

Arupadai Veedu



Arupadai Veedu - The Six Abodes of Lord Muruga

The Lord is known by different names such as Karthikeya, Skanda, Vadivela and Muruga at various temples. These six temples are situated in Tamil Nadu. These most sacred abodes of Lord Muruga is mentioned in Tamil divine literature, "Thirumurugatrupadai", written by Poet Nakkeerar and in "Thirupugal", written by Saint-poet Arunagirinathar.

The six abodes are:
Thirupparankunram
Thiruchendur
Palani
Swamimalai
Thiruthani and
Pazhamudircholai.

Om Saravanabhavaya namaha



Arupadai Veedu - 1 of 6

Tirupparankundram is a hill at 8kms southwest of Madurai, Tamilnadu. A cave temple mentioned in various classical Tamil texts as the 'Southern Himalaya' where the gods assemble, Tirupparankunram is also mentioned in legend as 'the place where the sun and moon abide'.

Long ago the two daughters of Lord Vishnu, Amrita Valli and Sundara Valli, cherished the desire of becoming the consorts of Lord Subrahmanya. With this aim in mind they both went to Saravana Poigai (pool in Himalayas) and commenced austere penance to fulfil their desires.

Pleased with their prayer and worship, Lord Subrahmanya appeared before them and told Amrita Valli, "You will be brought up by Indra as his daughter and I shall marry you in due course." Her younger sister Sundara Valli was also graced with a similar blessing. She was born to sage Sivamuni and brought up by Nambi, the headman of Veddas.

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Amrita Valli took the form of a female child and went to Mount Meru where Indra's Airavatam - white elephant, took care of her. Hence she came to be known as Devayanai, one who was brought up by the heavenly elephant of Indra (yana in Tamil means elephant).

Lord Subrahmanya vanquished demon Surapadma and on his way came to this place followed by all the devas and heavenly beings whom he had released from the miseries caused by Surapadma. Lord Indra desired to get his daughter Devayanai married to Subrahmanya, as a mark of his gratitude for relieving him and the devas. Lord Subrahmanya married Devayanai upon the hill and it is considered the most auspicious place for marriages.

Om Saravanabhavaya namaha



Arupadai Veedu - 2 of 6

Thiruchendur temple is in Thoothukudi District, Tamilnadu. Among the six abodes of Lord Subrahmanya, this temple is the only one which is on the seashore, other five are on the hilltop. The deity is worshipped here as Senthilandavar or Senthilkumar.

Legend says Surapadma an Asura was ruling Veera Mahendrapuri, an island fortress. He performed many austerities invoking Lord Shiva and the Lord granted him many boons. Later, the asura became arrogant and captured all the three worlds. He made the Devas do menial tasks, unable to bear his torture they complained to Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva opened his third eye to create a son to kill Surapadma. Six sparks of fire emanated from the third eye. These divine sparks were received by River Ganges through Agni and passed on to the Himalayan lake, Saravana Poigai. Here they were transformed into six babies suckled by the six Kirithika nymphs. Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvathi Devi came to Saravana Poigai, and when Goddess Uma fondly clasped the babies they joined together to become Lord Arumuga with six faces and twelve arms. When child Arumuga grew up to become a young boy, Lord Shiva asked him to destroy Surapadma and free the Devas from their cruel bondage.

