CHAPTER VII

Puthan Sthala at Thiruvengadu
Sri Swēthāṇaṟṇyēswarā Śwāmy temple at Thiruvenṛgadu is noted for the worship of the Navagrahā "Puthan". There is a separate shrine for the grahā Puthan with in the temple complex. The Sthalā is noted for the Mōōrthy, Sthalam and Īhīrutham. Thiruvenṛgadu is located in the Īrkatrinsicī block in Thanjavūr district. The place is encircled by rich Saivite and Vaiṣṇavite temples. This temple is the eleventh Saivite Sthalā located to the northern bank of the river Cauvery in Thanjavur district. The name Thiruvenṛgadu' has been mentioned in inscription, Dēvaram hymns and the governmental records as Thiruvenṛgadu' as such. In Sanskrit, it has been known as 'Swēthāraṇyam'. The word 'Swēthāraṇyam' can be split into 'Swētham, meaning ‘white ‘ and Āraṇyam' meaning ‘Kādu’ of forest. This place is also has been known as Āthi Chiḍambaram' because Lord Natarāja before performing his dance at Chiḍambaram, performed the dance at Thiruvenṛgadu. Thiruvenṛgadu has been called owing to various puranic events. They are: Pāraraṉyam, Mahāvaraṇgam, Nāvaniruṭṭhaṇāṇam, Veṭṭeṇṛgadu, Kālaĉhaṇḍīram, Vilvavaṇam, Dabōṇaśaparum, Pābanāsaparum, Ganapathy Nagaram, Murugan Pōõndi, Mālur, Umaiyūr, Periya Mayāṇam, Gnānavanam, Sṭhālanmāyagam, Pāṭhaḷa Kaitāsam, Sivānandakkādū, Mukti Naghar, Mukti Vāyil etc. 

**Greatness of the Sthalā:**

The name Swētharya has been referred to in the Vālmiki Rāmāyana as “Sabā Pātha Karō Pōōman Thākyāmāna Sāraṅkāṇi
Naruthre near viniṛṭhathakka Swēṭhāraṇyē Yāṭhānthahā" which Sanskrit version of this sloga is seen in the Āranyakandam. This literally mean that "How Lord Swēṭhāraṇyā pounced upon and Slew Yamā at this Sthala, so also Rāmā pounced upon and slew Kārāthu Shanāṭhis".

This Sthala is one among the Six Sthalās equillant to the holy place Kāsi. There are three Sivā mōōrthikal in the holy shrine namely Swēṭhāraṇyēśwarar, Natarajar and Agoramōōrthyy. Likewise, there are three holy tanks in the temple namely Agni Ṭhṛiṭham, Sōōriya Ṭhṛiṭham and Chaṇḍra Ṭhṛiṭham. Moreover, the shrine has yet another unique feature of having three Sṭhala Viṛukśhas namely Banyan tree, Koṇḍrai tree and Vilvam tree. All the four Saivite Saints namely Appar, Sundarar, Gnānasambaraṇdar and Manickavasakar have paid visits to the temple and have sung holy hymns in praise of the deities.

This temple has a special shrine for the Navagrahā "Puthan ", hence called the "Puthan Sthalā". It is one among the fifty one Sakthi Pītās temple. The "Brahma Samāthi" has been located in the temple. "Agoramōōrthyy", one among the sixty four various forms of Lord Sivā can be seen only at this temple. As cited earlier, the shrine has been called as "Āthi Chiḍambaram". Inside the temple there are the Sabā and towards the south west of the Sabā exists the Perumāl shrine. Lord Sivā performed a variety of dances here namely, Ānanda Thāṇdavam, Kāli Niṛuṭṭham, Gowri Thāṇdavam, Muni Niṛuṭṭham,
Sandāla Thāṇdavam, Thiripūra Thāṇdavam, Pūjaṅga Lalitham, Samhāra Thāṇdavam, Paishādanam, all put in to nine Thāṇdavaṁs in total. He performed the dances at Thiruvengādu as “Sagunam” and grants both Life and Mukthi.

The temple is the unique place since Lord Iṇḍra, the white elephant Iravatham, Saint Sivappiriya, Vādarāsi, SwthanKēthu, Suvēthan, Lord Vishnu, Sōōriyan, Chaṇḍran and Agni. Saint Paṭṭinaṇṭhar who sung the Pathinoram Thirumurai obtained ‘Siva Thēṭtchai’ only at this temple. Saint Meikandar who composed the Saiva Siddantha book, “Sivagnāṇbhōtham” was born only at this place. It is the place where Saint Siruthōndar lived, and his wife Thiruvenkāṭṭu Nagai and Sandānathāthi were born and brought up here only.

