



Glory of Bharath » Bharath Darshan

Dear Sai Brothers and Sisters,
Our sacred journey this month is to one of the holy abodes of Lord Karthikeya in Karnataka.

Kukke Subramanya Temple



Lord Kukke Subramanya

About Kukke Lapped in the luxurious abundance of the beauty of the nature the village of Subramanya lies in the Sullia Taluk in Dakshina Kannada with a sanctity which very few places can boast of. The temple is situated in the heart of the village. Nature reveals herself in all her unhidden beauty in the rivers, forests and mountains which the temples is surrounded by. It is about a 105 KM from Mangalore.

Mythology In consequence to the boon conferred upon Demon Tarakasura by Gods, in return for the penance he did, he was not destined to die from anybody, either men or gods aged above seven days and therefore being confident that there was no death for him, he began to tease the whole world, and the story goes on to say that he fought single handed and conquered all the three worlds. The Rishis also found it difficult to go on with their penance and hence they went to Lord Shiva and requested him to redress their grievances. Luckily enough, it was the seventh day, his son Kumar was born and through this child "Kumar" aged seven days, the Demon Tarakasura was slain in a hand to hand fight and Sri Kumar permanently made his abode nearby which is called Adi Subrahmanya. Near this Adi Subrahmanya there is a big temple and a Madhwa Mutt. The Kumara Parvath, (Mountain) is just adjacent to the temple and the pilgrims can go up the mountain with the help of mountain guides.

According to one Mythology, after killing the demon rulers, Tharaka, Shurapadmasura and their followers in a war, Lord Shanmukha reached Kumara parvatha with his brother Ganesh and others. He was received by Indra and his followers. Indra being very happy prayed Lord Kumara swamy to accept and marry his daughter Devasena for which the Lord readily agreed. The divine marriage took place on Margashira shudha shashti at Kumara parvatha. Gods like Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra and many other deities assembled for the marriage and coronation ceremony of Shanmukha for which waters of several holy rivers were brought. With these waters of Mahabhisheka fell down to form a river which was later known by the popular name Kumaradhara.

The great Shiva Bhakta and Serpent king Vasuki was performing tapas for years in the Biladwara caves of Kukke Subrahmanya to avoid the attack of Garuda. Following Lord Shiva`s assurance Shanmuka gave darshan to Vasuki and blessed him that he would stay with his parama bhakta in this place forever. Hence the poojas offered to Vasuki or Nagaraja are nothing but the poojas to Lord Subrahmanya.

Derivation of the name Kukke Subrahmanya It has been learnt from books and legends that Subrahmanya used to be called Kukke Pattana in the past. In the 'Shankara Vijaya' Anandagiri observed that Sri Shankaracharya camped here for a few days during his religious expedition. Shankaracharya referred to this place as 'Bhaje Kukke Lingam' in his 'Subrahmanya Bhujangaprayata Stotram' makes the above evidence all the more convincing. Moreover, the Sringeri Mutt situated to the north of this temple is ancient enough to be an eloquent proof to the above fact. A Mutt of the Dwaitha system of Sri Madhwacharya can also be found in this place. As legend has it, that divine sages have installed many Lingas of Lord Shiva in this area.

Vasuki also installed a Lingam of Lord Shiva blessed as he was with the power of Skanda Swamy. As the

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Linga of Lord Shiva was installed in the 'Kukke' or 'Kukshi' in old Kannada language (the cave) it became famous as Kukke Linga and consequently the place rose to the fame as Kukkepura. Shivanidhi observes that 'Shivalinga Pradurbhava Patala' of Lalithagama Jnanapada, which describes the hundred and thirteen Shiva centres, refers to this 'Subrahmanyehipeshwara'. This means that lingas of Lord Shiva installed by Ahipa-Vasuki are in Subrahmanya. It may be interesting to note that this description accords with the legend of the place. But as per the villagers explanation the Kukke means basket. The worship of linga in basket (kukke) resulted in naming the place as Kukke.

Temple

Pilgrims going to the temple have to cross the Kumaradhara River and take a holy dip in the river before entering the temple for their darshan holy viewing of the Lord. The devotees enter the courtyard from the doorway at the back, and walk around to go before the deity. Between the sanctorum and the portico entrance, there is the Garuda pillar covered with silver. Devotees circumambulate this pillar. It is believed that this pillar was charmed and planted there to shield devotees from the poisonous flames streaming from the breath of Vasuki who resides inside. Beyond the pillar are the outer hall, the inner hall, and then the sanctorum of Sri Subrahmanya. At the center of sanctorum is a pedestal. On the upper dais stand the deity of Sri Subrahmanya and the deity of Vasuki and, at a somewhat lower level, the deity of Shesha. Ritual worship is offered to these deities every day.



