

# THE SECOND ALL INDIA VEDIC CONVENTION

Siva Vishnu Temple, Theagarayanagar, Madras-17 - 2

*24th February to 28th February 1965*

“ Veda Rakshana Nidhi Trust ”,  
Kulitalai P.O. (RS),  
Madras State.



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Vedas form the root of all dharma. The Hindus of different regions, though different in food and dress and speaking different languages, have hitherto been living in unity and amity as good neighbours. This has been due to the existence of common bonds uniting the people from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. They are the Vedas prized by many as the sacred treasures of Bharat.

2. In times of yore, the Vedas, consisting of many mantras which are the inarticulate gesticulations of letter radicals called 'aksharas', the vibrations of which and the constant meditation of the Devatas of which produce effects, which could be turned to material or spiritual good, served a two-fold purpose.

3. 'Veda Parayana', with or without understanding the meaning of the mantras led not only to individual welfare but also to collective prosperity of the world, though knowledge of the meaning of the mantras ensured greater efficacy. The utilisation of the Veda mantras in rituals strictly performed according to rules in a spirit of dedication served to propitiate the Lord to ensure the creature comforts of the beings of the world. This duty was the responsibility of those who are the descendants or chelas of the Rishis of old and to whom Bhagavan Veda Vyasa, who is said to have flourished 5,000 years ago at the end of the last Yuga, entrusted the Vedas for preservation. Tradition has it, that the four Rishis, Paila, Vaisampayana, Jaimini and Sumantu were the first repositories of the Vedas which were synthesised into four, popularly known as the Rik, Yajus, Sama and Atharva. In turn, these Rishis initiated their disciples in different Sakhas. According to the Vishnu Purana, there were then 1,131 Sakhas of the Vedas, made up of 21 in Rik, 101 in Yajus, 1,000 in Sama and 9 in Atharva. The various Veda Sakhas were preserved by the imparting of adhyayana orally and till about 300 years ago were preserved in several orthodox families. Today each one of these families belongs to one or other of the aforesaid Veda Sakhas.

4. The Pillar-inscriptions at Talagunda of Mysore of the 4th Century A.D., at Bahur near Pondicherry and those at



Chaturvedimangalam, Tribhuvanam and Palayaseevaram in Chingleput district of the 11th century give in detail the various Veda Sakhas that flourished and the details of persons learning the same at centres known as 'Ghatikasthanas' and 'Vidhyasthanas'. It is learnt that in and around Kanchi alone 6,000 persons were studying all the four Vedas about 1,000 years ago; and in and around Madura, 3,000 vidyarthi were learning Vedas, during the 16th century. Detailed information is available in the Chola and Pallava inscriptions about the Sutras, Veda Sakhas and Vedangas with pointed reference to the number of students belonging to each and having training therein. Even as late as the 19th century, Muthu Ganapati of Tiruvayaru in Tanjavur district, Madras State, is said to have had 200 to 300 disciples to whom he was imparting adhyayana orally in the traditional mode in batches which involved dedication of the most part of his time for the purpose. 'Adhyayana' and 'Adhyapana', the learning and the teaching of Vedas were conceived in a spirit of duty and without expectation of any material benefit, though both the State and the general public took the responsibility of ministering to the wants of the Vedapathins which were really very few.

5. Within the last 100 years, the notion that education other than the Vedic education alone can ensure a livelihood has taken root even among those families with the result that the oral tradition has been slowly disappearing and the line of sishyas who preserved various Veda Sakhas is getting extinct; and today, hardly ten Sakhas of Vedas—one in Rik, four in Yajus, three in Sama and two in Atharva are known to exist. They are the Sakala of Rik, the Taittiriya, Maitrayaniya, Kanva and Madhyandina of Yajus, the Kauthuma, Jaimini and Ranayaneeya of Sama, and the Sownaka and Pippalada Sakhas of Atharva. The rules governing the chant of the various Veda Sakhas have been codified in texts known as the 'Prathisaakhyas' which ensured the preservation of the vitality of the Veda mantras.

