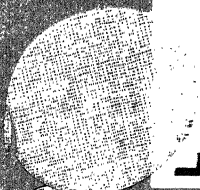
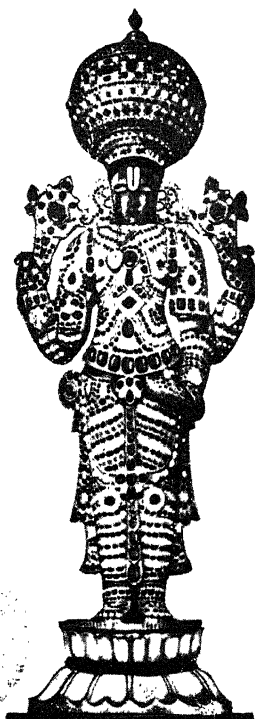


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TIRUMALA THE PANORAMA OF SEVEN HILLS

T. VARADACHARY



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The Executive officer
Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams
Tirupati

1999

TIRUMALA - THE PANORAMA OF SEVEN HILLS

A Pilgrim's Guide to Tirumala

Author:

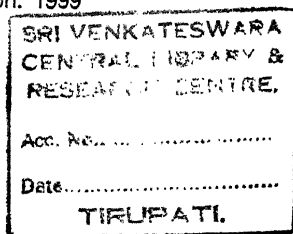
T. VARADACHARY

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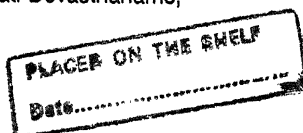
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FOREWORD

Sastras and puranas unequivocally praise Tirumala, the abode of Lord Venkateswara as the hill which ensures prosperity to all those who surrender unto the Lord. Sri Venkateswara who manifested Himself for the welfare of mankind is the God who leads the whole mankind from the darkness of despair to the light of everlasting bliss. Millions of devout worshippers throng the portals of Tirumala shrine and offer their prayers to the beautiful form of Sriman Narayana who grants them the boons of enjoying earthly happiness and also bestowing elysian bliss.

This ancient centre of pilgrimage was a source of awe and mystery even to great rishies and heavenly beings. Soul-stirring hymns of alvars and Annamacharya and a galaxy of poets and seers ~~for~~ dwell at great length on the alluring form of Lord Srinivasa and His overwhelming compassion. Many acharya purushas believe that performing kainkarya to the Lord is the ultimate goal of life and that the ocean of samsara is but knee-deep for those who surrender their body and soul to the Lotus feet of Lord Sri Venkateswara.

The present book on Tirumala by Sri T. Varadachariar contains a wealth of information about the Tirumala shrine and its Deity. The readers may find in this compilation certain lesser known facts about Tirumala. The author also briefly describes some features peculiar to the temple and narrates a few interesting anecdotes relating to the sacred hills.

We hope the readers will find this book, a 'ready reference' on Tirumala, thoroughly engrossing.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams

PRAAYER

Vande Śrī nayanotpalasya śaśinaṃ
Śeṣācalā dhiśwaram,
Brahmādyarchita pādapadmayugaḷaṃ,
lokaika netrotsavam,
Vāsiṣṭaiḥ Sanakādibir munigaṇaiḥ
Saṃstūyamaṇaṃ sadā
Bhaktānamakhilārtha dāyina maḥaṃ
Śrī Venkateśaṃ gurum

‘Oh Lord of Seshachala! Our Obeisance to you, who are the Moon to the lotus-like eyes of Lakshmi. Your holy lotus feet are worshipped by Brahma. You are the only Delight of the Universe. You are always extolled by the Sages Vasista, Sanaka and others. You are the Bestower of all that is desired by the devotees. Oh Lord Venkateswara! Our Guru, we bow down to you.

“Śrīmān Venkaṭanāthāryaḥ
kavitārkika-kesarī,
Vedāntācāryavārya me
sannidattāṃ sadā hṛdi”.

May Svami Desika, called Venkatanatha, more popularly known as Kavitaarkika-kesari and Vedantacharya, full of virtue, ever dwell in my mind (heart).

PREFACE

Tirumala the holy abode of Lord Venkateswara of the Seven Hills (known in North India as Balaji) is a venerable centre of Hindu pilgrimage. The great Seshachalam range of the Seven Hills on which the sacred temple of Sri Venkateswara is located in the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh finds mention in the early Tamil literature.

Throughout the recorded history, Lord Venkateswara has been worshipped. The Pallava, Chola, Pandya, Yadava Rayas and Vijayanagara rulers and their chieftains patronised the temple with their munificent donations. The temple originally had only a sanctum sanctorum and a frontal mandapam. Subsequently it had been extended by the additions of various mandapams, gopura-gateways and subsidiary shrines by the offerings of innumerable liberal donations of the rich and mighty. Today, the Tirumala temple has a cluster of shrines and sub-shrines and tastefully sculptured, pillared halls of varying sizes.

