



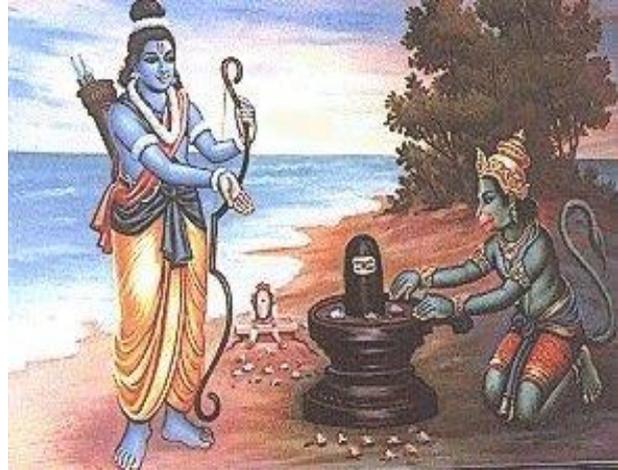
## Rameshwaram, the anchor of Indian Renaissance 6

By Shri. Narendra Joshi

### Jyotirlinga : The Endless Column of the Eternal Light 2

The site on Jyotirlinga gives following details about the Jyotirlinga: 'Lord Siva with his consort Umadevi appeared in the sky and proclaimed, that those who took bath in Danushkodi and prayed the Sivalingam is called "Ramalingam." The Deity there is Ramanathaswamy and the place is hence called "Rameswaram". When Anjaneya returned with a lingam from far off Mount Kailas, the worship was almost over. He got angry and tried to remove the sand lingam by his hands. Sri Anjaneya tried to pull it out with his mighty tail. After failing in all his attempts, he felt the divinity of Sivalingam made of sand by Devi Sita. Sri Rama asked Sri Anjaneya to place the Viswanatha Lingam on the Northern side of Ramalingam. He also ordained that the people should worship Ramalingam only after worshipping the Lingam brought and installed Sri Anjaneya. The other Lingam is placed for worship near the Sri Anjaneya deity at the entrance.'

<http://www.jyotirlinga.com/ramanath--rameshwaram.html>



Swami Vivekananda has given a classical refutation to the western perversion a part of which is discussed in last part in the Paris congress of religions. (THE PARIS CONGRESS OF THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS Translated from Bengali from a Paris letter written to the Udbodhana.) Following is the translation of the report from Bengali.

‘At the Congress, Mr. Gustav Oppert, a German Pandit, read a paper on the origin of the Shâlagrâma-Shilâ. He traced the origin of the Shalagrama worship to that of the emblem of the female generative principle. According to him, the Shiva-Linga is the phallic emblem of the male and the Shalagrama of the female generative principle. And thus he wanted to establish that the worship of the Shiva-Linga and that of the Shalagrama — both are but the component parts of the worship of Linga and Yoni! The Swami repudiated the above two views and said that though he had heard of such

ridiculous explanations about the Shiva-Linga, the other theory of the Shalagrama-Shila was quite new and strange, and seemed groundless to him.

The Swami said that the worship of the Shiva-Linga originated from the famous hymn in the Atharva-Veda Samhitâ sung in praise of the Yupa-Stambha, the sacrificial post. In that hymn a description is found of the beginning-less and endless Stambha or Skambha, and it is shown that the said Skambha is put in place of



the eternal Brahman. As afterwards the Yajna (sacrificial) fire, its smoke, ashes, and flames, the Soma plant, and the ox that used to carry on its back the wood for the Vedic sacrifice gave place to the conceptions of the brightness of Shiva's body, his tawny matted-hair, his blue throat, and the riding on the bull of the Shiva, and so on — just so, the Yupa-Skambha gave place in time to the Shiva-Linga, and was deified to the high Devahood of Shri Shankara. In the Atharva-Veda Samhita, the sacrificial cakes are also extolled along with the attributes of the Brahman.

In the Linga Purâna, the same hymn is expanded in the shape of stories, meant to establish the glory of the great Stambha and the superiority of Mahâdeva.

Again, there is another fact to be considered. The Buddhists used to erect memorial topes consecrated to the memory of Buddha; and the very poor, who were unable to build big monuments, used to express their devotion to him by dedicating miniature substitutes for them. Similar instances are still seen in the case of Hindu temples in Varanasi and other sacred places of India where those, who cannot afford to build temples, dedicate very small temple-like constructions instead. So it might be quite probable that during the period of Buddhistic ascendancy, the rich Hindus, in imitation of the Buddhists, used to erect something as a memorial resembling their Skambha, and the poor in a similar manner copied them on a reduced scale, and afterwards the miniature memorials of the poor Hindus became a new addition to the Skambha.

One of the names of the Buddhist Stupas (memorial topes) is Dhâtu-garbha, that is, "metal-wombed". Within the Dhātu-garbha, in small cases made of stone, shaped like the present Shalagrama, used to preserve the ashes, bones, and other remains of the distinguished Buddhist Bhikshus, along with gold, silver, and other metals. The Shalagrama-Shilas are natural stones resembling in form these artificially-cut stone-cases of the Buddhist Dhātu-garbha, and thus being first worshipped by the Buddhists, gradually got into Vaishnavism, like many other forms of Buddhistic worship that found their way into Hinduism. On the banks of the Narmadâ and in Nepal, the Buddhistic influence lasted longer than in other parts

of India; and the remarkable coincidence that the Narmadeshvara Shiva-Linga, found on the banks of the Narmadâ and hence so called, and the Shaligrama-Shilas of Nepal are given preference to by the Hindus to those found elsewhere in India is a fact that ought to be considered with respect to this point of contention.

The explanation of the Shaligrama-Shila as a phallic emblem was an imaginary invention and, from the very beginning, beside the mark. The explanation of the Shiva-Linga as a phallic emblem was brought forward by the most thoughtless, and was forthcoming in India in her most degraded times, those of the downfall of Buddhism. The filthiest Tântrika literature of Buddhism of those times is yet largely found and practiced in Nepal and Tibet.'

'The Swami gave another lecture in which he dwelt on the historic evolution of the religious ideas in India, and said that the Vedas are the common source of Hinduism in all its varied stages, as also of Buddhism and every other religious belief in India. The seeds of the multifarious growth of Indian thought on religion lie buried in the Vedas. Buddhism and the rest of India's religious thought are the outcome of the unfolding and expansion of those seeds, and modern Hinduism also is only their developed and matured form. With the expansion or the contraction of society, those seeds lie more or less expanded at one place or more or less contracted at another.

He said a few words about the priority of Shri Krishna to Buddha. He also told the Western scholars that as the histories of the royal dynasties described in the Vishnu Purâna were by degrees being admitted as proofs throwing light on the ways of research of the antiquarian, so, he said, the traditions of India were all true, and desired that Western Sanskrit scholars, instead of writing fanciful articles, should try to discover their hidden truths.'

[http://www.ramakrishnavivekananda.info/vivekananda/volume\\_4/translation\\_prose/the\\_paris\\_congress.html](http://www.ramakrishnavivekananda.info/vivekananda/volume_4/translation_prose/the_paris_congress.html))

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