6. Efforts have been taken by the Acharya Swamiji of the Kanchi Kamakoti Pitha to arrest this decadence during the past twenty years by the organisation of sammelanams designed to educate even the educated among us on the content, import and purport of the Vedas and to awaken them to the need of honouring such of those who still preserve the same and to give a lead to many of us to live a way of life suited to the modern times without sacrificing the fundamentals of Vedic anushtan which formed the base for sustaining shanti in many homes.



7. In October 1962, the First All-India Vedic Students Convention was held in New Delhi which was presided over by Dr. Shrimali, a Sama Vedin, the then Education Minister of the Government of India. Steps were taken to bring together the Gurus and the vidhyarthi from various parts of India. Subjects Committees appointed to investigate the state of Veda adhyayana or the Vedapat in the country revealed that in the regions south of the Vindhya alone the early traditions of oral adhyayana continues to be preserved in Pathasalas and in a few families. Statistics taken then show that in West Bengal, there are only three centres wherein 20 vidhyarthi are learning the Vedas. There is none in Himachala Pradesh and East Punjab. In Bihar, Gujarat, U.P., and M.P. and Karnataka including Mysore and Kerala adhyayana is imparted in less than ten centres with not more than 50 vidhyarthi in each, who are having adhyayana in the traditional mode. Madras has 44 Pathasalas, Andhra Pradesh 17, Maharashtra 16 and Utkal 15. The total number of Pathasalas is 128 and there were only 850 vidhyarthi throughout India, Madras accounting for 157, Maharashtra 113, Andhra Pradesh 100, Gujarat, M.P., Karnataka and Kerala with each 50 and Bihar and Bengal 20 each.

8. Of the nine Sakhas found to exist then, there was only one person and one vidhyarthi in the Sownaka Sakha of the Atharva Veda and hardly three in Maitrayaniya Yajus, about nine in the Pippalada Atharva Veda and a few persons only in Jaimini Sama.

9. A survey of the distribution of the various Veda Sakhas throughout India shows that Kauthuma Sama prevails mostly in Bengal, while Pippalada Atharva known as the Kashmiri Veda is prevalent in the Baripada district and the Mayurbanj of Utkal and part of Ganjam district. The Caaraana-vyuha Sutra mentions that the spheres of influence of the Atharva Veda are the northern and southern sides of the Narmada. Even now, there are some Sownaka Atharva Veda families in Gujarat and Jamnagar area. In fact, the only person who has Kantapat of the Sakha, Vasudeva Ramaniklal Panchole lives at Sinor on the banks of the Narmada. The inscriptions at Ennayiram show that Atharva Veda was learnt in Madras State. The Maitrayaniyas abound in Nasik and East Kandesh in Bhadgaon. Madhyandina and Kanva Sakhins are the largest group in U.P., Vidarbha and Rajasthan. Andhra and Madras consist mainly of a large number of Taittiriya Yajur Veda Sakhins. Maharashtra abounds in Rig Veda with as many as 15 Rig Veda Pathasalas. Jaimini Sama is to be found in Malabar and in some villages inhabited by the solias (Poorvasikhas) of the vaishnavite com-



munity, namely, Thenthiruperai, Nagarkoil in the south and in many villages in Tiruchirapalli district and the border villages of the Tanjore and South Arcot districts. A notable feature is that the oral tradition is fully preserved in two Sakhas of Yajus, two of Sama and the only one Sakha of Rig Veda in Madras State.

10. Steps have been taken since the last convention to preserve the Sownaka Atharva, Maitrayaniya Yajus, Jaimini Sama and the Kauthuma Sama by the starting of Veda Pathasalas at Sinor (Gujarat), Nasik (Maharashtra), Srirangam (Madras State) and Calcutta (West Bengal) where the local students are taught the respective Sakhas except in the case of the first, in which adhyayanam is imparted to students from Madras who have completed krama pat of Taittiriya Yajus. The teacher and the taught are subsidised from institutions sponsored by His Holiness and with the assistance of the Education Ministry of the Government of India.

