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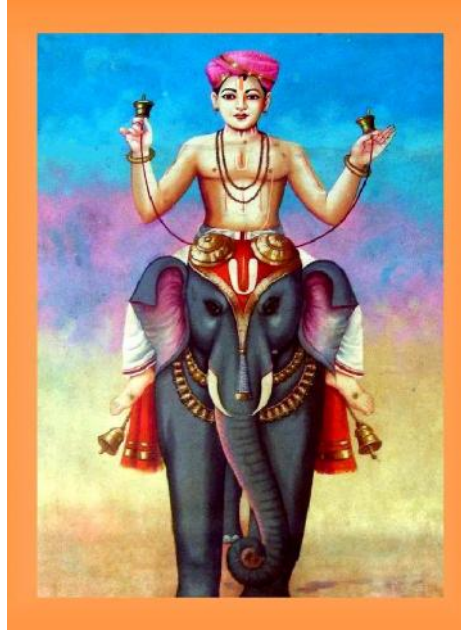
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Srinivasa Bala Bharati

VISHNUCHITTA

English Translation

Prof. K.V. Ramakrishnamacharya



**Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams,
Tirupati**

Srinivasa Bala Bharati - 149
(Children Series)

VISHNUCHITTA

Telugu Version

Dr. K.V. Raghavacharya

English Translation

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FOREWORD

If a beautiful garden is to be raised, one needs to take proper care of tender flower plants. In the same way in order to create a good society, great care needs to be taken of young children who are going to be future citizens of India. All their intellectual attainments will be futile if they fail to learn of their culture and its greatness. They need to be told of great men and women of this country so that they are inspired by their ideals. The essentials of our culture should be given to them in the form of simple and charming stories. They will cherish these ideals and be guided by them. They will promote good and they will love the society they live in. They make their families proud and bring great prestige to their country when they grow up into good citizens.

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams have brought out these booklets for children in Telugu under Srinivasa Bala Bharati Series. Although meant for children, they are useful to the elderly too. They have found place in the book shelves of every family. The stories of legendary men and women are narrated in a simple way. We hope that more and more children will read them and profit by them.

I congratulate Dr. R. Sri Hari, Editor-in-Chief, TTD for his efforts in bringing out the English translations of SRINIVASABALA BHARATI SERIES so well. We have received co-operation of many learned men and women in our efforts to popularize this series. I am thankful to them.

In the Service of the Lord



Executive Officer,

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams.
Tirupati.

FOREWORD

Today's children are tomorrow's citizens. They need apt acquaintance with the life-histories of celebrated persons at tender so that they get opportunity to lead their lives in an exemplary way. They will come to know that great things such as Indian culture, basic tenets of life and moral teachings are abundantly available in the life-experiences of great men. It is observed that there is no scope to teach such subjects in school curriculum.

Observing such circumstances the Publication Division of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams has published about hundred booklets in Telugu about the lives of famous sages and great men written by various authors under the editorship of Dr.S.B. Raghunathacharya under "Bala Bharati Series". The response to these books is tremendous and it has given impetus to publish them in other languages also. To begin with, some of the books are now brought out in English and Hindi by T.T.D. for the benefit of boys and girls and the interested public.

These booklets, primarily intended to the growing children and also to the elders to study and narrate the stories to their children, will go a long way to sublimate the aspirations of the children to greater heights.

R. SRI HARI
Editor-In-Chief
T.T.D.

Welcome To Srinivasa Balabharati Series

The series is the outcome of abundant grace of Lord Sri Venkateswara.

This will be an unfailing source of inspiration to the young.

It enshrines the best of Bharatiya tradition. May this noble endeavour be successful.

