

Haridasas of Karnataka

Shri Vijaya Das :
Works : Descriptions of visits to holy places
(selected and abridged) (Part V)

- Prof. D. V. Potdar

Haridasas visited almost all the holy places in India. A difficult task, since they had to do so, either on foot or by bullock cart. Shri Vadiraja wrote a travelogue in verse, describing the places, the gods and the many legends associated with them. This work was a model for others to follow. These visits were exalting, because of the temple architecture, and the sublime surroundings, rivers and mountains, and woods.

1.

Presiding deities of holy waters,
I bow to you.

Every day where'r I bathe,
let me feel your presence, God Marut,
Laxminarayana,
be free from, selfishness and sins
committed in this Kali age.

Udupi

2.

(There's)
No guardian like mother,
no teacher like father,
no joy like eating,
no fast day like haridina,*
no holy place like Udupi,
no idol like that of Krishna,
and no treatise like Sudha.**

*ekadashi (eleventh day) ** a work by Tikacharya

3.

Beware of giving alms here,

for what you give, grows a hundred fold!

4.

Oh, the might of your devotees, Hari,
one drank up the sea,
another moved with the sun,
one dammed a river by an arrow,
another destroyed cities,
one swallowed poison and smiled,
I bow to them!

5.

Devaki said,
“Krishna I didn’t see a single prank
of yours at Gokula”,
Krishna heard, and became a mischievous
kid once more,
Devaki watched, delighted said,
“Stay, this form I like most,
remain on the earth, and be worshipped”.
Krishna obeyed.
Later, Rukmini got His idol sculpted,
and decorated it with her nose screw,
but seeing the Kali age approaching,
she hid Him in a lump of white clay.+

+ history of the Krishna idol before Madhwa picked it up

6.

Shri Krishna,
Fascinated by your charm,
Gopi didn’t worship you,
and the cowherds because you
were a friend,
enamoured the cowgirls
didn’t respect you,
and the Yadavas because you
were a kinsman,
King Ugrasena made you his bard,
it’s only now,
you’re fed from morn to night,

and lionized by the sages!

7.

A glance at the sumptuous food offered,*
your sins are destroyed, you're
full of devotion,
and start repeating His name;
eat a morsel, you're happy, contented,
and if you have your fill,
the Lord'll start consulting his spouse,
"What shall I grant this devotee?"

* to Lord Krishna

Kashi

8.

Ajamila, a Brahmin, gave up rituals,
lived with a maid, and when he died,
Yama's flunkeys came,
but angels appeared, drove them away
for he had dwelt near the holy river,+
such'll be your luck if you bathe here.
for Vijaya vithal reya sports
in the waters.

+ Ganges

Tamraparni

9.

Sage Bhagwan with his disciple,
on his way to the Ganges,
to immerse his guru's ashes, bones,
halted here;
the disciple, hungry, opened the bundle,
but found it filled with flowers,
surprised he ran to the sage,
both came back and checked,
overjoyed, they sang the praise of the place,
joined by the gods.

10.

If in a family, the funeral rites
haven't been performed,+
and the descendants dip in this river,
their manes'll don silk garments,
and'll move with the Lord,
wielding conch and disc.++
and'll ne'r return to the earth.

+for a dead person ++ sarupya mukti

Ghatikachala

11.

Sages, performing tapas here, were harassed
by the demons,
the Three-eyed or others couldnt cope with them,
so the Lord called Mukhayprana, gave His disc
and bade him, "Go and destroy".
The Wind god stabbed the demons in the flanks,
sent them in the air and thence to hell.
Keeping the disc at His feet, he bowed,
the Lord pleased, blessed him, and permitted the further
use of the missile.+

+ the statue here wields the disc, unusual

Nivratti sangama

12.

In Kashi town, a brahmin's wife,
daily met a low fellow,
bathed in the Ganges to wash off her sins.
'Twas now the river's turn to tremble,
for she was defiled;
She met Vijya vithal,
He narrated the glory of this place,
told her to come daily, have a dip,
which she did, flying as a crow.
Days passed,

meeting her, a sage was charmed by her form,
and admired her,
then she knew she was her former self,
became happy.

