CHAPTER IX
Sukiran Sthala at Kanjanur
The Shrine for the Navagraha Sukkiran (Venus) has been located at Kanjanur which is three kilometers away from the Sōōriyanar temple. It is eighteen kilometers east of Kumbakonam and twenty two kilometers away from Mayilāduthurai. Sukkiran has been known by several names. They are Usāran, Bhāraghavan, Kavi, Kāviyan, Himāban, Kundavānan, Subrāmsu, Suklambharathan, Suklabhōoshanam, Sōōthi, Atmasith, vēdvēdāngā, Parāgan, Mahāmathi, Nēēthinijan, Nēēthīkkū Nēēthi Māṛkkāmi, Gragāthiban, Pābu, Karunā śiṇṭhu, Thaithiyā Maṇṭhri!

The temple is an old temple with prahāras. The presiding deity of the temple has been called “Agnēsswarar” and the Ambal of the temple has been known as “Karpagāmbigai”. The sthala virutisha of the temple is “Pōrasu” tree. There are two holy tanks in the temple namely “Again Thritham” and “Parasāra thirtham”. A number of saints including Parāsārar, Brahmā, Agani, Chandrā, Kāli kāmar, Maṇakkankanjāra Nāyanār and Harathātha Sivāchāriyar. Saint Appar hand visited the holy shrine and praised the sthala and the deities with holy hymns.

The sthala has a few important episodes associated with it. At Kanjanūr, there lived a person called vāsudēvar, who was a Vaishnavite. He had a son by name Sadārsanār who developed a deep devotion towards lord Sivā and used to wear the holy ash on his forehead and the rudraksha bead. Lord Siva wanted to prove that “Sivan” is the ultimate one and hence sat on a stood of red hot fire
and confined every body. Dakshināmōorthy of the same place converted Śodārsanar into a Saivite, gave him a new name called “Harathathar”. It is the birthplace of Mānakkanjara Nāyanār. It is also the place of having done Thirumāyam to Kalikāna Nāyanār. Again, it is the same place where lord Śiva presented the thāndavā scene to Parāsarar.

Plan of the Temple:

Kanjanūr, where the temple for the Navagrahā is situated is a small village. At the entrance of the temple exists a Rājagopura with five tiers. The main entrance of the temple is the southern gate and when entered into the temple, at the left turn side the Vināyakar is present. At the right turn side is present the Viswanāthar Ambāl shrine. Crossing over the inner gate and leading towards the shrine of the Swāmy, there exists a mandapa called the “Vowyal Nēṭhi Mandapa” where lord Vināyaga, Mayūrasubramaniyar and Goddess Mahālātshmi shrines are present. At that place, can be seen the sthala virukṣha of the temple the “Purasa” tree. Under the tree can be seen Lord “Agniēśwarar” as suyambu moorhty3.

The peculiarity of the temple is that, though the temple has been called a “Sukkira sthalā”, there is neither a separate shrine for him nor any puranic information’s that he visited the place and offered worship to the deities. Hence the presiding deity of the temple, Lord Agniēśwara, himself to be considered as Sukkira” and offered worship according to the Navagrahā āgamic rites.
Next to the shrine of Lord Agneeswara, the images of Mañakanjāra nāyanār, Kalikāmar are present. Next to that can be seen a devotee called Suraikkāi pathar along with his consort. The puranic information is that the Lord himself went over to his place, demanded a dish made out of “Suraikkāi (Pot gourd) and ate it, hence in remembrance of that event, the images of the saint and his consort are present in the temple.

In the Mahāmandapā, there are the shrines of Bhairavā, Sōoriya, Nālvar, Chaṇḍran, Sani Bhagavān and the Navagrahās. Next to that is present the Natarāja Saba where lord Natarāja is seen with his consort Sivakāmi in an alāwning style of iconography. The Ambāl shrine, facing the east presents the scene of the marriage with the lord in standing pose.

