



Dear Yagya Friends,

September is the month when our ancestors are honored in a traditional festival called Pitru Paksha. Pandit Mishra and his priests did a wonderful job with this 3 day yagya and I know you'll enjoy the photos especially those taken on the banks of the Ganges river.

Also in September, our pundits in Kanchipuram performed a special yagya called Sama Veda Parayana, which entails the recitation of the complete Sama Veda.

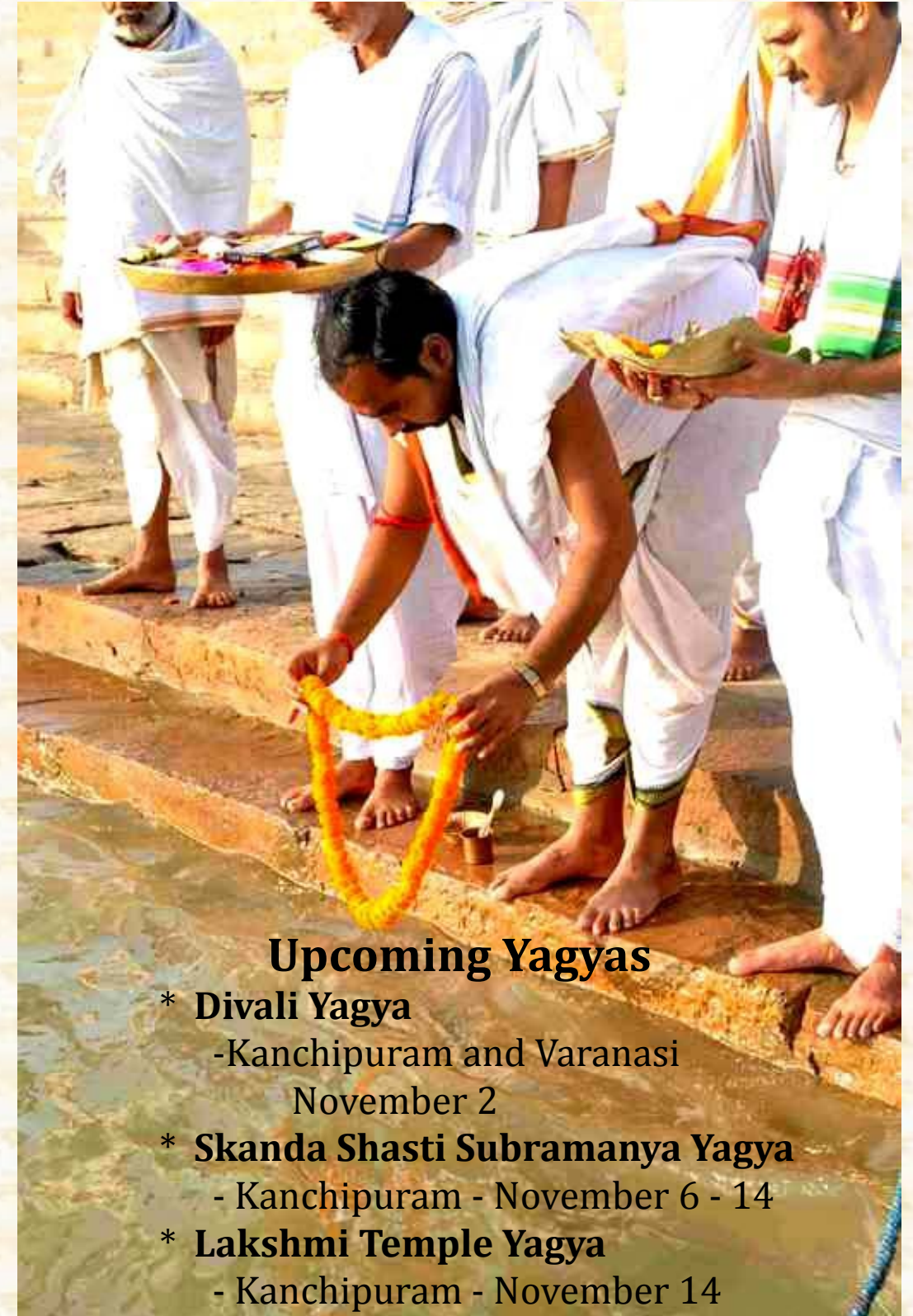
The final yagya performance took place in one of the ancient Shiva temples and our priests were assisted by some of the local pundits-in-training. These are amazingly beautiful photographs. Be sure to see them starting on page twenty.