The present book, *Tirumala: The Panorama of the Seven Hills*, makes an attempt to illustrate the important aspects of the Lord's temple and its sacred environs. It takes the reader through a long corridor of time and space to highlight the significance of places and parts of the great temple complex. The book mentions the historical facts about the galigopuram, the Varaha and Narasimha shrines, the kalyana mandapam, swarna Ananda Nilaya vimanam, etc. It also enlightens the

devotees with the legends connected with the Tirumala temple and other places of worship in the neighbourhood. In a nutshell, *Tirumala: The Panorama of Seven Hills* presents a panoramic view of Tirumala for the first time with several illustrations in one volume.

T.VARADACHARY

Alwartheertham (Kapilatheertham)

Alwartheertham or Kapilatheertham is the divya theertham said to be flowing from the lotus feet of Sri Venkateswaraswamy Varu down the holy hills to Tirupati. Tradition says that a dip in this theertham will make one's ascent to the hills easy.

There is an image of Sri Varu in one of the niches of the cave atop the hill where the water course takes a steep descent. Inscriptions refer to the regulations formulated by saint Ramanuja regarding the conduct of temple service in this theertham.

The *Venkatachala Mahatmyam* says that one devotee by name Madhava bathed in this theertham to wash away his sin, before climbing the holy hill. Even Vakula devi (the foster mother of Lord Srinivasa) took a dip here before leaving for Narayana Vanam to seek the hand of Padmavathi devi (daughter of Akasaraaja) for Srinivasa.

The divine couple of Siva-Parvathi appeared here in archa form to enable the devotees to worship them as per the desire of sage Kapila in whose memory it is called Kapilatheertham. Hence pilgrims going up to Tirumala must at first bathe in this theertham and worship Lord Siva in the sanctum (Kapileswara swamy). Among the prominent deities here, mention may be made of Ganesha, Dakshina Murthi, Kamakshi, Kumaraswamy and Navagrahas.

Sopana Margam (Footpath)

The pilgrim who goes on foot to Tirumala has to visit Sri Pada Mandapam to worship the holy feet of Lord Venkateswara after having darsan of Sri Garudalwarlu.

On the way he has to touch the "Thala Yeru Gundu" to be free from headache and bodily pains. On the way he will also see Kuruva nambi (Kummara Mandapam), Gali Gopuram and Vaikunta Dvara Mandapam, statue of Sri Anjaneyaswami, Dova Narasimha Swamivari Temple, Mokalla Mitta, Dova Sri Bhashyakarulavari Temple, Sare pettelu, William Dora Chali Pandili at Neredu Makulu on the foot path.

While walking on foot the pilgrim devotee derives the benefit of walking along the path trod upon by great sages.

The footpath is clustered by several medicinal plants which would cure many diseases. One can see the aerial view of the Tirupati town from the top of the hill and enjoy the natural scenery.

Going by bus or car is not a sin if time and health do not permit the pilgrim, but he loses the benefits that sylvan surroundings of the Seven hills bestow on him while walking on the footpath.

The Greatness of the holy Tirumalai

In the first sloka in Dayasatakam, Sri Vedantha desika offers prostrations to the hill itself.

The hill which is the abode of Lord Srinivasa whose mercy is the subject matter of the sloka. It says that the hill is as sacred as the Lord himself.

Dayasataka contains the quintessence of Nammalvar's *Tiruvoimozhi*.

Nammalvar in his *Tiruvoimozhi* (III - 3,8) has sung to the effect that our sins will get destroyed by worshipping the hills alone.

The *puraṇas* have attached great sanctity to the hill.

Tirupati - The First Hill

The *Rajagopuram* and the *Galigopuram* are the two gateways leading to the heavenly abode of Lord Venkateswara. They are lofty and masculine in appearance covered with the Ramayana and the Bhagavata panels. The *Galigopuram* is at the height of 3000 feet above mean sea level. It was built in the 13th century by the Matla chiefs of *Andhra desa*.

The temple can be reached both by foot and automobile. The foot-path resembles a stepped gallery cut across the holy hills covering a distance of about 11 kms. from the foot of the first hill (Alipiri) to the precincts of the shrine of Srinivasa. This was the first and the earliest of the paths to uphill leading from Tirupati. In the past, kings and seers, men, women and children irrespective of age, status and sex walked through this foot-path of steps to have the *darsan* of Lord Venkateswara.

