

Spot on the Chin

Ananthalwan was born in 1053 AD in a place called Siruputtur, near the southern town of Mysore in India. He was interested in learning Vedas and scriptures and studied them from a very young age. He became a disciple of Bhagavad Ramanujacharya and spent his time performing service to his teacher.



Ananthalwan and his wife praying to their guru Bhagavad Ramanuja

Bhagavad Ramanuja's guru Tirumala Nambi lived in Tirumala Hills serving Lord Srinivasa. However, he was getting old and found it hard to maintain the temple and its surroundings. Ramanuja, who was inspired by Alvars's (saints immersed in deep devotion to the Lord) divine poems on Lord of Seven Hills, called an assembly of Acharyas, and asked them if any them would undertake the task of serving the Lord on the Hills every day.



Bhagavad Ramanuja asking the gathering "Who can go to Tirumala to serve the Lord?"

It was a well-known fact that the hills of Tirumala were covered with thick dense forests. It was home to many wild animals. There were not many people who lived on the Hills. Many of Ramanuja's disciples were fearful of living in such unfavorable conditions.

Anantharya, a strong and silent devotee in the gathering, rose to his feet and said, "Beloved Acharya! I will be happy to go to Tirumala and do service to Lord Venkateswara as per your wishes."



Ananthalvan volunteering to go to Tirumala Hills to serve Lord Venkateswara

Ramanuja felt very happy. He stood up and hugged Anantharya and declared before the gathering, “Anantharya , You are truly **THE MAN** (Aanpillai in Tamil).”



Anantharya , You are truly **THE MAN** (Aanpillai in Tamil)

Ananthalwan and his wife went to Tirumala and immediately started to clear away the land and establish a garden. They grew fragrant flowers, and wove them into beautiful garlands to offer to Lord Srinivasa throughout the day without taking any breaks.



Ananthalwan and his wife making garlands for Lord Venkateswara

One very hot and dry summer, the water level in Swami Puskarini decreased rapidly. Ananthalwan was worried that the plants would die without enough water, and decided to dig a well. Since his acharya, Bhagavad Ramanuja, had entrusted him with the task of performing service to Lord Srinivasa, he felt only he and his wife were responsible for taking care of the garden and so began to dig the well.

Ananthalwan's wife, who was pregnant, worked very hard to help her husband. She was a very devoted wife, and followed his instructions. As Ananthalvan dug out the dirt and mud from the bottom of the hole, she would put the mud into a basket, carry it, and throw them away from the temple.

She did this everyday, without resting or relaxing even for a moment. But, one day Ananthalvan's wife was very exhausted, that she dropped the basket of mud, and sat down to rest in the middle of the path. Lord Srinivasa who observed the couple's service, was moved seeing the dedication and hardship they were going through to dig the well. Lord Srinivasa who had observed the couple's service, melted with compassion on seeing Ananthalvan's wife's condition. He wanted to help them. He immediately took the form of a young boy and asked her to let him carry the basket of mud.

Lord appears as a small boy to help Anathalvan and his wife



She refused, but the young boy was persistent. He was determined to help her, and Ananthalwan's wife had no other choice but to agree.

Anathalwan, meanwhile, was digging at the bottom of the well with a crowbar. He noticed that his wife's pace, which was very slow, had picked up.



She returned with the empty basket within few moments. Ananthalwan became curious when he noticed his wife was returning much more quickly with the

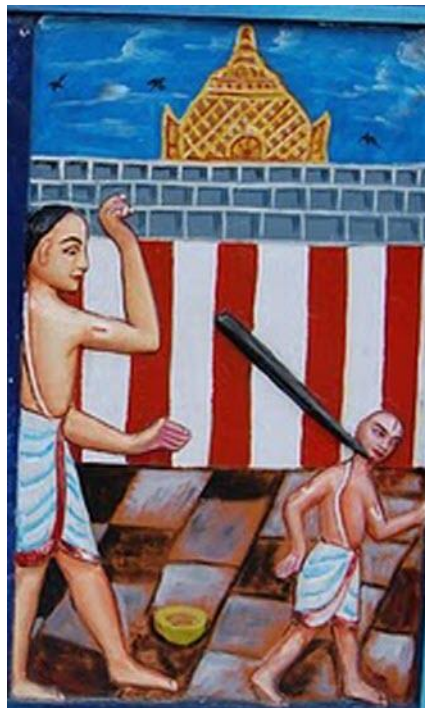
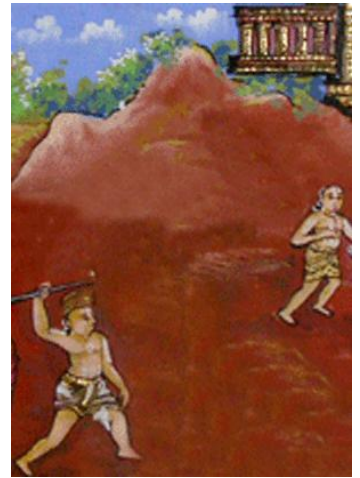


Wife shows Anathalwan the boy and says, "That young boy is helping us"

empty basket. When asked, his wife replied that she was aided by a little boy, who helped her carry the mud out. Ananthalvan became angry. He did not want anyone else performing this service to the Lord, and told the boy to go away.

The boy was very reluctant and kept nagging Ananthalvan. Ananthalvan became more furious, and threw the iron crowbar to chase him away.

The crowbar hit the boy's chin and the young boy started to run. Ananthalvan followed him, but the small boy was very fast. He ran into the temple. Ananthawan ran behind the boy but could not find him. He had vanished!



Ananthalvan throws the crowbar to scare the boy off and leave them alone

Next day, when Ananthalwan went to Lord Srinivasa's temple to serve him, he was shocked to see blood oozing out of Srinivasa's chin. He immediately understood the identity of the young boy, and was grief-stricken with remorse at hurting the Lord.



Ananthan sees Lord bleeding

He asked the priests to apply camphor, or paccha karpooram, on his chin so that the bleeding would stop and provide relief to the Lord. Ever since then, the priests of Tirumala have applied a white camphor to Lord Srinivasa's chin as a beauty spot.



Ananthan applying camphor to the injury

Lord Srinivasa, instructed the priests to hang the crowbar in the middle of the mandapam right in front of the deity. He wanted to show Ananthalwan's love and devotion to all, and also demonstrate His own love towards his devotees.

People who visit the temple today, can see the crowbar hung above the right side of the entrance door of the gopuram and can realize the significance.

To this day, after the Deepavali Asthanam in Tirumala, Lord Malayappa , Sridevi & Bhudevi (proceSSIONAL deities) return to Garbhagruha(inner sanctum sanctorum). While Sridevi & Bhudevi are taken inside the Garbhagruha, Lord Malayappa is taken anti-clockwise carrying and running around the Vimana Prakaram and then going into Garbhagruha. This is called as BHAG SAVARI Utsavam, which is unique in Tirumala. This depicts the scene where Ananthalwan was chasing the Lord with a crowbar and Lord as a young boy running and disappearing into the Garbhagruha.

Jai Srimannarayana!