

## **HISTORY OF ANJANEYA TEMPLE AT NANGANALLUR, CHENNAI- A STUDY**

**Dr. S. PRABAKARAN**

Assistant Professor & Head  
PG & Research Department of History  
AVVM Sri Pushpam College(Autonomous),  
Poondi, Thanjavur-613503

### **Introduction**

This land is teeming with temples, both Miniature and Monumental, stark and ornate, stretching from beyond the borders of what is today known as India, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu. Temple, a structure made sacred by the presence of a deity or holy symbol. The Latin, *'templum'* from which the word *'temple'* is derived, merely signifies a sacred enclosures, the essential element of sanctity is these. A temple almost always stands out clearly from its surroundings and has a pronounced architectural character. This type is common to most societies, being thought of as the dwelling place of the divine. The broad concept includes the mosque the synagogues and the church and the word is also used to refer to buildings for fraternal orders and religious organization.

The South Indian Temples apart from being places a worship were the vital centers of socio-economic life of the people of ancient and medieval times and they played a significant role in the activities of the people of the region. Besides they are the open-archives and source-centers for the study of regional history of our country.

There are temples dedicated to various gods and goddesses. As the Vinayaga is an important deity, Hanuman is to the Vaishnavites. Various forms of Hanuman temples are spread all over India.

## Hanuman - An Introduction

*'Hanuman'* the word means, a person with blown cheeks or cut cheeks. Here, "**Hanu**" means cheek. It also can be said that, a person capable of taking any shape like a molecule or a great Saint. According to Valmiki, *'Hanuman* the name called due to his cheeks were blown or broken. In the words of Sri Vaiyapuri Pillai the name *'Hanuman'* is derived from *'Hanu Mahan'*. The important names of Hanuman are, (i) Anjaneya - as the son of Anjanai; (ii) Maruthi - the son of Marutham land; (iii) Sameranan - since his war with the son of Lord Vayu. He was also called such as, *Kalinmathalai, Vayuvin Thanayan, Kesari Puthalvan, Rama Thoothan, Kalin Mainthan, Anjanai Singham, Kurukku cheeyum, Raghavan Thoothan, Anjanai Siruovan, Nambhan, etc.*

Hanuman is differentiated from *Animal* and considered as a *Human*. One is, Hanuman, the son of *Anjanai*, who never think of women in his mind and a perfect bachelor. The other one is, he did not have a monkey's agitation or arousal of emotion. He was more capable and talented than a mere mortal in taking correct decision and his method of action.

According to Thiru.Vi.Kalayanarasundaram "*Hanuman is the embodiment of all saintly qualities thereby has no comparable position with anyone. He is above all the mere mortals. These qualities have given him to sainthood and made him divine.*"

## History of Anjaneya

Sri Rama was of the Seventh Incarnation of Lord Vishnu. According to the Puranas, Anjaneya, a monkey was created with the purpose of helping and serving Rama.

There was a daughter *Anjana* born to **Gautama** and his wife

**Agalika** the daughter of **Brahma**. At the appropriate time she was wedded to *Kunjara Kesari*. He was a man known for the power invested in his tail, once; he destroyed the evil forces, which were hindering sages penance. As a result, he earned their appreciation and admiration. Keeping this in mind. Anjaneya was married to Kesari. Unfortunately, there was no use. Agonized Anjana started a penance, which bore result. The Goddess of Dharma appeared before her and explained that since she ridiculed the God of fire in her birth, she was childless and asked her to worship god of wind for a child. Moved by her Austere Penance, God of wind bestowed a fruit to Anjana. On eating the fruit Anjana conceived. A divine voice proclaimed to her that she would beget a beautiful son who would so live to win the praise of both Earth and Heaven. As said Anjaneya was born in the month of Margazhi under the star Moola.

Anjaneya was endowed with an enviable intelligence and became adept at all arts and warfare. Once on the day of Solar Eclipse, Raghu approached the Sun and the sun had acquired an orange fire and appeared like a fruit hanging from heaven. The child Anjaneya in his curiosity thought that he could pluck the fruit and so he leaped into the sky. Raghu on the one side and Anjaneya on the other side were nearing the sun. Anjaneya who saw Rahu as a rival started to attack him. Unable to withstand the onslaught Raghu sought the help of Lord Indra. Indra got on his mount Iravada and charged Anjaneya. The boy who saw the white elephant rushed at it assuming that it was edible. Lord Indra was shocked at that unexpected turn and thoughtlessly lifted his Vajrayudha and laid a blow on the cheek of the boy. The boy lost consciousness and fell down. The God of wind got wild on seeing the unconscious condition of his godchild. He struck work in incapacitating all life. Devendra who could not make Vayudeva see reason complained to Brahmadeva who pacified Vayu by helping Anjaneya to regain

consciousness.