At the entrance can be seen the flag mast. Next to that can be seen the Nanthi, called the “Pulthinra nandhi” (Grass eaten nandhi) An interesting puranic episode is associated with the nandhi. A Brahmin of this area, dropped a bunch of grass on a calf accidentally, and as a result, the calf died. As a result of this, “Pasu thōśham” (Cow’s Curse) fell on the Brahmin and he was excommunicated from the Brahmin community. Hence, the Brahmin went to the temple and appealed to Harathathathar, who instructed the Brahmin, “after having a holy bath, offer a bunch of grass to the Nandhi” and as per that instruction, the Brahmin also did the same. The Nandhi received the grass and ate it and thus the Brahmin got relieved from the curse.
Legends:

1. Sukkiran Puranam:

Sukkira Bhagavān was the Guru or master of the Asurās. He was a stalwart in all arts. He was also the author of a book called "Rāja Thaṇṭhirā Nul" (a diplomatic book). He was born to saint pirugue ad pulōma. His brother was saint Siyāana Mahirishi. Angirasa Māhirishi was the teacher of both Sukkiran and Brahaspathy. The Asurās had a grievance that Lord Thirumāl used to help only the Dēvās ad hence, appeared to Sukkiran. Sukkiran also consoled the Asurās and instructed that he will go to Lord Sivā, obtain mantraupadesa and then he will tech it to them. He requested to Asurās to be patient until that time. Stating this, he went to Kāşi and began an acute penance over Lord Sivā.

Lord Indira, the chief of the Dēvās understood the plan of Sukkiran and wanted to spoil it. Hence, he sent his daughter Jayanthi to spoil the penance of Sukkiran. She also pleased Sukkiran through her sincere and loving activities. Hence, Sukkiran promised her that after he finishes his penance, he will marry her. Sukkiran learnt the precious mantra of giving life to a dead person from Lord Siva called "Miruṭha Sanjēēvine" 5.

Later, Sukkiran began to lead the marital life with Jayanthi, the daughter of Indira without it was known to anybody. Hence, the Asurās began to suffer without the whereabouts of Sukkiran. At the time, a fierce battle broke out between the Dēvās and Asurās.
Learning the news of the war, Sukkiran rushed to the rescue of the asuras. As Sukkiran had already learnt the "Mirutha Sanjeevine" mantra, he made alive all the dead asuras. Hence, the Devas suffered a lot to kill the asuras. Hence the Devas approached the Nandhi and requested him to find a solution to check the activities of Sukkiran. Lord Siva summoned Sukkiran to him and swallowed him. Hence, the Asuras, who with in the stomach of Siva for many years. Hence, he earned the name "Bhargavan" and "Sivaputhiran". The Devi came to the rescue of Sukkiran, pacified the wrath of Siva and rescued Sukkiran. Therefore, Sukkiran will be pleased if the Devi is worshipped during the "Sukkiravara". Sukkiran was the Guru of the Asura kings namely "Ivrushabharva", "Hiranyan" and "Mahabali". Sukkiran became one among the Navagrahas only by the grace of Lord Siva, hence Veilikizhamai (Friday) has been called as Sukkiravara.

Sukkracharyar, that is Sukkiran, who had learnt the "Mirutha Sanjeevini" mantra was not know to the Devas. Brahaspathy was the Guru of the Devas and his son was Hasan. The Devas deputed Hasan to Sukkiran to learn the Mirutha Mantra. Hence, Hasan came over to Sukkiran, became his disciple and attended faithfully all the duties of Guru. Sukkiran was very much pleased over the sincere activities of Hasan. In the mean time, Deivayani, the daughter of Sukkiran fell in love with Hasan. The Auras began to fear over the love affair of Hasan and Deivayani and suspected that Hasan may try to learn the Mirutha Sanjeevini Mantra. Hence, they plotted to kill Hasan and one day they also killed him. When Deivayani learnt the death of Hasan, she
pleaded to her father to bring him alive. So, Sukkiran using that Mantra gave new lie to Hasan and he came alive.