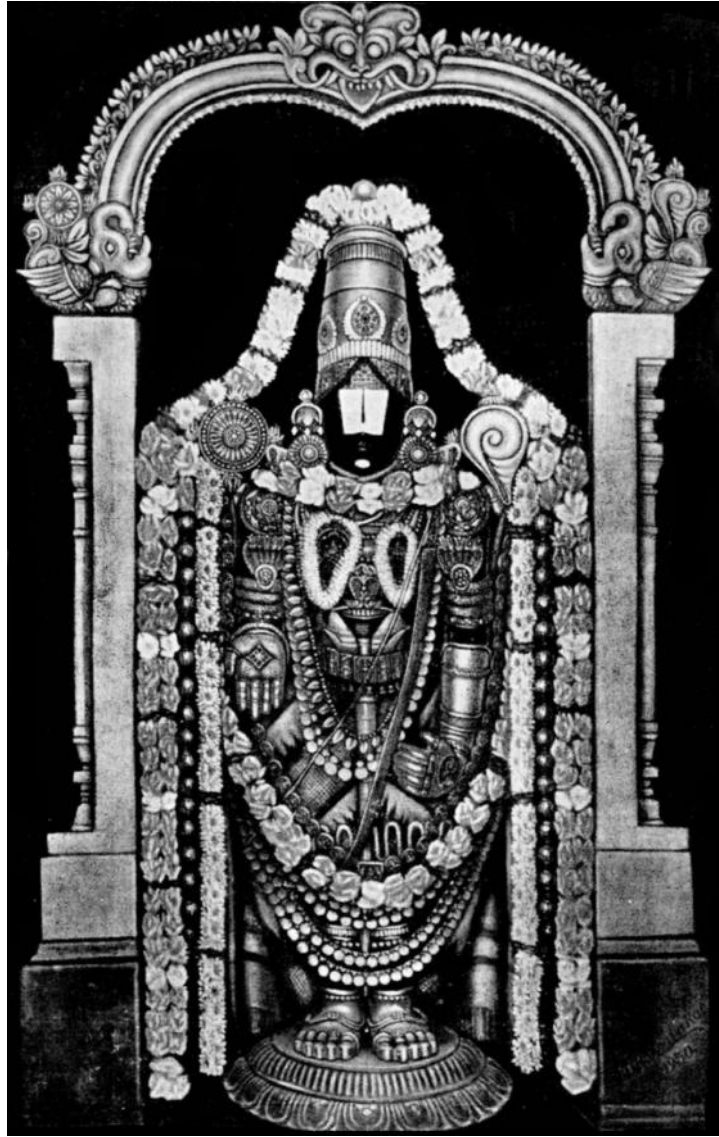
India has been known for its culture and civilization, its ethical and dharmic way of life from time immemorial. India has marched ahead with its commitment to dharma, its resistance to adharma, its espousal of life-affirming values and its humane attitude to life as a journey towards God realization. Those who embodied these values in their life have been a beacon of light to us. Their impact is deep on the life we lead. Young boys and girls will find them exemplary and feel proud of their invaluable heritage. They will love their motherland and dedicate themselves to its service.

It is therefore necessary that the young learn about these great men and women so that they will realize their indebtedness to them for their selfless contribution to the enrichment of life. This should indeed be a chief component of true education which ensures the perennial continuity of Indian culture and civilization. SRINIVASA BALA BHARATI SERIES has come into existence to acquaint the young boys and girls with right perspective of Indian life and values through a series of booklets written exclusively for this purpose describing in brief the lives of great men and women.

We welcome you to share our joy in launching these booklets.

S.B. Raghunathacharya

Cheif Editor





VISHNUCHITTA

Can an illiterate person participate in a discussion on Sastras? Can a mere gardener take philosophical decisions? Can a mere attendant to god direct Paratatva? If such things happen, we call it a miracle. A common man cannot perform such things. Only an ardent devotee of the Lord can perform such tasks, with the Lord's grace bestowed upon him. One such devotee was Vishnuchitta.

