



THE FAMOUS TEMPLES IN CHITTOOR DISTRICT: A CASE STUDY OF SRI VENKATESWARA TEMPLE AND KALAHASTI TEMPLE IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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Abstract

One of the most famous and ancient temples is Sri Venkateswara Temple. Dedicated to Lord Balaji, famously known as Venkateswara, the temple belongs to the 12th century. It is located at an height of 853 meter from sea level. The temple is a favorite spot for pilgrims. The architecture of the temple is a combination of the style of Chola, Pandya and the Pallava. The gold plated dome and the Papanasam waterfalls attract tourists. Review of Ganesh Temple. Sri Swayambhu Varasiddhi Vinayaka Swamy in Kanipakm, Chittoor Dt, Andhra Pradesh. Background Story of Kanipakam Temple: Temple is located in a small village called Kanipakam. Tamil word "kaniparakam" and later pronounced as kanipakam. This paper is focus on the Venkateswara Temple and Kalahasti Temple in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh.

Key Words: *Venkateswara, Dedicated, Vinayaka Swamy, Combination, Pronounced.*

Introduction

Lord Sri Venkateswara, also known as Srinivasa, Balaji, and Venkatchalapati, made Tirumala his abode five thousand years ago. Even before him, it was Lord Varahaswami who had made Tirumala his abode. Since then, many devotees have continued to construct grand entrances on the ramparts of the temple over generations. The temple complex is spread over 16.2 acres of land. In Tirumala, the East facing Sri Varahaswami temple is located in the North West corner of the temple tank - Swami Pushkarini. As per the temple legend, Lord Srinivasa sought a gift of land from Sri Varahaswami, which he readily granted. In return, Srinivasa provided him with an agreement deed assuring that he would be paid the first darshan, worship and offerings by all the devotees visiting the temple. This tradition is in practise to this day at Tirumala and Lord Varahaswami continues to receive the age old traditional worship. Even today, all offerings are first made to Lord Varahaswami and then to Lord Sri Venkateswara.¹

Sri Swayambhu Varasiddhi Vinayaka Swamy in Kanipakm, Chittoor Dt, Andhra Pradesh. Background Story of Kanipakam Temple: Temple is located in a small village called Kanipakam. In Tamil "Kani" means wetland and "Pakam" means flow of water into wetland. According to the legend of the temple there were three brothers and each one had a handicap. Viz., Dumb, Deaf and Blind. They were earning out their livelihood by cultivating a small piece of land. In olden days water was drawn from the well by way of 'Piccota System'. As one of them used to irrigate the field through the channels, the other two used to ply on the Piccota. On one such operation they found that the water in the well got dried up and they could no longer continue their job. One of them got into the well and started digging it up. He was taken aback to see the iron implement hitting a stone like formation.

Later, he was shocked to see blood oozing out from it. Within a few seconds the entire water in the well, turned blood red in colour. Thus, startled by this divine sight, all the three became normal getting rid of their deformities. As soon as the villagers came to know about this miracle, they thronged to the well and tried to deepen the well further. But their attempt proved futile because the 'swayambhu' idol (the self-manifested) of Lord Vinayaka emerged from the swirling waters Tamil word "kaniparakam" and



later pronounced as kanipakam. Another striking and strange feature of the idol is that it is still growing in size. At present, we can see the knees and the abdomen of the idol. Smt. Lakshamma, an ardent devotee had offered a 'Kavacham' (Armour) to the Lord, fifty years ago but today it is out of size and doesn't fit the idol. The holy water from the well is offered to the devotees as theertham. Sri Varasiddhi Vinayaka as up-holder of 'Truth' The swayambhu idol of Kanipakam is the up-holder of truth. Day to day disputes between people is resolved by taking a 'special oath'. The people in the dispute take a holy dip in the temple tank and swear before the lord. It is taken as gospel truth.²

Objectives: The main objectives of this paper to focus the Sri Venkateswara Temple and Sri Vinayaka Temple in chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh.

Methodology: This Paper is based on secondary data use of websites, published books and journals.

Temples in Chittoor District

Famous in chittoor district temple in chittoor district tirumals surrounding famous temple, srivasamangapuram, alivelimangapuram, sri kalahasti, gudumallam, old shiva temple, Govendaraja temple and kanipakam temple are famous to chittoor district.

Sri Venkateswara Temple In Chittoor District



There is ample literary and epigraphic testimony to the antiquity of the temple of Lord Sri Venkateswara. Sri Krishnadevaraya All the great dynasties of rulers of the southern peninsula have paid homage to Lord Sri Venkateswara in this ancient shrine. The Pallavas of Kancheepuram (9th century AD), the Cholas of Thanjavur (a century later), the Pandyas of Madurai, and the kings and chieftains of Vijayanagara (14th - 15th century AD) were devotees of the Lord and they competed with one another in endowing the temple with rich offerings and contributions. It was during the rule of the Vijayanagara dynasty that the contributions to the temple increased. Sri Krishnadevaraya had statues of himself and



his consorts installed at the portals of the temple, and these statues can be seen to this day. There is also a statue of Venkatapati Raya in the main temple. .