In 1944 a motorable ghat road was opened to traffic and in 1974 another one was built to the left of the old ghat road to the *giripradakshinam* and to facilitate one-way traffic across the hill range. The above bus routes of 20 km. each girdles round the hill and the Lord above.

Tirumala is connected by bus and rail from far and near in the state and outside from all corners of the country.

Rigveda and Lord Srinivasa

The Veda which is acknowledged to have no beginning speaks of this hill as a holy abode of Lord Vishnu.

The Veda Says:-

*"Araayi Kaane vikate girim gachcha sadaanve
Sirimbithasya sathvabhihi tebhishtvachatayamasi"*

Oh! human beings! even if you are poverty stricken, devoid of vision external as well as internal, afflicted by the three miseries (*tapatrayas*) due to *aadhyathmika*, *aadhi bhautika* and *aadhidaivika* possessing many enemies (as a remedy to the above) you may go to the hill of Srinivasa (the holy seven hills) along with the devotees of Lord Srinivasa. Having gone there, you may present yourself to the Lord with the help of those devotees (accompanying you). Or, you may present to Srinivasa your desires with the help of those devotees who will initiate with intuitional devotion the case to the Lord for immediate fulfilment.

This means that the Lord fulfils the desire of those devotees who are accompanied by other devotees (*Bhagavatas*) approach Him at the Venkata hill and pray to Him.

The above passage occurs in the Rigveda, VIII *Adhyaya*, 8th *Anuvaaka*, *Vacana* 13, which is explained by Sri Ramanuja in the first *stava* of Sri Venkatachala *Ithihasamala*.

Sri Venkateswara in the Puranas

The Puranas state unequivocally that the image of Sri Venkateswara is self-manifest and not sculptured by any mortal. It is said to have lain in an ant hill under

a tamarind tree on the bank of the *Svamipuṣkarini* at Tirumala. We are also told that the image is of Vishnu and that it depicts Him as holding *sankha* and *chakra* in the two upper hands, keeping the lower right hand in *varada* and the lower left hand in *Katyavalambita*. It is said to be fully decorated with various ornaments and clad in fine clothes.

The Holy abode of Lord Venkateswara (Balaji)

It is believed that Lord Vishnu has assumed the form of Venkateswara in the present Kaliyuga to bless His devotees. He fulfils the desires of the devotees instantaneously. Like Lord Krishna in Dvaparayuga, Lord Venkateswara offers his benign protection to his devotees in distress.

His temple situated at the top of the *Seshaparvata* is the cynosure of all eyes.

The Kalyanakatta

As one enters Tirumala one would invariably find a cluster of cottages and choultries built for the accommodation of the pilgrims. In the vicinity of these choultries is the *Kalyanakatta*. Here devotees offer their hair to Lord in fulfilment of their vows. Men and women line up here to get their heads tonsured. This practice is widely prevalent in this holy place of Hindu pilgrimage.

This custom was perhaps introduced to stress the quality of humility as well as renunciation of what is usually prized.

A nominal fee is collected for the tonsuring and it is possible that the revenue aspect including the value of hair given might have been one strong reason for

the introduction of this custom in Tirumala, even before 1831. A.D.

Sri Bedi Anjaneyaswamy

The temple of Sri Anjaneyaswamy facing the Mahadvaram of Sri Venkateswara shrine houses the image of Bedi Hanuman. According to a legend Hanuman attempted to flee from the holy hills in search of his *Onte Vahanam* (camel vehicle).

In order to prevent Anjaneya's flight his mother Anjana Devi residing near *Akasa Ganga* at *Anjanadri* of Sapthagiri (Seven Hills) prevailed upon her son and tied the celestial bedi (hand-cuffs) to his hands with the aid of several monkeys living there, so as to make Anjaneya stay in devotion in front of the Lord's temple to fulfil her desire.

The Svami Pushkarini

The Svami Pushkarini, the holy tank abutting Lord Venkateswara's temple, has a stepped gallery on four sides. There is a chiselled *mandapa* in the centre of the tank with a series of *salas*, *panjaras* and *kutas* crowned by a *sikhara* with gold gilded *kalasa*. Sri Malayappaswami with his consorts Sridevi and Bhudevi gives darshan on a bedecked float on *Theppotsavam* days. The tank is said to be the source of holy waters of the Ganges itself.

Prior to entering the temple devotees take dip in this sacred pushkarini to wash away their sins.

Sri Varahasvamivaru (Tirumala)

It is customary for the devotees to offer worship at the shrine of Sri Varahasvamivaru located at the head of

the *Pushkarini*. Lord Vishnu assumed the boar *avatar* in the third of the *Dasavataras* to rescue Bhudevi from the clutches of the demon *Hiranyaksha*.