Alwars-The Vaishnava Saints

The word 'Vishnuchitta denotes one who resides in Lord Vishnu's heart. He earned this name as he always remained engrossed in meditating on Lord Vishnu. Vishnuchitta is revered as 'Periyalwar' by the Vaishnavaites. Alwar - the word means a devotee of Lord Vishnu. It is the Vaishnava name for a saint. The Alwars were twelve in number and are considered to have been incarnations of the attendants, arms or insignia of Vishnu. They endeavoured for the spread of Vaishnavism in South India and finally attained salvation (moksha) by serving him and praising him. The eldest among them was Vishnuchitta. His greatness lies in the way he praised God, out of fondness and with motherly affection, similar to that of Yasoda, whenever God appeared before him. His daughter "Goda" married Lord Sri Ranganatha and he had the

rare privilege of becoming the father-in-law of the Lord himself. This is the reason why all the devotees of Lord Vishnu adore him as 'Periyalwar'

Glory of Srivilliputtur

Srivilliputtur is in that region which was once ruled by Pandya kings and was well known for its prosperity. There were huge mansions, beautiful ponds- full of swans and ducks, and the orchards and gardens echoed with the chirping of parrots and cuckoos. All these added to the splendour and beauty of the place. The town followed a perfect planning and the roads cut each other at perfect angles.

The cornices (borders) of the mansions were decorated with images of parrots and cuckoos studded with precious gems. When the chirping of the birds from the garden echoed in the mansions, it appeared as if the images of the birds were chirping.

Kingfishers, which dwelled on the edges of these mansions, took a sudden plunge into the deep wells nearby to catch fish. By looking at them, it appeared as if the mistresses of the houses were playing a game with a ball.

Early in the morning, when the ladies opened their plaited hair, decorated with flowers, the bees resting on those flowers used to raise up and hover, buzzing all the way. This sound resembled the sound of a veena being played and the passers by would think that the

mistress of the house was playing veena (a musical instrument).

Dravidian Women

The married women of the town used to smear a paste of turmeric before taking bath in the ponds. When the colour of the turmeric got mixed with water, it gave a golden tinge to the wings of the swans resting near the steps, leading into the pond. When these swans flew into the town, people used to think that the 'Rajahamsas' (Divine swans) have descended from the heaven.

After taking bath in a pond full of red lotuses, the religious women filled their vessels with water for anointing the Lord (Abhishekam), plucked the flowers for offering to god and went to the temple singing sacred hymns (Dravida Prabandhas).

Honesty of the guards

The Brahmins of the town used to take bath in the canals which supplied water to the fields, early in the morning. The ducks slept in these canals with their heads buried under their wings. When the guards on patrol saw these ducks, they considered them to be the left over wet clothes of the Brahmins, out of delusion. When they tried to get them, in order to return them to the Brahmins, the ducks suddenly woke up and swam away from them. On seeing this, the guards remained dumbstruck. Instead of appreciating them

for their honesty the maidens guarding the crop used to make fun of their foolishness.

Orchards and Fields

The gardens were full of jasmines, date palms, mangoes, safflowers, gold flowers (champaka) and oleander trees. The jackfruits were as huge as boulders and reminded the Hindu Cupid's (Manmadha) elephants in rut.

Sugandhi variety of plantain trees were in abundance in the orchards. The huge bunches of plantains, that almost touched the ground, resembled big garlands and presented a pleasant sight.

The Temple in the North

Everyday, in the evening, the kettle drums were sounded and musical instruments were played in Lord Mannaru Krishna's temple. On hearing this all the swans returned back to their nests, flapping their wings and cooing loudly.

The breeze blowing from the south brought the fragrance of Tulasi garlands adorning the idol of Lord Krishna, along with the sweet smell of the delicious dishes offered to the Lord.

The bells on the sacred pillar erected in front of the temple were sounded by the gentle wind blowing from the south. On hearing the ringing of these bells, the birds sleeping on the champaka trees, inside the

temple, used to get scared and wake up making a lot of noise. When the couples heard this noise they mistook it to be dawn and used to get out of their beds.

