

TONDARADIPPODI ALWAR

VIPRANA:RA:YANA, BHAKTAGHRIRENU
Tirunakshtram: Dhanurma:sam, Jyeshtha Nakshtram

Tondaradippodi Alwa:r was born in Mandamgudi village, on the north bank of Kauvery River near Kumbhakonam in the year 787 AD. As he was born with the blessings of Lord Na:ra:yaṇa, he was named Viprana:ra:yaṇa. After Ve:da:dhyānam, he went to Srirangam and had darshan of Lord Rangana:tha. His heart danced with joy and he decided to spend his life serving the Lord with offering Tulasi garlands (ma:la: kainkaryam). On the Westside of the Temple, he developed a garden growing Tulasi and a variety of flower plants. Every day his duty was to make a beautiful garland with Tulasi leaves and flowers, and offer to Lord Rangana:tha accompanied by Devi Rangana:yaki.

On the north side of Kauvery in the village Kadambanagaram, a dancer by name Devadevi was living. One day she gave a performance in front of the Chola king. Impressed by her charm and skill, the king granted her lot of gifts. On way back she rested for a while in Viprana:ra:yaṇa's garden along with her sister Aliveni. They saw Viprana:ra:yaṇa in the garden. Devadevi went close to him and offered praṇa:m. Viprana:ra:yaṇa was so busy with his work, he did not reply her. Devadevi got terribly offended, and took an oath to seduce Viprana:ra:yaṇa. Her sister tried to explain that he was a saintly person and tried to dissuade her. Devadevi would not listen. Devadevi changed her robes to that of a saintly person, went to Viprana:ra:yaṇa and prostrated. Asked who she was, Devadevi replied "I am an unfortunate destitute woman, I want to serve a saintly person like you and get relief. Please allow me to serve you as a servant, Sir". Viprana:ra:yaṇa believed her words and accepted her. Devadevi acted her role well in helping him in nursing the garden and making garlands. Several months passed. Devadevi did not get a chance to put her intentions to action. She prayed Lord Rangana:tha and Devi Rangana:yaki that her desire to be fulfilled. The Lord smiled at her request. One winter day, the weather was rough and very cold. As usual Viprana:ra:yaṇa slept in the room of the cottage and Devedevi sat outside, trying to withstand the cold. Viprana:ra:yaṇa woke up from his sleep and reflected for a moment how Devadevi must be feeling miserable in the cold night. He opened the door and suggested her to come in and sleep in a corner of the room. That's enough. Devadevi with all her charms and skills achieved what she wanted to do. A total turn in the life of Viprana:ra:yaṇa.

Charmed by Devadevi, he was all the time moving behind her and totally neglected his services to Lord. He left the garden and went with Devadevi to her house and started living there. Devadevi on her part was serving Viprana:ra:yaṇa with reverence thinking that this was the blessing of Lord Rangana:tha. But her mother did not like this affair because Viprana:ra:yaṇa's presence in the house became a cause of drain of money, and Devadevi was not earning any more. One evening she drove him away from the



house. But Viprana:ra:yaṇa out of attachment was sleeping on the steps of Devadevi's house. Lord Rangana:tha and Devi Rangana:yaki during their trip through the city saw Viprana:ra:yaṇa sleeping outside, and took pity on him. To save him, Lord in disguise brought the golden vessel of worship from his temple, knocked the door of Devayani's house, and gave it to her saying that it was sent to her by Viprana:ra:yaṇa. Next day morning, the temple priest found the vessel missing and reported to the king. The city was searched and vessel was found in the house of Devadevi. She said that it was sent to her by Viprana:ra:yaṇa, thus he was found guilty, though he denied the charge. He was imprisoned.

That night, Lord Rangana:tha appeared in the dream of the king and said that the vessel was given by Him to Devadevi. He commanded that the vessel should be given to Devadevi, and Viprana:ra:yaṇa released from the prison. The king released him, and with all the respects sent him to his garden home. Viprana:ra:yaṇa felt guilty of his downfall with his material involvement with Devadevi. The compassionate Lord told him 'Don't feel guilty. Devadevi was an apsara in her previous life. With your association she was released from the curse, and attained Moksha'. And then, Viprana:ra:yaṇa continued serving Lord Rangana:tha till the rest of his life.

There are two great works of this Alwar. The first one is 'Tiruppliyeluchi', Suprabha:tam of Lord Rangana:tha, containing 10 Pasurams. The second one is 'Tiruma:la', containing 45 Pasurams in praise of Lord Rangana:tha also.