13.

Dhrmaja and his brothers fought a war,
killed enemies, sinned,
to get rid of sin, they donned tarred clothes,
went on a pilgrimage;
but black remained black.
Hearing of this place, they came and
had a dip in the river,
and lo, black turned into white.
Even gods were happy and showered flowers.
such is the virtue+ of the waters here.

+ vertue in French means power

Shuchindra+

14.

Indra seduced a sage's wife,
and was cursed,
the result--female genitalia appeared
all over his body;
miserable, he met Narada,
who said " Go to Mahendra,
To Atri's hermitage,
and perform penance".

Indra did so.

Here, told to bring water, his elephant,
channelled the river to his master,
Indra bathed, and contemplated His feet.
Vijaya vithal appeared, lifted
the curse,
then on Indra became the
'Thousand eyed'

+Shuchi+Indra

Tirupati

15.

I lived in a devotee's house,
carried water, cleared plates,
ate leftovers, kept watch at night,
wore old clothes, and was a trusted servant.
Overlook my faults, Vijaya vithal reya,
for my master's sake.+

+ rare memories of previous of life

16.

I came here, but couldn't have
a glimpse of the Lord,
I was sad,
but this is silly,
for wherev'r I look, whate'r
I see,
I should find you,
Vijaya vithal.

Prayag

17.

If a guy comes here,
stands in the shade of the tree,*
even mutters words with cunning, calls
the Lord,
he'll get knowledge,
--knowledge to be gained in many
many lives!--
and joins the Lord's retinue.
Just keep mumbling, and you'll
attain release, asserts Eye in the forehead.**

* ficus religiosa **Shiva

Mannar

18.

The demon Mannasura,

ireful, haughty, brooked no rivals;
he disturbed the penance of a sage,
listening to his prayer, Vijaya vithal appeared,
finished the demon.
hence the name of the place.

Valkala

19.

The Creator's sons performed
a yajna here,
poured offerings in the fire,
but Agni couldn't swallow, fast enough,
and prayed to the lord;
a child appeared, started gulping;
mounds of rice, ponds of ghee
disappeared,
the child said "Is that all, or shall
I take the last sip?" +
flabbergasted, Aja joined palms ,
and lo, the child disappeared,
and Vijaya vithal stood before them.
all bowed, and touched His feet.

+ aposhana

Shri Ranga

20.

Rama killed the demon,
crowned Vibhishana,
and assured him of help,

Vibishana accompnies Rama.

Told to go back he said,
"How can I, I cant brook separation"
Rama smiled, gave him an idol,
and said "Don't halt till you reach your city".

But Vibhishana had to stop on the way,
and the image kept on the ground

wouldn't move.
For Ranga had settled on the bank of
the Pushkarani.,
and He flourishes.

Shweta shringi

21.

King Shewta, cursed for not
feeding people,
had to hack his own body and eat his flesh;
miserable he met Narada, singing the
Lord's praise,
pitying his state the sage told him to
come to this mount,
made holy by Jamadagni,
--who begat the Lord--
and other sages.
The king obeyed, punished his body
for thousands of years,
and got rid of his sins.

Another sage Shringi attain'd spiritual
heights here,
hence the name of the place.

Subramhanya

22.

The demon Taraka performed hard penance,
the Lotus born pleased said, " You wont meet
defeat at the hands of men or gods".

Power drunk, the demon began to harass
the three worlds.
Annoyed the populace went to Brahma, appealed.
He in turn spoke to the Lord, and was told,
"Bring Shiva and Parvati together, the son
born'll slay the demon".

The god of love shot arrows,
and Shanmukha was born.

This general of the gods, slew the demon.

Seeking peace of mind, he heard a heavenly voice,
“Go feed a million guests, and roll in their left overs”.
He did so, and the custom continues,
believed to cure sundry diseases.

Om Tat Sat