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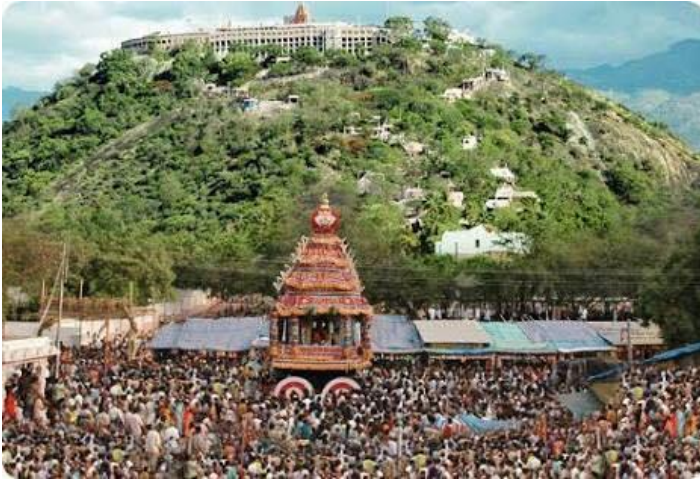
Lord Muruga reached Tiruchendur with his huge army and an intense battle was fought for a few days. On the sixth day, in the battle between Lord Muruga and Surapadma, the lance of Lord Muruga pierced the body of Surapadma, who got himself transformed into a frightful mango tree, and broke it into two. The broken pieces instantly transformed themselves into a mighty peacock and a cock. Lord Muruga took the peacock as his vahana or vehicle and the cock on his banner. This event is popularly known as Surasamharam and Skanda Shasti is celebrated on the victory of Lord Skanda over demon Surapadman.

After Surasamharam, Lord Muruga desired to worship his father, Lord Shiva. Hence Mayan, the divine architect constructed this shrine at Tiruchendur. Even now Lord Subramaniyan is seen in the posture of worshipping Lord Shiva in the sanctum sanctorum.

To quench the thirst of His war-weary warriors, Lord Muruga thrust His lance into the ground bringing out water and forming a well, called Naazhi Kinaru. The square well with the circumference of 14 feet square has a small well within it. The water in the larger well is brackish and salty in contrast to the smaller one with one foot square in extent which contains crystal clear sweet water. These two wells, despite their proximity, give two completely different tastes which is indeed a divine miracle. Normally, the Raja Gopuram will be in the eastern side of temples in Tamil Nadu. But in Thiruchendur alone the Raja Gopuram is in the western side.

Sri Adi Shankaracharya praised Lord Murugan of Thiruchendur in his "Sri Subrahmanya Bhujanga Stotra". He praised the greatness of Vibhuti of Lord Murugan that the mere vision of the Panneer leaf Vibhuthi would cure many incurable diseases.

Om Saravanabhavaya namaha



Arupadai Veedu - 3 of 6

Palani is in Dindigul District, Tamilnadu. The deity here is worshipped as Lord Dandayudhapani.

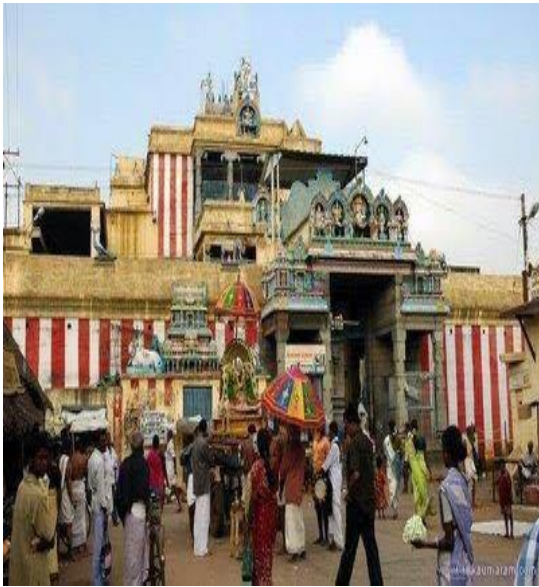
One day, Lord Narada comes and gifts a celestial fruit to Lord Siva and Goddess Parvathi in Mount Kailash. Their kids Lord Ganapathy and Lord Murugan, demanded the entire fruit for each of them. Lord Siva announced a competition and promised to give the fruit to the one who wins the test. The condition is that they should go around the world and reach back first. Both agreed to it and Lord Ganapathy makes a circumambulation of His parents, reaches first, and wins the fruit. Lord Murugan who goes on his peacock around the world reaches later and finds that Lord Ganapathy has won the prize. He therefore gets disappointed and, renouncing the world, stands atop the Palani Hill. Lord Siva and Goddess Parvathi comes to Palani and pacifies Lord Murugan telling him Muruga, you are yourself a divine fruit (meaning he is the divine fruit for true seekers); then why do you need a fruit? 'Pazham' in Tamil means fruit and 'Ni' means You, hence this place came to be called as Palani, as Lord Muruga was addressed as Palam Nee.

