

NZ Thirumurugan Temple – Our Journey So Far to June 2020.....

The Tamils who migrated to New Zealand predominantly from Sri Lanka, Malaysia, India and other South east Asian countries up to the late 1990's felt the need for a common meeting place to foster their religious believes (faith), culture and common bond. The children of these migrants were lacking the knowledge about their own culture, language and traditions. It was felt that a medium should be provided where by the community can regularly meet to foster culture, values and believes.

The vision of a Hindu Temple was first conceived by a handful of Hindus who had migrated to New Zealand in the nineties. The idea began to take more concrete shape following a few Hindu festivals held at community halls in Auckland – the first one being “Thai Poosam” on 28 January 1999 at the Mt. Albert War Memorial Hall. The significant level of interest and support from the community led to the formation of The New Zealand Thirumurugan Temple Incorporated Society in February 2000. We must acknowledge the contribution of the Inaugural Trustees and Management Committee for putting in an enormous amount of thinking and effort in finalising the constitution and strategic details for the future to come.

Initially Lord Murugan's sacred “Vel” was the only icon that was used to offer the prayers followed by other festival structures (manjam etc) made locally and stored in the residence of a devotee. Sentiments from Auckland devotees was to end this practice of keeping our Lord Murugan's Vel in a box and taking to different halls as soon as practicable. Following the formation of the society, priority was given to have poojas at a single venue every Friday, sponsored by different families. Leicester Hall in Eilerslie became the first regular venue, setting the benchmark for the unwavering devotion and commitment of the community.

While this was happening, fund raising for a permanent abode for our Lord Muruga went up a notch with generous support from the community willing us to have a temple as soon as possible. Having raised a level of funding to support part payment, the search started to find suitable halls from Mount Roskill to Papakura. This concluded with our purchase of 174A Marua Road, Mt Wellington building in May 2001.

To the delight and awe of devotees, Lord Murugan's sacred “Vel” was appropriately installed on His birth day of Vaikasi Visakam in June 2001 at 174A Marua Road. Following this, foundation for moolasthanam was laid in January 2002. All icons including Thiruchenthoor Murugan, Maha Ganapathi and Rajarajeswary Amman were made of granite stone in Bangalore and started their voyage to arrive in time for kumbhabhishekam after Tamil New Year in 2002 with the first Kumbhabhishekam taking place on 29 April 2002.

Patronage of the temple had a sharp increase following the Kumbhabhishekam and this building was our Lord Murugan's abode until 13 December 2012. Due to limits on capacity and desire to extend devotional experience with “veli veethi”, multi-purpose hall and increased car park options, we had commenced search for a larger building - once again across the whole of Auckland. Following the extensive search, we identified the current building at 145, Church Street, Otahuhu in June 2012, formally confirming our decision to purchase on 28 September 2012 after successfully obtaining the required resource consent.

“Balasthanam” in the new location was held on 13 Dec 2012 following which extensive work was done on the design and building consent of the new temple with the traditional layout. Decision was

made to add the installation of Kethara Lingam and Maha Vishnu icons. Bhoomi Pooja was held in March 2013. Following successful receipt of the building consent, construction of the new temple commenced and was completed within an exceptionally short period. This enabled us to have the Kumbhabhishekam on 8th June 2014 in a grand manner.

Since then the number of festivals observed at the temple increased significantly and we had the first Mahotsavam (Annual Thiruvizha) in Jan-Feb 2015. Mahotsavam has now become the major event in the temple calendar now with incremental enhancements to the way it is held with attendance by hundreds of devotees.

Acknowledgements:

We are eternally grateful for having a temple of our own and would like to place on record our acknowledgements:

Firstly, our Lord Murugan for giving us the opportunity to have his abode in Auckland.

- Our patron for his guidance and moral support always
- The amazing continuous support of the community for their moral, physical and financial support all the way
- The small group of visionary devotees who had put in the energy to bring the concept to life and form our temple
- The inaugural trustees for their foresight towards laying the foundation for the society
- The inaugural management committee for working hard to translate the vision into reality
- All our esteemed priests for their enormous contributions over the last 20 years
- All the members, including the life members, of our Society,
- All members of the governing board (formerly known as trustees) for their oversight and governance of the society
- The leadership of the society over the years for their unwavering commitment, leadership, perseverance towards achieving the goals of the society
- The members of each management committee for their selfless commitment and hard work
- Finally, and importantly, the wonderful group of volunteers without whom the temple will not be able to function