branch may have languished for some time with fewer supporters, with some suspicions also attached to it. The emphasis on Moola Rama Idol may also have increased at this time, to show that they were the real successors of the original branch of Kavindra. In any case, all the stories involving Sri Raghunatha speak of his relative poverty, lack of contacts with persons of wealth and power, due to which Sripadaraja was being received by society as of greater importance. There is no doubt that for all the external manifestations of Knowledge, social service and propagation of Tatvavada, Sripadaraja was the dominant personality in that time, as was Vyasaraaja, a few decades later. It is believed that Raghunatha stayed on in yeragola towards the end of his life and he died in Malkheda where his Vrindavana was installed by his shishya Raghuvarya. Sripadaraja had stayed on in Mulabagilu after 1476 AD.

In fact, we have to take recourse to some events mentioned in a composition, called Sripadarajashtaka, written 3 centuries later by a successor of Sripadaraja, called Srinidhi Tirtha (1745 – 72 AD), where two shlokas allegedly mention Raghunatha’s name to fix his dates relative to Sripadaraja indicating that they were contemporary. There are some doubts expressed about the genuineness of the composition itself and its possible corruption also. There is another beautifully crafted set of shlokas attributed to Sri Vyasaraaja, which is genuine and is obviously contemporary (after Sripadaraja’s Vrindavana pravesha). There is also another composition attributed to Sri Vadiraja, with its characteristic rhythm and meter. There are also devara namas attributed to both Vyasaraaja and Vadiraja as well as later Dasa parampare headed by Vijaya Dasarua, which describe some of the events. For careful evaluation of Raghunatha related stories, any concordance of a direct reference or indirectly derived kind is useful. Though I am not attempting here a detailed analysis of this kind, the following points may be noted:

i. Vyasaraaja’s stothra of Sripadaraja – 5 shlokas

There is no mention of any specific event in this shloka involving either the kings or Raghunatha etc. This is obviously composed posthumously and refers to his achievements and greatness in Jnana, Bhakthi and Vairagya. He has also used the

well known name Sripadaraja rather than Lakshminaraya Muni here once in each shloka.

śrī śrīpādarājapañcaratnamālikā

vande śrīpādarājamaṃ rucitamahṛdayamaṃ pūjitaśrīśahāyamaṃ

nirdhūtāśeṣaheyamaṃ nibhṛtaśubhacayamaṃ bhūmidevābhigeyamaṃ |

viprebhyo dattadeyamaṃ nijajanasadayamaṃ khaṇḍitāśeṣamāyamaṃ

niṣṭyūtasvarṇakāyamaṃ bahuguṇanilayamaṃ vādisaṅghairajeyamaṃ || 1 ||

kṣubdhādvādikarīndravādipaṭalīkumbhacchaṭābhedanapraudhaprābhavatarkasaṅghan
ikaraśreṇīvilāsojjvalaḥ |

gopīnāthamahīdhraśekharaśatpādasthaḷāvāsakṛt

pāyānmām bhavaghorakuñjarabhayācchrīpādarāṭkesarī || 2 ||

bibhṛṇamaṃ kṣaumavāśaḥ karadhṛtavalayamaṃ hārakeyūrakāñcī-

graiveyasvarṇamālā maṇigaṇakhacitānekabhūṣāprakarṣamaṃ |

bhuñjānamaṃ ṣaṣṭhiśākamaṃ hayagajaśibhikānarghyaśayyārathāḍhyamaṃ

vande śrīpādarājamaṃ trisavanamaniśamaṃ ghoradāridryaśāntyai || 3 ||

yadvṛndāvanasevayā suvimalāmaṃ vidyāmaṃ paśūn santatimaṃ

dhyānāt (dhyānamaṃ) jñānamanalpakīrtinivahamaṃ prāpnoti śīghramaṃ janaḥ |

taṃ vande narasiṃhatīrthanilayamaṃ śrīvyāsarātpūjitamaṃ

dhyāyantaṃ manasā nṛsiṃhacaraṇamaṃ śrīpādarājamaṃ gurum || 4 ||

kāśīkedāramāyākarigirimathurādvārakāveṅkaṭādri-

śrīmuṣṇakṣetrapūrvatribhuvanavilasatpuṇyabhūmīnivāśaḥ |

gulmādivyādhihartā guruguṇanilayo bhūtavetālabhedī

bhūyācchrīpādarājo nikhilāsubhatatiprāptaye santataṃ naḥ || 5 ||

iti śrīvyāsarājapūjyacaraṇaviracitā śrīśrīpādarājapañcaratnamālikā sampūrṇā

bhāratīramaṇamukhyaprāṇāntargata śrīkṛṣṇārpaṇamastu

In addition, there are 4 well known Devaranamas in Kannada composed by Vyasaraaja on his Guru Sripadaraja quoted by Korati Srinivasa rao.

“Mahime saalade ishte mahime saalade”

“Nenedu badukiro santhatha nenedu badukiro”.

“Vadisharabha masthakamkusha medineesura vandyā sripadaraya”

“Paramathaghanavana pavakane sharanu bhusuranutha siri narayana yogi”

In all these, Sripadaraja’s greatness is eulogized with great sincerity and love towards his Vidyaguru along with many of his miraculous deeds. In one of them, (given in Page 10 of Korati Srinivasa Rao’s book) there is a description of the incident of Raghunatha ascending to heaven as follows:

“Suranathapurakandu ghanapushpavimaanadi

Sarivutthalire raghunathendrara

Dhareyolee vrindavana pradakshinisi

Karedu bhaashisi kaluhidashcharya charithaa”.

Though the devaranama has an anktiha of “sirikrishna” indicating the composition by Vyasaraaja, there is another nudi, which is as follows:

“Sarasijakshana dhaynadolire vyasamuniyaa

Uragabandhisalu dhyanaadoleekshisi

Thodari bidiside ahipashava gururaya”,

Which refers to himself by name, which creates a doubt about Vyasaraaja himself being the author. There is visible distortion in the Devaranama as the second half of nudi in 3 and 6 as printed there is simply repeated and the nudis do not have the same length. The language is also more involved and complex compared to the other 3 Devaranamas, which are more typically similar to other compositions of Sri Vyasaraaja. Perhaps a competent scholar will analyse and eliminate the distortions.