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Many Siddhas (Saints) are said to have lived in this Palani region. The idol of Lord of Palani is said to have been made of Navapashanam (nine poisonous substance if mixed in proper ratio becomes medicine - a combination of Veeram, Pooram, Rasam, Jathilingam, Kandagam, Gauri Pasanam, Vellai Pasanam, Mridharsingh, Silasat), by a siddhar called Bhogar. It is also claimed by many that the materials of abhishegam like milk, sandalpaste, etc., attain medicinal properties on being poured over Lord of Palani and they have cured many diseases, when taken by the patients.

Another legend says, Sage Agastya wanted to take two hills — Sivagiri and Sakthigiri to his abode in the South and commissioned his disciple Idumban to carry them. Idumban bore the hills slung across his shoulders, in the form of a kavadi one on either side. When he was fatigued, he placed the kavadi near Palani to take rest. At this stage, Lord Muruga had been outwitted in the fruit contest for going round the world. In anger, the frustrated child left the divine parents and came down to Tiru Avinankudi at the Adivaram (pronounced Adivâram. It means foot of the Sivagiri Hill). Later, He withdrew to the hill and settled there as a recluse in peace and solitude. When Idumban resumed his journey, he could not lift the hill. Muruga had made it impossible for Idumban to make it. In the fierce battle that ensued, Idumban was killed but was later on restored to life. Idumban prayed that: whosoever carried on his/her shoulders the Kavadi, signifying the two hills and visited the temple on a vow, should be blessed and he should be given the privilege of standing sentinel at the entrance to the hill. Hence we have the Idumban shrine halfway up the hill where every pilgrim is expected to offer obeisance to Idumban before entering the temple of Lord Dandâyudhapani. Since then, pilgrims to Palani bring their offerings on their shoulders in a kavadi. The custom has spread from Palani to all Muruga shrines worldwide.

Om Saravanabhavaya namaha



Arupadai Veedu - 4 of 6

Swamimalai, otherwise called as 'Thiruverakam' is situated about five kilometers west of Kumbakonam on the banks of a tributary of river . The presiding deity here expounded the meaning of the Pranava mantra OM to his own Father Lord Siva Himself.

Legend says that saint Bhrugu before commencing an arduous tavam or penance, got the boon that anybody disturbing his meditation will forget all his knowledge. Such was the power of the penance that the sacred fire emanating from the head of the saint reached up to the heavens, and the frightened devas surrendered to Lord Siva praying for his grace.

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The Lord extinguished the sacred fire by covering the saint's head by hand. With the saint's penance thus disturbed the Lord became oblivious of all his knowledge and is said to have regained them by learning the Pranava mantra from Lord Muruga at this shrine.

Once when Lord Brahma was proceeding to Kailasa, the ever-playful child Lord Muruga asked him for the meaning of the Pranava OM. When Lord Brahma admitted his ignorance, the Lord Muruga imprisoned him. With Lord Brahma imprisoned, all creations came to a standstill and the devas prayed to Lord Siva to get Lord Brahma released. When Lord Muruga insisted that the imprisonment was a just punishment for the ignorance of Lord Brahma, Lord Siva asked him whether he himself knew the meaning of the primordial Pranava OM. Lord Muruga said that he knew the meaning of OM and can expound it to the latter only if he can accept him as guru and listen to the exposition as a devoted disciple. As Lord Siva acceded to the request of Lord Muruga and heard the exposition of OM as a disciple, the place came to be known as Swamimalai and the presiding deity as Swaminathan.

The temple is built on an hillock of about sixty feet height with sixty beautifully laid stone steps representing the Hindu cycle of sixty years - leading to the Lord. In the ground floor there are temples dedicated to Lord Sundareswarer and Goddess Meenakshi.

Om Saravanabhavaya namaha



Arupadai Veedu - 5 of 6

Thiruthani hill is at a distance of 13 kms from Arakkonam and 84 kms from Chennai, Tamilnadu.

