



NEW

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Dear Sai Brothers and Sisters,
The holy sojourn for this year begins with a visit to the famous temple at Arasavilli, Andhra Pradesh dedicated to the effulgent Sun God.

Suryanarayana Temple, Arasavilli



The effulgent Sun God

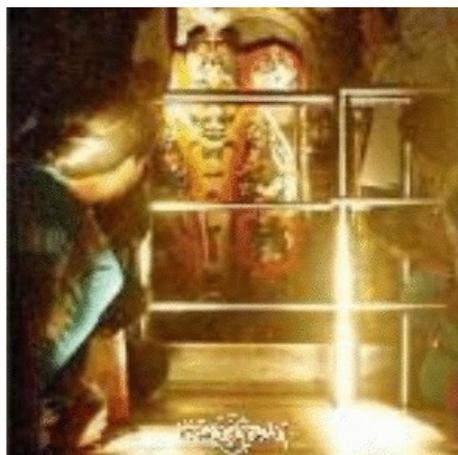
The famous Sun God Temple is situated in Arasavilli village which is at a distance of about 1 K.M. east of Srikakulam Town in Andhra Pradesh. It is one of the ancient and all among two sun God temples in our Country. The original name Harshavalli means abode of joy. It has SuryaNarayana Swamy (Sun God) as the presiding deity. Ratha Saptami is the most important festival which is celebrated in this temple. The temple is believed to have been built in the 7th Century AD by the Kalinga rulers Devendra Varma of Orissa.

Legend

According to Padmapuranam, Sage Kasyapa installed the Idol of Surya at Arasavilli for the Welfare of mankind. Therefore, the Surya is of Kasyapasa Gotra. He is also termed as planetary King. The ' Sthalapuranam ' of the temple narrates that lord Devendra had founded this temple and installed the existing idol of the sun God commonly known as Lord Suryanarayana Swamy under the following circumstances.

Once Lord Devendra, ignoring the words of Dwarapalaka Nandi, attempted to force his entry for Darshan of Sri Rudrakoteswara Swamy at an untimely hour when Lord Siva was along with his consort. The Dwarapalaka Nandi in the discharge of his duties kicked the intruder. Thus kicked and injured by the Divine attendant Indra fell down senseless and in his unconscious state Indra dreamt that he would be relieved of his pain of injury in his chest caused by Nandi if he built a temple and installed an Idol of the Sun God. After regaining his consciousness, he remembered what he dreamt.

Following his dream he picked up handfuls of earth three times at a place where he lay and there he found this beautiful idol of Sun God with his three consorts Usha , Chaya and Padmini . At the base of the idols are the figures of Mathara and Pingala the Dwarapalakas and high up are the two divine saints, sanaka and sanadana holding 'Chatrams' (An Umbrella). The Sun God is depicted as riding over a chariot drawn by Anura, the Radhasaradhy. All these figures are exquisitely carved out of a single black finely polished granite stone.



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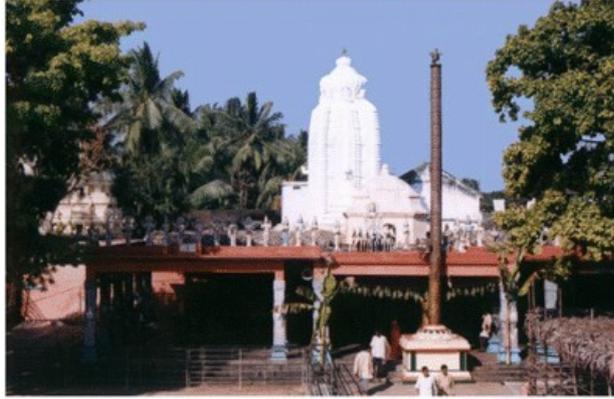
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This temple is a testimonial for the architectural skills of Vishwakarma Brahmin sculptors. It is believed that the Orissa Vishwakarma Brahmin sculptors also called as Maharanas in Orissa have planned the architecture and sculpted this engineering master piece. The temple is built in such a way that the Sun rays fall on the feet of the God twice a year in the months of February and June during the early hours of the day. The rays fall on the feet of idol for a few minutes through the five entrance gates of the temple remain closed. The five idols installed in one place in the temple viz., 1.Aditya 2.Ambica, 3.Vishnu, 4.Ganesha, 5.Maheswara are worshiped by different devotees. The Sun God is depicted as riding on a Chariot drawn by seven horses driven by Anura. All these figures are exquisitely carved out of a single black granite stone. Sundays during the five months from Magha masam are considered sacred. Every Sunday people from different places from Andhra & Orissa come here for worshipping the Sun God. This temple was built in the Orissa style of temple architecture.

Inscriptions reveal grants made by Aditya Vishnu Sarma and Bhanu Sarma of the Kalinga clan. The present structure is largely a result of 18th century renovations. The Temple is a panchayatana temple with Aditya in the center, with Ganesha, Shiva, Parvati and Vishnu in four corners of the quadrangle. An image of Indra is also enshrined in this temple. It is believed that those with skin ailments, blindness and barrenness are miraculously cured of their afflictions upon offering worship at this temple.



Our sojourn would continue next month.