Houses of the pious people :

Lord Mannar Krishna's temple was towards the north of the town. There were two big chariots (Rathas) in front of the temple. They were as big as the mountains Meru and Mandara. On either side of these chariots were the houses of religious people. When the coconut trees in the front yard of the houses bloomed, their shade formed a decorative (rangoli) pattern. On either side of the main entrance of these houses were images of two elephants showering water on goddess Lakshmi's image which was in the middle. And on either side of these images were 'Sankha' and 'Chakra', the weapons of Lord Vishnu. In this way all the houses in the town depicted Vaishnavism.

Religious People of the town (Bhagavatas) :

Being very hospitable, the pious or religious people of the town offered prostrate homage to the guests, out of great respect. They invited them to their houses with great pleasure and served them delicious lunch. After lunch, they offered them betel leaf and attended to them by taking care of their needs. And when they were about to leave, they duly honoured them and gave

them a warm send off. In this way all the people of the town served guests everyday.

Bhattanatha-none other than Lord Garuda

Vishnuchitta was originally Bhattanatha. Among the vaishnavaites in Sriviliputtur, he was regarded as the most pious vaishnava. It is believed that he was born from a part of Garuda or Garutmanta and his birth star is Swati. According to Vaishnava tradition the period when he lived is considered to be the 46th year of Kaliyuga and according to the modern historians, it is 8 B.C.

Vishnuchitta disregarded hardships and fortunes. Though uneducated, he displayed wisdom and was free from worldly attachments. He always meditated on Lord Vishnu. Pleased by his devotion, Lord Vishnu blessed him and resided in his heart. So people called him Vishnuchitta. He used to wear a dhoti with a reddish tint and adorned his body with the Namam (the upright mark drawn on the forehead by the vaishnavaites). He used to wear a chain of beads made from Tulasi and lotus seeds. He always chanted the 'Dvaya Mantra'. His daily routine included making garlands and offering to 'Vatapatrasayi' and serving Lord Srimannarayana. He strongly believed that serving religious people was far greater than serving the Lord. Being a principled man, he used to donate or offer food to all the vaishnavaites, who visited the town with

whatever he earned. He used to serve them delicious dishes in accordance to different seasons.

During the rainy season he served them hot rice with four or five varieties of curries, papads and curd. During summer he first offered them pure sandalwood paste (which acts as a coolant), to be smeared on their body. Later he served them hot rice, sweet rasam, sugarcane juice, tender coconut water, small tender mangoes (which shed from the tree due to hot weather), scented coldwater and buttermilk and during winter he used to serve them musky rice, pepper powder, hot curries, pickles, rice pudding (payasam), ghee and milk.

On every Saturday he would give oil and flour made from Mowha seeds for anointing their head (head bath). Recital of the Dravida Veda and narration of stories related to Lord was a regular feature and continued till midnight in his house. In this way he served the guests with utmost sincerity and hospitality.

Ruler of Pandya Kingdom - Vallabhadeva

Vallabhadeva, who was a virtuous king, ruled the Pandya Kingdom in those days. He was known for his righteous conduct and integrity. His capital was Madhurai. He used to patrol in the streets at nights to know about the well being of his people. One night, while he was on patrol, he heard the following verse recited by a Brahmin, lying on the raised terrace in front of his house-

**“Varsharthamashtau prayateta masan
Nisarthamardham divasam yateta
Vardhakya hetorvayasa navena
Paratra hetoriha janmana ca.”**

The king interpreted the verse in the following way-
“A person must gather everything he needs for the rainy season during the other 8 months, things needed for the night during the day, things needed in for old age during his youth and must strive to attain salvation during his lifetime”.

He realized that, instead of striving to attain salvation, he was wasting time by enjoying the worldly pleasures. He then decided to worship the God who could bestow the boon of attaining salvation. He honoured the Brahmin who made him realize his mistake.

