

# GENESIS OF ANDAL TEMPLE SRIVILLIPUTTUR

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## Abstract

Andal Temple at Srivilliputtur in Viruthunager District in Tamil Nadu is one among the one hundred eight Divyadesas of Lord Vishnu. Andal temple is situated in the southwest site of Vadapathrasayana Perumal Temple. A granite wall surrounds the temple enclosing all its shrines, the garden where Andal is believed to have been born and two of its three bodies of water. Vatapatrasayanaperumal is believed to have appeared to Andal, Periyalur and sages markandeyar and Bhirugu Vatapatrasayanaperumal temple was built during the period of early Pandyas. The ground plans of the structure together with their measurements are given and some are illustrated in general ground plan of the temple. Like other big temples of South India this temple was built and various times. The temple inscription furnished evidences for determining the age of structures.

**KeyWords:** Andal Temple, Sriviliputtur, Inscription , Vadapathrasayana Perumal.

## Introduction

Vatapatrasayanaperumal temple is a vast and impressive complex of structures enclosed by high and massive compound walls all around occupying a rectangular plot of land. The RajaGopura with eleven storeys and the maintenance face the eastern direction. It is height in one hundred and ninety six feet with eleven Kalasas. This is the second highest Vaishnava temple to war in TamilNadu one after Srirangam. This gopura is believed to be constructed by the Periyalvar with the help of Srivallabhapandya (815 – 862) of Madurai.

The temple epigraphs mentions the date of construction and the person 822 A.D. of Sadiyenmaran alias Srimarasrivallabha is found on the Adhistana of Garbhagraha of Vadapatrasayanaperumal temple. Not only the temple epigraphs of this age but also some literary works reconstruct the history of this temple. Thiruppallandu, Periyalvar Thiruvaimoli. Nachiyar Thirumoli are of eighth century literary work, which refers to Srivilliputtur and its temple. This is the first and earliest reference to the primary deity Vatapatrasayanaperumal, Pillaiperumal Iyengar of Seventeenth century composed one hundred and eight Tirupathi on Srivilliputtur in praise of the Primary deity of this temple. This temple is also referred to in Srivaragapuram (Sanskrit), Srivilliputtur sthala Mahathmiyam. Kavipusanam Narasimachariyas Srivilliputtur sthalapuramulamum and Dravidamanoranjani, Pinpalagiyaperumaljiyers. Arayirappadiguruparamaparpravam and U.V.K. Srinivasaiyengars, Thiruppavai

Viyakyanam. This temple is glorified in the *NalayiraDivyaprabandha* the early medieval Tamil canon of the Alvars from 6<sup>th</sup> to ninth centuries. It is one of the one hundred and eight divyadesa dedicated to lord Vishnu who is worshipped as *Vatapatrasayanaperumal* and his consort *Lakshimi Andal*. *Periyalvar* the father of *Sri Andal* worshipped and served the Lord *Vadapadrasayanaperumal*. This temple is situated in the northeastern side. Hence his temple is called as *Vedaperunkoil*.

There are some legendary accounts about the origin of *Vadapatrasayanaperumal* temple. According to one legend. The Sage *Bhirugu* and *Markandeya* were doing penance and had their hermitages in *Varahashetra*. He was adense forest named *Shenbagarangen*. Ademon named *Kalaneri* was troubling the Sages and they prayed to *Vishnu* to relieve them from the demon. *Vishnu* was pleased by their devotion and appeared in the place to slay the demon. He is believed to have taken the abode in the forest reclining on *Adisheshalakshimi* and *Shri Bhoomipiratti* in a place called *Vadaveshwarapuram* or *Shenbagaranyem*.

*Shenbagaranyem* around *Srivilliputtur* was under the rule of Queen *Malli* whose sons *villi* and *Kandon* were hunters and used to hunt animals in *Shenbagaranyem*. One day these two hunters *villi* and *Kandon* went to the forest for hunting and spotted a tiger. They tried to kill the tiger with *Kandon* vigourously chasing it and *villi* almost lost tract of his brother. However after sometime the tiger managed to kill *kandon* by hiding behind a tree Pouncing on him at an opportune time. Unaware of this *villi* searched for his brother, got tired and feel asleep. During his sleep he had a dream *Lord Narayana* along with his consorts appeared in his dream narrated to him what happened to his brother and soil *villi* denote grieve we will get back your brother *Kandons* life. He then mentioned about his previous appearance as *Vatapatrasayi* in *sayenathirukkalam* under the foot of the banyan tree and said that there was a cave near a huge banyan tree where his moorthy had been lying for long time.