Even taking the devaranama shlokas as acceptable prima facie, the incident seems to refer to Sripadaraja performing a pradakshina of Raghunatha’s Vrindavana on earth (in Malkheda?) and talking to the departing saint, rather than the more imaginative story of Raghunatha dropping a flower on Sripadaraja teaching his shishyas from his heavenly vehicle and indicating

the impending termination of his sojourn on earth in 2 years. Further, it is well known that installation of a Vrindavana of a departed saint is not immediate but takes some time – how can one perform Pradakshina to a saint's Vrindavana even when the saint is just leaving by a divine Vimana? It is inconceivable that a Vyasaraaja could even be imagined of making such a simple mistake. Further, as is well settled, both the great saints were in an advanced age (90 years) at the time of their demise and it is not possible to imagine Sripadaraja leaving Mulabagilu and going to do Pradakshina of Raghunatha at his age. This is therefore an interpolation of the original devaranama and not a reliable evidence to prove the reality of the incident as narrated now.

The whole story also becomes impossible when the latest UM dates of Raghunatha are considered.

ii. Vadirajakritha sripadaraja sthothra:

This set of six shlokas praises Sripadaraja's accomplishments. There is no mention of Raghunatha in them.

Similarly a Devara nama composed by Vadiraja on Sripadaraja does not mention Raghunatha.

iii. Some songs composed by Sripadaraja himself are also cited as evidence. One which appears in Sripadaraja volume published by Kannada Sahithya Parishath had wrongly ascribed a song composed by Sripadaraja, in honour of Sri Jithamithra as for Raghunatha. The error has been accepted by the editor of the volume.

Another song appeared for the first time, describing Sripadaraja praising Raghunatha when he was worshipping Moola Rama in the UM publication – Saseethamoolaramaarchaa -. There is a similar krithi ascribed to Purandara Dasaru praising Raghunatha worshipping the traditional Idols in UM. The origin and genuineness of these are not beyond doubt, as they have not appeared in previous collections of the songs by these great composers and a reference to a paper manuscript a couple of hundred years old (?) has been made as authority. In any case, these only talk of their being contemporaries and do not substantiate any incidents as such.

iv. The pramāṇa which is usually considered for verifying the stories of Sri Raghunatha's interaction with Sripadaraja is the Sripadarajashtaka composed by Sri Srinidhi Tirtha (1745 – 72 AD). Let us look at this pramāṇa also in some detail.

The shlokas are as follows: (Order may be jumbled up).

Bheree bhairava kaahale patahakaadaale dhurjharee

Vadithrambujathaaladundhubhi ghanee shringara ghantaaravah

Sauvarnaamaladanad chamarasitha chathroru haimollasath

Yashtudvandasuparichavaranasano bhuyassa na shreyase. (1)

Kasthurikaadisamalankrutha divaydeham

Drishtvaidooshayathimoodajaneekshanena

Thathyagavaarithathanoparirakshakaya

Sripadaguarvesthu namah shubhaya (2)

These two clearly describe the great prestige, wealth etc of Sripadaarja, as justified by his Sukhaprarabdha.

Sri gopikapathiniveditha shashtishakah

Mukhyorubhojanavidoshan thatparanam

Samdarshithorunijakuskhigathardrashaka

Sripadaguarvesthu namah shubhaya (3)

Describes the miracle of the 64 types of luxurious foods eaten earlier during Sadhana dvadashi even without bathing being produced in the original condition on the river bank for completing his Puja rituals.

Srivyasaraajaphanibandhanivarakaya

Thadbhashayaiva phainirajasamthoshakaya

Sauvaranarathnakhachithojjala kundalaya

Sripadaguarvesthu namah shubhaya (4)

Saving his disciple Vyasaraaja, who was enveloped by a great snake by sending it away after talking to it in its own language.

Shankhasthithena payasaadvijagathapaape

Dooreekrutha bahujaneshu vishankitheshu

Thenaiva shoditha maleemasakarpataya

Sripadaguarvesthu namah shubhaya (5)

This describes the miracle of complete purifying and whitening of a piece of cloth dipped in used oil, just by sprinkling of water from his Conch/Shankha – to answer critics who doubted his cleansing of Brahma Hatha dosha of the King (due to killing of Archakas of Tirupathi.

Jathvaneetham nrupenaprabala gajapathim kankanadvandvamekam

Yasmiadattham manojnam thadanunarapatheh bhoganaaryai nishaayaam

Yadroodaadrameshah parijanasahithayadi sthyapiraajne

Guptham bhupalamaulau punarapithadadaadbhikshavesau thadaannam. (6)

Producing an ornament (Kankana) of Sr Ranganatha Swamy from his Pooja box, after it was reported to the King that it was given away by Sripadarajaru to a dancing girl.

All the above shlokas are clearly describing Sripadaraja's greatness, special qualities like Sukhaprarabdha, some of his miracles etc. Now, let us see the shlokas which mention Raghunatha Tirtha incidents:

paatu shrIpaadaraaja: saKivararaGunaathaaryayukta: kadaa |

gaMgaasnaanaaya gachChan pathinRupasadanaM praaShyachit bhaikShyaM ya yaache |

paadaprakShaaLanaarthaM sthitavatiyatipe bhartsanaadyasyakOpaat |

gEhEdagdhEtina mRuMpadayugaLagataM yOrarakShaavanIshaM

This shloka describes the incident of a joint visit to a rich person's house, for Bhiksha, when the host did not follow the desire of Sripadaraja to give the first worship to Raghunatha (implying his superiority). Subsequent events which resulted in destruction of his house and belongings in a fire made him accept the direction later and get the blessings of Raghunatha.