Discussions and debates in the king’s court

The very next day he organized a discussion with the learned and wise people of his kingdom. He asked them to clarify his doubt and ascertain regarding the God who could bestow salvation. He even announced a reward for the person who would win the debate. The bag containing the reward money was hung very high in the centre of the hall where the debates were taking place. One of the debaters said that Lord Siva was the only god to bestow salvation while the other said it was Goddess Parvati. Someone else argued that

it was Agni and the others said that it was Lord Surya, Ganapati, Lord Brahma and so on. But none of them could justify their arguments.

In Srivilliputtur, one day while Vishnuchitta was reciting the ‘mulamantra’ and adorning Vatapatrasayi with the garlands made of Tulasi, he heard the God speaking to him. He said, “Oh, wise man! Today, you should go to Madhurai, participate in the debate, suppress the pride of the debaters and prove my greatness and all-pervasiveness. You should win the reward and initiate King Vallabhadeva, who has lost interest in the worldly affairs, into Vaishnavism.”

On hearing these words Vishnuchitta trembled with fear. He prostrated before the Lord. Overwhelmed by happiness and devotion, he obediently said, “My Lord! I have not learnt any Sastras. I have dedicated myself to your service. If you send me, a mere servant, to the king’s court for debating, won’t it be a disgrace to you? Won’t your reputation be at stake? If you wish, I would maintain the temple premises clean, make garlands for you, carry your flag staff (dhwajam), fan you, carry the lamp, bring water and even carry your palanquin. Participating in a debate is beyond my ability. Moreover, there is no use of such debates to me. Is there no one else to take up this task?”

Pleased by his devotion, Lord Srimannarayana decided to help Vishnuchitta win the debate by using

his miraculous power and expressed the same to his consort, Goddess Sridevi. He then ordered Vishnuchitta to go to the king's court and assured that he would support him by all means.

Vishnuchitta had to accept as he had no other choice. Nambi made arrangements for his journey and the expenses were borne by the temple authorities. Accompanied by a number of devotees of Lord Vishnu, Vishnuchitta set off to Madhurai in a palanquin.

Arguments put forth by Vishnuchitta

Discussions and debates were still in progress in King Vallabhadeva's court. As these were open to all, Vishnuchitta could easily enter the court without any request or obtaining prior permission. Surprisingly, once he stepped inside the court, he became zealously active and there was a kind of genius glow on his face, all because of the god's grace. The king and all other courtiers stood up as a mark of respect and he was offered a golden chair by the king himself. After receiving honours, he requested the king to be the mediator for his arguments. Having obtained the consent of the king, he started his debate.

He started his argument by stating that the world is full of Lord Vishnu, who is the only one to bestow salvation and that he is the Truth. He condemned the arguments of the other scholars by proving his philosophy through many examples from the Vedas

and the Upanishads. Through his arguments he brought out the significance of Visishtadvaita.

He further continued his arguments saying that Lord Narayana is omnipresent. He is regarded as the mother, the father, the brother, the protector, the friend and that he is our final destination (abode). This has been mentioned in 'Subalopanishat', which states the relationship between the living being and the Supreme Being.

With authentic proofs, he brought out the supremacy and omnipresence of Lord Srimannarayana.

He then elaborately explained about the omnipresent nature of Lord Narayana. He said that in the very beginning, Lord Narayana was the only one to exist in universe. There was no Brahma, no Siva, no Earth, no Sky, no Moon, no Sun, no Stars, no Fire or Water either. In such a state Lord thought that loneliness doesn't help in enjoying the pleasures of life. So, he created the living being and nature. If the living being is the body of the Lord, nature is the body for the living being and Lord Narayana is the soul for both. Without soul a body cannot exist. So, Lord Narayana exists in all living beings and in nature, right from a miniature living being to the largest being. The sect of philosophy which brings out this fact is called Visishtadvaita.

'Chandogyopanishat' states that Lord Narayana has taken different forms according to his wish and will.