11. During the post-convention work, it was found that a Sama Sakha, known as "Ranayaneeya" was found to exist as also the Bashkala Sakha of the Rig Veda. A few families of the former Sakhins are still to be found in the villages of Hosakuli, Mugave, Salakod, Nagad and Neelakode in Honnavar taluk of the Karwar district of Mysore State. A pathasala is maintained by the Ramachandrapur Mutt where this Sama Sakha is taught.

12. With a view to honour the repositories of the still surviving Veda Sakhas and to enable the people of Bharat to receive the blessings (Akshatha Aseervatham) of the Veda-pathins, who have dedicated themselves to the adhyayana of the surviving Veda Sakhas, the second Vedic Convention was held at the Siva Vishnu Temple, T. Nagar, Madras-17, from 24th to 28th February.

13. About 550 Vedic scholars and vidhyarthi were present. Chanapaatis about 100 in number of the Rik, Yajus and Sama Sakhas in Madras and about 60 vidhyarthi drawn from sixteen Pathasalas wherein adhyayana is subsidised by the Veda Rakshana Nidhi Trust, sponsored by Sri Sankaracharya of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peeta took part. 'Dharmagnas', 'Veda Bhasya scholars' who have passed the Veda Bhasya examinations held under the Shasti-Abdapoorthy Trust, the Pundits of the Sanskrit College, Madras, other Vidwans and 150 Parayanikas of the Madras City were among the participants. In Madras, the



Sakhas represented were Sakala Rik, Kanva, and Taittiriya Yajus as well as the Kauthuma Sama.

14. Diwakaran Nambudri of Tiruppanithura with his disciples, the Adhyapaka and disciples of the Vadakke Matam and Tirunavay Pathalasa, about 18 Rigvedis and seven Jaimini Samagas constituted the Kerala delegation. Portions from the Rik and Jaimini Sama Sakhas were chanted by them. A peculiar feature of the Kerala chant was the chant by Mudras of Vedas which, it is said has the authority of tradition. The Jaimini Sama chant of Koduntharapalli differed in form from the chant of the same Sakha by the Panjal Nambudris.

15. About 60 Ghanapaatis of the Rik-Kanva and Madhyandina Sakhas and the students hailing from Pathasalas of Kolhapur, Ichalkaranji, Chinchwad and Gokarnam came from the Karnataka area which now form part of the Mysore State and part of Maharashtra. Their chant differed from the chant of Sakala Rig Veda of the Madras State in that Hasthaswara was employed by them. Many Rig Vedis who came from the area had qualified themselves in vikritis and were Dasagranthis. One of them was Moreswar Rajaram Joshi, an Agnihotri who is imparting adhyayanam to his son, Gajanan Moreswar Joshi, a teenager of eight years who got on the dais for recital with loin-cloth (kowpeen).

16. Thirteen Dasagranthis of Rig Veda, four persons well versed in Rik Prathissakhya, of whom were Ambadas Sharma Arvikar, Pandit Shankar Shastri Arvikar, and Ambadas Sharma Pande took part. Ranayaniya Sama Sakha which has been recently found to flourish in North Karnataka was represented by three persons with Visveshwar Bhatt Balagade as their chief. Purushottama Mule of the Bhonsle Pathasala at Nagpur came with six vidhyarthi of the Madhyandina Sakha, the Parayanam of the Sathapath Brahmanam of which was done by Mangaleshwar Badalji and Manohar Joshi of Varanasi and Nanaji Dhamankar, the Prathissakhya Pandit of the Madhyandina Sakha; Kinjavadekar, the Rig Veda Ghanapaati, Abaji Kaveswar and Mahabaleshwarkar, who belong to the traditional adhyayana parambaras came with their vidhyarthi.

