Nandi Installed During Sivalaya Deepam Festivities
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"Saiva Dharma; A Catechism For Saivite Hinduism" Set Beneath Nandi

The full moon night of Kartikai (November 22nd in 1980) was a day of great note in the history of Saivism in the West for it was upon this day in antiquity that Lord Siva established His supremacy over Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu and upon this day in the present that Saivism was presented in modern viable terms for the modern man. "Saiva Dharma: A Catechism for Saivite Hinduism" is a 40-page lesson on Saivism in the form of questions and answers with accompanying commentaries. It has been written and edited over the past three months at the Kauai Aadheenam by the Saiva Siddhanta Church to be the first lesson of the San Marga Master Course. Its completion coincided with another great work, the final installation of the 16-ton granite Nandi commissioned three years ago for the Kadavul Hindu Temple.

The day began when the first copy of the Catechism was coated with beeswax (to preserve it) for its placement under Nandi. The top layer of stones has a slot in it just the right size for the book. As you can see in the pictures on page three, Gurudeva placed the Catechism in the slot and the monastics filled it with mortar. Just as the ceremony began, a rain began to fall, which is a sign of blessing from the Gods. Just as the ceremony ended, the rain stopped. Later in the morning, the large crane arrived to lift Nandi from his temporary resting place behind his mandapam site. A mandapam is a special shelter for him consisting of a roof set on four columns. The crane was operational about two in the afternoon. Cables which went under Nandi were connected to the main cables of the crane, and he was lifted off the ground. Very slowly the crane swung the massive statue over to the peedam. The reaches of the crane from its initial position was not quite adequate to place Nandi in the center of the peedam. He was set carefully somewhat back on it, the cables disconnected and the crane moved forward. He could then be moved to the proper position.

The instructions from India said that Nandi should sit directly upon the stones of the peedam, with no intervening mortar. This created the problem of how to remove the cables which went under him. A rather unusual solution was arrived at

to solve this: he was set on the peedam with the back of the base on the stone and the front end on a high wooden block, thus freeing the back cable which was removed. He was lifted by the front cable, the wood block removed and several blocks of ice placed under him. The crane let him down onto the ice which, thought it crushed slightly, still allowed the removal of the cable. Nandi slowly settled onto the peedam as the ice melted.

Nandi was garlanded and dressed with his specially made saddle blanket. At last he has arrived, sitting with his gaze eternally directed at Kadavul Nataraj. Nandi is said to represent the wisdom and purity which comes as the result of controlling the instinctive mind by worship of Lord Siva.

Nandi was created by Neelameham Stapathi of the Tamil Nadu Handicrafts Corporation in Mahabalipuram, South India. He required one year to be carved from a single granite stone by a team of men working around the clock six or more at a time. In order for the workers to move Nandi, such as to turn him on his side, seventy men had to be hired to pull the stone over. His acquisition for the Temple was sponsored by Marianne Sheeks, Aran Sendan and Scott Olson. Nandi's peedam and foundation were sponsored by Rajan Stahl, Deva Rajan and Kanda Aran.

At six in the evening, all the devotees and monastics went out to San Marga to the site of the future Iraivan Temple where a large bonfire had been prepared. Soon after it was lit, it blazed high in the night sky, appearing to us as if it were just like the pillar of fire Lord Siva manifested before Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma.

In the ancient story it is told that one day Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma were arguing as to who was the Supreme Being. In the midst of their argument an endless pillar of fire appeared before them. They agreed that if one found the top or the other the bottom, that would prove who was superior. Lord Brahma set out as a swan for the top, and Lord Vishnu as a boar for the bottom. Neither could find an end. Lord Brahma, however refused to admit his failure and instead lied that he had found the top, whereupon Lord Siva emerged from the pillar of fire and cursed him never to be worshipped or have his own temples. To this day, Lord Brahma is not worshipped in any temple of his own. Lord Vishnu acknowledged the superiority of Lord Siva and was therefore granted equal popularity among Hindus.

After the blaze burned down, we all quietly walked back in the dark down San Marga to the aadheenam. In all respects, it was an impressive day of converging of the forces as Siva's vahana was installed, completing the set of images in the Temple, and a clear exposition of Saivism was made available to the public.