The brilliant and the glorious one, the Pundarikaksha, is none other than Lord Narayana. He is neither Siva nor Brahma.

The Vedas and the Upanishads describe the unique, divine form of Lord Narayana, his virtuous nature and his divine attributes. The names Brahma, Siva and Indra, mentioned in the sacred texts, indicate Lord Narayana. So, he is the only one to bestow salvation.

In this way Vishnuchitta proved the supremacy of Lord Narayana and won the debate. At that very moment, the bag with the reward money, which was hung high in the centre of the hall, fell down, sound of the trumpets was heard and there was a shower of flowers on Vishnuchitta, indicating his victory.

Way to attain salvation

Vishnuchitta, then discussed the way to attain salvation. He insisted on practice of abstraction and meditation (Yogam). It means meditating on god by following 'Yama' (restraining passions), 'Niyama' (providing proper place for worship) and being a satwik (a man of gentle temper). A person who observes this is called a 'Yogi' (an ascetic).

'Satta' is the name given to the essence of the Supreme Being, without a proper form, on which the yogis meditate. That form is none other than Lord



Vishnu and is the centre of all the energies in the universe. It is unique and different from the form of the universe. He is the abode of virtuous qualities, divine excellence and supreme power. He is full of mercy and has taken different incarnations to protect the humanity and to establish dharma.

Vishnuchitta then said, “O king! One, who wishes to attain salvation, should divert his attention from the worldly pleasures and meditate on Lord. Let me describe ‘His’ divine form to you in this context. His face is as pleasant as the moon during the autumn season, his eyes are as large as red lotuses, his cheeks glisten with charm and beauty, he has a broad forehead, his ears are adorned with ‘Makarakundalas’ (ear rings bearing the figure of a crocodile head) embedded with precious stones, has a conch like neck, a broad chest adorned by goddess Sridevi and Srivatsam (a particular mark, said to be a curl of hair, on the breast of Vishnu) and has four long hands extending until the knees. He is clothed in a saffron robe and wears a crown, garlands and chains studded with precious gems. He carries a conch, a disc, a mace and a sword in his hands, the weapons to protect his devotees.”

Method to be followed for meditation :

“A sadhaka (one who practices meditation) should meditate on this form of the Lord with greatest concentration. With regular practice he can retain the

form of Narayana in his heart. Once he attains such state, Lord Narayana's form will always be radiant in his heart - while walking, sleeping or working. In this way a human being develops intimacy with the God and becomes inseparable, just like a magnet that attracts a piece of iron."

"So, king Vallabhadeva, you should serve Lord Narayana and follow bhaktiyoga to attain salvation. There is no way easier than this. This was the 'Saranagati Dharma' the Lord Krishna preached Arjuna on the battle field, asking to surrender himself to the lotus feet of the Lord to attain salvation."

In this way Vishnuchitta educated the king, regarding 'Vishnu Tatva', taught him the 'mulamantra' and initiated him into the Vaishnava sect.

The king was pleased by Vishnuchitta, gave him the reward and honoured him by making him sit on an elephant (which was considered as the greatest honour to a scholar). He then gave him a warm send-off.

When Vishnuchitta was returning to Srivilliputtur, Lord Srimannarayana, who was mounted on 'Garuda' along with golden Lakshmi, appeared before him. He appreciated and praised Vishnuchitta for being victorious and for establishing his supremacy in the king's court.

Vishnuchitta was filled with ecstasy on seeing the divine form of the Lord. His feet were as tender and

gentle as the red lotuses and Garuda was bearing them in his palms. The Lord was clothed in a saffron robe and in his hands were the conch, the disc, the mace and a lotus. The Makarakundalas were shining brightly. There was an affectionate look in his eyes. He was accompanied by gods, goddesses and his devotees.

Vishnuchitta expressed his gratitude through a benediction (mangalasanam) to the Lord by ringing the bells of the elephant on which he was sitting. His heart was filled with motherly affection and he feared that some evil eyes might fall upon the Lord.

