

# A holistic experience in the hillside

*The lingam in Isha Foundation is reputed to be the largest one in the world and the first of its kind to be fully consecrated. It has been built with only traditional materials which ensure a life of at least 5000 years, writes*

**SUSHEELA NAIR**

It was a one-hour drive from the textile city of Coimbatore to the Isha Foundation located at the foothills of the Velliangiri hills. The brainchild of Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, the tranquil centre takes yoga and meditation to a higher plane. What make this place so breathtaking are the mist clad hills, the green blanket of flora and the sparkling waterfalls which come into focus as the mist clears.

The stunning backdrop provides the perfect ambience to destress and recharge one's batteries. The centre comprises of a triangular block for the brahmacharis, the Dhyanalinga temple, the Trimurthy panel, the Spanda meditation hall, the Theerthakund, thatched meditation hall, where residential programmes are conducted and cottages for visiting devotees, all aesthetically designed and well-laid out on a sprawling 50-acre verdant land. Beautiful artefacts, flowering

shrubs, lovely antique furniture and woodwork dominate the premises.

Before you enter the Dyanalinga, a 17-foot-tall white granite monolith- 'Sarvadharmha Sthamba' with sculptural reliefs and symbols of major religions inscribed on three sides strikes your attention. It reflects the multi-religiousness of the ashram. The rising stone sun crowning the *sthambha* symbolises a new dawn. A stone gateway leads one to an open pathway or parikrama which eventually leads to the sanctum sanctorum of Dyanalinga shrine.

At the northern corner of the Dyanalinga is the Theerthakund, a wa-

ter body with its powerfully consecrated Rasalinga. Framed by gigantic granite stones and vaulted by a colourful mural depicting the Maha Kumbh Mela, this water body is embedded 30 ft down the earth. Devotees take a dip in the energised water, a prelude to their visit to the Dyanalinga.

Remaining in the energy soaked water accentuates spiritual receptivity, enhances basic health and well being besides preparing one to receive the divine energies of Dhyanalinga. Consecrated by Sadhguru, the Rasalinga is made of pure solidified mercury.

The shrine is constructed with a lot of science and harvesting loads of en-

ergy. Housed in a pillarless free spanning dome structure dome, the sacred shrine of divine energy houses the awesome Dhyanalinga towering up to a height of 13 ft and rising out of a seven-coiled serpent receptacle, the Avudaiyar, the feminine receptacle of the lingam. It is reputed to be the largest lingam in the world and the first of its kind to be fully consecrated. It has been built with only traditional materials like burnt bricks (2,50,000) and mud mortar stabilised with lime, sand alum and herbal additives which ensure a life of at least 5000 years. Measuring 33 ft from the ground level with a diameter of 72 ft and eight inches at

the bottom, the dome weighs approximately 700 tons. What makes the dome a unique structure is the absence of any framework, ring beam centering, steel or concrete in the structure in the construction.

