



## Glory of Bharath » Bharath Darshan

Dear Sai Brothers and Sisters,

This month our sojourn is to DakshinaArka Temple at Gaya to offer our salutations to the Sun God.

### DakshinaArka Temple



There is an ancient Sun temple at Gaya in the state of Bihar. Offerings to the ancestors are made at the Surya Kunda or the DakshinaMaanas tank in front of the temple. Sun worship apparently was very popular in the Magadha region which included Gaya. Numerous old images of the Sun God Aditya are found in the Gaya region and there are still quite a number of sun worshippers in Gaya. It is said that they may have descended from the fire worshippers of Central Asia. In fact, the granite image of Aditya or the Sun God worshipped here is portrayed as wearing a jacket, a waist girde and high boots in the Iranian tradition.

Sun worship in the Magadha region that encompassed Gaya has been mentioned in the Puranas and thus this temple is said to be of very ancient origin. The current structure dates back to the 13th century, where the South Indian emperor Prataparudra of Warangal in Andhra Pradesh is said to have built it. The Sun Temple at Gaya faces east and is located close to the famous Vishnupaada temple where a footprint of Vishnu is said to be enshrined. To the east of the temple is the tank Surya Kunda. The temple is a simple and plain one, with a dome over it. The comparatively larger sabhamandapa stands in front of the sanctum. Massive pillars line the mandapa where there are graceful stone sculptures of Shiva, Bhramaa, Vishnu, Surya and Durga. There are two other notable Sun temples at Gaya, namely the Uttarka temple near the UttaraMaanas tank and the Gayaditya temple on the river Falgu.

**Our sojourn continues next month...Till then Sai Ram**

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