



Story of Ananthalwan - Purasai Thota Festival

Thirumalai Ananthalwan: Selfless Service to the Lord

Purasai Thota festival is celebrated in Tirumala every year to showcase the love of Lord Srinivasa to his devotee, Ananthalwan, a disciple of Bhagavad Ramanujacharya. To serve his Guru, Ananthalwan volunteered to take up the task of growing a garden, so that beautiful fresh flowers could be offered to Lord Srinivasa every day.



Ananthalwan working in the garden

Ananthalwan worked on his garden very diligently. He plowed the land, sowed the seeds, tended the seedlings, and nurtured them with love and affection until they grew into beautiful flowering plants. While farming he



would often imagine, Lord Srinivasa being adorned with the flowers that he had planted in his garden. He would also imagine his Guru being pleased with the service he was doing to the Lord and that inspired him to grow & maintain the garden with utmost devotion & dedication.



Beautiful flower garden grown by Ananthalvan for Lord Venkateswara

In time, the garden was filled with vibrant, sweet smelling flowers. There were rows of white jasmine, red roses, pink lotuses, yellow daisies, green basil leaves, violets, orange lilies, green & yellow champak flowers, chrysanthemums and many more.



Ananthalvan and his wife would work in the garden the whole day adding more and more plants, removing weeds, making pathways, watering plants and plucking colorful and fragrant flowers to make beautiful garlands. These garlands were then offered to Lord Srinivasa every day.



Ananthalvan and his wife making garlands to Lord

Lord Srinivasa and Goddess Padmavathi were in awe at the variety of flowers being offered to them, that they decided to see the garden for themselves.



So one night, when the sky was clear, the stars were out and moon was shining brightly, Lord Srinivasa & Goddess Padmavathi appeared in Ananthalvan's garden amidst the fragrant flowers. The garden was in full bloom with flowers swinging gently to the breeze.

Lord Srinivasa and Goddess Padmavathi strolled through the garden admiring the flowers, tasting fruits and smelling the sweet fragrances of the flowers.

They became so absorbed in the beauty of the garden, that they did not realize they were stepping on flowers and trampling them. Throughout the night, they walked all around the garden, played with each other, enjoyed the lovely flowers and disappeared before the day dawned.



Ananthalvan hiding in the bushes



When Ananthalvan came to the garden the next morning, to pick flowers for the garland, he was shocked. The whole garden was a mess – leaves, flowers, fruit peels scattered everywhere. He became furious at the thought of someone destroying his garden and stealing the flowers that he decided to teach him or her, a lesson.

That night, Lord Srinivasa and Goddess Padmavathi visited the flower garden again, walking through the pathways, eating fruits and plucking flowers. They looked like a princely couple strolling with majestic grace.

Ananthalvan was hiding near the bushes in the hopes of catching the person who had stolen his flowers and trampled his garden.

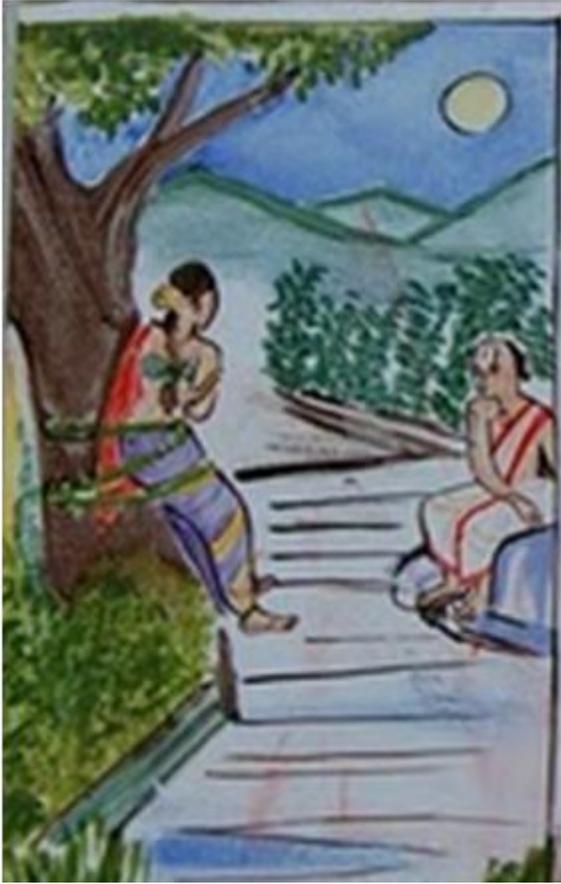


Ananthalvan gets hold of Padmavathi Devi while Lord Srinivasa escapes

As soon as he saw Lord Srinivasa and Goddess Padmavathi, he jumped up and tried to catch them. Lord Srinivasa was quick and He escaped.



However, Goddess Padmavathi was a little slow and got caught by Ananthalvan.



He tied her to a tree and waited with Goddess Padmavathi the entire night, in the hopes Her husband would return to rescue her and at that time he could capture him as well. But nobody came.

Next day, the temple priest came running to Ananthalvan. He said he had come to deliver a message from Lord Srinivasa. Lord Srinivasa had told him to tell Ananthalvan that the person whom he had tied to the tree was none other than Goddess Padmavathi.

Padmavathi tied to tree

Ananthalvan was embarrassed and cried out “Oh Lord! I have done a grave mistake, please forgive me.” Ananthalvan at once, took Goddess Padmavathi in a flower basket to the inner sanctum sanctorum. As soon as they entered the temple, Padmavathi devi disappeared and retained her original form on the chest of Lord Venkateswara.

Since Ananthalvan offered Goddess Padmavathi to Lord Srinivasa, he is considered as father-in-law to Lord Srinivasa and the festival of “Purusai Thota Utsav” is celebrated to remember this incident. Also, the honor bestowed upon Ananthalvan by becoming his son-in-law, shows the love and affection of Lord towards his devotees. He gives them opportunities to perform services and takes pleasure in accepting their service.

Jai Srimannarayana!