Nambirajan, the head of the Gypsy-Kuravas- community found a female child amidst the Valli plants, took her and brought her up. He named Her 'Valli' after the plants. Lord Muruga married Valli at Thiruthani.

Legend also says that Lord Muruga rested at Thiruthani hill to reduce His anger after destroying the demon King Surapadma in Thiruchendur and hence this place is known as Thanigai malai, 'Thanigai' in Tamil means 'cooling down', 'malai' means 'hill'. It is believed that the Lord here blesses his devotees with mental peace and happiness.

There are 365 steps leading to the temple which signifies 365 days of the year.

Lord Muruga holds 'Vajra Hastam' in his right hand and placing left hand on the hip, which represents Gnana Shakti (Power of wisdom).

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Lord Rama, after putting an end to Ravana, worshipped Lord Siva at Rameswaram, at whose request he came to Thiruthani and found perfect peace of mind by worshipping Lord Subrahmanya here.

Arjuna got the blessings of Lord Muruga here by offering prayers to Him on his way to the South for Teertha Yatra.

Lord Indira had offered Airavadham, the white elephant as the wedding gift to Deivanai, the prosperity of Deva world began to shrink. Lord Indira prayed to Lord Muruga to allow the elephant to turn the Deva Loka (East) which would help the growth of prosperity in his kingdom. Lord Muruga gracefully obliged. Hence the elephant Vahan is facing the opposite direction(east) in this temple.

There is a scar on the chest of Lord Muruga believed to have been caused by the demon Tarakasura (brother of Demon Surapadma) on throwing the discus on the Lord Muruga's chest. And it is said that the discus was gifted to Lord Vishnu.

Lord Muruga here is regarded as Skanda, Karthikeya, Veeramurthy, Gnanamurthy, and Acharyamurthy because He proclaimed the knowledge of Tamil to Sage Agasthya.

Om Saravanabhavaya namaha



Arupadai Veedu - 6 of 6

Pazhamuthircholai hill is situated 19 kilometres from the temple town of Madurai, Tamilnadu. On top of the hill Lord Muruga stands majestically in the temple as the Lord of the Hills popularly known as Kurinji Nilakkizhavan in Tamil. This hill is also known as Vrishabhadri or Idabagiri. Here Lord Muruga is worshiped along with his consorts Valli as Iccha Shakti and Devayani as Kriya Shakti and himself as Jnana Shakti. From days of yore Vel (spear) of the Lord made up of stone is of special significance and is worshipped with a great veneration by devotees.

Tamil Saint poet Arunagirinathar reveres this shrine in his Tiruppukazh (poems in praise of Lord Muruga) which contains 16 Tiruppugazh psalms on Pazhamuthircholai Murugan. Arunagirinathar very emphatically says though one might be in possession of all types of wealth, if he wants to lead a healthy life bereft of any disease he should necessarily visit Pazhamuthircholai.

Tamil Saint poet Avvaiyar was tested by Lord Muruga here. Once, weary with hunger and thirst, Avvaiyar stood under a jamun tree. Lord Muruga, as a shepherd, sat on its branches. Avvaiyar asked him to shake the tree and give her some fruits.

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He asked her whether she wanted 'Sutta pazham' (Roasted/Hot ones) or 'Sudaatha pazham' (Non-roasted ones). Avvaiyar thought that the kid was blabbering something as she considered him to be an illiterate, told him to put the 'Sudaatha pazham'. There was a shower of ripe jamuns. As Avvaiyar picked them, she blew on the fruits to remove the mud. The shepherd laughed and said, "Grandma! Are the fruits so hot that you are blowing on them?" Avvaiyar was stunned. She realised she had become complacent and had a momentary pride and neglect in her mind thinking that the boy is illiterate and she was knowledgeable. As she looked up, she saw a smiling Lord Muruga in all his glory, stunned to find herself in Divine Company, bowed in obeisance and realising the infinite nature of knowledge, prayed to Lord Muruga to bless her and continue bestowing his Infinite Grace on her.

Om Saravanabhavaya namaha