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ANJAMBALAM THODUPUZHA YATRA

India is one of the oldest civilizations of the World. It has a rich history of art, architecture, medicine, culture etc. The Vedas, the Puranas, the Shastras are read and appreciated all over the world.

The two Epics of India, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana are well known to all and both don't need any detailed descriptions about them. They are the bedrock of Indian culture and history. The Panch Pandavas or the Five Pandavas who are the central figures in the Mahabharata traversed the length and breadth of the country during their exile and built temples in different parts of the country.

The temples they built in Thodupuzha, Idukki District of Kerala are the subject of our video. The name Thodupuzha is derived from two words in Malayalam, Thodu meaning Touch and Puzha meaning River. The same river touches and flows through all the places where the Five Temples are situated and thus we get the name Thodupuzha. The Sree Krishna temples built by the Pandavas are together known as, THE ANJAMBALAM OF THODUPUZHA or THE FIVE TEMPLES OF THODUPUZHA. All the temples are surrounded by medicinal vanas or forests. Two of the temples face West and the other three face East. Let us now get to know more about each of the temples and see how they have stood the test of time and what is their condition today.

Our first and most important temple in this video is the Edavetty Temple. In today's modern world as diseases are increasing so also are the cures for it, but still all of us are on the lookout for miracle cures; that is why the first temple we will look at is the Edavetty Temple. This Sree Krishna Temple was built by Nakula, the fourth among the Panch Pandavas. The temple shrine is facing the western direction. Here Sree Krishna is worshipped in the form of Lord Dhanwantri, who is considered as the physician of the devas or gods. Our Puranas mention him as the God of Ayurveda. It is also believed that this temple has got the blessings of the Ashwini devas or the Ashwini Kumaras, the twin gods who are the divine healers associated with Ayurveda, medicine, health, the sciences etc.

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The Edavetty temple is surrounded by an Oushadha Vana or a forest of medicinal plants and trees. This forest which is of immeasurable value exists till today. It is believed that the Goddess Vana Durga guards this very dense forest. Big companies like Dabur, Kottakal Arya Vaidyashala etc. collect the medicinal herbs, roots, tubers and other medicinal products from these vanas or forests, they then offer what they have taken from the forests to Lord Sree Krishna, thereby getting the blessings of Lord Dhanavanthri and then only take these to produce various oils, medicines etc.

There is a big Cherai or Pond in front of the temple, this is a major and perennial source of water for the people, the animals and the plants in the nearby areas of Edavetty. Unfortunately, this pond has become almost dry and is in URGENT NEED OF RENOVATION.

Every year on the 16th day of Karkataka masam or Ashada masam which generally falls in the last week of July or the 1st week of August, an ancient tradition of OUSHADHA SEVA is held. Due to the abruptly changing weather conditions, it is during this period that there is always an outbreak of various diseases and to combat this spread of diseases, the divine medicine using medicinal herbs, tubers, roots, etc. procured from the Oushadha Vana is made and distributed on this day. This medicine is made by the head priest or the Thirumeni. Along with the roots, herbs and tubers he also uses special and exclusive butter sent by the Guruvayoor Devaswam. This butter is made from the milk got from the cows which are in the Guruvayoor Devaswam Goshala. While preparing this medicine there is continuous chanting of the Dhanawantri Mantram. This specially prepared and miraculous medicine is best consumed on an empty stomach. Those who have absolute faith, belief and devotion in Lord Krishna as Lord Dhanwantri and who consume this medicine on this day have recounted miraculous cures and recovery.

The oil used for the abhishekam of the deity, is considered to have a lot of medicinal benefits and is best for curing skin problems, abdominal ailments, it tremendously improves memory power in children and has many other medicinal uses.

With so much of heritage, historical value and most importantly the immense medicinal benefits for the common man, this Edavetty temple needs to be restored to its former glory and deserves to be preserved for the coming generations.

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Next in line is the **Sree Krishna Temple at Perumpillichira**. This temple was built by Sahadeva, the twin brother of Nakula and the fifth of the Pandava brothers. The shrine here too faces the West.

Let us now move on to the next **Sree Krishna Temple at Muttam**. This temple like all the other temples is surrounded by the beautiful vana or forest. This temple was built by Arjuna, the third brother among the Pandavas. The shrine here is facing East. It is said that Arjuna did the prana prathistha of the Idol and he declared that this idol of Sree Krishna depicted the chaithanyam of the Vishwaroopam as shown to Devaki by Sree Krishna when she gave birth to him in the prison. Through the carvings done above the central Sree Krishna idol, it is depicted that the idol or deity is being showered with flowers and petals by the sages, the rishis, the gods and the goddesses. The Dashavatharam is also depicted in this temple through carvings.

We will now move on to the **Sree Krishna Temple at Kolani**. This temple was built by Bheema, the second of the Pandava brothers. This shrine also faces East. It is said that the footprint of Bheems is still visible on a stone at Uravappara near Kolani.

Last in our tour of the Anjambalam of Thodupuzha we come to the **Sree Krishna Temple at Thodupuzha**. This temple was built by Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandava brothers. It is rumored that the main idol of Sree Krishna had gone missing for many years, but was found and later consecrated. This shrine too faces the East. Compared to the other four temples, this temple is in a better condition and maintained well.

With that we come to an end of our Anjambalam Thodupuzha Yatra. We need to do our best to preserve and maintain these temples as they are a testimony to our rich heritage and culture. The medicinal forests or Oushadha Vana are of immense value to mankind.
