THE DEXTEROUS DESIKA

SWAMI
VEDANTA DESIKAR'S
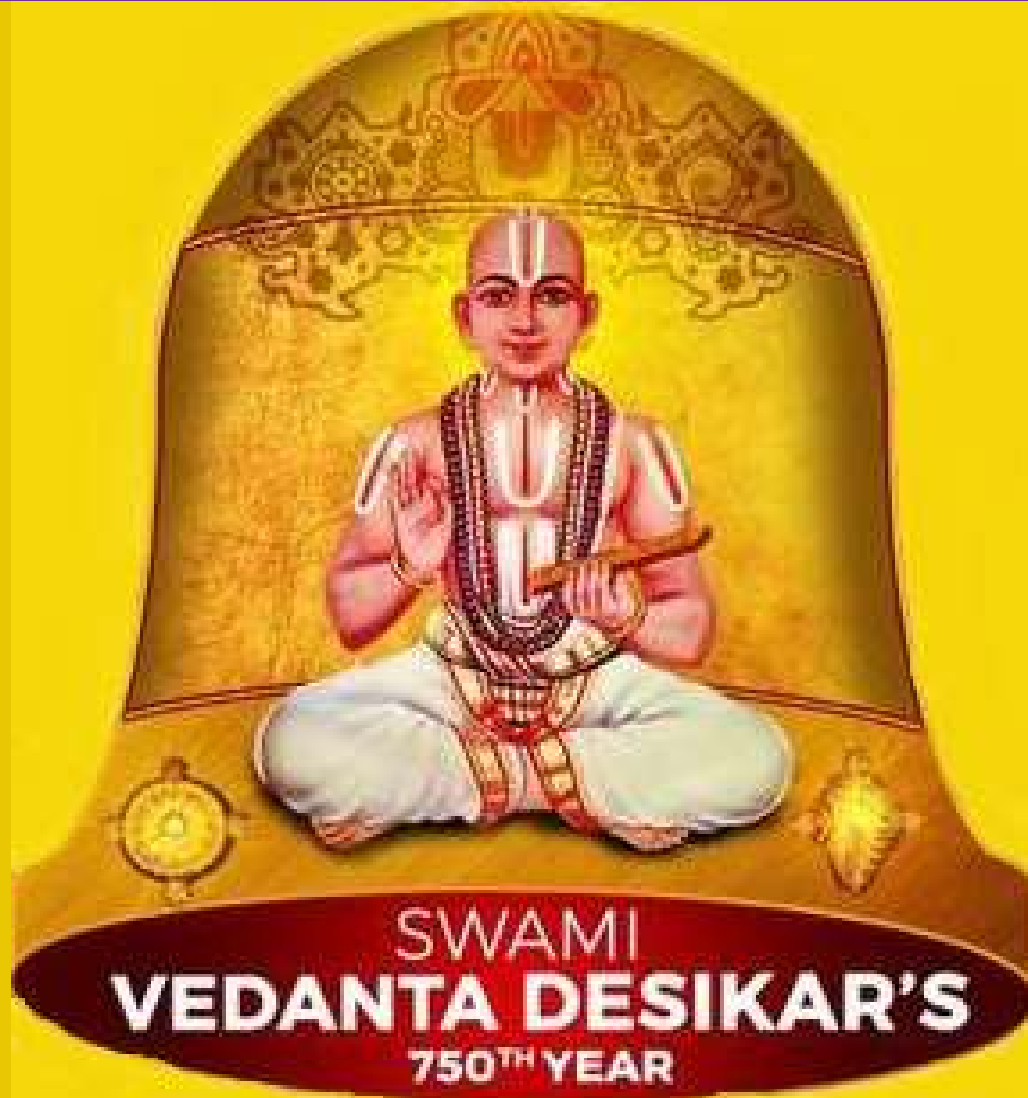750TH YEAR

The Dexterous Desika

(Sarva Thanthra Swathanthra)

The world we live in, has many fields that inspire us and encourage us to become competent in. Even as a child, we all would have been posted with a familiar question "What do you aspire to become?" We would have answered- a doctor, an engineer, a scientist, etc…" When time pass by, one could have attained what he had aspired to or nosedived. Others may have been successful in more than one Vocation.

Have you ever wondered if it would be possible for a single man to be master in many trades? Seems impossible task right?