This story appears unlikely to have been in the original Sripadarajashtaka as there is nothing eulogizing Sripadaraja here. It is plainly adulatory to Raghunatha and intended to prove his greatness relative to Sripadaraja, by making the latter recognise it himself. The only basis for its inclusion here is the first line Paathu sripadarajah, which could have well been Paathu Raghunathah also. In fact, Korati Srinivasa Rao describing this in some detail perhaps with his own imaginary content, has correctly headlined it as the

mahime of Raghunatha Tirtha. Further the incident, even if true, is not as significant as the others described in the Ashtaka intended to glorify Sripadaraja, composed by an ascetic of Sripadaraja Lineage 200 years later. Thus doubts about its genuineness will persist.

shrImadyashIsha raGunaathamunErvimaanaat |

puShTEsvamUrdhnipatatiprasamIkShachOktvaa |

aMprEritOru raGunaathamunIshvaraama |

shrIpaadaraaja guruvEstu nama: shubhaaya |

This describes the well publicised incident of a divine flower being dropped on Sripadaraja by Raghunatha already mentioned in the Devaranama attributed to Vyasaraja, which has been commented upon earlier. This incident's truth depends completely on the choice of demise dates of Raghunatha and Sripadaraja. As Sripadaraja's is already settled as 1502 AD (a possible alternative of 1487 AD suggested by B N K Sharma is discussed later), Raghunatha's must be slightly earlier – 1500 AD as accepted till recently by all. But when UM has altered this date to 1527 AD, *this story is clearly falsified, as he had his demise decades later than Sripadaraja*. Alternatively, we have to give up the proposed new dates and stick only to the old dates of 1444 AD – 1500 AD traditionally adopted and also accepted by B N K Sharma. This gives rise to many other problems which will be discussed later. The comments on the earlier shloka are applicable in this case also, as it seems to be intended only to glorify Raghunatha and not Sripadaraja. Both the stories show that they were good friends, and Sripadaraja was acknowledging publicly his respect for Raghunatha who is the main ascetic whose greatness is described in them. While there would be nothing objectionable in such a projection, if based on real stories with proper bases, here the only basis available is the Sripadarajashtaka, where all the other shlokas glorify him and no other fact or proof is adduced to show the superiority of Raghunatha to him.

At this stage, let us look at the actual stories as projected today:

(Source Sumadhvaseva postings by Narahari) in 2010.

Paadodaka mahime – as per Sripadaraja stotra

- **Period – 1444 – 1502AD**
- **Vrundavana @ MaLaKEDa**

- Aradhana – maargashira Krishna paaDya
- Ashrama Gurugalu – Sri Vidyanidhi Tirtharu (YaragoLa)
- Ashrama Shishyaru – Sri Raghuvarya Tirtharu (Navavrundavana)

raGunaathagurum noumi vidyaanidhikarOdbhavam |

kUrmO varuNagangE cha yasya pratyakShataam gataa: |

He is the 12th Yati from Srimadacharyaru and 7th Yati from Sri Jaya Tirtharu.

Contemporaries - Sri Purandaradasaru, Kanakadasaru, Sri Vibudendra Tirtharu, Sri Sripadarajaru, Sri Vyasajararu, Sri Raghottama Tirtharu, etc.

I. Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu gave the title “Sripadaraja” to Sri Lakshmi naaraayaNa Tirtha” -

Once Sri Vibudendra Tirtharu, was staying in Koppara Narasimha kshetra. He was doing Srimannyayasudha paata to Sri Lakshminarayana Tirtharu. Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu came there on tour and stayed there for some time. Sri Lakshminarayana Tirtharu had the opportunity of presenting the anuvada of Srimanyaya sudha in front of Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu and vidya guru Sri Vibudendra Tirtharu. Overwhelmed with joy, Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu felt happy and praised Lakshminarayana Tirtharu and gave the title “Sripadaraja” in front of Sri Vibudendra Tirtharu. That was the vidyaa pakshapatitva of Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu.

Brief remarks : Note that Sripadaraja was still studying Nyayasudha with his Guru Vibhudendra, while Raghunatha came there. The two ascetics – Vibhudendra/Sripadaraja made use of the opportunity of presenting the learning of Sripadaraja in front of Raghunatha who came there on tour. The presentation was received with great happiness and resulted in the title being awarded by Raghunatha to Lakshminarayana Muni as Sripadaraja.

How can anyone accept the truth of the story unless

- Sripadaraja was still studying Nyayasudha, when Raghunatha was already an accomplished scholar (implying age, Ashrama differences – in favour of Raghunatha)
- There was complete harmony amongst the Vidyanidhi (Raghunatha) and Vibhudendra branches to show such objective presentation and assessment.

Evidence of both points is in the absolute negative.

II. Miracle by Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu -

Once Srighalu had visited a village. There one of the brahmana had died. The wife of the brahmana came to Srighalu for permission for saha gamana and did the namaskara. Not known about the death of the brahmana, and without being asked by her, he gave the blessings that she shall have eight children “asta putrO

bhava". All were surprised. The woman was shocked and surprised to hear the swamiji's blessings. The shishyaas informed the swamiji what had happened to the brahmana. Swamiji told that those are the words of Sri Ramachandra and not mine, and that can't be untrue. It so happened that the dead brahmana got up, and he lived for long time, and he got eight children as blessed by the swamiji. The same has been explained in Satyanidhi Vilasa as follows :

prashaanta kaantaanugamOdyaa taanataa bhavaaShTa putrEShTa munOditaa sati |

sutaana vaa paaShTha dhavEna jIvataa dadhEShTha putryaaKya mapisvamanvayaM |

Brief Remarks;

This concerns an incident in Sri Raghunatha's life only and no comments are offered as there is neither Sadhaka or Badhaka pramāṇas on this. A similar story prevails on Brahmanya Tirtha, which led to the birth of Sri Vyasaraaja.