Brahmadeva explained to everyone that Anjaneya's strength was immense and it would come to the help of Rama at the appropriate time. Since Lord Indra had caused a permanent swelling on the cheek of Anjaneya and he was given the name of Hanuman. ` *Hanu* ' in Sanskrit meaning ` *Cheek* '. Anjaneya possesses great skill and incomparable power to grant anything that we ask for. Born with the grace of the Gods, he is empowered to grant any boon.

### **Hanuman - Different Shapes**

There was only one Hanuman, even though, our fore-fathers had given different shapes to him. Every shape has its own individual difference both in structure and thereby changes in their name. Hanuman's name varies as per its place of dwelling.

**Hanumeshwarar** : This Hanuman dwells in Hanumanpalli. Here, his search for Seetha at Kongupondurai and Keelkarai resulted fruitless. So, the depressed Hanuman worshipped Lord Siva at this place. Henceforth the place called as Hanumanpalli and the stream which was created by Hanuman for the Pooja purpose began to be known as Hanumanadhi. Kurukkupallam is another name for the stream.

**Sathya Anjaneya** : This Anjaneya dwells in the fort wall of Chengalpet city. People promises in his alter to resolve their disputes. It is believed that a false promise will be severely punished by this Sathya Anjaneya.

**Threenethra Chaturpuja Hanuman (three eyed four faced Anjaneya)** : This kind of Hanuman has three eyes and ten hands. The mightiest among the Hindu religious Gods are Sivan, Vishnu, Indiran,

and Yaman. There is no one equal to them in their power and none can over-power them and come out as a winner. If all these Gods become one, then that one mighty or Avatar cannot be win over by any one.

That saintly creature or shape should have been the Vishvarupam in truth. This Hanuman has Siva's three eyes and deer and axe in his hand, Lord Vishnu has given his own *Conch* and *Chakra*, *Bow* and *Arrow* and has stood aside. Indian's *Vajrayudhan* and shield has attached to this Hanuman.

This Hanuman also taken Yaman's weapon such as , *Pasam* and *Sholam*. Thus, ten weapons in all his ten hands. He has the powerful broad chest to carry all these heavy weapons. Mighty shoulders, has long and high crown on his head.

This mighty appearance of Hanuman has its own high level of status in the field of Arts. This Hanuman dwells in Rajagopalswamy Temple at Anandha Mangalam. The name *Ananda Mangalam* is derived from '*Hanumantha Mangalam*'.

**Pancha Muga Anjaneya (Five Faced Anjaneya) :** Panchamugha Anjaneya has five faces with fifteen eyes. He looks gigantic and fearful appearance with protruding teeth and raised eye brows and crossed eyes. These five faces shows that, *Varahar*, *Karudan*, *Anjaneya*, *Narasimhan* and *Hayagriva*. He is golden in colour and praised and worshipped even by the heavenly bodies.

**Balarupa Anjaneya :** To the East of Udipi on a three miles distance there is a Durga Temple on a small hill. There is a small pond at the temple. On the shore of this pond, a small Balarupa Anjaneya give his

blessings wearing a Loin cloth. This idol was made in such a way that all his body hairs can be seen. It is the masterpiece of the sculptor.

**Yantharoththaraga Hanuman** : This Hanuman is at Hampi. There is a story behind this Hanuman. Vyasarayar a Mathva Aachariyar lived there at 400 years ago. He was the man who talented in drawing Anjaneya figures. One day he drew a picture of Anjaneya in a place. The very next day he found the hanuman figure had disappeared completely. He was awestruck and filled with fear. But he did not stop to draw the Anjaneya figure. He draw the same figure in the same place. Hanuman figure disappeared every day. At last, he decided to stop that happenings, he placed him inside a `Yanthram'. That is why, even now, the Hanuman idol is sitting inside a `Yanthram' in the temples.

**Yoga Anjaneyar** : Yoga Anjaneyar is at the small hills in Singapuram. This Anjaneyar dwells here facing his leader Lord Narasimha with all his strength and power suppressed in a meditational state of mind. This kind of idol cannot be seen anywhere else in India, except here. This Anjaneya stands with four hands with Conch and Chakra.

**Val Arupatta Anjaneya (tail cut off Anjaneya)** : This Anjaneya is graciously present in Rameshwaram. Ravana was awaiting the arrival of Anjaneyar with Vishwanatha lingam, and found to be late in his mission. So, he asked Seetha to make a sand Linga and did his Pooja. The Anjaneya who returns there got angry and demanded Ravana to took away the Seetha's sand Linga and to install his Vishwalingam. Anjaneya himself tried to throw away the sand Linga with his land, but fruitless. He had great trust on his tail. So, he curled his tail around the Linga and tried to pull it out. But his tail had broken. That is why this Anjaneya

grace others with his tail cut off.

