

## SAKTHI FOUNDATION – CAC CLASS

### THIRUVANJIKALAM SHRINE

We all are seeking happiness (Santhosham) in life. But the happiness is short lived. We believe that if all our desires are fulfilled, we will be happy. So we have come to this Shiva temple to pray to get our wishes fulfilled. When all our desires are fulfilled, it is not Santhosha , but known as Ananda. This is why Shiva is called Ananda Nataraja and not Santhosha Nataraja.

How to extend happiness by getting all our desires fulfilled by worshipping Thiruvanjikalam Shiva?

This is possible by first visiting the shrine of 2 great close devotees of Shiva. They are Sundarar and Cheraman Perumal who was the Kodungaloor king of 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

The idols of Cheraman Perumal and Sundarar are placed in the long roofed corridor in southern part of the temple complex. Here are few incidents showing the greatness of this temple and the devotees.

Once when Perumakodhai [real name of Cheraman Perumal] was passing through Karoovur padana, he prostrated before a poor washer man who had a smear of soap soil on his fore head, thinking he was a great shiva devotee smeared with sacred ash. The king was soaked in such devotion to Thiruvanjikalam Shiva that he was blessed to attain whatever he wished. In addition, Lord Natarajar of Chidhambaram blessed the devotional king to hear his anklets' sound every day night.

Every time, when you visit this temple and chant 108 times Om Namaha Shivaya, before the very old Natarajar with Shivakami in the left side corner of the shrine, we can also enjoy the same blessings of Shiva. These idols of this temple are as old as lord Natarajar of Chidhambaram, the foremost temple of Lord Shiva based on Akasha [space] thatva. Cheraman Perumal transformed this Thiruvanjikalam as Chidhambaram of the west.

When Chidhambaram deekshidars [3000 Deekshidar priests who alone can perform poojas to Natarajar] refused to coronate the Tamil king Kootruvan, he was asked by Lord Natarajar himself to seek the blessings of Cheraman Perumal. It is here in Thiruvanjikalam temple, when the king Cheraman Perumal prayed, Natarajar placed his right foot upon Kootruvan's head. Imagine the grace of Cheraman Perumal and Shiva who can now bless us with all our needs. Only thing we must surrender our self with true bakthy. Now we can understand the greatness of the king's devotion and this temple.

You will also be surprised to know that what idol you are seeing in this Nataraja shrine is the very same idol which was prayed by Cheraman in the Cheraman parambu palace. Every day night Chera performed prayers and rituals and listened to anklets rhythm. But one day when it was not heard, he just tried to stab himself. Shiva appeared and said that he was delayed because he was enjoying Sundarar's hymns in Chidhambaram. Lord then directed the King to consider Sundarar as his friend and Guru.

We can imagine and admire the sacredness and richness of this shrine through many incidents. Both of devotees have travelled to many places in Tamil Nadu and sang in praise of Shiva and made spiritual upliftment in the society through simple true bakthy and service. All the hymns are still recited in many Temples of TamilNadu.

In Madurai Lord MeenakshiSunderaswarar composed a song praising our Chera king and directed his poor devotee Panabadra to Thiruvanjikalam. When the king read this hymn he presented his entire kingdom to Panabadra. This shows the greatness of Cheraman Perumal.

Both Chera and Sundarar have spent many days in Thiruvanjikalam temple. Every sand particle vibrates their energy and makes us to attain the bliss of life. All our Indian temples are very closely associated with great devotees. Sastras say that one can attain all fruits of their prayers by tuning their mind and chanting the namas which will make the vibrations of the devotees to recommend to the almighty.

Sundarar has composed beautiful hymns upon our Lord which can be seen in the stone carvings just at the entrance of their shrine. It is said that the corridor was the place where both of them sat and discussed many things and met the people. Sundarar has visited 2 times to Thiruvanjikalam. He is celebrated as "thambiram thozhar" which means "very close friend of Shiva". Cheraman Perumal has also been Sundarar's guest in Thiruvaaroor.

Thiruvaaroor which is also the most celebrated Shiva temple encloses 108 subshrines within the same temple complex. It is also the pritheve [Earth] stalam. Cheraman Perumal who has admired the greatness of Thiruvaaroor has erected many sub shrines in our Thiruvanjikalam temple and made Sundarar to celebrate it as "Thiruvaor of Chera Nadu".

Legends say that Cheraman Perumal was very particular in solving the problems of his nation and maintained peace in his time. In the presence of Sundarar, Chola and Pandiya kings gave a warm welcome to Cheraman in Madurai and all the 3 great emperors had a long spiritual conversation.

Lord Natarajar had blessed our king with the siddi of understanding the feelings of every living organism by which he performed greatest darma which alone made him to compose his hymns in front of Shiva and Parvathy in Kailasam.

On a Aadi [Karkadaka] month Swathy day when both the friends were taking oil bath in the temple pond, Sundarar alone left to the sanctum and sang his last hymns in which he requested Lord's permission to leave the Earth. Immediately he shed his body and his atman reached Kailasam. When Chera came to know this, just by chanting Sundarar's name with true Gurubakthy he also reached Kailasam. But shiva asked him to wait for some more time. Chera demanded that guru's blessings have made him to reach there and he doesn't want to go back to Earth. Shiva also accepted. Sundarar recommended Shiva to listen to Chera's Tamil hymns. He also sang his famous Thirukailaaya gnana ula which was blessed by Shiva and Parvathy. Darma sastha in Thirupatoor near Trichy was asked to take the scripture to Earth and also brought down to Earth.

Today the entire Shaivism celebrates Cheraman Perumal as one among the 63 devotees [Nayanmars]. Sundarar titled him as "Kazharit tra revar" meaning "one who knew to remove the ignorance and realize his atman".

Today by worshipping Thiruvanjikalathuappan we can attain all needs and wishes of life. By praying to Sundarar and Cheraman Perumal, visiting the spots associated with them, our life will be filled with happiness.

OM NAMA SHIVAYA!

Sakthi foundation

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