The most note worthy aspect of Thiruvengādu is that, during the ancient past the places has Angaragan industry of smelting and casting panchalōga idols, and only from this place the idols have been transported to other place. The bronze, and other metal idols of this temple are noted for master craftsmanship and a few samples of them are being displayed in the Art galleries at Thanjavur and Chennai.

**Legends:**

Thiruvengādu Sri Swēthāranyēswara temple has been called the “Puthan Sthala” and there is a separate shrine for “Puthan”. He has been called as “Viḍyākārakan” and has been located in the leftturn side of the shrine of Amman Vidyāmbigai. The presiding deity of the
temple also have blessed Puthan to have a separate shrine in his holy shrine and have granted him the powers to redress the transgressions and sins of those people who come and offer worship to him.

Puthan, as per the legend was born to Chandran and Thārai, and Thārai was the consort of Guru. But Thārai had physical relationship with Chandran and got conceived. After the conception, she returned back to Guru and gave birth Puthan. There arose a doubt that to whom Puthan was born, since she was the wife of Guru but got conceived through Chandran. But Thārai, who gave birth Puthan explained that Puthan was the son of Chandran. As a result of this doubt, there arises confusion and disgrace over the birth of Puthan. So as to get relieved from the disgrace about his birth, Puthan reaches a place called Saravanavanam in the hilly terrain of Himalayās and indulged in penance, this acute penance of Puthan attracted the attention of Lord Vishnu, who got very much pleased and appeared before Puthan. Through him Puthan learns all sorts of arts, mantrās and Vēdas. As a result of his though learning of all kinds of skills, he came to be known as “Vāni Jaya Nibunāya” which means the one who is well versed in every thing. Then as per the advice of Saint Vaśhistar, reaches Thiruvengādu, takes a holy bath in the holy tank Chaṇḍra Puṣṭhakārani and again sat in front of the holy shrines of Lord Swētharaṇyēswarā and Goddess Periyanāyahi. The Lord felt very happy about penance of Puthan and offered his grace and blessings. As a result of this, the disgrace associated with Puthan’s birth disappeared. Moreover, he had been elevated to the
status of a deity to whom the devotees should offer with all Veneration. Moreover Lord Brahma wanted to make it clear that Puthan was the son born to Chandran and Tārai, hence made him to reside closer to Sun. Puthan, again commenced a penance towards Lord Sivā and as a result of that Puthan became one among the Navagrahās.

A King by name Ilan went to the Sukumāra forest for hunting. There existed a curse by Ambigai that who ever enters into the forest will be changed as women. Without knowing the fact Ilan and his associates entered into the forest and as per the curse, they all changed into women. When Puthan happen to meet Ilan, who became a woman and known as Ilai, attracted by her charm and fell in love with her. As a result of their love game Ilai got conceived and gave birth to a son called Prurava. As per the curse, Ilan used to be a man for a month and a woman in the next month and the change of sex ordeal continued. Puthan got upset over the bi-sexual nature of Ilan, wanted to find a solution for that. Hence he consulted the saints and as per their advice performed the Asuvamētha Yāga. Lord Sivā was very much pleased over the Yagā and granted Ilan to be a man thereafter.

Puthan has known by several names. They are: Gnāni, Ganiṇāyagan, Buṭṭhidatthā, Buṭṭhi Vivārthanān, Thānappirian, Thayāragan, Thāra Putharānya Pasupprāthān, Ganjanēthiran, Manōharan, Sowmyamōrthy, Vishṇūrūby, Natchaṭṭhīrēsan,
Lograppirian, Gragapitakaran, Gnanaruban, Priyangan, Santharuby, Kuthirai Vahanan, Vidyakaragan. He is gifted with the power of removing all the misfortunes caused by the other Navagrahās. He is noted for knowledge and wisdom hence called Danapradāna Dayākaran. Since he happen to be good fortune grahā, hence, called as Gnanakārakar.

