

## Thaipusam:

Thaipusam is an important festival dedicated to Lord Muruga, observed in the Tamil month of Thai (January-February), on the day of the star Pusam around Pournami (Full Moon). Though there are several legends around the festival, the rituals remain the same, and it celebrated in a grand way particularly in the temples dedicated to Lord Muruga.

On the day of Thaipusam, devotees offer to take Kavadi, with a basic structure of a palanquin having a wooden rod with two bags slung on



either side, in a procession. The kavadis are usually decorated with flowers, interwoven with peacock feathers, with brass bells adorning and announcing, as the bearer draws it along. The baskets hanging on either side contain the devotees offering to God, such as milk, rice or other articles. The most devout devotees perform this ritual as a Sadana by walking barefoot in a procession, and collect these offerings by begging from door to door. The Kavadi-bearers are found dressed as Pandarams, a Saivaite mendicant, wearing saffron colour clothes, and seen with several rudraksha malas on the chest.

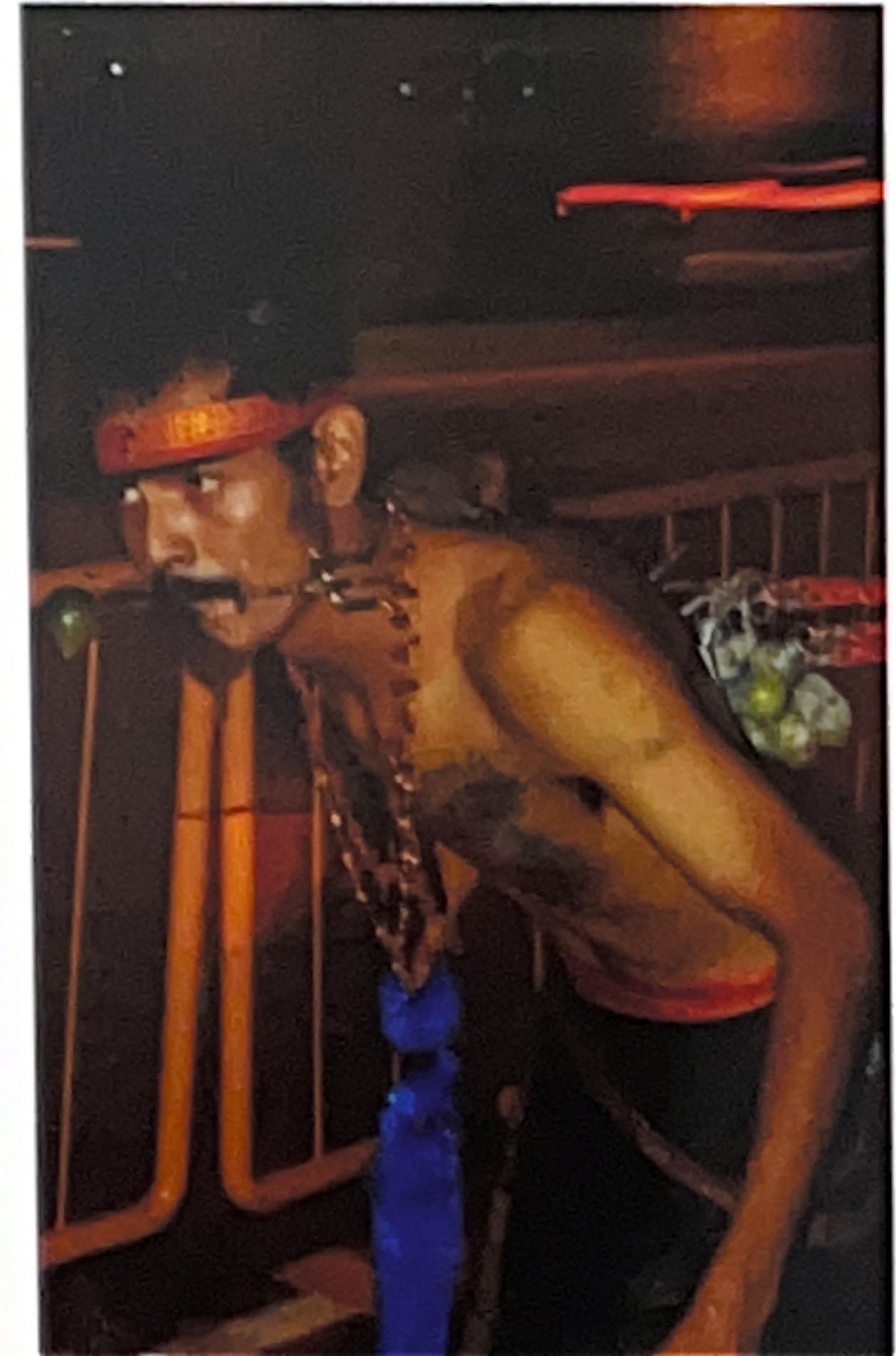
Apart from observing certain procedures during the procession, the kavadi-bearer observes strict celibacy, eating saatwik food, abstaining from all sorts of intoxicating drinks and drugs, and always thinking of God. Many devotees who do it as a Sadana also impose various painful procedures on themselves such as piercing a spear through their tongue, protruding through their mouth, and pulling the chariot carrying the Lord with hooks pierced on their backs. Devotees believe that such procedures remind them of the Lord always and gives them a great sense of endurance. Further, the belief that God enters the Kaavadi carrier's soul make them go through this ritual with great religious fervour.