III. Vyasarajaru met Raghunatharu @ YeragoLa –

Once Sri Vyasarajaru wanted to have the darshana of Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu, when he was in Yerogala. Raghunatha Tirtharu arranged for separate bhiksha in one of the shishyaa's house, having known of the fact that Vyasarajaru is the shishya of Sripadarajaru. But Vyasarajaru insisted for saha pankthi bhojana with the great yati, Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu and both agreed for that. After the bhojana, Sri Vyasarajaru showed the TippaNees prepared by him to Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu and he was very much pleased by the work. Vyasarajaru also did the samarpaNa of survarNa nirmita kaTaaha, to be used by Sreegalu for filling water and doing the naivedya. Thus Sri Vyasarajaru, who was even honoured by many kings, many vidwat panditaas, honoured Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu.

Brief Remarks:

This will be discussed under Vyasaraaja (Part II).

IV. VyasamusTi turned Koormarooopi saaligrama :

Once Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu was on digvijaya tour, came to pampakshetra. There he was welcomed by Sri Vyasarajaru, Vijayanagara king. Swamiji told that he is on tour and he is going to Kashi for ganga snaana. It was on pingaLanaama samvatsara, phalGuna shudda saptami day, during aruNodaya kaala gangadevi came in the form of pravaaha. Sri Vyasarajaru, Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu, Sri Raghuvarya Tirtharu, and Vijayanagara king all had the snaana, daana and other kriyaas. Sri Raghuvaryaru requested Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu that Ganga has come here itself and that there is no necessity of going to Kashi. Swamiji replied that Ganga might have come for having

the darshana of Sri Ramachandra devaru. Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu was doing the nirmalya visarjana, the vyasamushTi rolled out and reached the river but could not be traced. Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu observed fasting for seven days and was staying near the river only and on the seventh day, the vyasamusti came out floating and came in the form of korma roopa. Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu did the kshera abhisheka of koormarooopi Sri Vedavyasa devaru and even today it is being worshipped in Uttaradimutt. Further, the saligrama will be rotating as long as it in ksheera (milk).

Brief Remarks:

This will be discussed under Vyasaraaja (Part II).

V. Paadodaka mahime – as per Sripadaraja stotra

paatu shrIpaadaraaja: saKivararaGunaathaaryayukta: kadaa |

gaMgaasnaanaaya gachChan pathinRupasadanaM praaShyachit bhaikShyaM ya
yaache |

paadaprakShaaLanaarthaM sthitavatiyatipe bhartsanaadyasyakOpaat |

gEhEdagdhEtina mRuMpadayugaLagataM yOrarakShaavanIshaM |

- Once Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu on his way to Dwaraka met Sri Sripadarajaru in one village. The king of that place invited the yatidwayaru for paada pooja. Sripadarajaru told the king to do the bhiksha first to Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu, but the king was reluctant to do so. He wanted to do it to Sripadarajaru. So, Sripadarajaru also refused his paadapooja and both the yatees went off that house. Immediately that house got fire and was burning with the agni jwaala. Repenting for his durahankara, the king fell on the paadakamala of the yatigalu for excusing his deeds. Then the Yatidwayaru accepted the paadapooja and ordered the king to do the prokshane of the paadOdaka on the house. The king did like that and got his abheeshasiddhi.

Brief Remarks:

This shloka is nor adulatory of Sripadaraja except that he recognised the superiority and precedence of Raghunatha for being honoured. The translation and the original seem to have major differences – such as reference to Dwaraka not available in original.

VI. Gave darshana to Sripadarajaru on his way to devaloka:

On the day of his exit from the bhooloka, Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu, was travelling in a beautiful vimaana to devaloka. Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu threw a devaloka pushpa on Sripadarajaru from the vimaana (aeroplane). Sripadarajaru was doing

sarvamoola paata to his shishyaas. Immediately, Sripadarajaru took that flower and had a touch of that flower on his eyes and kept it on his head. Unknown about what had happened, the shishyaas asked as to what had happened, then Sripadarajaru told them that Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu has departed from this bhooloka and he had thrown that flower on him. This can be seen from the shloka by Sri Nidhi Tirtha Virachita Sripaadaraja stotra :

shrImadyashIsha raGunaathamunErvimaanaat |

puShTEsvamUrdhnipatatiprasamIkShachOktvaa |

saMprEritOru raGunaathamunIshvaraama |

shrIpaadaraaja guruvEstu nama: shubhaaya |

Brief Remarks:

The incident obviously depends on the dates of demise of Sri Raghunatha and Sripadaraya. As per Raghunatha's latest dates, Sripadaraya died 25 years *earlier*, and hence this incident is false and made up. It is strange that the incident in this shloka is attributed to an ascetic of Sripadaraja parampare, composed two centuries later and does not appear in the more authentic sthothras of Sripadaraja composed by his contemporaries – Vyasaraaja and Vadiraja.

In a broad sense, it would be noted that in the incident of his naming, Sripadaraja is considered much younger in age and ashrama, while in the last incident he has to be around the same age unless he is attributed much lesser life span. These requirements conflict with each other in the light of the fairly well established long life of Sripadaraja (96 years). The latest dates and periods fixed by UM chart make Sripadaraja much older and rule out both the stories.

[“Source – Srisudha”](#)

Just for record, let me reproduce the compiler/moderator's note about the period discrepancies without comment.