**Architecture:**

The Puthan Sthala, is located with in the temple complex of Sri Śvēṭhaṁranyēswara temple at Thiruvengādu. The temple is located at the center of village. The temple is encircled with elevated walls and around them are four broad streets for the purpose of drawing the temple cars. The temple faces the east but there is entrance in the west also. The temple measures 792 feet in the east west and 310 feet in the South north. Rājagōpuras are present both in the east and west entrances. There are also two gōpurams present in the east and west while entering into the inner Prahāra from the outer Prahāra.

When entered into eastern gōpurā, there are flag mast pillaiyar, Paliḷita, flag mast and Naṅṭhi. Just south of that area are located the holy tank Agni Thirtha and in the east the shrine of Ageēswara. On the banks of the holy tank are seen the Ūnjalmandapā, and the Shrine for Saint Meikantār. While entering into the southern prahāra, there are the holy tank of Sōōriya Thirtham and the shrine of Sōōriyan. At the south west of the outer prahāra is located the temple's office, storage yard and the garden. In the western outer
prahārā, at the north of the Rājagōpurā, there are the shrine of Lord Muruga and the hundred pillar mandapā. In the west of shrine of Lord Murugā, there exists a Siva Linga called Vēerapāndian.

At the north west corner of the outer prahārā, exists the Ambāl shrine with a tiny gōpura. The Shrine for Puthan has been located at the left of the Ambāls's Shrine. Next to that shrine are seen the Brahma Samāṭhi and Vilva tree. Just opposite to the Ambāl's Shrine are located the Chandra Thirtham, Banyan tree and the shrine of Chandra. On the banks of the Chandra Thirtha, there is the Koṇḍrai tree. In the western side of the temple exist a platform with Arasu and Nēēm trees. In the west of the Ambāl's shrine are located the shrine for the Sambanda Vināyakā and the Yahā Salai.

While entering again into the eastern prahārā, there is the flag mast, and in the north are seen the Alaṅgāra Maṇḍapā and the Vāhana Mandapās. Next to the east gōpura, there exists a nice Kalyāna Mandapā. Through this the Mandapā, one has to enter into the inner area of the temple. At the southern side of the inner prahārā there are the shrines of Periya Vāraṇappillaiyār and Sōṃankarndar. In the Thriumāligaipathi, there are the images of Sixty three Nāyanmārs, Badrakāli, Vēerapathirar, Iḍumban, Sugasanamōrthy, Sōlaiyappā Mudaliar. In the western Thriumāligaipathi, there are the images of Nāgeswarar, Vināyakā, Yōgamāniṭka Vāsakar, the Saivite Dēvaram and Thiruvasagam, Āvudaiyar Badraḥitam, Visvēswarar, Visālāṭchi, Angāla Paramēśhwari, Suvēdanawathy, Thāni Vināyagar.
In the west inner prahārā, the Natarāja Sabā is located facing the south. In the northern inner prahāra, there are separate shrines for the presiding Agoramōorthy. Here we also can seen the shrines of Kātchi Nāyanar, Sandeśuarar, Suvētha lingam. In the eastern inner prahārā, the images of Bairavar, Kāsithuṇḍi Vināyagar, Durga and Navagrahās.

In the center of the temple complex is located the shrine of the presiding deity Swēthāranyēswarar. This shrine is quite large in size with Nirūṭha Mandapa, Mahā Mandapā and Artha Mandapās. At the entrance of this main shrine, there are the images of Dwārapalakās. In the Kōṣṭam, the image of Dhaśināmōorthy, Lingōṭbahavaḍan Brahmā. In the SanctumSanctorum, the Māhalinga Mōorthy of Thirunvenkāṭṭar is installed in the linga form.

Other Deities:

b. Swēthāranyēswarar

He is the presiding deity of the temple who has been seen in the SanctumSanctorum in the form of Suyambu Linga. He has been otherwise known as Thiruvengādar, Thiruvengādu Dēvar, Thiruvengāṭṭu Perumaṇ.

a. Brahmā Vidhyāmbigai

She is the consort and Amman of the temple who is otherwise known as Periya Nāyaki. She has four hands. The left upper hand holds a lotus flower, the right upper hand holds the Akkamālai. Lower
right hand holds the abaya mudra and the left lower hand holds the anjalikastha.

c. Natarāja

The Nataraja of this temple has been known as “Āda Vallān” as per inscriptional sources. As Thiruruvēṇgādu has been called as “Ādi Chiḍambaram”, here also seen the Natarāja Sabai, Spadiga Linga and the Secrecy (Ragasiyam). For the Spadika Linga, abhishekas are performed daily four times and for Lord Natarāja, Six times per year and Pachakiruthya Pōōjās. The image of Ādvallan has been designed as per the Sirpa Sāstrās.

