

## HANUMATH JAYANTHI

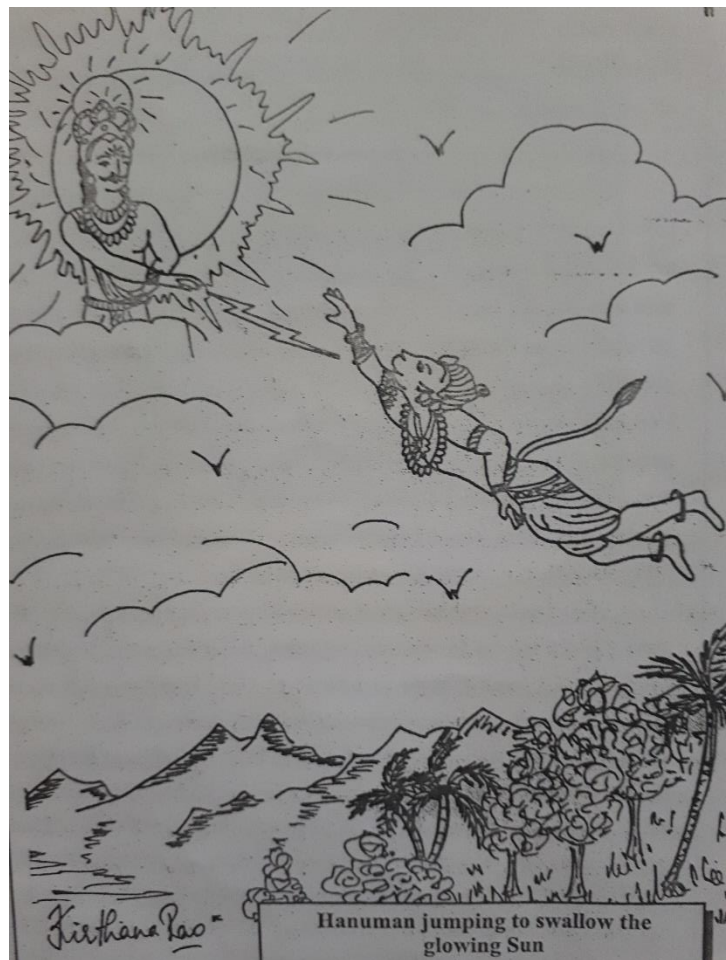
Hanumath Jayanti is celebrated to commemorate the birth of Hanuman, the son of Vayu (wind god). Hanuman is one of the most important celebrities in Ramayana. He was a Brahmachari (Celebate) throughout his life. He is the foremost devotee of Sri Rama. He is a Chiranjeevi. He is a symbol of perfect purity and self-control.

**Pooja procedure :** On Hanumanth jayanthi day, people flock to Hanuman temples from early morning to worship him. An idol of Hanuman is worshipped with sodasopachara, abhisheka with milk, panchamrutha and scented water and then the entire body is smeared with sindoor and oil, a symbol of life and strength. Bananas and fruits are offered as neivedya. They congregate in large numbers to listen to the recitation of "Hanuman Chalisa" of Tulsidas. In places like Thanjavur and Maharashtra, "Bheema roopi stotra" which consists of fifteen couplets written by Sri Samartha Ramadas (who is considered to be an avatar of Hanuman) is recited with intense faith and devotion.

### Story of Hanumath Jayanthi

Hanuman's origin is some what peculiar. He looked like a monkey but he called himself the son of Vayu, the wind God (Vayuputra). His father was a monkey called Kesari, who was the king of a small state called Sumeru. Kesari's wife was Anjana, also a monkey. When Kesari was called by one of the celestials to kill SAMBASUTRA, who was molesting pilgrims at the bathing ghats, he had to be away from home for a short time. In his absence, Hanuman was conceived and came into existence. How this happened is pieculiar. Kesari's wife was born of a monkey because of a curse, but once she was of great beauty. Once she went about like a woman in the nearby garden, when Vayu (God of wind) caught a glimpse of her, took fancy, and approaching her, disrobed her and touched her.

Vayu, seeing Anjana's anger pacified her saying that her husband had done a great service to the Gods by killing the asura and as a gesture of goodwill, He (Vayu) is going to bestow a child on her who



Hanuman jumping to swallow the glowing Sun

will perform miraculous deeds and become famous in all the three worlds. A miraculous child was born to Anjana in a nearby cave. This child, even at birth was so hungry and there being no fruit available nearby, looked up, saw the red glow of the sun, jumped to swallow it. The Sun God struck him down a hill and in the process, got his chin hurt. From then on, he came to be called 'HANUMAN' (Hanu in Sanskrit meaning 'chin'). Hanuman is known by various other names too – "ANJANIPUTRA' or 'ANJANIKUMARA' being the son born of Anjana, 'MARUTHI' because he is son of wind God (MARUT meaning wind).

Hanuman is represented as a monkey of extra-ordinary strength and powers, which is manifested on several critical occasions on behalf of Sri Rama, e.g. his crossing the ocean to land in Sri Lanka, his lifting Gandharmadana Parvatha, uprooting it to save Lakshmana, his assuming cosmic proportions to reassure Sita of his identity as a sincere devotee of Sri Rama, whom he regards as the lord of his heart.

Although Hanuman was bestowed with many gifts, as a monkey, in his younger days, he used to play little pranks. He used to trouble the Rishis during their yagas, with the result, they told him that he would not remember his own strength until somebody reminds him that he is capable of doing miraculous deeds. On many occasions, this has been made evident.

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