According to a legend, Varahasvami was the *kshetrapala* of the hill and Venkateswara approached him for some space to his residence here. Therefore it is ordained that worship should be offered to Varahasvami first before proceeding to Venkateswara's shrine. In this temple Varaha stands with his leg upraised and holds Bhudevi in his arms.

The Mahadvara Gopuram

The Mahadvara gopuram or the outer gopuram of Lord Venkateswara's temple is a lofty five storeyed structure. It was probably built in the 13th century A.D. The gopura, resembles the gopuras at Rameswaram, Madurai and Srirangam. Sculptured scenes from the *Ramayana* and the *Bhagavata* are carved on the gopuram.

Sankhanidhi and Padmanidhi

The gopuram entrance houses two images of *Sankhanidhi* and *Padmanidhi*, on either side facing the worshippers entering the temple. Perhaps this is the only temple where images of these two guardian deities are found. The Sankhanidhi is installed on the southern and the Padmanidhi on the northern side of the main gate.

According to the *Vaishnava agamas* and *samhitas*, *Sankha* and *Padma nidhis* are the guardian deities in the third *prakara*, as found in Tirumala temple.

A small projection is visible, attaching to the lower part of the pedestal in both the images. It is a bhakta's image in typical Vijayanagar style.

Venkatapathi Rayalu

The bronze image of Venkata I, the scion of the Aravidu dynasty of Vijayanagar, is found on the southern side of the *Mandapa* in the temple. Venkata, the brother of emperor Sriranga II, was an ardent devotee of Lord Venkateswara. He made many benefactions to the temple. He stands in anjali pose, worshipping the Lord. The name Venkatapathirayalu in Telugu characters is incised on the right shoulder of the image.

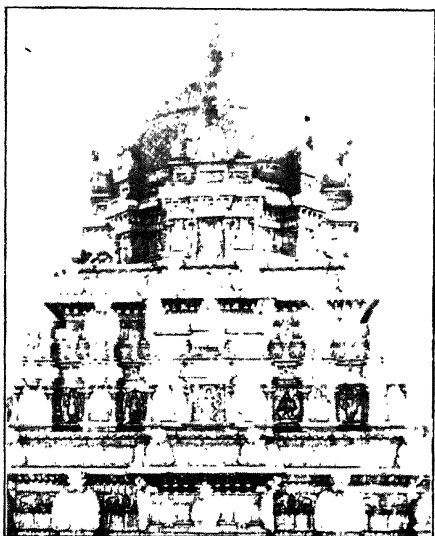
King Achyutaraya and his consort

Achyutaraya, the successor of Sri Krishnadevaraya, was also an ardent devotee of Venkateswara. To commemorate his visits to this temple, two stone images of the Emperor and his consort in anjali pose were installed. Achyuta wearing the typical conical cap or *kirita* is muscular in appearance and stands in *Samabhanga*. His consort is seen to his left wearing an interesting hair dress with *anjali hasta*. These images are also housed in the same *Mandapa*.

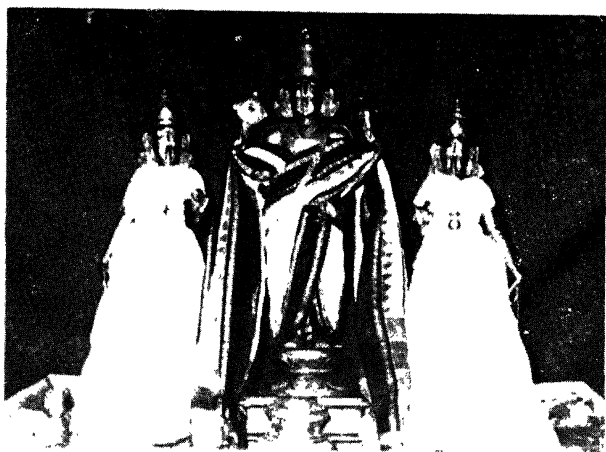
The Emperor Tirumala Raya

The stone images of Emperor Tirumalaraya (of the Aravidu family of Vijayanagar) and his consort are found in the *Mandapa* to the south of the dhvajasthamba.

Tirumalaraya, the ruler of Penugonda and Chandragiri, was a devout worshipper of Lord Venkateswara. His inscriptions found in Tirupati and Tirumala refer to his munificence to Lord Venkateswara. Like his compatriots he also holds his hands in prayer to the Lord along with his consort.