d. Agōramōorthy

Agōramōorthy is nothing but the incarnation of Lord Sivā. Agōramōorthy is the 43rd incarnations of the 64 incarnations of Lord Sivā. The image of Lord Agōramōorthy can be seen only in the temple. The image is black in colour with eight hands and seen with the left leg projecting forward, pressing the toe and the next finger firmly on the ground. All the eight hands are holding Vēdālam, Knife, Udukkai, Kapālam, Shield, bell and Trisūla. He is dressed with red colour vastrās. His image has been designed in such a way to present a fearful look.
Poojas and Festivals:

1. Poojas:

At this temple, poojas are performed daily six times to the deities. They are Thiruppalli Ezhutchi, Kālasāni, UchhiKālam, Sāyaratchiai, Eṛandām Kālam, and Arthasāmam from 6 Am to 9.30 Pm. Special archanās and abhishēkas also have been performed.

1. Festivals

Throughout the year, festivals are being celebrated every month. They are as follows:

i) Chithirai: Abhiseka to Lord Natarāja on the Thiruvōnam star day.

ii) Vaikāsi: On the New Monday, Lord SivaPriyar takes special bath in the Manikarnikai river, and also performing the rites to grant absolution to the white elephant Iravatham.

iii) Ani: To perform Abhiseka to Lord Natarāja at Uthiram Star

iv) Ādi: along with other celebrations, for ten days Ādipura celebration will be performed to the Amman.

v) Āvani: During the month of Āvani, the Natarājar Abhishēka will be performed on crescent moon saturthi. Gokulāśhtami Perumāl Sevvai, Vināyagar Chaṭhurṭhi, Āvani Mōōlam, and the precession of Paṅcha mōōrthikal.
vi) **Purāṭṭāsi**: Navarāthiri celebrations, *Natarāja* Abhishēka, Devēndra Pōoja, Latchārchanai for the Ambāl and other celebrations.

vii) **Ippasi**: Annābishēkam at Asupati, Skantha Shasti festival etc.,

viii) **Kārthikai**: On every Sunday, special abhishēkās and pōojas will be performed to Lord Agōramōorthy. Rudra Abisheka, Holy āsh abhishēka, 1008 Conch abhishēkas, kārthigai dēepam festivals will be performed.

ix) **Mārkaṇḍi**: During this month, Danur month Pōojas, Manickavasakar festival at Sathaya star, Thiruvāthirai Natarājar darśhan will be performed.

x) **Thāi**: Sankarānθhi, holy bath to the Ambāl in the Manikarnikai river, and the Lord on the horse Vāhana proceeds for pari hunting. Ten days festival for Lord Iyyanār, and another ten days festival for Goddess Pidāri.

xi) **Māsi**: The celebration of Ḫnḍra festival. During the crescent moon punarpoosam star, the hoisting of the temples flag to mark the commencement of the grand festival of the temple which lasts for ten days with the car festival, float festival etc.,

xii) **Panguni**: One Lakh abhishka at Suklap patcha prathamai for Lord Agōramōorthy, Panguni Uthiram on the full moon day and the next day Vidaiyātri.
Administration and Finance:

Sri Swethāranyēswarā temple at Thiruvenğādu is the Sirkazhi Taluk of the Nāgappaṭṭinam district. The temple is under the control of the Hindu Religious and charitable Endowment Board, Government of TamilNadu. The Executive officer of the temple directly controls the administration along with the members of the Board Trustees. There is an office with the members of the Board of Trustees. There is an office with in the temple complex with the required office staff. Apart form the office staff, there are a number of persons to look after the various functions of the temple. There are priests, oduvars, musical instrument players, gardener, watchman and others.

For the temple, there are 809 acres of wetland and 557 acres of dry lands. Besides, there are four building and plots measuring 192 acres. Through these landed properties, the temple receives a monthly income of seventeen lakhs. Apart form these income, the other sources of income are derived form the sale of archanā tickets, fees collected for special abhishekas and poojas. The Hun dial offering by devotees is another source of income. The temple maintains a tourist home. The temple runs a primary school and two higher secondary schools, one for the boys and the other for the girls. The temple cars, vahanās, jewels, ornaments are the other valuable properties of the temple. There are thirty eight employees in the temple to look after the day to day business of the temple.
Astrological aspects of Puthan:

The Navagraha Puthan is located very near to the sun or Sooriyan. Puthan has been called as a stable graha (Nilai graham) and also a secondary graha (Idai nilai gragha). He is said to be the authority for knowledge and wisdom. It is also regarded as an auspicious planet. Moreover, it has been regarded as an eunuch planet, neither male or female.