17. Sankar Lakshman Dixit and Joshi of Bhadgaon as also Sripada Bhatmule and Triumbak Joshi of Panchavati, Nasik, came with four students of newly started Veda Pathasala of the Kamakoti Pitha and represented the Maitrayaniya Sakha.

18. Gujarat provided the only Atharva Vedin of the Sownaka Sakha who came with vidhyarthi of the newly started



Kanchi Kamakoti Pitha Pathasala, and the Orissa Pippalada Sakhins of the Atharva Veda were eight in number along with a solitary Kanva and Kauthuma Sama representative of the State.

19. Most of the 70 Ghanapaatis of Andhra Pradesh were swayampakis and seven of them were imparting adhyayanam to their children. Three Pathasalas sent their children. The Ghana Chant of the Andhra Taittiriya Yajur Vedins rent the air as by lions in the forest, and the Convention Pandal has been named "Veda Aranya Mandapam", the foundation stone for which has been laid by His Holiness Jayendra Saraswathi, the Sankaracharia of the Kanchi Kamakoti Pitha.

20. Though the Kowthuma Sama is widely prevalent in West Bengal 'Kanta-pat' is rare. Attempts to revive the same during the past one hundred years having failed, it was given to the Kanchi Kamakoti Pitha to give a fillip to the same by starting a Vedapathasala for imparting adhyayana to Bengali vidhyarthis. The Pathasala Guru Sankaranarayana Srouthigal came with three vidhyarthis whose chant created a very good impression.

21. The Convention opened on the 24th February with the procession of the portrait of Veda Vyasa taken around the Siva-Vishnu temple at T. Nagar to the chant of Vedic hymns by the Vedapathins of the various Sakhas. Vyasa pooja over, Vigneswara pooja was performed by the respective Sakhins as a preliminary to the havan of each Sakha and Veda parayana thereof.

22. Ten Vedis for havan in all the surviving Sakhas were put up and in front of each assembled the Sakins of the respective Sakhas and commenced the parayana of Vedas, after invocation of Veda Vyasa in the ten kumbas specially installed with the necessary rites after avahana of Varuna and 'punyaha-vachanam'. The whole atmosphere was surcharged by the Vedic chants and at one and the same time about 500 Vedapathins chanted Vedas. The Vedaparanaikas were cordoned off by an enclosure so that the whole anganam where parayana was performed was kept sacred and pure, none being admitted into the enclosures except the Vedapathins and the personnel necessary to assist the conduct of the havans. The morning session, comprising of Vedaparayana and havans lasted till about 12 noon.

23. A sadas in which learned Sastragnas took part was held in the afternoon on each of the days. Acharya Venkatesa



Dikshithar of Bombay and the principals of the Veda Pathasala at Triupathi and the Sanskrit Colleges, Madras were the sadasyas. As many as 20 subjects were set for discussion, the main themes of which related to the discussions on the variations in the form and swara of mantras dealing with the same matter in each of the Sakas. Also the pronunciations of certain aksharas by the different Sakins in the different areas. The authority of the Pratisakyas was called in aid very largely during the discussions. The conclusions arrived at have been embodied in a note prepared by Ramamurthi Sastrigal of the Sanskrit College. It is learnt that while there is the authority of the Prathisakhya for the 'Hasthaswara' of the Madyandhina Sakha, the chant by mudras of Rig Veda seems to be based on tradition. Prominent among the scholars who took part were Brahmasri Venkatesa Dikshitar, Balasubramania Sastrigal, Krishnasami Iyengar, Ramanatha Dikshathar, Sivaramakrishna Ganapaatigal, Agnihotram Ramanuja Thathachariar, Dr. Raghavan, Ankur Venkatachariar, Subramania Sastrigal, Ambadas Sharma Arvikar, Narayana Sharma Arvikar, Nanaji Dhamankar and Srinath Misra.