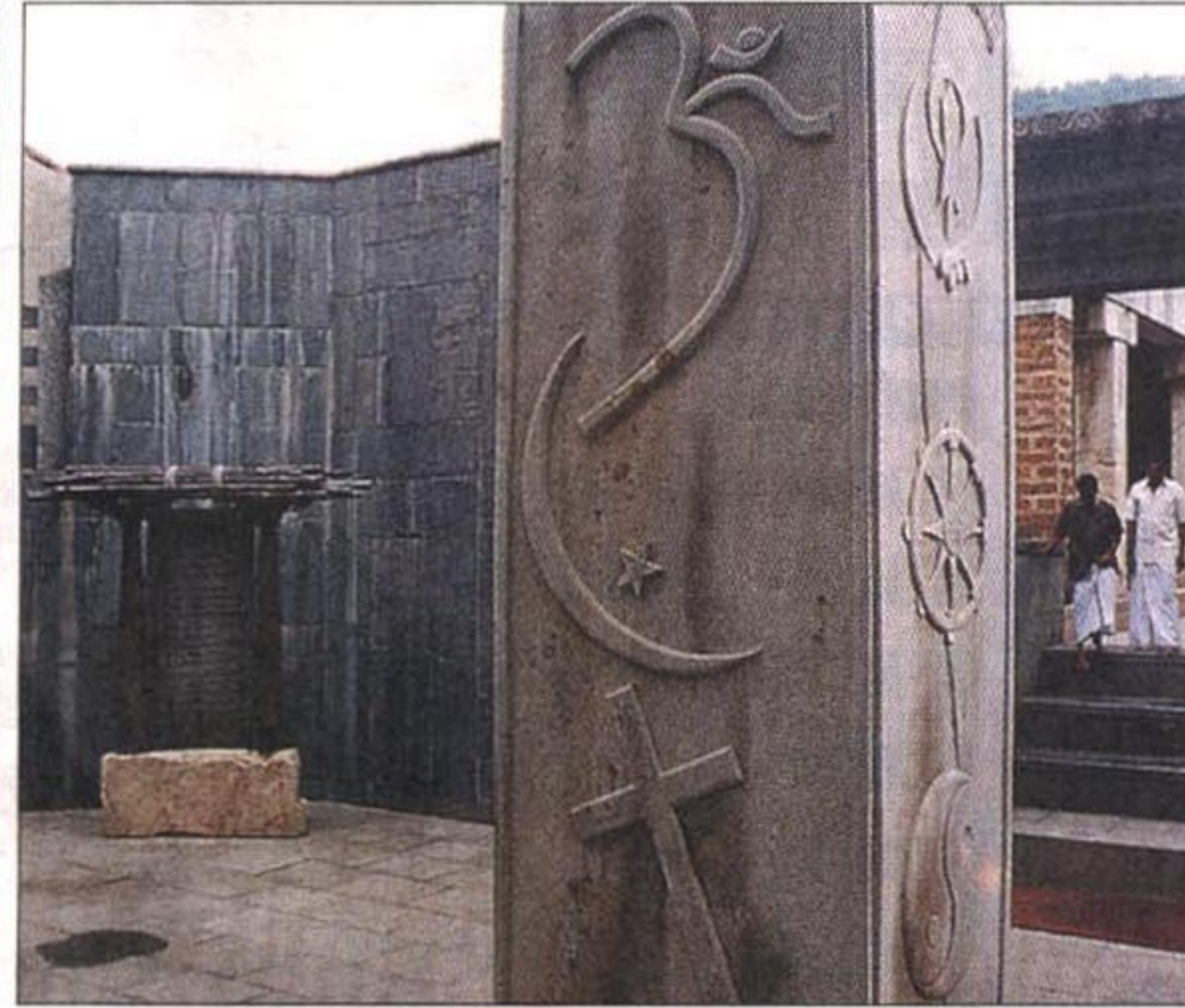
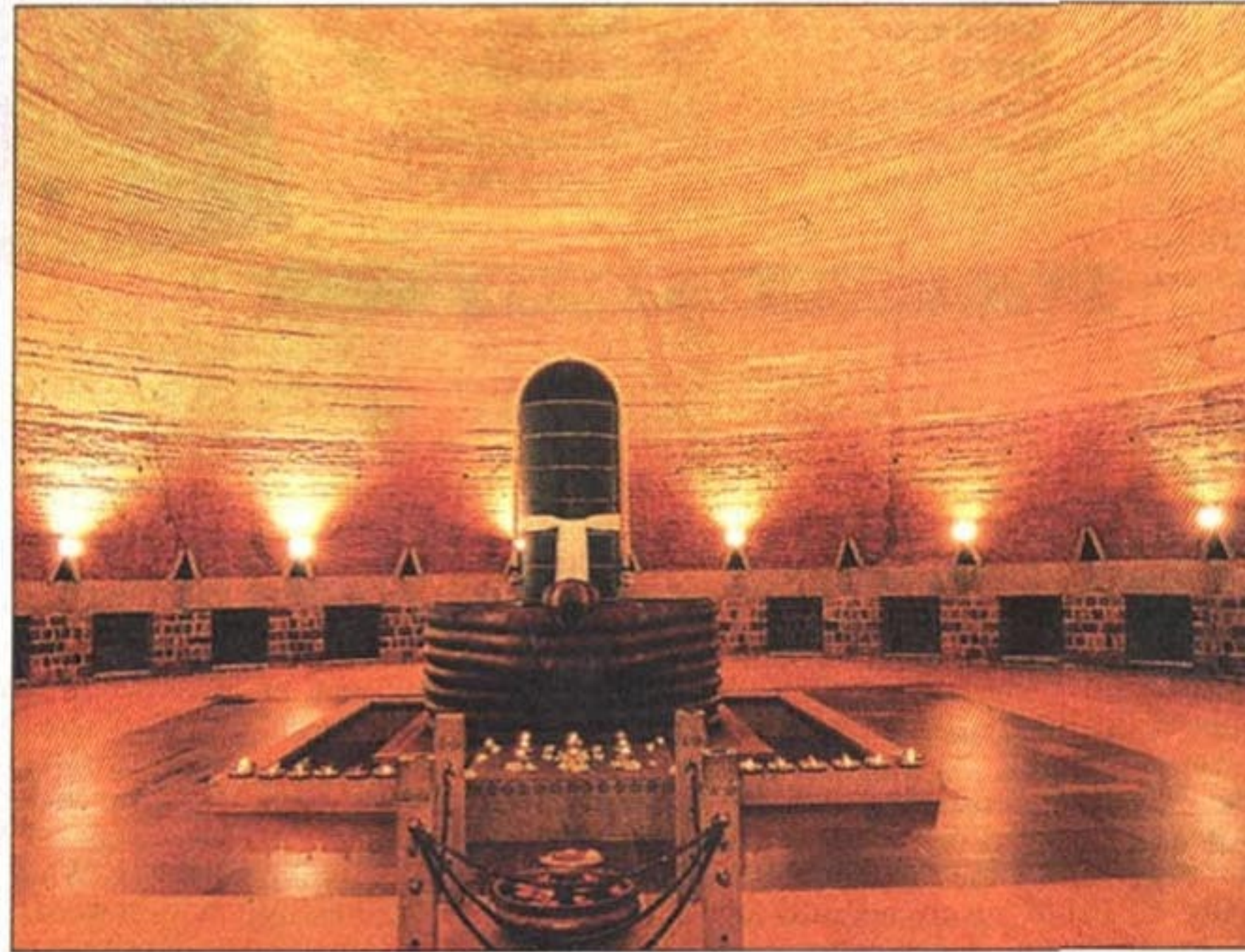
According to the sadhguru the lingam is merely symbolic of the final form of energy, and not representative of any particular religion. It is believed that the Dhyanalinga does not have any Shaivite links. It is not a place for worship or rituals; it is the spiritual body of the divine radiating the qualities of the seven chakras and enhances the spirituality of all those who come into its sphere.

