

The Paduka of Yogacharya Sri T. Krishnamacharya

Offering Puja to the Padukas of his Guru had been a part of the daily observance of Sri T. Krishnamacharya throughout his lifetime. In November 1988, on the auspicious Maha Navami day, the Acharya placed the Padukas of his teacher on his head as had been his custom every day. At the request of his students, he put on his own Padukas and the Acharya - "Transferred all his Vidya and Sadhana" to these Padukas (to describe it in his own words.)

A Puja with all the sixteen traditional offerings (Shodasa Upacharas) was performed to the Padukas of the Acharya while he was wearing them, on that occasion. Since then they have remained an object of daily worship at the Krishna-macharya Yoga Mandiram. Today they are being installed at the shrine that has been built for this specific purpose.

The Significance of the PADUKA

Released on the occasion of the
Paduka Pratistha of Sri T. Krishnamacharya
on 15th March 1991



KRISHNAMACHARYA YOGA MANDIRAM
13, Fourth Cross Street
Ramakrishna Nagar
Madras 600 028
Phone : 837998

The Significance of the Paduka

Paduka is the name used to denote that which is worn on the foot to protect it. This is also sometimes called as **Padaraksha** - literally meaning "protector of the foot." This is not to be confused with ordinary footwear, which we leave outside the door when we enter a house. The **Paduka** of teachers and divine personalities is said to be fit for worship.

The **Paduka** has been considered as important and holy right from the ancient times. In the **Ramayana** we have an account of how the **Padukas** of Sri Rama were worshipped by his brother Bharatha. Similarly, there are also references in the **Upanishads**. In the **Svetasvatara Upanishad**, there is a stanza that speaks about the importance of devotion to the feet of the **Guru** - that is **Guru Pada bhakti**.

It is commonly said that the **Guru** can be equated to God and that one can worship one's **Guru** in the same way that one worships God. In fact it is considered better to worship the **Guru** since he is more directly accessible. When we offer flowers to God, it is said that the offering is - "to the feet of the Lord" and not to the head or any other part of the body.

Bharatha is the earliest example of a great devotee who worshipped the **Paduka**. During the period of fourteen years when Sri Rama was in exile in the forest, Bharatha had symbolically installed the **Padukas** of Sri Rama on the throne of Ayodhya. In fact it has even been suggested that the **Padukas** of Sri Rama are even greater than Sri Rama himself in their glory and greatness. It is said that during the reign of the **Padukas** perfect **Dharma** prevailed in the kingdom, whereas during the reign of Sri Rama as the King it appears that there were instances of violation of **Dharma**. Since our **shastras** say that the conduct of the subjects in a country is a reflection of the conduct of the King it has been argued by some that the **Padukas** of Sri Rama are greater than even Sri Rama himself. It has similarly been suggested that the **Padukas** of the **Guru** are, in a sense, greater than even the **Guru** himself. Sri Vedanta Desika has written a well known text called **Paduka Sahasram** which is a composition containing one thousand verses regarding the **Paduka**.

This tradition of respect to the **Paduka** cuts across various sects and beliefs and can be said to be indeed a pan-Indian tradition. The greatness of the **Paduka** is summed up in an ancient **sloka** as follows :

The three syllables **Pa**, **Du** and **Ka** that constitute the word **Paduka** stand for three qualities - it protects us from various difficulties, it relieves us of our fears and it is capable of bestowing all the four **Purusharthas** - i. e. **Dharma**, **Artha**, **Kama** and **Moksha**.