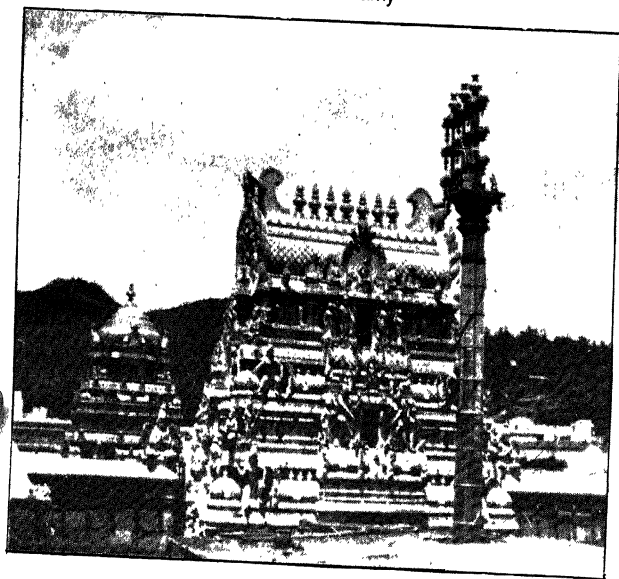
Ananda Nilayam



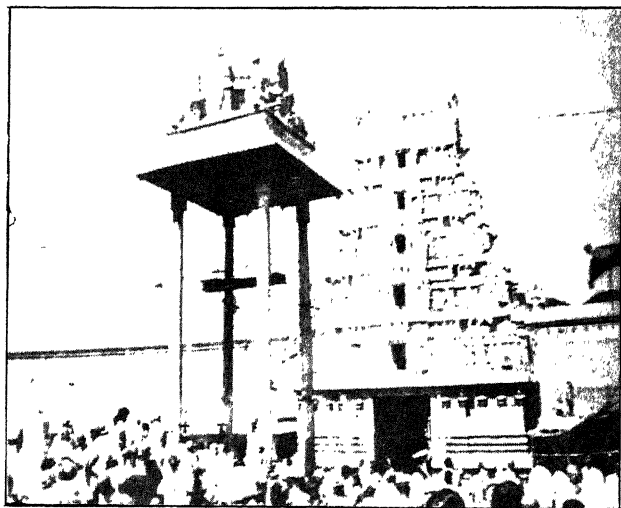
Sri Malayappa Swamy with his consorts



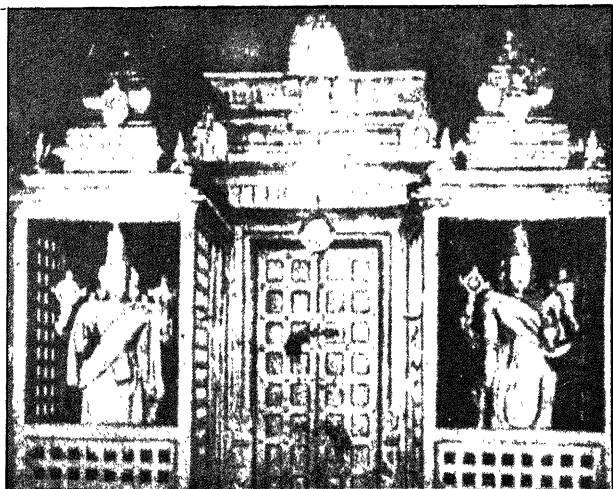
Sri Varaha Swamy



Dwajasthambam



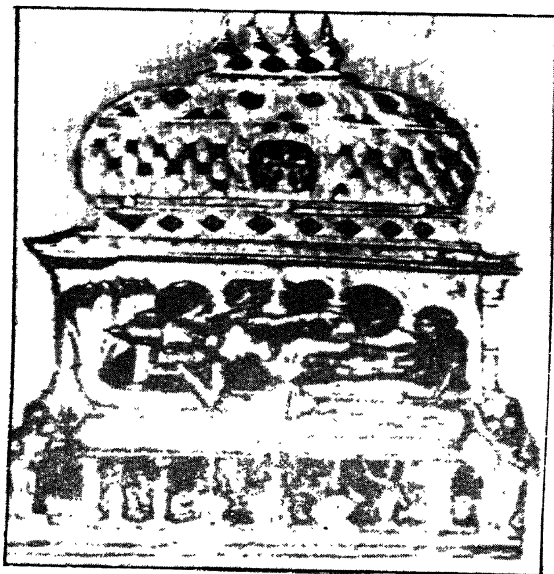
Mahadwaram



Bangaruvakili



Sri Varadaraja Swamy



Sri Ranganatha Swamy

Ranga Mandapam

The Mandapa said to have been built by Sri Ranganatha Yadavaraya, a local ruler called Ranganayaka mandapam houses a Sesa vahana or serpent vehicle where the *Utsava Murthy* of Venkateswara takes his seat on special and festival occasions. The shrine within it is supposed to be the place where the utsavamurti of Lord Ranganatha of Srirangam was kept during the 14th century when Srirangam was occupied by the Muslim army of Malik Kafur.