MODERATOR's NOTE : Whereas many books, articles says that Sri Raghunatha Tirtharu gave Sri Lakshminarayana Muni, the title "Sripadarajaru" , there are some opinions by some pandits that Raghunatha Tirtharu did not give him the title. Further some say that Sri Krishnadevaraya was not his contemporary. We from Sumadhvaseva does not like to have discussion in this regard as to whether Sripadarajaru got title from Raghunatha Tirtharu or not. **Let us not worry about the history.** We shall take into account only the works by Sripadarajaru and SriRaghunatha Tirtharu > ===== Narahari Sumadhwa, Moderator, Sumadhvaseva

Brief Remarks:

The above approach closes all possible review of the truth or otherwise of the stories and keeps repeating them as the “doings” of Sri Raghunatha and Sripadaraja ad nauseum, which less informed persons have to take as the “Truth”. This kind of blind

faith would have kept us confined to the obviously wrong dates of Acharya Madhva and all his lineage – based on tradition. I am happy that all Mathas including UM have accepted that changes need to be made – when valid evidence exists – as they seem to have done for the dates of Vidyanidhi and Raghunatha Tirtha. If Raghunatha were indeed to be a contemporary (as seems to be accepted a priori in the statement above), of Krishnadevaraya (1509-1530 AD) as per history books, his dates now being adopted 1479 – 1527 AD seem to be a good fit, but will create innumerable problems including the falsification of all the Sripadarajashtaka stories and other incidents involving the two of them, which have been sworn to as facts for several centuries.

Now let us analyse the data that we have gathered to decide the most acceptable criteria.

The incidents themselves refer to a Kashi pilgrimage, meetings with some local rulers (who can not be easily identified in history) etc. There is an unstated but positive assumption of seniority of Raghunatha, in age as compared to Sripadaraja, which is unavoidable. In fact, a reputed writer like Korati Srinivasa rao, who has written a well researched book in Kannada on Sripadaraja (similar to companion volumes on Madhva, JayaTirtha, Vyasaraaja, Vadiraja, Raghavendra, Purandara and Kanaka) clearly assumes that he was older by 20 years (p 214 – in edition republished in 2003) – to account for many events such as his naming a young Lakshminarayana yathi as Sripadaraja, their joint visits to many places including Kashi, as well as the incident when he died earlier and gave an intimation to Sripadaraja of his own imminent end. If the events are viewed in this limited context, they would appear quite plausible and when described in the manner done in this book, quite acceptable to all – as it depicts both the sages in a adulatory manner, without bringing in relative superiority or other irritating issues, claimed by some more hagiological UM publications.

Taking this age difference criteria as valid and Sripadaraja's period as 1406 – 1502 AD, his Sannyasa when he was 8 years of age, his becoming a Peethadhipati in 1420, at an age of 14 years – all of which are traditionally accepted and are fitting in with historic events involved in Vijayanagara developments, Raghunatha's birth will have to be around 1385 AD and fixing his demise also as per the "two years earlier to Sripadaraja" story, it will be in 1500 AD. This will give him a life span of 115 years – which seems to be not likely – even the long lived Sripadaraja and Vyasaraaja lived for around 90 + years. Surely like the great Vadiraja who is believed to have lived 120 years, there would have been a tradition of Raghunatha's longevity also, which is not there today. Instead, if one considers a normal life span of 90 years, in his case also, the incident of his earlier demise and its being shown to Sripadaraja would be preponed by 25 years, which takes away its element of their great intimacy or appropriateness. Further, he would have to succeed Vidyanidhi much earlier – to provide for the

seniority in Ashrama envisaged by the story of his naming Sripadaraja, by a similar amount, say by 1410 AD. It is known that Ramachandra was in Peetha till 1430 AD, after allowing for Vidyadhiraja, Kavindra and Vagesha, the accepted minimum periods after JayaTirtha in 1388 AD. This date is way past the date being suggested for Raghunatha here and does not allow for any period of rule for his Guru, Vidyanidhi (who incidentally had a reign of 68 years as per his Charama shloka!). Thus, there is no way in which one could consider Raghunatha was senior in age and ashrama seniority to Sripadaraja, as depicted by the stories, which will definitely cast serious doubts on the naming story as well as his preliminary demise story.

Taking the traditional figures adopted by B N K Sharma for Raghunatha, he took the Peetha in 1444 AD, which allows for a reign of 14 years for Vidyanidhi, his predecessor and stayed in the peetha till 1502 AD. He would indeed be Junior by 24 years in Ashrama and perhaps a similar number in age also – noting that Sripadaraja was only 14 years when he took the Peetha and Raghunatha might not have taken the Peetha as a Brahmachari like him. The most optimistic scenario would be to assume that he also took the Peetha when he was in his early 20s (say 24 years of age), in 1444 AD, making him about 14 years younger. Even this has some difficulties in explaining all the events fully – but we will ignore them for the time being.

The latest UM website figures of 1479 – 1529 AD for Raghunatha, will displace his period by a further 35 years more – making him 50 years younger in age and 59 years younger in ashrama seniority. Almost all the stories involving their joint trips including his naming Sripadaraja as well as the last encounter between the saints will become either redundant or impossible. In fact, considering the lack of direct evidence fixing his period as mentioned earlier, this total discord with the traditional stories itself should rule out these new dates for Raghunatha.

Before the final dates and period for Raghunatha can be chosen, let us look at some events included in these stories which may throw further light on the matter. Apart from the very first story of the naming of Sripadaraja, which requires the large age difference and Raghunatha being senior in age, but could be perhaps explained by the alternative scenario being suggested here, the one significant historical event which has a ring of truth in it is the Kashi trip. B N K Sharma also refers to this in HDSV – (p 461 of rev.edn. of 2000) – with the quote from Sripadarajashtaka. The joint trip by the two ascetics, should have been undertaken, before they were too old – before either of them had crossed the sixties, and with some assistance from the rulers who were deferential to them. There is no mention of any specific ruler who was so in Raghunatha's case, and the name of Saluva Narasimha I immediately comes to the mind, when we think

of Sripadaraja. The reference to the former's state of poverty and lack of influence and the latter's social status, his undoubted reputation in scholastic circles, as he was running a Vidya Kendra in Mulabagilu with such students as Vyasaraaja etc hint at his being the main organizer of the Pilgrimage while Raghunatha would have joined him for his own convenience. Incidentally, there is an error in the translation of the story No. V, where there is no mention of Dwaraka in the shloka, but of going for Ganga snana (Bathing in the Ganges) – trip to Kashi.