After the decline of the Vijayanagara dynasty, nobles and chieftains from all parts of the country continued to pay their homage and offer gifts to the temple. The Maratha general, Raghoji Bhonsle, visited the temple and set up a permanent endowment for the conduct of worship in the temple. He also presented valuable jewels to the Lord, including a large emerald which is still preserved in a box named after the General. Among the later rulers who have endowed large amounts are the rulers of Mysore and Gadwal. After the fall of the Hindu kingdoms, the Muslim rulers of Karnataka and then the Britishers took over, and many of the temples came under their supervisory and protective control. In 1843 AD, the East India Company divested itself of the direct management of non-Christian places of worship and native religious institutions. The administration of the shrine of Sri Venkateswara and a number of estates were then entrusted to Sri Seva Dossji of the Hatiramji Mutt at Tirumala, and the temple remained under the administration of the Mahants for about 90 years, till 1933 AD. In 1933, the Madras Legislature passed a special act, which empowered the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams(TTD) Committee to control and administer a fixed group of temples in the Tirumala-Tirupati area, through a Commissioner appointed by the Government of Madras. In 1951, the Act of 1933 was replaced by an enactment whereby the administration of TTD was entrusted to a Board of Trustees, and an Executive Officer was appointed by the Government. The provisions of the Act of 1951 were retained by Charitable and Religious Endowments Act, 1966.³

The height of the main entrance has been increased periodically since 13th century. Its present height is fifty feet. This entrance has other names such as ‘Padivaakili’ and ‘Simhadwaram’. In Tamil it is called ‘Periya Thiruvasal’. On either side of this main entrance there are two feet high statues made of alloy metal (Pancha loha). They are Sankanidhi and Padmanidhi who are the guardians of ‘Navanidhi’, the treasure of Lord Sri Venkateswara. The Maha Dwaram comprises three consecutive entrances – the first is a brass one, while the second is a silver one. The third entrance is a golden one. These are the two angels guarding the wealth and treasure of Lord Sri Venkateswara. As per the tradition these are installed at the third entrance of the temple. One enters the holy shrine after saluting the first protection threshold - Sankha Nidhi and Padma Nidhi. According to history, these statues were consecrated by Vijayanagara emperor Achyutha Rayalu, the younger brother of Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu. Abutting the Mahadwara and to its right, there is a high-rise mandapam (Porch). This is called Krishnadevarayalu Mandapam or Pratima Mandapam. This mandapam has been constructed in Vijayanagara architectural style. To the right side of this porch, one can find tall copper statues of the emperor of Vijayanagara kingdom, Sri Krishnadevarayalu and his two consorts, Tirumala Devi and Chinnadevi.

These three statues placed in front of Lord Sri Venkateswara express their devotion to him. It is said that Sri Krishnadevarayalu himself installed these statues on 2nd January 1517 A.D. and then onwards this mandapam has become famous as the Krishnadevarayalu mandapam. Their names are inscribed on the shoulder badges of these statues. By the left side of the main entrance or Mahadwaram there is a tall copper statue with folded hands. This is the statue of Venkatapatirayalu, the king of Chandragiri. He was a generous king who ruled Chandragiri during 1570s and donated many valuable gifts to the deity. Twelve feet to the north of Sri Krishnadevarayalu Mandapam, there is a glass porch. Every day at 2 p.m., a service called “Dolotsavam” is performed for the Lord in this glass porch. Historical evidence proves that this seva programme began to be performed in 1831.⁴



Sri Kalahasti Temple in Chittoor District



Srikalahasti temple is a very famous Shiva temple located in the state of Andhra Pradesh in India. It is one of the most well known temples of South India and is known for being the place where Kannappa happily sacrificed both of his eyes to stop the blood flowing out of the Shiva Lingam and he continued doing the same so long till the time, he was not stopped by Lord Shiva. After the incidence Lord Shiva being happy with his devotion gave him salvation. Kannappa also called as Kannappa Nayanar and one of the 63 saints and the devotee of Lord Shiva. This temple is known for having one of the Panchabhoota Sthalams, Vayu Linga which represents wind. Srikalahasti temple is located at a distance of about 36 km from the Tirupati temple. Besides that, the temple is also considered as Dakshina Kasi and Rahu-katu-Kshetra. The interior of the temple was built during fifth century while the outer part was built by Vijayanagara and Chola kings in twelfth century. Lord Shiva, he is worshipped as Kalahasteswara in the form of Vayu. There is a lot to explore about their, one of the most pious places of the great country India. Let's delve a little deeper into the various other aspects of the Srikalahasti Temple of the Sothern part of India.

