

Dasa Shresta Purandara Dasaru

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Bakthi yogi, dasashresta, Sri.Purandara Dasaru pious name shines with a rare and eternal brilliance in the history of haridasa sahitya, haridasa parampare. He is considered the harikara, the architect of haridasatva, and the best example of haridasa samskrithi. As is the case with many saints of India, we know very little about his life. Very little information is available in historical documents and even less from his works.

Srinivasa Naik that was Purandaradasa's earlier name- was born in an affluent family, carrying on business in gold and precious stones, residing in Purandara Ghada, a place 18 miles from Pooa. His father's name was Varadappa Naik. A smartha deshastha, he was of Vasista Gothra and Yatus Shaka. In his early years, he had mastered Sanskrit, Kannada, music and a good knowledge of shastras and puranas. But amassing wealth was his aim, he became very rich and was known as "Navakoti Narayana". His wife's name was Saraswathi Bai, a very pious and devoted woman. Through her, by an incident known as "Mukthi tanda mooguthi" a revolution, transition came in his life , at about the age of 40. In one moment "lobha" gave place to "Vairagya", love of gold to love of god and he gave away all his wealth and became a haridasa. He left Puranandara Ghada along with his wife and children, visited Pandarapura and then came to Vijanagara (Hampi). He became a Shisya of Sri Vyasathirtha, Rajaguru of Sri Krishna Deva Raya, the Vijayanagar emperor, great saint in the pontifical order Sri Vyasa thritha gave him Chakrankana, ankithopadesha, ankitha as Purandara Vittala, and initiated him as a haridasa. Then onwards, he lived the life of a saint and composed innumerable devaramamas, made pilgrimages all over the country, singing Harinama, preaching Haribakthi.

Sri Purandaradasa lived by "ooncah uritti" rising up early in the morning, he would go up to the Tunga Bhadra river and after bath and prayers, proceed with his sons and

followers on a round of the city, singing songs in praise of Sri Hari, dancing now and then to its tunes. His dress was that of a haridasa, consisting of a turban, tulasimale, tumboori, chitike, geje and gopalabutti, collecting gifts of rice and other food articles voluntarily given. Food would be prepared by this collection. After every body, including Saraswathi Bai , had taken food the remaining would be given away nothing would remain in the house. The word “ Purandara dasara mane” became a proverb to denote poverty. It was the routine followed even when he went on his pilgrimages. This was known as “ Madhukara uritti” and in one of his songs he has said “ Madhukara uritti nannadu , adu balu channadu”.

He was a contemporary of great personalities like Sri. Vadirajaru , Kanakadasaru, Sri. Vijayadasaru, Vaikunta dasaru and Annamacharya. He had 4 sons, Varadappa, Gururaya, Abhinavappa and Guru Madhwapathi. They were also haridasas and have composed devaranamas. It is said, the first 3 sons died in Purandara dasa’s life time itself, only the last son survived.

Though Purandara dasaru made extensive pilgrimages, he liked Pandarapura, Malakheda, Thirupathi., Hampi and Udupi very much. Vijayanagara emperor Sri Krishna Deva Raya liked Purandara dasaru very much. He invited him often to his palace and had talks. He had built a Japashala for Purandara dasaru near Chakrathirtha, now it is called as dasara mantapa. Purandara dasa lived to the ripe age of 84 (1480 A.D to 1564 A.D) and he attained the lotus feet of Purandara Vittala on Pushya Bahula Amavasya, of Rakthakshi Samvatsara i,e 1564 A.D. Every year on this day his Aradhana is celebrated all over the country.

“ Purandara Gurum Dasa strestam Dyanidhim”

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