Temple through the ages

The temple was in ancient days under the Hoysala Ballala Kings of Dwara Samudra. The statue of Ballala King installed in front of the temple bears unmistakable testimony to this fact. This place was an important town during the reign of Ballala rulers, and the temple enjoyed a splendour and grandeur of its own. It is learnt that various and varied services used to be offered to this temple by many kings. Indore, Mysore and Coorg continue their services to this temple even to this day. The reign of Ballala kings drew to all close and with it did the epoch of splendour and grandeur enjoyed by this temple too. It seems that during the period of time that followed the temple came under the management of the local people. Later on this district came under the Government of East India Company and the management of this temple also rested directly under the above Government from 1810 to 1845. No doubt, consequent upon this happening the properties and liabilities were managed along efficient lines; but as the surrounding areas were converted into protected forests the climate went bad, the population decreased and this place plunged into obscurity.



The temple

In 1845 the collector of the South Kanara appointed the Swamiji of the Subrahmanya Mutt. Sri Ramakrishna Asranna, the Tantri (Priest) of the temple and Archaka Narasimha Acharya as the trustees of the temple and handed over the management of the temple to them. Endowment committee was formed in 1863 and the committee in charge of the Subrahmanya Temple allowed the above Trustees appointed by the Collector in 1845 to continue as trustees. His Holiness Sri Vidyaraja Thirtha of the Subrahmanya Mutt managed the affairs of the temple in his capacity as on of the trustees from 1845 to 1851. Later on subsequently different trustees administered the temple efficiently and in 1938 the tenure of these trustees drew close and Endowment committee appointed new trustees for a period of five years. And this procedure is continuing till today.

Puja Activities

Ashlesha Bali Pooja & Sarpa Samskara are two important Sarpa Dosha Poojas are done at Kukke Subrahmanya Temple.

Ashlesha Bali

Ashlesha Bali Puja or Aslesha Bali pooja is one of the important Kaalasarpa dosha pujas performed at Kukke Subramanya temple near Mangalore in Karnataka. Lord Subramanya is known as the protector from Kaalasarpa dosha and Kuja dosha. Kukke Sri Kshetra temple is the most popular for Sarpadosha puja. Ashlesha Bali puja is performed on Ashlesha nakshatra in each month. It is believed that if this puja is performed on other days it has no power. Devotees believe Shravana masa, Karthika masa, and Margashira masa are the most auspicious months to perform Ashlesha bali puja at Kukke temple.

Sarpa Samskara / Sarpa Dosha

Sarpa Samskara / Sarpa Dosha is one of the pujas performed by devotees at this temple to get rid of the sarpa dosha (according to belief, a person, either in this birth or in any of his previous births, could be afflicted by the sarpa (serpent) dosha (curse) either knowingly or unknowingly, through many ways). Persons who are afflicted with this dosha are advised by astrologers / horoscope writers to perform this pooja for their own wellbeing. Pooja can be done either by the afflicted person himself if he is male and married, or through a priest. This is because the pooja involves rituals similar to those done while performing shrartham (funeral rites). Due to the widespread belief in the snake god in Tulunad region of Karnataka and Kerala, this pooja is performed by people of all faiths.

Festivals & Celebrations

The Annual festival is celebrated here every year from 'Karthika Bahula Dwadashi' to Margashira Shudha Poornima'. But the devotees begin to throng here as early as 'Karthika Bahula Amavasya' and will continue to do so till 'Margashira Shudha Saptami'. The Lakshadeepotsava is celebrated on the day of Karthika Bahula Amavasya and on the four succeeding days, the Chandramandalotsava, Ashwavanotsava, Mayura Vahanotsava and Flower Chariot Utsava are conducted respectively. On Panchami (the fifth day) 'Panchami Rathotsava' is celebrated at night. On the Shashti day Sri Subrahmanya Swamy and Umamaheshwara come out at an auspicious hour in the morning to participate in the festival. Sri Subrahmanya Swamy mounts the 'Brahmaratha' and God Umamaheshwara the 'Panchami Ratha'. Then a very strange occurrence takes place.

The Garuda Pakshi (kite) which is never found in this place on the rest of the days of the year makes its appearance at the time of Ratharohana and again at the time of Avabrath Mahotsava the next day. At the time of car festival the chariot is pulled by means of cane. The moment the car festival is over the devotees vie with one another to get hold of a piece of this cane because this is considered to be very effective cure even for the most virulent, positions like that of a snake-bite. Then the God alights from the chariot. The devotees perform various kinds of worships. Then the 'Mahapooja' and the 'Mahasantharpana' (feeding of Brahmins) take place. The next day of Shashti also Sri Kumaraswamy comes out to take part in the festival. After the 'Okuli Pooja' (Sprinkling of Saffron water) God proceeds to 'Matsya Thirtha' where the 'Nauka Viharotsava' and the Avabritha takes place. After this festival the devotees and pilgrimage start returning and the density of the population lessens gradually. But the festivals continue till Poornami. On that day 'Maha Samprokshana' is conducted and with this the annual festivals come to a close.

Our sojourn continues next month...Till then Sai Ram