As per many Hindu scriptures the temple is associated with the story of the three ardent devotees of Lord Shiva. The name Sri kalahasti itself is derived from the name of all three devotees; Sri has been taken from spider, kala from serpent and Hasti from Elephant. It is believed that all the three were ardent worshippers of Lord Shiva and they offered pooja to Lord Shiva in their own way. While the elephant offered Abhishek to Lord Linga with water which he used to bring from the nearby river, the spider used to wrap around the linga, the strong thread so as to protect it from getting deteriorated. The Serpent on the other hand used to decorate the lingam by placing Naga Manikyam, his dear stone near the lingam. Once, while each of the three were trying to do the pooja in their own way, they crossed each other's path and the elephant considered the method of worshipping of the spider is disrespectful and so, he splashed the thread the spider had weaved with his trunk full of water. At the act of elephant, the serpent and spider got angry and to take revenge the serpent entered the trunk of the elephant and spread its venom. The rage continued and the elephant smashed its trunk against the lingam and killed the serpent and in between the fight the spider also dies. Lastly the elephant dies because of the effect of the poison



on its whole body. Looking at the sacrifice of his devotees, Lord Shiva was very much pleased and he gave salvation to elephant and the serpent while the spider got rebirth as King to serve the divine task.

Significance of Sri Kalahasti Temple

This temple is celebrated for worshipping Lord Shiva, for him being embodiment of one of the five primary elements in the form of water, fire, earth, space and air. Sri Kalahasti temple is famous for the element air and the other four which are Chidambaram (Space), Kanchipuram (Earth), Tiruvanaikkaval (Water) and Tiruvannamalai (Fire). This temple is among some of the very famous and honoured religious places of the South. Sri Kalahasti temple commands special respect particularly by the devotees of Lord Shiva. The fervent Purana and the well-off architecture make it a great experience for the devotees. Visiting this sacrosanct religious place, besides giving a heavenly experience also liberates the devotees from fault in their planetary orientations.

Legends Connected With the Temple

At this place, Lord Shiva is believed to have given liberation to an elephant, serpent and spider who were great devotees of Lord Shiva lingam located at this place. In Kritayuga, which is considered to be the first of the four Yugas of the Hindu religion, the spider has got to have salvation, while the snake and the elephant who were the devotees of Lord Shiva in the Trata Yugaam got salvation that era. It is believed that the devotional expression of the elephant was a troubling thing for the devotional display of the serpent and vice-versa and so, the two got into extreme animosity with each other. And it ended only with Shiva liberating the two of them.

Sarvadoshas Pooja Sarpdosha Grahadoshas Rahu-Ketu

A person who has fault in the planetary positions of Rahu-Ketu has often a life full of worries and stress and he/she goes through many ups and downs in financial, personal and official issues. And the person may be laden with many problems and not able to figure out the cause for the same. The issue can only be found out by a professional astrologer and the person is surely found to be gripped with Kaal Sarp Yoga. The best treatment for the problem is the Sarpdosh Puja performed at the Sri Kalahasti temple where the puja can be performed in the presence of Lord Shiva. In the presence of Lord Shiva, the problem gets obliterate because of his divine power and enlightens every aspect of the person's presence.⁵

Conclusion

The other story associated with the temple is that of Sri kannappa Swamy who was an enthusiastic devotee of Lord Shiva. It is believed that once, he saw blood coming out of the eyes of the Lord Shiva and so in reaction to that and to stop the flow of blood, he took out his one eye and placed it onto that of the lingam. Then, he was stopped by Lord Shiva, when he was about to tear down his other eye. Lord Shiva then gave him Divya Darshan as he had already passed the divine test of the almighty. Tirupathi or Tirumala temple, a sacred place located in the Andhra Pradesh state of India is better known for its spiritual and divine ambience. The Lord Venkateshwara is said to be the 'God of Kaliyuga' and the story dates back to the centuries. As per mythology, Venkateshwara is the incarnation of Lord Vishnu and we all know the story behind. Many a times, we had given a visit to Tirupathi, but still we are unaware of the hidden secrets about Tirupathi temple. Come, let's explore today. Tirumala Venkateswara Temple is a famous Hindu Temple of Lord Venkateswara located in the hill town Tirumala of Andhra Pradesh. This temple is reputed as the most ancient temple in India. The temple is built on the Venkatadri hill, one of the seven hills of Tirumala, and hence is also known as the Temple of Seven Hills. Venkatachalapathy or Srinivasa or Balaji, is the supreme God believed to be a form of the Hindu Deity Lord Vishnu.



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