But the Asurās again killed Hasan, burnt him, and mixed the ashes with liquor and gave it so Sukkirāchāriyar. With out knowing the fact, he also drank it. Hence, the felt happy that Hasan will not come alive again. But Deivayāni, learning the plot of the Asurās and the death of Hasan, ran over to his father and explained everything. Sukkirāchāryar came to know the fact that unless he dies, Hasan cannot come alive. Hence, through the Mirutha Sanjēēvini Mantra, Sukkiracharyar gave life to Hasan, who came out, tearing the stomach of Sukkirāchāryar and he died. But, when Hasan came alive, using the same Mantra made Sukkiracharyar alive. Then Hasan prepared himself to go back to Devalōga. Deivayāni requested him to marry her and take her along with him. But Hasan replied that the daughter of his Guru is equivalent to his sister and said that he cannot marry her.

During the Vāman Avatāra, " Lord Thirumāl came over to Saint Mahābali in the guise of a dwarf Brahmin and requested him to give him three feet sand. Sukkiran advised Mahābali, not to give the sand, but Mahābali did not accept it and to grant the demand, he fitted the Kamandala to pour water. At once, Sukkiran took the form of an insect and blocked the hole of the Kamandala. So, Vāmana, took a dharbai grass and pierced it in to the hole which was blocked by Sukkiran in an insect form. The dharbai grass went through one of the eyes of Sukkiran and he lost one of his eyes. Hence Sukkiran went to Thirumayilai, worshipped Lord Siva and got back his eyes. As
Sukkiran is otherwise known as "Velli" (Friday) the lord came to be known an "Vellēēswarar". The colour of Sukkiran is white and seen seated on a lotus with one eye. His chariot will be drawn by a single horse.

**Pōōjas and Festivals:**

At this temple, the daily pōōjas are performed to the deities as per the rites and rituals. Three important festivals are associated with the temple. They are Māsi Maham, Yēgathina Vīžha and Harathathar Kāṭchī Vīžha in the month of Thai. Apart from these pōōjas and festivals, the devotees visit the temple and after special archanās and abhishēkas to the deities. As there is no separate shrine for Sukkiran, the presiding deity of the temple Lord Agneēswarar, has been assumed to have present in the form of Sukkiran and during the Sukkirawāra, special archanas and abhishēkas are performed to the Lord.

**Administration:**

The temple is under the control of Madurai Thirugnasambandar Ādēēnam, who is the head of the administration. To look after the day to day functions of the temple, there are a number of officials including the Priests. The properties of the temple are in the form of wet and dry lands. There are 175 acres of wet land and 50 acres of dry land. There are also 46 plots belonging to the temple. The other properties of the temple are in the form of gold and silver ornaments, wooden and metal vāhanas. The bundial offerings and other donations are the other sources of income. The annual income of the temple is around Rs. 40 Lakhs.
**Sukkiran and Astrology:**

(a) **Sukkira Dasai:**

Sukkira Dasai lasts for twenty years. He takes thirty days to cross over each rasi. Sukkira Dasai grants the fortunes or favours as per the details when he stays in these rasis.

1. Meena Rasi (Pisces) – 11/4
2. Rishaba and Tulā rāsis (Taurus and Libra) – 1
3. Mithunam, Kumbam and Maharam (Gemini, Aquarius, Capricorn) – ¾
4. Mēsham, Viruchika and Thanusu (Aries, Scorpio, Sagittarius) – ½
5. Simma Rāsi (Leo) – ¼
6. Kanni Rāsi (Virgo) – 1/3

During the months Ippasi, Vaikasi and Paṅguni, the good fortunes of Sukkiran can be seen. When he enters in to rasi houses of Rishaba, Tulam Mēnham, he grants good fortunes. when he enters into the stars of parani, pōoram and pōrada, the fortunes of Sukkiran can be seen. During the Sukkira Dasai, he causes misfortunes or distresses in terms of ill-health, bad company and financial constrains moreover it causes the desert ions of woman, and diseases associated with sexual diseases.