It's really not true. There lived one Great Acharya in our decade who is a Polymath and was Master in many skills. He has done wonders in his life that he could be named as…

1) Mathematician
2) Civil Engineer
3) Lawyer
4) Doctor
5) Poet
6) Philosopher
7) Professor / Teacher / Acharya
8) Sportsman
9) Actor
10) Movie Director
11) Sculptor
12) Magician
13) Linguist
14) Cryptographer and much more…

(Only Adiyean's limited knowledge could not pen down all – A famous verse says so - mathikshayAth nivarthanthE na Govinda guNa kshayAth)

Unbelievable right!!! Yes, such an individual lived among us in 13th – 14th Century us and he is none other than…………..

SWAMI VENDANTHA DESIKAR – THE DEXTEROUS DESIKA.
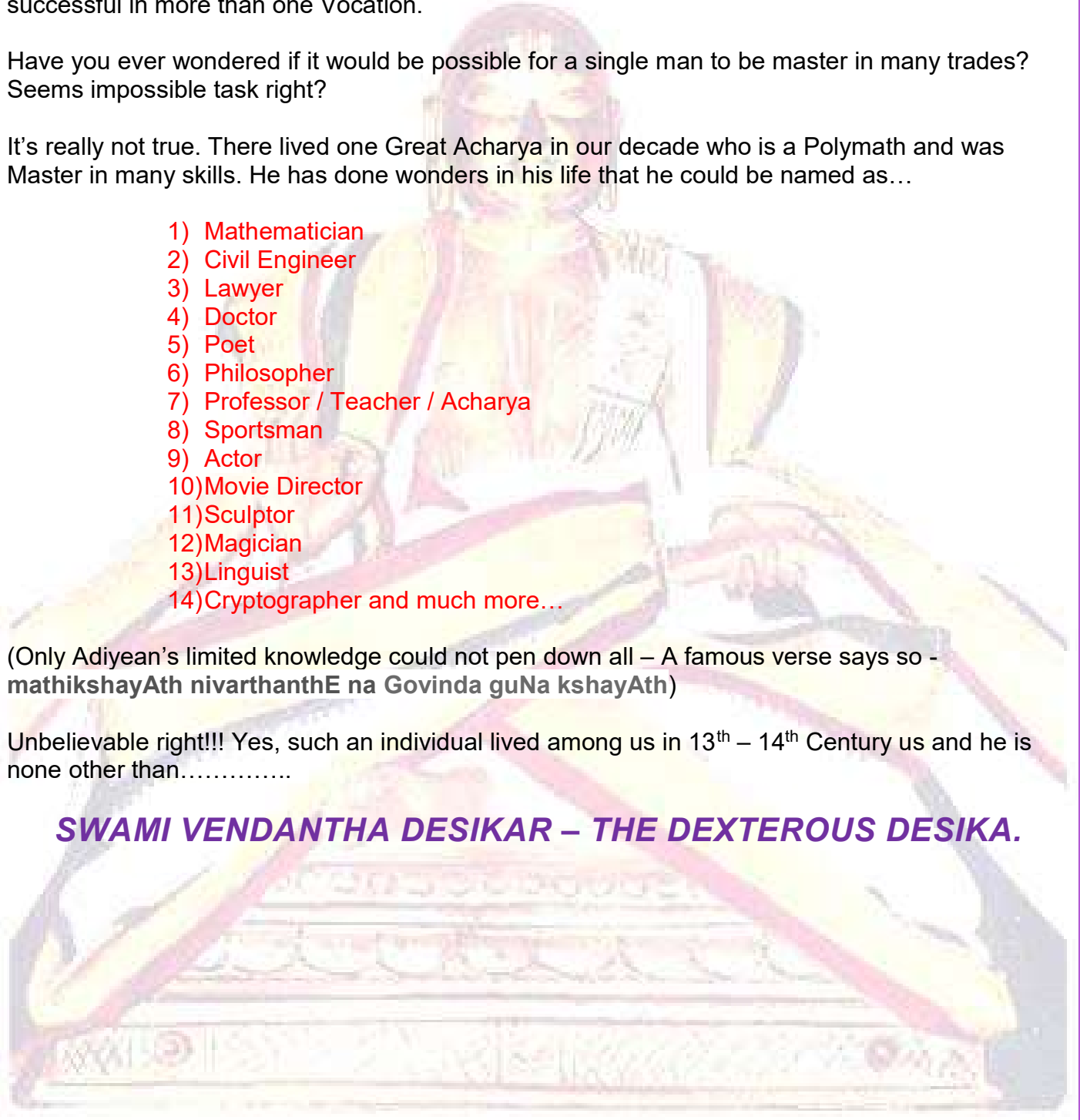
MATHEMATICIAN

There happened to be unresolved mathematical problem known as the knight's tour problem. It involved the moves of the knight pawn on an empty Chess board. The problem posed was to move the knight so that it visits every square (64) on the board – but only once. And, at the end of the tour it must come back to the square from which it began. The first mathematician to investigate the Knight's tour problem was Leonhard Euler (1707 to 1783), a Swiss mathematician. Since then it has come to be known as Euler Chess Knight Problem.
(For more on that please check: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knight%27s_tour)