24. By 7 p.m. the night sessions started on the opening day with Veda Vyasa pooja and Swasthi which took the place of the usual welcome address. This programme was a novel one. Special compositions were made by Ramasami Sarma of Kanchi Mutt and Navalpakkam Varadachariar, which made references to the various Sakhas area-wise in Bharat and gave a descriptive reference of the delegates. Special prasadam blessed by the Acharya was distributed.

25. Thereafter recitals started. Rig Vedins from different parts of the country sat on the dais and recited the vikritis, pada, krama, jata, gana, Dhawaja, Danda, Ratha, Reka and Mala. The programme was so arranged that the listeners could easily follow the differences and variations of the norms adopted in different regions of the country, on the same portions of Rig Veda. The proceedings terminated at 9-30 p.m.

26. The arrangements for the seating of Vedaparayanaikas were so made that thousands of people could watch the same and do parikrama or pradakshinas without entering the enclosures. The audience composed of the young and middleaged, watched with rapt attention and reverence the Vedic chants with abiding interest.

27. The programme for the succeeding days was the same except that the second day was devoted to Yajur Veda as also



part of the third, and the latter part of the third and part of the fourth to the Sama Veda and the Atharva Veda. The melody of Kanva Sakha of Madras and the tempo of the Madhyandina chant of Varanasi and the Ghanapat of Andhra were a class by themselves and attracted the audience.

28. (Kal-vaitha-varam) a competition in padapath of the Krishna Yajur Veda Taittiriya Sakha attracted as many as 71 entrants so that the programme scheduled therefor was advanced by one day and extended by one day after the conclusion of the convention session. Seven candidates were successful, one from Andhra and six from Tamilnad and each of them was awarded a cash grant of Rs. 125.

29. The last but one day of the Convention was the "Vidhyarthi day". It was devoted to the recitals by the Vidhyarthi area-war and Pathasala-war of Vedas. It was a sight to see tender vidhyarthi, some of the teenagers, the seeds of the future, repositories of our sacred treasure, ascend the dais, some in loin cloth and chant portions of Vedas with ease in a facile manner with the radiance of innocence on their faces, which made thousands of the listeners watch them with reverence and sympathy.

30. The sessions concluded on the 28th with sambavanas and akshata aseervadams and pradakshina namaskara.

31. The convention has been an unique one, in the history of such sammelanams. With conspicuous absence of the formalities of speeches, lectures, swagathams, vote of thanks and the like, thousands of people sat in reverence throughout with rapt attention listening to the simultaneous Vedic chants of all Sakhas by over 50 Vedapathins.

32. In view of the dwindling number of new entrants who take to Veda adhyayana, it is for the generous public to take the needed steps to ensure a steady flow of vidhyarthi who complete a course of adhyayana lasting for about nine years.

33. His Excellency the Governor of Madras, Jaya Chamaraja Wadayar was present at the Convention on the concluding day and paid his reverential respects to the Vedapathins.

SECOND ALL-INDIA VEDIC CONVENTION COMMITTEE



## VEDA RAKSHANA NIDHI TRUST

To sustain a steady flow of Vidhyarthi who take to adhyayana of Vedas, an incentive scheme has been put into effect with the blessings of His Holiness Sri Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Pita. This is designed to ensure a grant of at least Rs. 5,000/- to a Vidhyarthi who undergoes adhyayana (Vedapat) for eight years.

To raise the sum of Rs. 50,000/- required for the purpose annually, donations of Rs. 400/- for Life or recurring *annual* contribution of Rs. 15/- are requested, which may be sent by cheques or M.Os. in the name of "The Veda Rakshana Nidhi Trust" to the address given below.

The donors will receive prasadam blessed by His Holiness on their Janma-Nakshatra day every month.

Sri S. Annadurai Ayyangar, B.A., B.L.,  
Executive Trustee,  
"Veda Rakshana Nidhi Trust",  
Kulitalai P.O. (RS),  
Madras State.