

Book Review: Stories of Sharana's for Children
by **Niranjan Dinesh**

Note: **Niranjan** offered eight copies of this book to auction at the Basava Samiti Holiday Party with the proceeds being contributed by him to the chapter's Dashoa Fund.

Stories of Sharanas for Children by **Smt. G. V. Jaya Rajashekar**, is a collection of twenty- five different stories of Veerashaiva sharanas. Each story in this book highlights the contributions of a sharana-sharneyaru to the Veerashaiva tradition and tells about how they did such deeds of devotion for Shiva that he took them to Kailasa. (A sharana is someone who has dedicated their life with single-minded resolve to Shiva and spiritual practice.)

The author has written this book in an easy to understand style and it is beautifully illustrated. I recommend this book to parents who are looking for children's literature about Veerashaiva religion and traditions. Although this book is targeted to children; anybody can read and enjoy these stories. Grandparents can read this to their grandchildren and the book makes a good gift.

One story is about **Kodagoosu**, the daughter of the priest at a temple of Shiva in the town of Koluru. Her father, named **Shivadeva**, offered one measure of milk each day to Shiva. When **Kodagoosu** turned old enough to do this she was excited, and on her first day she wore clean clothes, boiled some milk and picked fresh flowers for the lord. When she placed the milk in front of the statue, Shiva would not come and drink the milk. **Kodagoosu** pleaded and pleaded for him to drink the milk. She tried offering him food, toys and even golden jewelry, but to no avail. Finally, she offered her life to Shiva and started hitting her head against the Shiva lingam. Pleased with her persistence, Shiva appeared to her in person and drank the milk. **Kodagoosu** ran to her father and told him that Shiva appeared to her in person. **Shivadeva** could not believe this and made her take him to the temple to see for himself. **Kodagoosu** prostrated before the Shiva Lingam and pleaded for Shiva to come. When he still did not come, her father got angry and rushed towards her. **Kodagoosu** pleaded for the lord to save her, and at the last second Shiva came in person, and took her to Kailasa where she achieved salvation.

The moral of this story is that you do not need complicated rituals or years of learning to win Shiva's blessing, but all you need is simple and honest faith. The story also tells that sharanas need not be old and learned, but even young children can be one.

Reprinted from *Basava Wani* Newsletter, September 2007
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