During the course of the period Sukkira Dasai and changing of its rāsis from one to another, there can be fortunes and misfortunes, when Sukkiran enter and stays in the first rasi house, it causes auspicious events, the support of ladies, and happiness in the family.
When he enters and stays in the 2nd rāsi, there can be happiness, monitory improvement and more cheerful in the family. When he enters into the 3rd house, he grants promotions, good health, and the happening of auspicious events. When he is present in the 4th house, there can be good relationships is the family, enemities may diminish and the social status may go up. When present in the 5th house he grants the grace of gods, economic prosperity and good spirits.

When Sukkiran moves into the 6th house, the fortunes will not be satisfactory, the wife's health may detioriate. When he moves into the 7th house, one's popularity may be decline and the sexual life will be very good. At the 8th house, he grants wealth, happiness although there will not be much cordiality among the family members. When he is present in the 9th house, there will be prosperity, good health, progress etc., he grants sexual pleasure when he is present in the 10th house, as a good result of that one may earn bad name. When he moves into the 11th house, he grants gifts of the acquirements of silver, brass properties, and the family condition will be wonderful. When Sukkiran cross over to the 12th house, he grants abundantly gold, silver, money and other wealth. He also permit the person to spend the wealth as per his own whims and fancies.

**Sukkira thōsha Parihāra (Relief):**

To get relieved from the Sukkira thōsha, he has to be appeased by performing special poojas, archanas and abhishēkas on Sukkirawara or Friday. Sukkiran has to be dressed in white colour
and adorned with ornaments with diamonds, white lotus flower, Sukkira sthōṭhiras should be chanted. The fire pit has to be filled with the leaves of the fig trees and the yāga fire has to be lit. For Neivēthiya, beans powder mixed rice, curd rice can be prepared and offered. The Dipārathana with camphor can be shown to the deity. During the pōōjas, Sukkira hymns on Parasu rāga (tune) can be sung.

**Sukkira Sthōthiram:**

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Sukkira Bhagavān Thiyāna Slogam:

“I pray Sukkira Bhagavān who was born in the birugu vamsa, having the graces of ice drops, kuntha flower and lotus and being the supreme guru of the asuras, and the one who have learnt and well versed in the flower Vedas, I pray you.”

Sukkira Sthūthi:

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"Siva Chakkirangal four, the hollow of the Dévi, nine lōga mōōlakavasam, eight platforms of the Siva Yuvathi, sixteen upper platform made of the rays of flame, three circles, three lines, all put together forty four philosophical angles over which you are seated, o goddess".

**Astrological Association of Sukkiran (Venus):**

1. Gothira Bharghave
2. Supreme Lord Indirani
3. Prathyathi Devada Indira Maruthuvan
4. Worshipping Lord Durga
5. Authority Rishabā and Tulam (Taurus and Libra)
6. Direction East
7. Language Sanskrit and Telugu
8. Caste Brahmin
9. Dress White
10. Consort Sukērthi
11. Vehicle Vizhakadikan
12. Flower White lotus
13. Tree Fig
14. Grain Beans
15. Food Ghee rice
16. Metal Silver
17. Gem Diamond
18. Dwelling period in a rāsi one month
19. Dasai 20 years
20. Properties: Kālāthirākāragan – wife
21. Fortunes: 1,2,4,5,6,7,8,9,11,12 - good fortunes
22. Sthala: Kanjanūr and Sri Rangam
23. Vāhana: Vultures or Garuda II
Foot Notes

1. Azhi. V. Ramasamy, Navagraha Vazhipadum Thosha Pariharangalam (Nagappattinam, 2000), P127.
2. ibid., P128.
4. ibid., P 32
5. Azhi. V. Ramasamy, op.cit., P 132
8. ibid., P 135.
9. ibid., P 135.
10. ibid., P 136.