His fame lies in the fact that he was the only devotee who was privileged to bless the Lord. He blessed the Lord in 12 poetic verses called 'Tiruppallandu' which is being sung in all the Vaishnava temples even to this day.

Lord Vishnu, pleased by his devotion blessed him and appreciated him. He then ordered Viswakarma to fill Vishnuchitta's house with treasure and disappeared.

A grand welcome to Vishnuchitta

On hearing about his victory, all the people of Srivilliputtur offered a grand welcome and he was carried in a vehicle borne by Brahmins (a mark of great honour) as a procession, accompanied by the princes, the rich and the pious people. Vishnuchitta worshipped Lord Mannaru Krishna and then reached home. He

was surprised to find his house wealthier than ever before and understood that God had favoured him in this way. He started serving more number of devotees. He continued serving God, offered garlands to Him and wrote 'Tirumoli' (Srisukti) in 461 verses, in the Dravidian language.

Vishnuchitta finds a baby

One day, while Vishnuchitta was strolling in the tulasi garden, he found a small baby on the platform of a well. He was quite surprised and awestruck by the beauty, delicacy and the signs of goodness in the child. Since Vishnuchitta had no children, he considered that the baby was a boon from the Lord, took the baby home and gave her to his wife. They brought her up with lots of love and affection. She was named 'Goda'. She was an incarnation of Goddess Bhudevi. She happened to hear the story of Maladasari, who served Lord Vishnu (incarnated as Varaha), through his song of Mangala Kaisiki and finally attained salvation. She realized that singing in praise of God is the most fruitful way of serving God and in order to serve the Lord in that way, took birth as 'Goda'. In her previous birth she was Satyabhama. Nagakanyas, who took birth in the neighbourhood became her companions. The games that they played and the songs they sang reflected their devotion towards god. 'Goda' used to hear about the noble and virtuous qualities of the Lord through



their songs and in accordance to the tradition of her previous birth 'Goda' decided to marry Lord Vishnu.

Vishnuchitta made garlands of tulasi and red water lilies (chengalva) for offering them to Lord everyday. Attracted by their beauty, 'Goda' used to wear those garlands and look at her reflection in the water secretly. She then placed the garlands back in their place. Ignorant of this act, Vishnuchitta used to offer the same garlands to the God. One day when he happened to notice what his daughter was doing, he warned her saying that it was wrong. He then made new garlands with fresh flowers and offered them to the Lord.

But the Lord did not accept those garlands and told Vishnuchitta that he liked to wear the garlands worn and discarded by 'Goda'. He also told him that 'Goda' was none other than goddess Bhudevi and a great devotee. He then ordered him to bring the garlands adorned by 'Goda'.

On reaching home, Vishnuchitta praised 'Goda' calling her 'Yennai Andal' - which means, a mother who had come to help him attain salvation. So, 'Goda' is revered as Andal.

From that day Vishnuchitta took the same garlands, which were first adorned by 'Goda' and offered them to the Lord. This is the reason why 'Goda' is praised as "Amuktamalyada" - which means one who discards the garlands after adorning them.

Margasirshavrata (A religious vow)

Vishnuchitta used to sing in praise of different incarnations of Lord Vishnu. On hearing this Goda was fascinated by the noble, virtuous qualities and glory of the Lord, Sri Ranganatha, and decided to marry him. She heard the story of gopikas, who performed 'Katyayani Vrata' to marry Lord Krishna, in 'Srimad Bhagavatam'. She also decided to perform a vrata to marry Lord Sri Ranganatha.

