



## Inspiration

What motivated the creation of the Siddha Ganesha Foundation were the miraculous events that took place at Charantimath Gardens in Dharwad City, on a Tuesday morning around 8.00 O'clock. The date was 30th of July, 2002.

Arun Charantimath as usual was on his morning rounds supervising the work done at Charantimath Gardens, his prestigious residential layout in Mangalwarpeth area of old Dharwad. To lay drainage lines, land was being dug up with the help of an excavator and there were a large number of stones in different shapes and colours scattered all around. It was as if the universe had ordained, his sight fell on a stone that appeared unique and strangely different. He picked it up and took it back home and placed it outside his house. The milkman who had come to deliver his daily quota of milk surprised everybody when he questioned as to 'why was the holy idol of Ganesha, (the elephant-headed god of the Hindu pantheon) lying here unattended?' His question really struck a lightning in Arun's soul and before he could reply something back to the milkman, he had moved on to the neighbour's house to sell milk. Stunned, Arun called all his family members and a small crowd gathered and they all began examining the stone that he had inadvertently picked up.

After due examination there was no doubt in anybody's mind that they were experiencing a miracle and they were unanimous in their opinion that this stone was indeed an idol of "Ganesha!"

After this miracle there was no respite and indeed the days were hectic for Arun and his family. They shifted the 'Ganesha' to his office premises adjoining the house and as the news spread of this miracle people from all over started pouring in to have darshan of the God. By evening, thousands had already started performing abhisheka on the 'idol'.

This whole turn of events put Arun in a tizzy and he was shocked, startled, puzzled and had not a clue as what to do about the whole situation. It was beyond his wildest imagination. Though a Shaivaite by tradition, Arun had no special knowledge about Ganesha and this strange phenomenon of the appearance of an idol on his soil really was something strange and bizarre.



Arun Charantimath points  
the way to Shastriji.  
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In the presence of  
Swayambhu Siddha  
Ganesha are Arun  
Charantimath,  
Bhalchandra Shashtri and  
others.



**Swayambhu Siddha Ganesha was found here.**



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Unsure as how to proceed further he sought the fair counsel of the huge numbers of devotees who were continuously pouring in and offering their prayers to the idol. They advised him that he should now definitely meet Veda Brahma Pandit Bhalachandra Shashtriji, the well known erudite scholar of the Sanskrit language, who is also well versed in all the hoary religious rituals and traditions of the Sanatana Dharma.

The very next day, seeking an appointment, he met Shastriji and narrated in great detail the happenings at Charantimath Gardens. Shastriji initially did not react and quietly advised Arun to get a photograph of the idol first and show it to him. Accordingly, Arun got the photo and presented it to him. Shastriji, looked at the photo for quite sometime and took a decision of visiting the place and seeing the idol first hand. His arrival on the scene was a great event by itself because Shastriji is a very reclusive person and very rarely steps out of his abode and such visits were definitely out of question. To the amazement of everybody present, he sat before the idol for about 30 minutes and meditated. After due contemplation and seeing through his inner eye, he confirmed that the idol was nothing else but a Swayambhu Ganesha!

Shastriji opined that "it is indeed a miracle to find a red stone in the form of Lord Ganesha. In this particular stone, I clearly identify all the iconographic details of Lord Ganesha very distinctly. The features are clearly visible. There is a conch (shankha) on the top right-hand side and a lotus flower (kamala) on the lower right. The right palm is in a blessing gesture with a padma in it, which is a requisite for a 'Varada Hasta'. These two features are symbolic of Lord Vishnu. In the left hand, Ganesha holds his favourite sweet, the Modaka. The trunk has double twists and is seen touching the Modaka. The idol has a crown (kirita) and a cascading plait (jataa), both symbolic of Lord Shiva. There is a serpent (naga) that encircles the waist. Ganesha is seen sitting on his vehicle (vahana) Mooshaka (Rat). Thus, there is an unusual amalgamation of the iconographic details of all three powerful gods of the Hindu pantheon: Ganesha, Shiva and Vishnu.

As is the nature of the Swayambhu Ganesha, in due course of time many more features will appear to be revealed to the Sadhaka. Without any doubt the Ganesha found is 'Swayambhu' and therefore a 'Siddha'. Hence he should be addressed as 'Siddha Ganesha'. He is indeed Siddha Ganesha, who has appeared on his own volition and is a very powerful wish-fulfilling manifestation of the Lord. As is mentioned in our holy scriptures, those who worship him with complete devotion will find all their heart's desires coming true."

Shastriji further prophetically stated, "in this part of India, the two most famous Ganeshas are at Gokarna and Idagunji. Both these statues are hand sculpted. But, this Siddha Ganesha is nature's own creation, as if God himself willed to appear. There are no two opinions in my mind that one day this Siddha Ganesha will become very famous and draw devotees from far and near. He will show Light to millions of his devotees by removing obstacles and providing auspicious beginnings to all their endeavours."