The temple is open to persons of all faiths. Visitors are not allowed to bring any offerings here and have to maintain absolute silence. An interesting feature is that the pooja offered to the linga is through Nadha Aradhana or an ethereal offering of sound sans mantras of any kind.

Daily activities include non-lyrical chants, offered by a talented group of singers, hailing from various countries and cultures. These chants allow one to become more receptive to the meditative quality of the space. A unique feature is that inside there are numerous small caves or niches where one can sit and meditate. It is one of the few temples in India where women take care of its maintenance for 15 days of the month.

After you have attained solace through meditation, take a stroll to the white granite Trimurthy panel crafted by a team of 32 skilled sculptors. It is a set of three magnificent statues, each towering to a height of 15.5 ft depicting three states of human growth called *tamas*, *rajas*, and *satva* that find expression in the three faces of Lord Shiva as Hara, Rudra and Sadashiva.

The Foundation manages several Yoga Centres, an ashram, mobile health clinics and a hospital. The Centre's Programmes are conducted in neighbouring cities as well as in several parts of the world. For holistic health and inner balance, there is Isha Rejuvenation programme designed by Sadhguru. A unique, one-of-its-kind programme is the Action for Rural Rejuvenation, spearheaded by Sadhguru himself. Its ecological initiative Green Hands has mammoth plans of planting seven lakh saplings on October 15, 2006 all over Tamil Nadu.



Photos by author

The 'mandap' in Isha Foundation, (right) the 'Sarvadharmha Sthamba' that reflects the multi-religiousness of the ashram.