The image of Puthan can be seen in the sitting position holding the left leg folded on the thigh and the right leg hang freely. Both of his hand are showing abhaya varada mudras. In the left hand he holds a Suvadi. As per astrology, if Puthan happen to be in the good position of ones jathakā, it is assumed that he has to be intelligent, a scholar, well versed in studies and arts. He also will be blessed with prosperity in business. Moreover, he can attain a good status, obtain eloquence, well versed in Mathematics, Logic and other arts. He also will be blessed with a good family of wife and children. Puthan has authority over the nerves and other associated components of human body, hence, those persons afflicted with such ailments can get cured from them by lighting seventeen deepas and go around the Puthan's shrine for seventeen times. Moreover, those who have problems in marriage, giving birth to children can get relieved by offering worship to Puthan.

Puthan is also noted for the enormous fits to be obtained by him through the astrological calculations. He is said to offer Rājayogās. If Puthan is seen along with the Sun in the fourth place, he can grant
Rājayōgās. If he is seen along with Seyvāi, he can grant abundant economic prosperity. For Chandran, in the 6th, 7th and 8th places, if Puthan is seen with Sukkiran, one has to obtain Rājayōga. If Puthan is seen along with Guru at Thirigōna place in the 5th place and 9th place, one can obtain Rājathī Rājayōgā. If Puthan is in Mēēna Rāsi and also in Kanya he grants Rajayōga.

Puthan grants Rajayōga to those whose astrological calculations are as follow:

a. For those with Mithuna Rāsi jātaka, if Puthan is present in Kanya Rāsi, for those who born in Mithunam and Kanni Rāsi with the Guru, Sukkiran's notice, and if Puthan in the 9th place, he grants Rajayōga.

b. For those with Simma Rāsi, if Puthan stationed in Mēsham and Seyvāi, he grants Rājayōga.

c. For those with Rishaba Rāsi, if Puthan stationed in Maharam and Sani in Mēēnam, such people obtain Rajayōga.

**Puthan's directions and the fortunes to be obtained:**

1. If Puthan looks at Mēsha Rāsi – Gifted with knowledge and education.

2. If Puthan looks at Rishaba Rāsi – Honest and just full person.
3. If Puthan looks at Mithuna Rāsi - Economic Prosperity

4. If Puthan looks at Kataka Rāsi - Peaceful and deep thinking

5. If Puthan looks at Simma Rāsi - Achievements and actions

6. If Puthan looks at Kanni Rāsi - Good status in the Govt. office / Political future

7. If Puthan looks at Thulām Rāsi - Higher Officials / Status / Economic prosperity

8. If Puthan looks at Viruḍhika Rāsi - the gift of begetting Children

9. If Puthan looks at Thanusu Rāsi - Reputation and Elevation in life

10. If Puthan looks at Mahara Rāsi - Authoritative / Power to govern

11. If Puthan looks at Kumba Rāsi - to Pronounce orders

12. If Puthan looks at Meena Rāsi - eloquence / grace of Kalaimagal
Puthan : Navagraha Sthothiram:

Born as the son of Chandra, having shining black like the bud of thinai, having the figure of incomparable nature, having the good Characters knowledge and wisdom, and all other virtues, for which I pray you.

Puthan : Thiyana Slogam

You are the authority for knowledge; grants wisdom for those who worship you with pure heat; Sweetness in speech; talented in eloquence; composing of classics, O lord, I pray you.

Sri Puthan Sthuthi:

You are the authority for knowledge; grants wisdom for those who worship you with pure heat; Sweetness in speech; talented in eloquence; composing of classics, O lord, I pray you.
**The favourites of Puthan:**

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Foot Notes


2. ibid., P.24

3. ibid., P.26


5. ibid., P.16


9. ibid., P.26

10. Azhi. V. Ramasamy, Navagraha Vazhipadum Thosha Pariharangalum, (Nagappattinam: Kumari Publications, 2001), P.95

11. ibid., P.95

12. ibid., P.95

13. ibid., PP. 95-96

15. ibid., PP. 36-37