Everyday she used to wake up early in the morning, took bath in the well in the garden, made garlands of red water lilies, plucked bananas and went to the temple. After cleaning the temple premises and decorating with rangolis, she used to decorate the Lord with the garlands and offered Bananas. After circumambulating (pradakshinam) the temple she used to take teertham (holy water) and return home. At home she imagined herself to be a gopika and composed and sang one verse of Lord Krishna everyday. This routine continued for 30 days and it was also called the Dhanurmasa Vrata. The 30 verses that she composed and sang took form as a sacred text called 'Tiruppavai'. The verses in 'Tiruppavai' reveal 'Goda's love and devotion towards Lord Krishna. This is the reason why 'Goda' is regarded as one among the 12 Alvars and revered as the only woman to attain that status.

‘Goda’ also composed ‘Nacchiyar Tirumoli’ in Dravidian language, which consists of 143 songs, describing her dream where in the Lord marries her.

On observing the religious vow being performed by ‘Goda’ Vishnuchitta became quite concerned about her as she was becoming lean and weak due to the grief of separation from her lover, Lord Krishna.

He went to the temple and told the Lord about the religious vow being observed by ‘Goda’. On hearing this Lord told him the story of ‘Maladasari’ and reiterated that there is no other greater penance than singing in praise of Lord and that ‘Goda’ was an incarnation of goddess Bhudevi, who has been born with a purpose. He then asked Vishnuchitta to take ‘Goda’ to Srirangam.

Vishnuchitta obliged and took ‘Godadevi’ to Srirangam. They visited the temple of Sri Ranganatha, situated amidst river Kaveri and had darsan. Vishnuchitta praised him as the Supreme Being, as the soul of the universe, as one who cannot be destroyed, as an Eternal Being and as the form of Truth and prayed to bestow mercy and grace.

Impressed by his devotion Lord Ranganatha enquired about his well being. ‘Goda’ offered pranams to the lotus feet of the Lord. Overwhelmed by her beauty, Ranganatha took ‘Goda’ to his palace.

When, Vishnuchitta did not find 'Goda', he became worried and insulted the Lord saying that he had kidnapped his daughter and was trying to make fun of an old and weak Brahmin. He retorted that if the Lord was impressed by 'Goda', he could have married her, instead of kidnapping her. He warned Lord saying that though he is weak and old, he has the support of all the Bhaghavatas (Religious People).

On hearing these words, Lord Ranganatha, afraid of the disgrace of causing distress to Vishnuchitta, who was a religious person, said, "why do I need to kidnap your daughter? Have you become mad and foolish? Go and check, your daughter is safe in your house."

Vishnuchitta thanked him and praised him for his kind nature, went home and felt over joyed on seeing his daughter.

Goda kalyanam (wedding)

Lord Ranganatha decided to marry 'Goda'. He sent Lord Brahma and Saraswati, Lord Siva and Parvati to fix the alliance after speaking to Vishnuchitta. Vishnuchitta was filled with ecstasy and informed them that he would accept the proposal on one condition that Lord Ranganatha should come to Srivilliputtur to marry his daughter.

Lord Sri Ranganatha reached Srivilliputtur accompanied by all other deities, saints and sages.

Goddess Parvati and Goddess Saraswati decorated the bride while singing songs. 'Goda' was blessed by the pious ladies, wives of sages.

The bride and the bridegroom got seated on the dias. After the initial formalities and rites Vishnuchitta offered his daughter to the Lord. The couple was blessed by Gods, sages and all the guests, who attended their wedding.

Lord Ranganatha then returned to Srirangam along with 'Goda' and stayed there happily forever. He continued to bestow mercy and grace on his devotees.

Vishnuchitta became the father-in-law of the Lord and was revered equally with sage Bhrigu, The king of oceans (Samudra) and King Janaka.

Sri Krishnadevaraya, a great king who was a patron of art and literature, wrote the story of Vishnuchitta in the form of poetry in verse (Padyakavyam) with the name Amuktamalyada and dedicated it to Lord Venkateswara.

Everyone should read this noble poem to gain knowledge and wisdom.

We should derive inspiration from Vishnuchitta, a pious person, who is a role model for all the devotees and has laid a path of devotion to attain salvation.

