

TIRUVARUR THYAGARAJA TEMPLE AS AN ASIAN ICON

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ABSTRACT

Each temple, have a unique specialty and architecture.....

The article is about the ancient Thyagaraja temple. Many composers of Music have composed on the deities of this Thyagarajaswamy temple. Muthuswamy Dikshitar who is one among the trinity of Carnatic Music has given the mentions of this temple in various aspects such as the deities, festivals, rituals, the posture of God and Goddess etc. There is a saying among people that one who takes birth in Thiruvarur will attain moksha. In addition to this there is a flower which is only found here, none elsewhere though many tried to hybrid this flower plant in many other states of India or many other countries.

Keywords: - God Thyagaraja, Kamalalayam, Ajaba Natanam, Azhi ther, Sengulaneer, Thiruvarur etc.

Thyagaraja Temple

Thiruvarur, a town in modern Tamil Nadu's Tanjavur district boasts this incredible ancient temple with unsurpassed continuity of living tradition and spiritual energy. The temple has served as an icon of the Tamil land, its environs fostering the best in human creativity and the attainment of spiritual potential. Of all the beautiful temples of Tamil Nadu, this Thyagarajaswamy temple at Thiru Aarur (Thiruvarur) has the most complex sacrosanct connections between the devotee and divinity. It is a vital center of the Tantric Sri Chakra spiritual energy and the ancient practices established over millennia continue to be in active practice to this day. The antiquity of the temple predates the documented history that begins from the time of Mahendra Pallava. The province of Thiruvarur, prominent because of the energy of the Thyagarajaswami temple, also included temples in Thiru Moolatannam and Araneriyaam during this Pallava period.

Subsequent inscriptions note rule and contribution of Pallava, Chola, Pandya, Vijayanagar, Thanjavur Nayaka, and Maratha

empires. The unbroken traditions of this temple survived the changes of the kingdoms and absorbed their influences in art, craft, literature, and history. The Thyagarajaswami temple once called Poongkoil has a synonymous association with Thiruvarur today. Thiruvarur is called by various names such as Kshetravarapuram, Hatakesapuram, Antarakesapuram, Vanmiganathapuram, Devasiriyapuram, Samarkapuram, Mooladarapuram, kamalalayapuram, Kamalalayakshetram.

Thiruvarur is home to Trinity of Carnatic music, namely Thyagaraja (1767–1847 CE), Muthuswamy Dikshitar (1775–1835 CE) and Shyama Shastri (1762–1827 CE). Muthuswamy Dikshitar has sung eulogies of the temple deities of the Thyagarajaswamy temple. Each and every composition is unique and masterpiece.

The preeminent deity here is God Thyagaraja, Vanmikanatha and Goddess Kamalamba, Alliyamkothai, Neelothpalamba. Lord Shiva had played 364 miracles (Tiruvilayadal in Tamil) in and around Thiruvarur. Lord Thyagaraja is said to have risen from the navel of Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu in his yoga stage breaths, and when Adishesha also breaths, there are waves found in the parkadal, the milky ocean at the vaikuntha, where Lord Vishnu resides. This causes tilting and lord Thyagaraja is always visualized like doing a rhythmic dance which is known as "**Ajaba Natanam**"

The first of the most arresting features of the Thiruvarur Thyagarajaswami temple to greet the devotee is the architecture of the great entryways, Gopurams, at the four cardinal directions. Each of the four exterior perimeter walls of the Thiruvarur temple has a large big Gopuram with reinforced wooden gates at its center. Of these four Gopurams, the Eastern Gopuram (height of 120ft) on the outermost perimeter wall called the RajaGopuram because it conforms to the Vaastu Shastra concept of a Maha Dwara (great entrance) is by far the most exquisite. Overall, the temple covers a huge area of 33 acres which is comprised of temple complex and Kamalalayam tank (having a temple in middle like island) which is also 33 acres, having in its fold 9 Rajagopurams, 80 domes (Vimana), 12 high raised walls, 13 halls, 15 holy water wells (each holy water had each curative power but unfortunately there is no water and all are locked), 3 gardens, 3 spacious prakaras, 1000 pillars and more than 100 shrines!

The stone inscriptions of the temple are found on the walls of Thyagaraja and Achaleswara shrines; and on the first and

second prakara walls. Of the 61 stone inscriptions, 48 are dated in the regnal years of Chola kings.

It is noteworthy that, Pradosha Pooja is performed in this temple every day – known as Nitya Pradosha – from 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm though it is performed once in a fortnight in other temples. It is said that all the Devas – 33 crore in number (Muppathu Mukkodi in Tamil) are worshipping Lord Thyagaraja during this Pooja.

The annual chariot festival of the Thyagarajaswamy temple is celebrated during April – May, corresponding to the Tamil month of Chitrai. The chariot known as Aazhither is the largest of its kind in Asia and India weighing 300 tons with a height of 90 feet. The Azhi ther which is primarily a wooden structure with beautiful carvings gets added beauty when 68 decorative pieces are added to adorn the chariot. Normally, the dome of the cars will be in the format of hexagon, octagon, or circular. But the basement to the dome part of Azhi ther has five bands per side, totaling 20 in all. Valluvar Kottam in Chennai has been modelled on this chariot



Conclusion

Throughout its long history Thiruvavur has commanded high esteem among the followers of faith that is not mostly with other temples. Another more fascinating point is that a flower named Sengulaneer is famous which is not found elsewhere in this world only in Thiruvavur. This flower is the specialty of Thiruvavur and it is tied in garland and offered to Lord Thyagaraja. It’s a divine flower. But my question is that why this Great temple with an outstanding look and architecture is not visited by foreigners in a wide unlike the other Shiva temples such as Mylapore kabaleeswara temple Chennai), or Meenakshi Amman temple (Madurai) etc...

REFERENCES

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BIOGRAPHY/BIOGRAPHIES



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