DETAILED ANALYSIS – Some important factors:

In the case of encounters between Sripadaraja and Raghunatha, the most important points which apply in all these cases are the following:

1. Sripadaraja was actually very senior to Raghunatha in Ashrama as well as in age. He was a peethadhipati in 1420 AD (born in 1406 AD), while the latter became one in 1444 AD or 1479 AD depending on the assumption of the old or new UM figures, perhaps at an age of 20 plus. This long period difference of 24 or 59 years means that S would have been a Peethadhipati before R was born and completed his educational phase long before (in the first 10/12 years) he would meet the latter, in his seat. Therefore, any story talking of his being subjected to a demonstration of his knowledge in Raghunatha's presence can just not be true. The latest UM figures of 1479 AD make the whole story an absurd mockery of truth.
2. Sripadaraja was the **Vidya shishya** of Vibhudendra, who himself was the famous Vidya shishya of Rajendra Tirtha. In his Charama Shloka, it is recorded that Rajendra taught Vibhudendra and other shishyas - Nyayasudha NINE TIMES. He was also the Guru of the north Indian ascetic – Vishnudaasacharya – who gave the forerunner to the Vyasa Tirtha's great compositions in the form of Vadarathnavali, in which he praises his Guru Rajendra in superlative terms. Thus, both Rajendra and Vibhudendra were well known to be great scholars, with Sri Teekacharya as the initial Guru of Sri Rajendra. Sripadaraja was also the **Vidya guru** of Sri Vyasaraaja, the unmatched scholar-philosopher- statesman whose achievements are beyond compare in Madhva lineages. Having been ordained at an early age as a boy, around 8 years and becoming Peethadhipati at 14 years, as is generally accepted, Sripadaraja studied initially under his own Guru (Svarnavarna Tirtha), followed by a stay of many years with Vibhudendra Tirtha – completing the usual Gurukula stay of 12/14 years before he was 25 years. His exceptional intellect and profound grasp would have made him far beyond the aspirant student who he is made out to be, in these stories, to give an Anuvada of Nyayasudha, before another ascetic like Raghunatha, who had only recently come into Peetha and was much younger, by all accounts.

3. The division of the single Matha after Sri Ramachandra was by no means peaceful and the **emotional scars have not healed even now after 600 plus years**. It is unrealistic to expect that Vibhudendra who lost the position of successor of Ramachandra to Vidyanidhi and was also bitter about it, would be interacting very freely with the new branch and the successors of Vidyanidhi. B N K Sharma says “How prejudiced these accounts are may be seen from the curious fact recorded in the Gurucharya and PGVKK (UM publications) in a preamble that the story of bifurcation was narrated to Raghunatha Tirtha of the UM, for the first time by Vibhudendra Tirtha himself, when the two met for the first time in the village of Kopre and Raghunatha had it recorded. As the portrayal of the part played by Vibhudendra in contesting the choice of Vidyanidhi overriding his rights and his **own offensive behavior in taking the quarrel to the streets actually in Bidarikote (PGVKK) and comparing the role of Vidyanidhi to Ravana as recorded in Gurucharya and PGVKK** and the objectionable manner in which he started acquiring disciples is *most derogatory* and reprehensible and amounts to a deplorable character assassination of Vibhudendra”. With this background, also based on records closer to the time period and to reality as they are likely to be more accurate regarding true events, it is difficult to imagine Vibhudendra, himself a great scholar, took his own disciple to Raghunatha for the Anuvada and subsequent naming as Sripadarajaru. This is indirectly supported by Sathkatha also which says that as the branch of Vidyanidhi was some what reduced in importance, he had to perform Thapas in Sri Nrisimhachala for 12 years and with the blessing of Lord Nrisimha, his scholarship came up, with which he was able to tour Kashi, Rameswara, etc. and secured some donations to the Matha from the Anegondi King. This clearly admits that the other branch of Vibhudendra was prospering better after the division. The story of Sripadaraja’s Anuvada in front of Raghunatha which seems to have been included in Sripadarajashtaka written centuries later and possibly modified by interested parties (surely not by an ascetic of Sripadaraja’s own proud lineage) is thus untrustworthy. One can find a better explanation for the undoubted naming of Sri Lakshmi Narayana Tirtha as Sripadarajaru, which fits better with the calendar of events, their back grounds and the series of unfortunate events in succession which cast their long shadows on the relationships between the branches.
4. The period of Raghunatha has been revised recently by UM to 1479 – 1527 AD, as against that of Sripadaraja – 1420-1502 AD. The earliest time when the two could meet will be 1479 AD and the time slot, when both are alive is only 1479 – 1502 years, during this time Sripadaraja would be 73 – 96 years. This is obviously not the age for any test or certification for him by some one like Raghunatha who had just come into the Peetha and would be about 25 years of age and further it also rules out their joint visits to Kashi etc. Thus, none of the stories relating the two can be even in the realm of possibility, with this latest time period assigned to Raghunatha.

5. To escape this quagmire, if we consider the earlier period of 1444 – 1502 AD, for Raghunatha as the preferred alternative, Sri Vidyanidhi has to be considered as reigning for the reduced period of 1435 -1444 AD (for 9 years only), when Raghunatha took over, which rules out stories of his Thapas for 12 years etc. The problem of 68 years of reign mentioned in Vidyanidhi's charama shloka will also always remain as unexplainable to question all the various alternative periods and dates being suggested, as this supposed Charama shloka which should have been composed by the same Raghunatha has to be admitted as fabricated and/or not composed by him with any of the alternative dates considered for Raghunatha and accepting such alternatives . UM must find a solution for this obvious travesty of truth – by admitting the error first pointed out by Dr. B N K Sharma and defining the origin, role and period as well as achievements of Sri Vidyanidhi. The latest period assigned for him does not make things any clearer .
6. It is also interesting that the same place name of encounters between the Trio is mentioned. Kopre (Narasimha kshethra) is
 - i. where Raghunatha and Vibhudendra met and quarreled as in 3. above,
 - ii. Where the anuvada by Sripadaraja was done, when both he and his Vidyaguru were staying and Raghunatha came visiting, which resulted in the special name being bestowed on him by Raghunatha,
 - iii. Where the miracle of bringing a dead boy to life by Lakshminarayana Muni took place.