Sri Vedanta Desika (13-14th century) the remarkable scholar –poet in his Paduka Sahasram celebrating the glory of Sri Ranganatha's padukas in 1008 verses   employs Chitra-paddathi for 40 verses (911-950). Among these, the verse No.929 and N0.930 are hailed as astounding solution to the 'knight's tour problem'. Vedanta Desika had used several types of poetic imagery. Chaturanga Turanga Bandham was one such imagery through which the knight's tour problem had already been solved elegantly, 500 years before Euler.

The syllables of the first Sloka (No.929) are posted, in sequence, on the squares of the Chess board.

Meaning:

स्थिरागसां सदाराध्या विहताकततामता ।
सत्पादुके सरासा मा रङ्गराजपदं नय ॥[21]

O the sacred Padukas of the Brahman, you are adorned by those who have committed unpardonable sins; you remove all that is sorrowful and unwanted; you create a musical sound; (be pleased) and lead me to the feet of Lord Rangaraja.

Then if the syllables on the squares that the knight visits are put together in their sequence it produces the Sloka No.930

स्थिता समयराजत्पागतरा मादके गवि ।
दुरंहसां सन्नतादा साध्यातापकरासरा ॥

Meaning:

The Padukas which protect those who shine by their right attitude; who is the origin of the blissful rays which destroy the melancholy of the distressed; whose radiance brings peace to those who take refuge in them, which move everywhere, -may those golden and radiating Padukas of the Brahman lead me to the feet of Lord Rangaraja.

| स्थि	रा	ग	सां	स	दा	रा	ध्या
1	30	9	20	3	24	11	26
वि	ह	ता	क	त	ता	म	ता
16	19	2	29	10	27	4	23
स	त्या	दु	के	स	रा	सा	मा
31	8	17	14	21	6	25	12
रं	ग	रा	ज	प	द	न्न	य
18	15	32	7	28	13	22	5

The second verse not only provided the solution to the knight's tour problem but went far beyond that.   It is said composing such verse is far more difficult than solving the original Chess-knight problem. It is all the more amazing when you realize that Sri Vedanta Desika lived at least six hundred years before Euler.

With such a great arithmetic skill or more, why can't HE be called as a MATHEMATICIAN?