The Tirumala Raya Mandapam

The Tirumala raya Mandapam is one of the best examples of Vijayanagar architecture. It is supported by high standing pillars. They are decorated with horsemen and yali riders holding swords. Every inch of the pillars is carved with geometric and floral designs. The ceiling is exquisite with specimens of plastic art. The central pavilion is a veritable piece of art. It is surmounted by a *vimana* of the usual *Dravida* order.

This lofty and spacious *mandapa* is ranked with some of the best preserved pieces of South Indian architecture.

Lala Khemaram. Mata Mohande. Pita-Bibi :

On a high pedestal in the vicinity of the lofty dhvajasthamba adjoining the Tirumalaraya mandapa is a row of three statues standing in anjali posture. Their names are inscribed on them. On extreme left is the figure of Lala Khemaram wearing a rounded beard. He is identified with Raja Todar Mal, the Raj put Revenue Minister of the Moghul Emperor Akbar (1556-1605 A.D.) The

middle figure is that *Mata Mohande* and the extreme right one is that of a female devotee named *Pita bibi*.

Four-pillared Mandapams at four corners of the open space

At each of the four corners of the open space in the *Sampangi pradakshinam*, there are small *mandapams* on four pillars constructed by Saluva Narasimha about 1470 A.D.

It was arranged that on almost all festival occasions the processional deity should be seated at each of these *mandapas* and that food offerings should be made there and distributed to the pilgrims.

Even now they serve the purpose during the four days of *vasanthotsavam* soon after *Ugadi*.

Dhvajasthambham and Balipeetham

The gold-gilded dhvajasthambha or flag staff near *nadimipadikavali* stands in front of the inner gopura of the shrine. There is the usual gold gilded silver sheet *balipeeta* facing the dhvajasthambha. On the opening day of the *Brahmotsavam* of Lord Venkateswara, his flag or *Kodi* is unfurled on the top of the sthambha. This function is known as *dhvajarohanam*. On the ninth day of *Brahmotsavam* the flag or the *Kodi* is brought down (*dhvaja avarohanam*) signifying the end of the festival.

The inner gopuram

At the entrance of the inner *gopuram Vendi Vaakili* (silver entrance) near dhvajasthambam, there are two interesting bas reliefs on the walls.

One of these shows the Lord's devotee Hathiramjee playing dice with Lord Srinivasa seated comfortably on an *asanam*.

Opposite to this is another interesting bas relief depicting Sri Rama holding court.

Anga Pradakshinam

It is in the *vimana pradakshinam* that pilgrims circumambulate the sanctum.

Women and men while in great distress sometimes take a vow (or *prarthana*) that when freed from such distress by the divine grace they would take bath in the sacred waters of the *Svami pushkarini* (holy tank) and with the wet clothes on, perform anga pradakshina in this court yard.

Sri Varadarajaswami Shrine

Lord Venkateswara's main shrine is surrounded by many smaller shrines for housing several images of Hindu pantheon. Among them the Varadaraja swamy's shrine is one. The Yadavarayas were, perhaps, instrumental in erecting a temple for Varada raja and other shrines in Tirumala. The icon of Varada raja swamy stands in samabhanga holding *sankha* and *chakra* in the upper arms while the lower right arm is in *abhaya* and the lower left is in *kati hastha* pose.

Bangaaru Vaakili

At the western end of the *Tirumamani Mandapam*, is the *Bangaru Vaakili* or the golden entrance.

We find two images of *Jaya* and *Vijaya* on either side of this golden entrance. These are dwarapalakas

or sentinels of the temple. The images are made of *panchaloham*. They are very beautiful.

The images have four arms. The upper hands hold the *chakra* and *sankha*. One of the lower hands, bears the *gada* or mace. The other hand is in the *suchi hasta* or *tarjani* pose the pose in which the devotees are warned to be clean in body, mind and speech while entering the sanctum sanctorum.

It is also significant that the Suprabhatham or daily morning ritual in which hymns are chanted to wake up the Lord, are sung before *Bangaaru Vaakili* which has a panel depicting Dasavataras of Lord Vishnu.

Sri Garudalvar

In the interior of Venkateswara's shrine is a small cell for Garuda, the vehicle of Lord Vishnu. He stands in anjali pose facing the sanctum of the Lord with his wings well spread out. This *vigraha* is popularly called as Garudalvar.

Snapana Mandapam or Thiruvilan Kovil

Crossing the *Bangaaru vaakili*, we enter the *snapana mandapam* or *Tiruvilan Kovil*.

Bhoga Srinivasa moorthy was consecrated in this mandapam in the year 966 A.D. by a Pallava queen named Samavai.