As per this story, this meeting during a Chaturmasya of Vibhudendra and Sripadaraja could have taken place only when the latter was young. It is strange and unbelievable that all the records of the bifurcation of the matha, bad mouthing by Vibhudendra, etc being written at the behest of Raghunatha, appear in Gurucharya etc and the great harmonious assembly where Sripadaraja was praised and named has also been authored – the latter is a “Rectification” of history attempted to cover up a bad period – and assumes that the former is to be forgotten! If this meeting is on two occasions, it is obvious that at least a decade must have elapsed between the two widely divergent emotionally severe accounts. This will put off the date of Sripadaraja's naming occasion further – when we already find it difficult to explain how a relatively junior ascetic could do so for one several decades his senior. One gets the feeling that the account of the quarrel etc is perhaps true and the latter is a rewriting history based on wishful thinking at a later date to mend the fences.

7. The incident, in Kopre, if true, could only occur after Sripadaraja had spent many effective years in the Peetha in Mulabagilu, as with the Vidyanidhi episode which had caused much anguish to Vibhudendra, the Guru, his accompanying his brilliant Shishya, Sripadaraja to Vidyanidhi's direct successor would have been impossible and many years would be needed before such an event could even be contemplated. The adoption of 59

years difference in Peethadhipathya precedence as per new UM dates, would make the whole incident look even more impossible and just a concoction bringing no credit to its inventors, as both Vibhudendra and Jithamithra were no more by 1479 AD and Sripadaraja was resplendent in Chandragiri court after having been offered Rathnabhisheka by the King Narasimha in 1476 AD and his Vidya shishya Vyasaraaja was already shining with his effulgence being groomed for his larger role in Vijayanagar.

8. Sripadaraja was a Guru of the Chandragiri King Saluva Narasimha I, who was perhaps the most successful ruler apart from Krishnadevaraya – as in his time, the empire extended up to Udayagiri (Orissa), Rameswaram, Trivandrum, South Kannada including Udupi, coastal Andhra south of the Krishna river up to Masulipatam and Kondaveedu etc. He had established his unquestioned control over all vassals and eventually took over the reins of the Kingdom itself controlled from Hampi. His role as the major army commander covered the period 1469 – 1485 AD and as King for five more years till 1490 AD. He performed the Abhisheka in Gold and precious stones for Sripadaraja who must have been his Raja-Guru for almost his whole rulership period, right after his Victory in Kalinga in 1476 AD, along with his rule as a nominal Vassal of the King from Chandragiri.
9. It was at Sripadaraja's instance that Vyasaraaja took up the worship in Tirupati temple in 1486 AD, staying in Chandragiri, which was then the capital of Saluva Narasimha and later went on to stay in Vijayanagar to become the Royal Adviser to 6 emperors of Vijayanagara.
10. Somanatha Kavi also uses the name Lakshminarayana Tirtha for Sripadaraja in his contemporary Kavya - Vyasayogicharitha, perhaps written in 1535 AD after Sripadaraja's demise. Even Sri Vyasaraaja in his composition Nyayamrutha prostrates to his Vidyaguru by name Lakshminarayana Tirtha. If at all, the name Sripadaraja was given by anyone else, it seems to have been rather late in his life and definitely not when he was a young ascetic giving a pravachana anuvada, before some one. It appears in his Charama shloka "Kale phalathi suradruh ... Sripadarangmunih" and also "Yadvrindavasevayaa – Sreepadarajam gurum". The latter is in the stothra composed by Sri Vyasaraaja, perhaps posthumously. A stothra composed by Vadiraja also uses the name Sripadaraja – showing that this name must have become popular towards the close of Sripadaraja's life. A wide acceptance by all societal leaders would only be possible in a public ceremony held by Royalty like his Rathnabhisheka in 1476 AD, where it is likely that the other great scholars like Vyasaraaja were present. The title Sripadaraja, King of the Ascetics, would also look appropriate only in a large gathering of that sort. Sri Raghunatha could also be present and even suggested the name, provided the earlier UM dates for him are adopted (remembering that Sripadaraja would be 70 years at that time, when Raghunatha would be in his forties, having taken the oaths in 1444 AD, when he would be about 20/25 years of age). With the latest UM date of 1479 AD for his

initiation, he would not even be in the Peetha at that time and hence even this small contribution of suggesting the name could not be there.

11. Adoption of 1487 AD as the time of demise for Sripadaraja (HDSV) will not make any significant difference to the conclusions given above except that the time slot for the possible meeting of S and R will be reduced to only 8 years – with a very young Raghunatha (Peetha in 1479 AD) and very old Sripadaraja – above 70 years and having been in the Peetha for at least 59 years, even if they meet immediately after R takes the seat. Even their joint pilgrimage trip to Kashi gets ruled out as impractical. The other situations described in the events are also totally improbable in this situation. Even by taking 1444 AD as the first year for R. the other aspects will still apply.
12. The joint pilgrimage to Banaras (also quoted by B N K Sharma) could be considered for its feasibility based on the possible dates of this Pilgrimage by Sripadaraja can be considered here. Considering the important events in his life – Peetha at the age of 14 years – in 1420 AD, His tutoring Vyasaraaja – 12 years during 1455 – 1467 AD (during this period Saluva Narasimha ruled in Chandragiri, Arcot, Kolar etc as a vassal of Vijayanagara), His being Rajaguru for Chandragiri kingdom – specially Saluva Narasimha I – 1465 – 1485 AD (which also includes his removing Brahmahathya dosha for him around 1467 AD), his Rathnabhisheka in 1476 AD etc, This trip could be in the period 1467 - 1476 AD, when he had the support of a powerful king who could ensure his protection for the long and arduous journey and also provide him escorts, travel facilities like Vehicles/animals etc. The peak period of Narasimha I in his conquests towards the Northern parts – Coastal Andhra, Orissa and Bahamani states was in 1470 AD. In fact, Venkoba Rao in his introduction to Vyasayogicharitham has opined that Vyasaraaja accompanied Saluva Narasimha to some of the places such SriRanga, South Canara etc in his tour of conquest seated on an elephant during 1471 – 75 AD. Taking into consideration that Sripadaraja was already 61 years of age in 1467 AD, it is likely that the Kashi trip must have come about within a year or two of this period – around the time of his removing the king's Brahma Hathya dosha. Raghunatha would have been in the Peetha for about 23 years (if we take 1444 AD as his accession to the Peetha) as per traditional record and around 47 years of age at this time. It is obvious that if we take the latest UM figures for Raghunatha, this trip could never take place, as by the time he came into the Peetha in 1479 AD, Sripadaraja was ensconced in Mulabagal due to age (70 plus) and would not be available to travel on such a long, arduous and perilous journey in those days. The earlier period of 1430 to 1456 AD (when Sripadaraja was 24 – 50 years of age, could also be considered, if the story of the joint trip is given up, but it is likely that he was not yet fully established in Mulabagal till the time he started his Gurukula there, where Vyasaraaja studied. There is also no record of any royal patronage received by him in this period, when Devaraya II was trying to reestablish his kingdom in Vijayanagar