CIVIL ENGINEER

Swami during his Thiruvahendrapuram sojourns, was challenged by a mason to construct a well
With the bricks supplied by him. Swami Desikan accepted the challenge. The mason gave broken
and irregular shaped bricks to swami. The Shilpa Sastra, an ancient treatise on arts and crafts
from India says that bricks which are uniform in size, have square corners, have a specific size, and are
red in colour are the best for construction. Even though the bricks given to him did not fulfil these
requirements, Desika used his extraordinary acumen to arrange these bricks in a unique sequence and
plastered them to form the circular periphery of the well.
This well still exists in Thiruvahendrapuram.
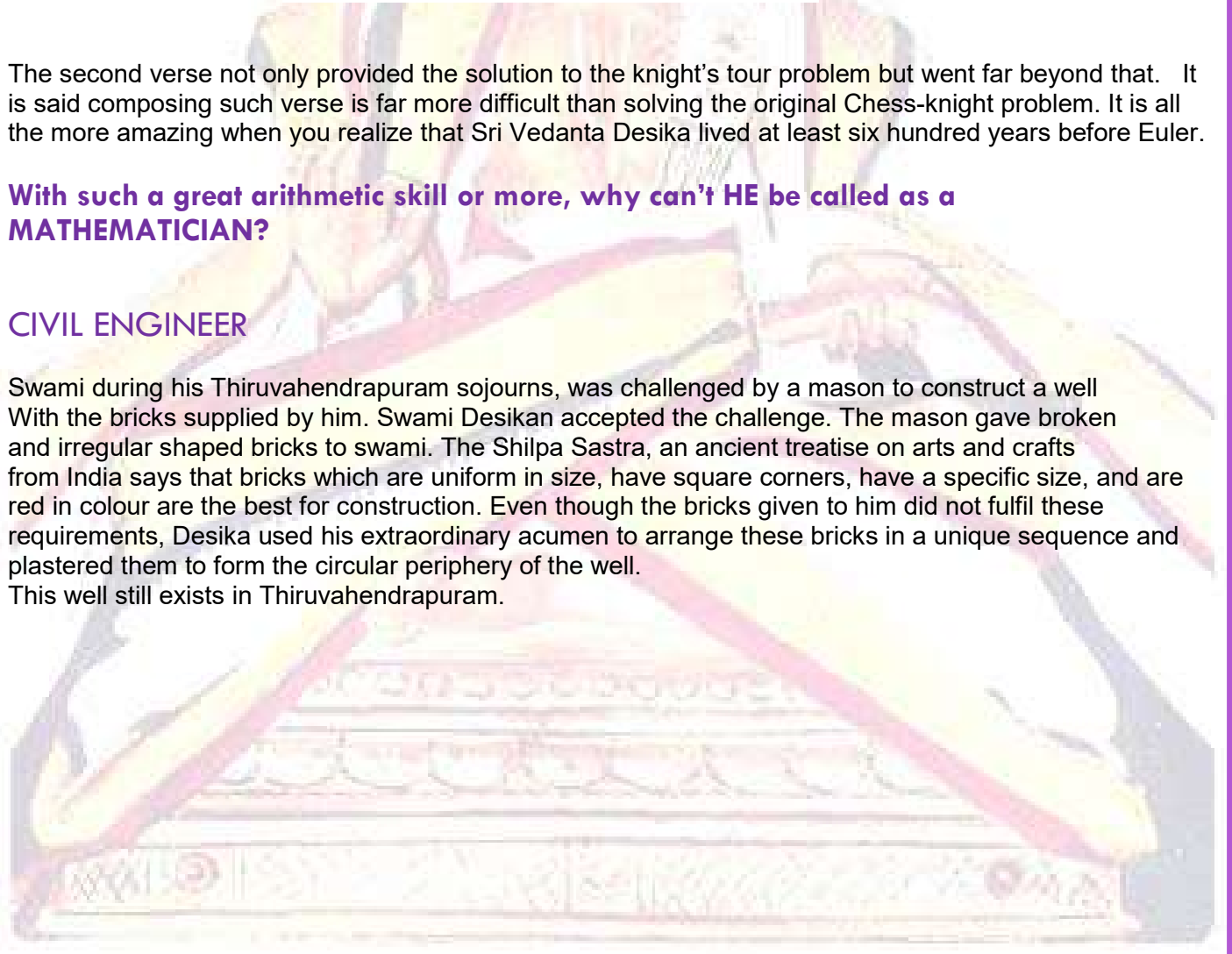
With such an technical skill that Swami has revealed, why can't HE be described as an ENGINEER

DIRECTOR & ACTOR

Once, an egotistic Advaithin Vidwan by name, Krishna Misra challenged Swami whether he could write a drama to match his own drama, 'Prabhoda Chandrodhayam'
Swami within one night wrote 'Sankalpa SuryOdaya'- a marvelous allegorical drama in 10 Acts in which he refuted soundly the views advocated by Krishna Misra in his play, with six acts.
Swamy Desikan established the key tenets of VisishtAdhvaitha philosophy in 'Sankalpa SuryOdaya' and blew away the views advocated by Krishna Misra in his play. In this play consisting of ten acts, Swamy Desikan stresses that the unfailing power of the will of Sriman Narayana is an absolutely indispensable requirement to gain Moksham (freedom from the cycles of births and deaths).
Swamy Desikan instructs us further that an Acharyan's intercession is a vital prerequisite for the bound jeevaathmas drowning in the terror-striking ocean of samsaram to shatter their bonds of Karma.

Swami Himself identifies Him as the Suthradhari (Director of the play) and introduces all the Characters that are acting in His play.
The interesting fact about this play is that good qualities like Viveka (discrimination Knowledge), vyavasaya (positive action), Shraddha (dedication) , vicharana (Inquisity) etc and evil tendencies like Kama, Krodha, Manamohana (jealousy, greed, anger, vanity etc., were personified as the dramatis personae.

In the "Sankalpa Suryodaya" Act II, he introduces a character called Sishya as the disciple of Ramanuja He considered himself as the Sishya of Sri Ramanuja also and dedicated himself to the defence of his system from the criticism of rival schools of philosophy... Though two centuries intervened between them, Desika was proud to call himself Ramanuja's Sishya.

With such a wonderful imagination and characterization skill, why can't HE be portrayed as a DIRECTOR?

Swami Desikan's
Sankalpa Sooryodayam

SrI nrusimha sEva rasikan
Oppiliappan Koil Sri.VaradAchAri SaThakOpan

Will Continue...