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Category : October 1981
Published by Anonymous on Oct. 01, 1981

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Saivite Monastery and Spiritual Center in Sri Lanka Honors New Incumbent, Sri Somasundara Thambiram

An article written for the New Saivite World by Mr. V.N. Sivarajah, Director, Department of Hindu Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka.

His Holiness, Sri Somasundara Thambiran, was installed as Guru Maha Sannidhanam (a deferential title for the head of an aadheenam) of the Nallai Aadheenam on Sunday, April 19, 1981, at a ceremony attended by numerous Saivite religious leaders, dignitaries and senior government and judicial officers. The rituals were conducted by senior Brahmin priests.

This position has been passed down from Sri-La-Sri Swaminathan Desika Gnanasambandar Paramacharya Swamigal, who received his investiture from the incumbent of the Madurai Aadheenam, which has an unbroken continuity through the centuries, since its original establishment by Saint Thirugnana Sambandar in the eighth century A.D. With the blessings of the Indian Aadheenam, and through the concerted effort of dedicated Saivites, the Nallai Aadheenam grew as a distinct aadheenam with a personality of its own, while observing rigorously the established traditions of aadheenam.

At the holy place of the Samadhi of Sri-La-Sri Swaminatha Desika Gnanasambandar Paramacharya Swamigal, a Swayambu Lingam will be installed. Daily pujas will be conducted in the Samadhi Temple within the Aadheenam compound.

The ceremonial installation function of His Holiness, Sri Somasundara Thambiran, commenced at 5 A.M. with the early morning puja and the chanting of the Vedic Mantras and Devarams. This was followed by His Holiness Somaskanda Kurukkal

performing the first consecration abishekam pertaining to the Incumbency. Then followed the abishekam and puja to the Samadhi by the new Guru Maha Sannidhanam, assisted by the priests. Having completed the Samadhi puja, the new incumbent took his place on the peedam for the first time, displaying commendable humility, grace and dignity, and radiating an aura of shanti to the dignified devotees, deeply grieved by the loss of the physical presence of the former incumbent.

His Holiness, Sri Somasundara Thambiran carries with him, apart from his own charm, the advantages of the Guru's training for about a dozen or more years, from the time he was designated "Illavarasu" - heir to the Aadheenam Incumbency - as well as youth support and experience in managing the institution while the Guru was away in other parts of Sri Lanka, in India and Malaysia on his religious discourse tours for which he earned a unique reputation.

May the Almighty bless this institution with indomitable strength and distinction with which to serve the spiritual needs of the Sri Lankans. OM NAMASIVAYA.

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