After Shastriji's prophesy it was also decided to invite experts in the field of archeology, iconography and art to make sure what the red stone was really and not to be swayed by mere faith.

Gangadhar Mahale, the local celebrity sculptor and artist of merit, was also invited. He is famous for his Ganesha idols and therefore a natural expert in the form, proportion, iconographic details of the seated elephant-headed God. With his keen insight and rich experience he slowly moved his hand on the Swayambhu Siddha Ganesha and prepared a sketch as he sensed it. The result was the exact figure of the seated Ganesha. To make sure of what he had outlined he matched it again and again with the stone and the result was the same. Mahale further observed that, "symbols of Shiva and Vishnu are also present along with Ganesha. This image therefore, is a complete one. There is no other Swayambhu image of Ganesha elsewhere, as far as I know. I have studied the Ashta Vinayakas in Maharashtra, but this image is really unique."



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Any lay onlooker may not be able to identify all the individual features of the idol as specified above; but would definitely be able to say at one glance that this is absolutely an idol of Ganesha as the milkman had surprisingly uttered then.

Dr S K Joshi, retired assistant superintending archaeologist of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), also examined the stone and was of the opinion that, the stone was not a man-made statue and was one of natural formation. He has done a lot of research on temples and sculptures in the region and has presented research papers. He stated that the oldest image of Ganesha in the region is the Gokarna Ganesha' of the 4th century and more or less followed by that of Idagunji Ganesha. These are man-made statues. But this Siddha Ganesha in Dharwad is definitely older as carbon dating has proved it to be 3,800 million years old and is made of what is known in geological terms as 'Dharwad Rock'. Nature has its own iconographic form and uses them for its creation and amazingly this Siddha Ganesha matches the iconographic creativity of Mankind as rendered in our holy scriptures.

Next to judge after due analysis was Dr A Sundara, a former explorer and technical executive at the Archaeological Survey of India, as well as a retired professor of Ancient Indian History and Epigraphy, Karnatak University, Dharwad. He said that the stone was hematite quartz and was not a sculpted or carved statue and had been formed naturally. The image is indeed a creation of Mother Nature, a unique Ganesha idol with characteristic attributes of Shiva and Vishnu. It is indeed nature's marvel and a poser to all the experts in sculpture and theology.

A resident of Dharwad, D H Kulkarni who is a veteran sculptor and painter and who has served at the Archaeological Survey of India and Delhi School of Art, was invited to view the Swayambhu Siddha Ganesha. A man known for his scientific bent of mind and for some award winning masterpieces, remarked that this definitely is not a piece of art. "Some portion of lava after volcanic eruptions has frozen to form this unique stone. The manifestations are absolutely amazing and anatomically perfect. To my mind, finding Ganaka Rishi in such a perfect form and that too in this age of skepticism and technology definitely makes us stop and think and believe that there is superior intelligence operating.

Honestly speaking the masses at large may not readily be able to recognise and identify the individual characteristic attributes pointed out by the experts who have indeed been undoubtedly dispassionate and skeptical in their assessment. But surely they would say unhesitatingly that the overall form is of Ganesha. To recognise the attributes the onlooker needs a certain idea of iconographic details of the Ganesha statues. To conclude it was found that the experts' objective observations and common peoples' general impression and passionate faith converge.

Appearances of such natural images of animals, birds, man-made iconographic forms do come to light whenever and wherever they occur. In fact, the roots of a particular plant known in the vernacular language of Kannada as white 'Ekke Gida' has one of the branches turned right and is deemed to be a Ganesha and is considered to be very auspicious. The eternal Shiva's Atmalinga enshrined by Ganesha himself at the holy pilgrimage centre of Gokarna is again Nature's creation approximating the form of a twisted Lingam.

Inhabitants of regions where such sacred swayambhu statues have been found have created excellent places of worship and many from far and near treat it as a pilgrimage centre. The concepts regarding the various manifestations accompanied by the various names of that Supreme One is rooted in nature and our consciousness. Elephant and human forms are Nature's creation. The general awareness is that this Siddha Ganesha at Charantimath Gardens who has appeared naturally is neither surprising nor unusual to our consciousness. What is gratifying, is its manifestation and it falling into the right hands.

Swayambhu Siddha Ganesha is especially rare if not unique. We can look at the various forms of Ganesha as rendered in text books of Murti Vijnana. There is an excellent reference volume on Ganesha containing all extracts from every known Sanskrit work published by Kalyan Publishers of Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh. Other important and authentic works on the subject are: The Element of Hindu Iconography by T A Gopinath Rao and Pratima Kosh by S K Ramachandra Rao.

All these miraculous events have had a deep impact on Arun Charantimath and his family. They have realized that the appearance of the Siddha Ganesha is a special call with the message of a special mission. Thus they have decided to set up the Siddha Ganesha Foundation and offer to the world excellent centres of teaching and research. A befitting tribute to the God of Auspicious Beginnings.