We may therefore presume that this mandapam existed in the early years of 10th century A.D. itself.

The pillars bear a few good bas reliefs. A particularly impressive bas relief is that of Maha Vishnu in the sitting pose.

Ramar Medai

Crossing the Tiruvilan Kovil, we enter the *Ramar Medai*. The *Ramar Medai* has two small platforms on which figures of *Angada* and *Hanuman* are placed.

It has also a figure of a *paricharika* holding a light. Opposite of them are equally beautiful *panchaloham* images of Ananta, Garuda and Vishvaksena which are worth seeing.

Mukkoti Pradakshinam

Around the original central shrine comprising the *garbha gruha* with its *Mukha mandapam* is the first circumambulatory path called the *Mukkoti Pradakshinam*. This *pradakshinam* is open in the temple only once in a year i.e. the *Vaikuntha Ekadasi* day.

There is a small shrine for Vishvaksena also called *Senai Mudaliar* on the northern side of the *Mukkoti Pradakshinam*.

The Sayana Mandapam in front of Sri Venkateswaraswami

From the *Ramar Medai* one enters the *Sayana mandapam*. The Lord of Tirumala is put to sleep in this mandapam during the *Ekantha seva* at night.

The Sanctum Sanctorum or the Garbha Griham

Behind the *Sayana mandapam* is the *Garbha Griham* or the sanctum sanctorum. In olden days *Garbha Griham* was called Kovil Alwar. The *Garbha Griham* houses only one *mula murthy*, i.e., Sri Venkateswara.

Kulasekhara Padi

The stone step between the *Garbha Gruham* and the *Sayana mandapam* is called the *kulasekhara padi* in honour of Kulasekhara Alwar. The food offerings to the Lord, are made outside the kulasekharapadi. Only four nalis of rice are said to be offered inside the Garbha Griha to the Lord along with fruits, flowers, milk, butter, etc. Devotees are not allowed to step on this or enter the Garbha Griham of the Lord of Tirumala.

Kulasekhara prays for the grace of the Lord of Ven-gadam. The prayer to be a bird, a fish, a bearer of the spittoon or a doorstep on which the servants of God tread when they enter the sanctum sanctorum of the deity (IV. 8), reveals his ardent desire to be ever in His presence and it is an expression of his utter humility and absolute surrender (IV. 5 & 6).

The Idol Sri Venkateswaraswami (The Mulabera)

The holy sanctum sanctorum or Garbhagriha of Lord Venkateswara is fronted by a long corridor. The antarala or ante chamber and the Mukha Mandapa are minutely carved with sculptured panels. The sanctum houses the icon of Lord Venkateswara standing in samabhanga. He holds *chakra* and *sankha* in His upper arms. His right arm is in varada or Vaikunta hastha pose and the left in katiastha pose. The Lord is richly adorned with ornaments. *Sridevi* and *Bhudevi* reside in his *Vakshasthala* or chest portion. The Lord's forehead is decorated with a *Namam* mixed with purified camphor, saffron and civet oil. He wears a *Sarpabharana* in his two arms.

The Lord, i.e. the *Mulabera*, is believed to be 'Svayambhu' (self manifest). There is an attractive grace and elegance in Venkateswara's face. The very sight of the Lord strikes the visitor with an inexpressible sense of awe and devotion. Every pilgrim-devotee feels that a mere vision of the Lord's image provides a communion with God and gives him solace. Perhaps due to this the visitors possess an irresistible desire to have the darshan of Srivaru as many times as possible.

The Processional deity or Sri Malayappan

The processional deity or Sri Malayappan is made of panchaloham and measures three feet in height. It is the true replica of the *Mulabera* but smaller in size. Malayappan or Utsava Murti is richly decorated with precious jewellery. The Lord is flanked by the images of Sridevi and Bhudevi. The Lord's consorts are adorned with variety of ornaments. They accompany the Lord whenever He goes out of the sanctum in procession.

On special occasions the Utsava Murti or Malayappan is decorated with a diamond armour known as *Vajrangi*, or with a pearl armour known as *Mutyala angi*.

All the arjitha sevas such as Kalyanotsavam, Brahmotsavam, Theppotsavam, etc., are performed to Malayappan (accompanied by Sridevi and Bhudevi.)

Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Murti

The Kautukabera of Sri Venkateswara

As in other temples, the sanctum of Lord houses the silver icon of the Kautukabera called Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Murti. He is a miniature replica of the Lord. All usual pujas are offered to this icon. He is supposed to possess all the attributes and the power of Lord Venkateswara.