There were also lots of gold coins and Jewels near that place. he then instructed *villi* tongue the money in deforesting the place and built a village with a temple after installing the statue in the temple. *Villi* Wokau to find his brother *Kandon* also alive and narrated his dream to *Kandon*. He built a temple and installing the statue of the Lord *Vadapatrasayi* and created a small tom around the temple. As a forest full of snake mounds were converted into a town by *villi* came to be known as *Villiputhoor*. Later with the advent of *Sri Andal* it got the name *Srivilliputtur*. *Srivilliputtur* is also known by various other names such as *Varathakshetram*, then *Puduvai Vadesvarapuram*, *Veedamohandapuram*, *Shenbagaranyashetram*, *Sri Dhavanvipuri* and *Vikramachola chaturvedimangalam*.

### **Glory of Srivilliputtur.**

*Srivilliputtur* finds mention in the *Brahmakaivatsapuranam* and the *Varahapuramam*. The *Varaha Puranam* tells the existence of *Srivilliputtur* and the consequent visit of the lord during the *Varahaavantram*. The *Brahmakaivatsapuranam* mentions the location of *Vatapatrasayi* temple in *Srivilliputtur*. The *Srivilliputtur divya desam* has the unique distinction among all other *divya desams* of being the birth place of two important

Azhwars among the twelve Azhwars, Periyazhwar and Sri Andal. It is one of the few divya desam where all the Vaishnava Traditions and festivals are followed regularly every year. Even now in the true spirit of Sri Andal's Paasurams when there is a long period without rainfall, people form groups in their respective streets and do a parayanam of reciting the famous aazhi mazhai kanna verse from thimppavai certain number of times every day sure enough with the Lrods grace there is rain within a few days.

### **Sri Andal - Thiruavatharam**

The life story of Sri Andal is well known in south India and to a few people in the north. The Vaishnava tradition holds that Sri Andal was found in the flower garden at Srivilliputtur, which was under the Pandyan Kingdom. Accordingly, her date of birth is 8<sup>th</sup> June 3004 B.C. But modern historians fix the date as first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. But many follow the "Gum Parampara" tradition.

It is believed that Periyazhwar found a baby in his garden while he was making a garland for Lord Vatapatrasayi Perumal. He realized the grace of the Lord and treated the child as his own daughter and named her as Kothai Nachiyar. Peraiazhwar brought up Kothai in a caring and affectionate manner and used to teach her hymns about his beloved God Sri Krishna. Intensely listening to the hymns from her father Kothai got deeply interested in Sri Krishna and it transformed into deplove for Sri Krishan. She offered a garland to the lord after wearing for herself. The activities of Kothai irritated Periyazhwar and he deeply apologized to the Lord for her daughter's big mistage. But the Lord was pleased by the activities of Kothai. So she was called 'Soodikkoodutha Sudarkodi' and also came to be known as 'Andal'.

From that day onwards Periyazhwar started offering the garland worn by Andal. Even today it is the practice in Srivilliputtur that the garland is first offered to Andal and the garland worn by Andal is taken to the Vatapatrasayi Sannidhin and then offered to Vatapatrasayi. Similarly during Chitra Pournami festival in Madurai Lord Kallazagar of Tirumaalirumsolai in Kudurai Vahanam enters the Vaigai river only after wearing the garland worn by Sri Andal at the Srivilliputtur temple. In Tirupati during the fifth day of the Porattasi Brahmotsavam Thiruvengadamudayan wears the garland worn by Andal brought from Srivilliputtur.

As the birth place of Andal has been well preserved to this date and one can visit Periyazhwar's nandavanam known as Thiruthuzhaay Mandapam just inside the compound of the Vatapatrasayi temple in Srivilliputtur.

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