### **Lord Anjaneya Temple at Nanganallur**

Nanganallur, a small town to the city of Chennai, located about 10km from the city. This town lays under Alandur Municipality. Nanganallur was called as `Nangainallur' in those days. There are many temples in this town. Among the temples Raja Rajeswari temple, Lakshmi Narasimhar Temple and Anjaneyar Temple are the important ones. The Temple construction was started in 1980 by the *Maruthi Baktha Samajam Trust* and it was completed in 1994.

The temple has indeed become a landmark and no tourist bus in that route skips the temple. The temple is accessible by road and by suburban trains stopping at Pazhavanthangal Railway Station. The main shrine houses Anjaneya inside a Temple Tower 90 feet tall. Anjaneya is facing West and the main entrance is on the West. There is an auxiliary entrance on the Southern side used during temple festivals. The main temple building has pathways all around the sanctum sanctorum and also a large covered space (Mandapam) for devotees to assemble in front of the Lord for offering worship. The temple around the massive idol has been built on the lines of the Raja Raja Chola architecture.

The *Mandapam* or the *Garbahagraham*, the tower over the Lord, the interior of the Sanctum Sanctorum, the lifting arrangement, etc., came through the magnificent support of a group of devotees who were moved to see the Temple remaining without a superstructure for the Lord and the main Mandapam being open to the sky, the temporary thatched roof having been blown away by a gusty wind.

In the recent recorded history, only in this project the superstructure was built after the erection of the idol. The last time a similar thing was accomplished was during the reign of *Raja Raja Chola*. That was the Prahadeshwarar Temple at Tanjore. This temple and the reign are being spoken about till date. This temple and reign of the Chola king mark the great achievement both in the spheres of mundane life of a householder that need not conflict with great divine achievements.

The temple at Nanganallur for Lord Anjaneya is perhaps a reiteration of this fact of life. The limitation is in one's mind and surely not in one's vocation, needing material growth to discharge one's worldly responsibilities. This temple project has incontrovertibly established that experts in the field of rational temple architecture are available even today to render their service if their counsel is sought as experts. It also established the fact that only building of such temples would support the practitioners of the age-old Sashttras who would be motivated to groom their descendants into such trades.

Thus, the Anjaneya Temple served the cause of the divine and the mundane. The temple Kalasam is made of copper with gold sheet covering. The tower is 92 foot tall and has become the landmark for this place.

### **Description of the Idol of Anjaneya**

**The Idol :** The idol of the Central image is 32 feet in height making it one of its own kind. The statue of Lord Anjaneya is in standing position with the hands joined together before the Chest and Thulsi mala is carved over the hands. The Anklets are rounded on his feet. There is a Sacred Thread (Poonool) on his left shoulder. There is a Sacred Mark (Naamam)

on the forehead. A twelve yards of silk cloth (Pattu Vastram) is dressed on His waist.

**The Tail :** The tail is unlike visible in the other Hanuman temples, here it has not been shown visibly outside. It is folded at the back of the idol. There are iron steps on both sides of idol for the purpose of doing "Abishekam".

On the south-west, a Sannidhi for *Lord Krishna* with *Rukmani* and *Satya Bhama*, all facing East has been built in 1994 and a *thulam* (weighing balance) has been erected for offering "*thulabaram*" (offering made in different materials equivalent to the weight of the devotee).

Even though a Sannidhi for Lord Rama is normally built in Anjaneya temple, rarely a Sannidhi for Lord Krishna is built. Here, in this temple, Krishna Sannidhi is built to remind the devotees that among the Gods it was only Anjaneya who was present in both the Indian epics.

### **Art and Architecture**

The temple architecture follows the *Agamasastras*. The *Ramar* Sannadhi, Sannadhi for *Lord Krishna* with his consorts *Satyabahama* and *Rukmini* and for *Garudar*, *Vinayaka* and for *Nagar* make the temple completed in 1994. Indeed in temple building, there lies an appropriate technology. All of them have been utilized in full in this effort. In one sense the temple has witnessed the fusion of modern building technology and the ancient wisdom of temple building architecture designed with the welfare of the devotees in mind.

### **Worshipping with a Garland of Vada**

During *Rama - Ravana war*, the devoted Anjaneya served Rama day and night foregoing food rest and sleep. His mother, Anjaneya pained to see her son's tiredness prepared a dish using black gram which has the power to rejuvenate. It is also said that during the Lankan War, Anjaneya suffered injuries caused by arrows, which appeared like holes. A *vada garland* made by running a string through the central holes of the vadas was placed on Anjaneya. On account of its medicinal properties, Anjaneya recovered.