## **Thaipusam in Sri Thendayuthapani Temple:**

Thaipusam is celebrated during January/February, that is, during the Tamil month of Thai. On the previous day, the deity, Lord Murugan, is taken on a procession in the Silver Chariot, to Sri Layan Sithi Vinayagar temple, and returns in the evening followed by Chettiar Kavadies and other devotees. This event is popularly called as Chetty Pusam in Singapore.

On Thaipusam day, hundreds of devotees offer prayers either by piercing their body with spikes and lemon, pulling a chariot or carrying Kavadis from Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple. The devotees then offer their prayers and fulfill their vows. The Vel (holy spear) in the sanctum is showered with milk continuously for hours.

Several Chinese devotees and people of other religions and races also come to fulfill their vows on this day. Sri Thendayuthapani temple has celebrated this festival in Singapore for more than hundred years. Annathanam (Free Food) is provided from 12.30 pm to 4.00 pm on Thaipusam day, at the Chettiar Wedding Hall located within the temple premises.



# Glossary of non -English terms found in this book

<i>Abhishekam</i>	: Ritual bath for deities
<i>Annas</i>	: Indian pennies used in earlier times
<i>Arasa Maram</i>	: A fig tree that is usually considered sacred by worshippers
<i>Ashtabandhana Maha Kumbhabhishekam</i>	: Kumbhabhishekam performed for newly constructed temple
<i>Ayam pon</i>	: An alloy of 5 metals comprising of Gold 1 portion, Silver 1 portion, Copper 5 portions, Zinc 2 portions and Iron 1 portion
<i>Brahmotsavam</i>	: An important festival in the Hindu temples, which is believed to be orchestrated by none other than Lord Brahma himself in honour of the presiding deity of the temple
<i>Chandi Homam</i>	: one of the most popular Homams (yagna) that is performed during various festivals, especially during Navarathri
<i>Chitra Pournami</i>	: An auspicious festival that is observed on the full moon day in the month of Chithirai (Apr-May)
<i>Guru Peyarchi</i>	: An astronomical transition of planet Jupiter (Lord Guru), which is believed to create astrological effects on human beings
<i>Hanumath Jayanthi</i>	: Celebrated to commemorate the birth of Lord Hanuman
<i>Kalasam</i>	: An inverted pot like bulbous structure that forms the top most portion of the temple tower or Gopuram
<i>Karthikai</i>	: A festival of lamps associated with Lord Muruga
<i>Kittangi</i>	: Warehouse shops
<i>Kovil / Mandir</i>	: Temple
<i>Kumbhabhishekam /</i>	: Consecration ceremony performed whenever the temple goes through any structural enhancement or is newly built
<i>Maha Kumbhabhishekam /</i>	
<i>Samprokshanam</i>	

*Maha Sivarathri*

: Literally meaning "Night of Shiva", it is a Hindu festival celebrated every year in reverence of Lord Shiva

*Makara Vilaku*

: An annual festival held on January 14 in Kerala, India at the shrine of Sabarimala

*Mandapam*

: Mandapa or Mandapam in Indian architecture is a pillared outdoor hall or pavilion for public rituals

*Naatukottai chettiyars / Nagarathars*

: A famous money lending community in South India

*Nandi*

: Name of the Holy Bull, which serves as the mount of Lord Shiva, and as the gate keeper of Shiva and Parvati in Hindu mythology