In November, we begin with Diwali on the 2nd and continue with our special Subramanya yagya series on the 5th. Please join us!

Enjoy the photos and as always, thank you for your continued support.

Very best regards,

Ben Collins



Upcoming Yagyas

- * **Diwali Yagya**
- Kanchipuram and Varanasi
November 2
- * **Skanda Shasti Subramanya Yagya**
- Kanchipuram - November 6 - 14
- * **Lakshmi Temple Yagya**
- Kanchipuram - November 14

Ancestor Yagya Series - Varanasi

Day 1 - Shiva/Shakti Yagya



The Ancestor Yagyas begin with a day dedicated to Shiva and Parvati (Shakti) at the countryside ashram.



The pundits performed a complete Rudra Abhishekam for Shiva.



The yagya continued with a recitation of the 700 verse Durga Saptashati , also known as the Chandi Path which tells the story of Shakti; all the powerful forms of the goddess who eliminate darkness and bring light to life.



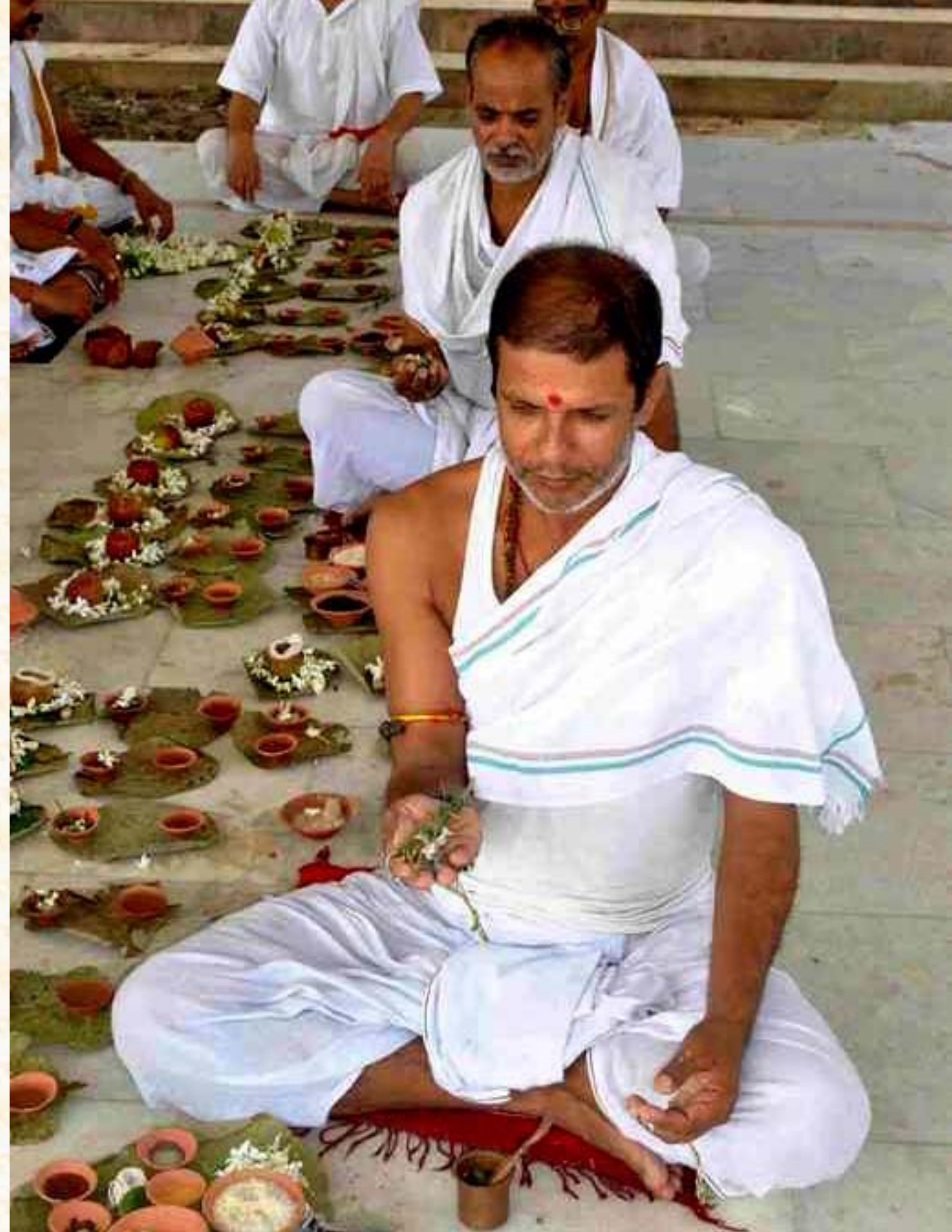
The day's yagya performance concludes with the performance of the traditional fire ritual called homam or havan in which various ingredients are offered into the sacred fire along with ghee and wood.