Anjaneya chants the name of *Rama* incessantly enjoying it even as the syllable is articulated. The *Ramayana* says that in appreciation of Anjaneya's efforts *Sita* presented him with a pearl necklace. The inherent nature of monkeys, talents in Anjaneya too made him bite the pearls. He threw the necklace away that the taste was no match for the deliciousness that He experienced when He recited *Rama Nama*. In memory of this the *Vada Garland* is presented and received as a blessing.

### **Tail Worship**

It is popularly believed that all of Anjaneya's strength lies in his *tail*. Once Bhima went in search of divine flower. Even after days of vigorous search he could not locate the flower exhausted by his efforts, he was pulling his weight along when he came across a monkey lying on his path with its tail stretched out. Bhima requested the monkey to roll back its tail to allow him passage. The monkey said that he was too old to move his tail and asked Bhima to do it himself. Conceited Bhima tried to lift the tail, but of no avail.

At last, Anjaneya introduced himself and gave way realizing his

mistake. Bhima worshipped the tail of Anjaneya. Anajaneya too on his part blessed him with prosperity and power.

Bhima requested that whoever worshipped his tail must be blessed with prosperity and Anjaneya granted that the method of this worship starts with dotting the beginning of the tail with sandal paste and kum kum and proceed every day in this manner for 48 days to end with the last dot on the tip of the tail. On the 48th day, complete the puja with an offering of vada garland. Thus done austerely the worship brings success and prosperity.

It is also believed that all the nine planets have converged on the tail of Anjaneya and the worship of the tail is equivalent to worshipping the nine planets together. Once Lord Shiva wanted to serve Rama. His consort Parvati did not want to send him alone. So, Shiva asked her to enter his tail. It is understood that all energy is present in the tail and girls find suitable match if they worship the *tail*.

### **Worshipping with a garland of Tulsi**

The herbal leaf *Tulsi* is favorite to Lord Vishnu. It is also having a medicinal effect to cure the diseases. That is why devotees worshipping by using the garland of Tulsi. The devotees also offer '*Neivilaku*' to the Lord.

### **Conclusion**

This land is teeming with temples, both miniature and monumental, stark and ornate, stretching from beyond the borders of what is today known as India, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari , in Tamilnadu. The origin of the temple is found in need for ancient people to make concrete their relationship to the forces of nature by means of

substantial structures commanding attention. Temple, a structure made sacred by the presence of a deity or holy symbol.

Hanuman worship is one of the important worship in Hindu religion. Hanuman played an important role in the '*Rama Avatar*'. He was endowed with an enviable intelligence and because adopt at all arts and warfare. He was more capable and talented than a mere mortal in taking correct decision and his method of action. He is the embodiment of all saintly qualities thereby has no comparable position with anyone. He is above all the mere mortals. These qualities have given him to sainthood and made him divine.

The good and rich qualities found in Hanuman such as modesty, humbleness never a lover of fame or popularity and self flatten always teach a lot. The basic or foundation of Hanuman's popularity lies in these qualities. And he shows that even a mere mortal can achieve all these through his sincere devotion and total surrender to God.

Thus, the Lord proved that he is present in the microcosm and the macrocosm both equally powerful. The individual derives the power by establishing the connectivity with the Lord through faith, love and devotion. One step towards Him and its is guaranteed it will be crowning glory for the devotee.

### REFERENCES

1. Ramaswamy, P.S., (ed)., *Thirukoil Veliyeedu - Chennai*, Department of Hindu Religious Endowment, Government of Tamil Nadu, Chennai, 2001.
2. *Sri Thrinethra Dasapujavira Anjaneya Swamy*, Published by Temple Trust, Anantha Mangalam, Nagai District.

3. Banumathi, K., *Tamil Ilakkiyangalil Hanuman Vazhipadu*, Anjana Pathippagam, Madras, 1999.
4. Brockington, J.L., *The Sacred Thread - A Short History of Hinduism*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1992.
5. *History of Adivadhahara Bhaktha Anjaneya*, Sri Maruthi Bhaktha Samajam, Nanganallur, 1990.
6. Kaumudi Marrathe, *Temples of India*, Business Publications Inc., Mumbai, 1998.
7. Sivakami, S., *Hanuman - Aaivum Vazhipadum*, Jeyakumari Stores, Nagarkoil, 1974.
8. Vanniyarajan, M., *Arulmigu Sri Anjaneyar Thirukkoil*, Madurai, 1980.