

ThoNdaradipodi AzhwAr



Period : 8th C. AD

Place : Thirumandangudi

Month : Maargazhi

Star : Kettai (Jyeshtha)

Day : Tuesday

His works: Thirumal, Tiruppalli aluchi

Songs : 55

Other Names : Vipra Narayanar, Thiru

Mandangudiyaar, Bhakthangirirenu,

Palliunartthiya Piraan

Hamsam : Vanamaalai (Garland)

ThoNdaradipodi AzhwAr, who called himself as "the Dust at the feet of Bhagavatals", was born to a vedic brahmin in Thirumandangudi in the month of Margazhi and in "kEttai" nakshatra, in the family of sOzhiya vaishnava He was an incarnation of vanamAlA (Garland of Lord Maha vishnu) and he was named "Vipranarayana". He was taught Tamil, Sanskrit, vedas, upanishads, shastras etc., at an early age. He had no

pride (vidhya garvam) and was humble and modest to the core and hence, he was respected by everyone in the locality.

After his father, he moved to Srirangam and he enamoured by Ranganatha He did not have the heart to leave SriRangam. Like periyAzhwAr, he was too interested in poomalai kainkaryam to Arangan. He made a beautiful nandhavanam with Lotus, karunkuvalai, Alli(lily), Thulasi so on. He made a small hermitage with in his nandhavanam to stay. Everyday our AzhwAr gets up in early morning and after his morning rituals he starts his nandhavanam kainkaryam. He plucks the flowers and Tulsi leaves, makes beautiful garlands, and takes them to Arangan for adorning Him. Totally absorbed in kainkaryam, Vipra Narayana had no other thoughts and lived the life of a brahmachari. One day it so happened that two devadasis passed that way and Vipra Narayana did not even take notice. One of them named Deva Devi challenged to make Vipra Narayana her slave. beauty of our AzhwAr's nandhavanam and his tEjas and charm. He ignored their beauty. But the younger sister, by name deva devi, challenged the other sister that she would make our AzhwAr her slave with her beauty. In spite of her sister's warning, deva devi was adamant and decided to embark on it. She requested him to accept her service to him at his place. He accepted her request and allow her to stay outside of his hermitage. He continued his kainkarya is unaffected by her

presence. She was desperate and looking for a day to achieve her vow. One day, when it rained heavily she got drenched and was shivering. Vipranarayana allow her to come inside his hermitage and devadevi slowly aroused his sensual desires and our poor Vipranarayana was hooked!. She virtually made him a slave for her beauty and he forgot all sorts of kinkaryam. His thoughts were only about devadevi and he could not bear even a moment separation from her.

When she achieved what she wished, she went back to her place in uttamarkoil (near SriRangam). Her mother did not allow Vipranarayana to see her unless he brought some money. Vipranarayana felt isolated and was heavily lamenting the separation from devadevi and did not know what to do. In the meanwhile, our Lord Thiruvarangan appeared as a servant of Vipranarayana calling Himself "Azhagiya manavala dasan" and went to deva devi's house. He handed over the Big Golden vessel (Thanga vattil) saying that Vipranarayana asked him to give this to her. devadevi's mother went in search of our Vipranarayana and let him meet her daughter. Next morning, the archakas found one of the "battles" missing in the Lord's Sannidhi and immediately informed the king. The servant of deva devi told about this Golden vattil to others and the news reached the king. The king arrested our Vipranarayana without listening to his pleas and he landed up in a dark cell! There he realised his apacharams. The Lord appeared in the king's dream and

narrated the whole incident and told the truth. Immediately, the king released Vipranarayana and prostrated at his feet and begged for his pardon. Vipranarayana felt greatly moved by the Lord's mercy and daya. He became a staunch bhakta and called himself the dust at the feet of bhaktas (ThoNdaradippodi AzhwaAr). He composed two poems namely., Thirumalai (a garland for the Lord) and ThiruppaLLiyezhucchi (waking up the Lord). He lived for 105 years and sang only about Ranganatha.



Important pasurams

* pachchai mAmalai pOl mEni * pavaLa vAy kamalach sengkAN *
achchudhA! amarar ERE! * Ayar tham kozhundhE! ennum **
ichchuvai thavira yAn pOy * indhira lOkam ALum *
achchuvai peRinum vENdEn * arangkamA nagaruLANE!