*Naagar*

: Snake God

*Navarathri*

: A 9 day festival dedicated to the worship of Goddess Durga

*Paalastapana Pradishtai*

: A secondary consecration ceremony usually performed when deities are temporarily moved to a different location

*Padayal*

: Offering of food

*Pandarams*

: Priests from non-brahmin origins

*Paal Payasam*

: Milk porridge

*Paal Kudam*

: Milk pots

*Periyachi Pooja*

: A pooja performed in the Tamil month of Aadi (July-Aug) to honour Goddess Periyachi

*Pongal*

: Harvest festival celebrated in South India

*Pooja*

: A ritual honouring various deities

*Pragaram*

: Temple compound / Sanctum

*Pradishtai*

: Secondary consecration

*Punithamaram*

: Holy tree

*Purattasi Sani*

: Auspicious Saturdays in the Tamil month of Puratasi (mid-september – mid-october), when Vratham or fast is observed for Lord Vishnu

*Rama Navami*

: Also known as Sri Rama Navami, it is a Hindu festival celebrating the birth of Lord Rama

*Rajagopuram*

: A monumental tower, usually ornate, at the entrance of the temple

*Santhanakuda Abhishekam*

: An abhishekam of Sandalwood paste offered to the deity

*Sankabhishekam*

: Sankabhishekam is performed by pouring holy water kept in a conch or sangu on a deity. Participating in a Sankabhishekam is said to create harmony and prosperity in the family

*Sankatahara Chathurthi*

: An auspicious day devoted to Lord Ganesha. Poojas performed on this day is said to relieve devotees of their worries and troubles

*Sadhana*

: A spiritual practice meant to accomplish a wish / desire

*Saatwik*

: Purity

*Sangu*

: Conch

*Sangu Stapanam*

: Placement of the revered Conch

*Saivaite*

: Devotees of Lord Shiva

*Saiva Sidhantha*

: Lord Siva's prophecy

*Skantha Shasti*

: Skanda Sashti commemorates the destruction of evil by Lord Murugar, and is celebrated with the dramatic enactment of Soora Samhaaram (destruction of Asura or evil)

*Soolam*

: A religious symbol of three spears, usually referring to Goddess Shakti

	: Footstones of Lord Rama, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu
<i>Thiruvadigal</i>	: Twelve-volume collection of Tamil Saivite devotional poetry
<i>Thevaram</i>	: Fire walking ceremony conducted in temples
<i>Theemidhi</i>	: A Hindu Festival that is celebrated on a full moon day in the Tamil month
<i>Thaipusam</i>	of Thai (Jan-Feb) for Lord Muruga by carrying the Kavadi
	: Lamp worship or lamp pooja
<i>Thiruvilakku Pooja</i>	: Holy pond within the temple premises
<i>Tirukulam</i>	: Temple donation boxes that are circulated or kept in temples
<i>Undial</i>	to solicit funds from public
	: Devotees of Lord Vishnu
<i>Vaishnavites / Vaishnava</i>	: A tradition in Hinduism that considers Lord Vishnu
<i>Vaikhanasa</i>	as the supreme God, and preaches the worship of the almighty and his avatars
<i>Vasantha Navarathri</i>	: Vasanta Navaratri or Spring Navaratri involves nine days of fast and worship that Hindus undertake during spring every year
<i>Vaikhanasa Agama</i>	: Vaishnavite practices
<i>Vaikunda Ekadesi</i>	: An auspicious day dedicated to Lord Vishnu
<i>Vimanam</i>	: A peak that is built above the sanctum sanctorum of a temple
<i>Vasthu Shastra</i>	: Science of construction or architecture based on how nature affects human dwellings
<i>Vel</i>	: A holy spear held by Lord Murugar

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" This book is a comprehensive compilation of the history and evolution of Hindu Temples in Singapore. Taking the reader on a historic journey through the origin and spread of Hindu Temples in India and South East Asia, this book traces the establishment of Straits Settlement that led to an exponential growth of the Indian community in Singapore. It further provides a detailed account of each Hindu Temple in Singapore illustrated with interesting pictures and details including the temple's uniqueness, festivals, maps, and generic facts. This collection promises to be an interesting coffee table book for all regular temple visitors, temple enthusiasts and tourists who seek to experience the rich legacy of the Hindu Temples in Singapore".