Ancestor Yagya Series - Varanasi

Day 2 - Shraddh Yagya on the banks of the Ganges river



The ritual for the ancestors is called Shraddh and it is unlike the usual vedic rituals that we perform. There are many ingredients and the physical aspects of the yagya performance are quite elaborate and unique.



The ritual involves the offering of flowers, ghee, water, fruit, and other items so that our ancestors may be protected, fed, and blessed.



Notable are the “pinda-daan”, balls made of rice and barley flour mixed with ghee and black sesame which are symbolically fed to the ancestors as a part of the ritual.

Ancestor Yagya Series - Varanasi

Day 3 - Ganga Yagya





Ganga has always been considered an important form of the divine in the Vedic tradition. She agreed to come to earth to purify it and flows down through Shiva's hair, making Varanasi (Shiva's city) a special place for her.



The yagya begins with pujas and offerings of fruit and flowers which are then dropped into the river (lower left). Then the yagya fire is lit and the offerings of sesame seeds and ghee are made into the flames.



The priests take the clay pots and flower malas out into the current of the Ganga.



To conclude the yagya performance, the pots are placed into the river where they will gradually dissolve.

Vinayaka Chaturthi Yagya

September 2013 - Bangalore



Vinayaka Chaturthi is a special event in September each year that celebrates Ganesha's birthday. This year Seetharam and the Kanchipuram priests made a beautiful Ganesha temple just for the day.



Ganesha is well known for his appetite and so there are 1000 sweet modaka balls to be offered along with sugar cane, fruit, puffed rice, and coconuts



Vinayaka Chaturthi concluded with a fire ritual in which the 1008 modaka balls were offered into the yagya fire while vedic mantras were recited.

Sama Veda Yagya Series - Kanchipuram

September 2013



This yagya series consisted of the recitation of the complete text of the Sama Veda, one of the four Vedas. This Veda is very melodic and consists primarily of Rig Veda verses sung in a special way.



As always our Daily Yagyas and Foundation Yagyas continue each morning.



The Sama Veda Yagya concludes with a large fire ritual (havan). Next we go to one of the ancient Shiva temples in Kanchipuram for a grand Rudra Abishekam including some of the young pundits-in-training from one of the many local patasalas.

Sama Veda Yagya Series - Kanchipuram

Shiva Temple Yagya





(from top left) Our young pundits have joined us and assist with all the chanting. Ganesha and Dakshinamurti offer their blessings. Fresh malas, fruit, and vibhuti are ready for the puja to begin. Many litres of milk, yogurt, sandalwood paste, and sweet pongal are prepared for the yagya offering. Twelve foot long fresh flower malas will be used in the final decoration.



After the lingam is cleaned with water and coated with sesame oil, the offering of milk begins by pouring it over the lingam while Sri Rudram and Chamakam verses from Yajur Veda are recited.



Offerings of sandalwood, rosewater, and honey are made and the lingam is washed with water. Lastly, the flower malas are arranged and the lingam is decorated with golden sandalwood and red kumkum, rudraksha beads, and silver ornaments.

The young brahmins recite verses from the Vedas and perform the final offering of light (aarti).









Our pundits have all received their vedic training and certifications through the Shankar Mutt in Kanchipuram. After the final event, Seetharam and the others attended the evening puja with Sri Jayendra Saraswati, the current Shankaracharya.





*"Roaring repeatedly along
the path of truth and dharma,
may you shine as the banner
of immortality.*

*May you send forth your voice
while sages are chanting
hymns of praise."*

-Rig Veda