O Lord of holy SriRangam. I experience such delight uttering your holy name, calling you -- "O Achuta, colour of the great green mountain, with lotus eyes and coral coloured lips; Lord of the divines and the leader of the cowherd race." Beyond this I do not want to experience the pleasures of paradise even if conferred on me;

*moyththa valvinaiyuL ninRu * mUnRezhuththu udaiya pErAl *
kaththirabandhum anRE * parAngkathi kaNdu koNdAn **
iththanai adiyar AnArkku * irangkum nam arangkanAya *
piththanaip peRRum andhO! * piRaviyuL piNangkumARE *

This verse refers to the episode of Kshatra Bandu of royal lineage who fell into evil ways, killing and torture but was finally saved by the Grace of the Lord, chanting the Trisyllabic holy name of Govinda. Even the

vile Kshatra Bandu of yore, given to intense violence and sinful living found salvation through uttering the Trisyllabic holy name (Govinda) when the merciful Lord of SriRangam is thus easily available to rescue the devotees. Alas! foolish mankind lets itself to be lured into life's turmoils, unable to meditate on Him!

* maRam suvar madhiL eduththu * maRumaikke veRumai pUNdu *
puRam suvar Ottai mAdam * puraLum pOdhu aRiya mAttIr **
aRam suvarAgi ninRa * arangkanArkku AtseyyAdhE *
puRam suvar kOlam seydhU * puL kauvak kidakkinRIrE **

Oh Men! Raising the ramparts of sin, you only ensure purposeless, endless births, which you do not realize at the time when this perforated walled residence of your body crumbles. By nourishing this body you only enrich the food for vultures. How sad it does not occur to you to ward off evil by raising the bulwark of virtue rendering devotional service to the Lord of Holy SriRangam.

*namanum muRkalanum pEsa * naragil ninRArgaL kEtka *
naragamE suvarkkamAgum * nAmangkaL udaiya nambi **
avanadhUr arangkam ennAdhu * ayarththu vIzhndhaLiya mAndhar *
kavalaiyuL paduginRAR enRu * adhanukke kavalginREnE **

My heart indeed goes out to the unfortunates who fall into purgatory swayed by false tenets without realizing that the very mention of the name of the Lord whom residence in Sri Rangam, will redeem. Is it not that Hell was transformed to Paradise when Yama was heard to explain that mention of Krishna's name was reason for Mudgala's salvation?

* vaNdinam muralum sOlai * mayilinam Alum sOlai *
koNdal mIdhu aNavum sOlai * kuyilinam kUvum sOlai **
aNdar kOn amarum sOlai * aNi thiruvarangkam ennA *
miNdar pAyndhuNNum sORRai vilakki * nAykku iduminIrE **

Holy SriRangam is full of groves swarmed by humming beetles where peacocks dance in droves, clouds hover over tall trees, dense foliage resounds to warble of koels, and is the seat of Narayana, King of Divines. Those who have no thought for the jewel of this holy town are mere brutes. Brush them aside if they rush for food and feed it to the dogs.

* kuda thisai mudiyai vaiththuk * guNa thisai pAdham nItti *
vada thisai pinbu kAttith * then thisai ilangkai nOkki **
kadal niRak kadavuL endhai * aravaNaith thuyilumA kaNdu *
udal enakku urugumAI! * en seygeEn? ulagaththIrE! **

O! Men of the world! I am so helpless! My whole body melts at the sight of the Lord of ultramarine hue, reposing on the serpent couch, head supported on the elbow pointing west, legs stretched towards east showing his back to the north and his look directed towards Lanka in the south.

* kurangkugaL malaiyai nUkkak * kuLiththuth thAm puraNdittOdi *
tharangka nIr adaikkaluRRa * samilA aNilum pOIEEn **
marangkaL pOI valiya nenjcham * vanjchanEn nenjchu thannAl *
arangkanArkku AtseyyAdhE * aLiyaththEn ayarkkinREnE **

While the simian army of Rama was engaged in damming the sea, lifting giant rocks, the simple squirrel too contributed sand particles, shaking its body by rolling in the beach and dipping itself in the damsite waters. My heart is not moved to engage itself in the service of the Lord of SriRangam, is like those boulders not even inspired by the sense of service of the innocent squirrel. This inertia is unbecoming of my high birth.

* mEmporuL pOga vittu * meymmayyai miga uNarndhu *

Amparisu aRindhu koNdu * aimpulan agaththadakki **

kAmbaRath thalai siraitththu * un kadaiththalai irundhu vAzhum *

sOmbarai ugaththi pOlum * sUzh punal arangkaththAnE! **

O Lord of the Island, you seem to reveal yourself only to those "idle" men who control the senses and eradicate the vestiges of worldly attachment, withdraw themselves from all external world, experience the bliss arising from contemplating the only Truth and stay rooted at the Ultimate doorway to your abode (Not for me the prodigal!).