against Bahamanis and Orissa and Sripadaraja would have been staying in Tamilnadu, Kolar district etc.

There is also a story about Raghunatha being honoured by Krishnadevaraya himself. The periods of the two are reproduced below:

Krishnadevaraya – 1509–1530AD Raghunatha – 1444–1502AD or 1479–1527AD

Raghunatha's first date rules out any direct association of Krishnadevaraya with him. This would be possible if the second date is adopted.

But, the choice of the latest date for Sri Raghunatha, if based on a specific Shasana of Krishnadevaraya in his own period (about which there is no dispute), will rule out all the Sripadaraja stories including his joint pilgrimage to Kashi.- no naming and conferring of the Title, joint visits where Raghunatha is extolled as superior to Sripadaraja etc. It will also prove that the Sripadarajashtaka verses are not genuine or mistaken, etc. A further pointer is the absence of any mention of this important ascetic in the Vyasayogicharitha of Somanatha Kavi, while he has mentioned Sri Narayana Tirtha of Koodali Akshobhya Matha. The long tradition of stories about the association of Sripadaraja and Raghunatha in almost all UM records in the past also cannot be wished away – even if there are some inaccuracies or exaggerations in them, as it is likely that some at least are true in their minimal content, even if we leave out imaginary elements. This strong evidence for the later date seems to be of recent origin as it has not been noticed by the great writer B N K Sharma also.

Summarising:

Adopting the presently chosen period of 1479-1527 AD for Sri Raghunatha:

- i. Incident of his naming Lakshminarayana Muni as Sripadaraja is impossible and “Time barred” as the latter would be 73 years old when Raghunatha came into the Peetha and the so called Anuvada of Nyayasudha by Sripadaraja, that doyen of scholars and the Vidyaguru of Vyasaraja in the presence of the new ascetic which was rewarded with the Title Sripadaraja will be totally unimaginable.
- ii. The incident of the departing Raghunatha throwing a divine flower at Sripadaraja and speaking to him is again impossible as the former is younger than the latter – Sripadaraja has his demise much earlier.
- iii. The verses in Sripadarajashtaka are thus proved to be later insertions.
- iv. Other incidents of showing superiority of Raghunatha over Sripadaraja also become impossible due to large differences in age and other factors as discussed.
- v. The stories of Vyasaraja will be dealt with in Part II.

Adopting the traditional dates for Raghunatha of 1444 – 2002 AD based on old UM records (HDSV also adopts this).

- i. The Incident of Raghunatha naming Lakshminarayana Muni as Sripadaraja still appears to be made up later as he would be far senior in Ashrama (24 years) and age (20 years) and would have completed his educational phase with Vibhudendra very much earlier than their possible meeting dates. The record of the unhappy relations between scholarly Vibhudendra and Vidyanidhi do not support a situation where the former would himself arrange the reported Anuvada by his brilliant disciple with Raghunatha, the direct shishya of Vidyanidhi. Sripadaraja would have already spent his initial 6/7 years with Sri Swarnavarna Tirtha, as a new ascetic and at least 17 years with Vibhudendra Tirtha as his vidya shishya before Sri Raghunatha was initiated by/succeeded Sri Vidyanidhi in 1444 AD. There is no basis to assess when the education of Raghunatha started nor of any Guru other than Vidyanidhi for him. It is thus impossible that Raghunatha was already an accomplished scholar when Sripadaraja was still a student with Vibhudendra as alleged.
- ii. The incident of the departing Raghunatha throwing a divine flower at Sripadaraja on the ground and indicating his own date of demise has no evidence. What ever evidence is offered seems to be artificial considering that it is composed after 200 years, without taking into account the periods, ages and places of stay of the two saints.
- iii. There may be a kernel of truth in the joint pilgrimage story of the two ascetics to Kashi – and the other stories based on events that are related to have occurred during that trip. Here also, it is more likely that Sripadaraja had arranged the tour with his strong regal backing and Raghunatha also accompanied him.

Concluding, the stories circulating about Sri Raghunatha/Sripadaraja in UM circles for more than 2 or 3 centuries seem to be completely falsified by their own latest dates for Raghunatha (1479 -1527 AD). If the earlier dates (1444 – 1502 AD) are retained to avoid this, the stories regarding Raghunatha/Vyasaraja/ Krishnadevaraya will get negated. The period of Sri Raghunatha and his Guru, Sri Vidyanidhi therefore still appear to be uncertain unless independent evidence is produced and examined. The stanzas in Sripdarajashtaka relied upon as evidence seem to be corrupted/fabricated, as they speak of contradictory events regarding periods.

The next part will deal with Sri Vyasaraja stories.