At the end of the day's routine Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Murti, also called Manavalapperumal, is placed in front of Lord Venkateswara on a cushioned bed or cradle for night rest, in the Sayana Mandapam. This feature is known as Ekantaseva and Theermanam. When devotees are allowed for that darshanam they are given milk as thirtham and fruits and sweets as prasadam.

Sri Koluvu Srinivasamurthi (The Balibera of Sri Venkateswara)

As the very name indicates, this icon officiates for the main idol during Koluvu, or darbar everyday after the morning Thomalaseva. In all temples this murti is taken in procession immediately after naivedyam at the sanctum and homam in the yagasala round the prathakshinams to propitiate the guardian deities at the entrances, on the Vimanam and at the Dwajasthambham and the Bali-pitam etc. In other words, neivedyam is offered to smaller deities through this murti. But in the temple of Sri Venkateswara this murti is not being taken in procession for the purpose. However there is a special function for this icon in the temple. Every day in the Mukhamandapam or Mahamanimandapam immediately after the Thomalaseva and before the sahasranamarchana the panchangam (Almanac) of the day and the accounts relating to receipts of the previous day in the temple are read out to Him.

Sri Ugra Srinivasamurti (Snapanabera of Sri Venkateswara)

Ugra Srinivasa Murti or the Snapanabera of Lord Venkateswara is offered holy bath or Thirumanjanam at the end of special functions such as Samprokshana

and on eclipses. This deity was originally known as Venkatathuraivar. It was stated that once during Brahmotsavam while this Murti was going round the streets, after dawn a huge fire broke out causing serious damage to the houses facing Ugra Srinivasamurthi. The awe-stricken people prayed for the Lord's mercy. He ordained them not to take him out in future on pain of similar destruction. Therefore He is known as Ugra Srinivasa Murti. However, on Kaisika Dwadasi day this Murti is taken out in procession before the sunrise.

Bangaru Bavi

In front of the 'potu' room adjoining a corridor running east-west there is a well covered with goldgilded plates, called the Bangaru Baavi (golden well). Water required for the temple and the kitchen in particular is drawn from this well. The well is considered to be a holy one having underground spring from the Virajanadi. The site of it is as depicted in the agama. According to legends, this well was constructed by Rangadasa who took rebirth as Thondaman Chakravarthi and constructed the temple of Lord Venkateswara.

The legend connected with the Bangaru Baavi is given in the Fifth Sabaka of the Sri Venkatachala Ithihasamala.

Sri Madapulli Nachiar

Vakulamalika in Sri Venkateswara Temple

The Madapulli or 'Potu' or the kitchen of Srivari temple houses the icon of Madapulli Nachiar, also known as Vakula Devi. This idol is four armed and holds lotuses in her upper arms and her lower arms are in abhaya and varada poses. According to legend Yasoda, the mother

of Lord Krishna, was reborn as Vakulamalika in the Kaliyuga. She sheltered Venkateswara and conducted his marriage with Padmavathi, the daughter of Akasa Raja. She supervises the preparations in the Lord's kitchen before they are sent to Him for naivedyam, and arranges its distribution to all devotees and also send naivedyam to the kshetrapalaka Varahasvami on the bank, of Swami Pushkarini.

The Dancing Vishnu

An interesting carving on a pillar in front of the potu or the temple kitchen in the inner prakara wall depicts Lord Vishnu in a dancing pose. Although Dancing Siva or *Nataraja*, is familiar of Hindu pantheon, dancing Vishnu is something unique, like Mohini Avataram. Here Vishnu, is shown as dancing encircled by the Naga prabha and holds sankha and chakra in his upper arms. His right leg is upraised while left stands on the Naga prabha. He has no jata-makuta but adorns the usual kirita.

Sri Rama with Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman in the Shrine of Sri Venkateswara, Tirumala.

In the sanctum there are images of Sri Rama, Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman. Rama's presence is significant here. It is stated that Padmavathi, the consort of Lord Venkateswara, is the incarnation of Vedavati who assumed the form of Sita to face hardships as Ravana's captive. In fulfilment of His promise in Tretayuga Rama wedded Padmavathi as Lord Venkateswara, in Kaliyuga. To give credence to this legend, the images of Rama, Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman are located in this temple.

Sri Krishna with Rukmini in the Shrine of Sri Venkateswara, Tirumala.

As is familiar to the Hindus, Lord Krishna's avatar in Dvaparayuga was ended by a hunter's arrow (the hunter being Vali, the elder brother of Sugriva, the monkey king). Krishna, it is said, returned to the Earth as Srinivasa in Kaliyuga. Therefore, the images of Sri Krishna and Rukmini are installed in the sanctum of the Lord.

Kalyana Mandapam in Tirumala Temple

The inner pradakshina of Lord Venkateswara's shrine popularly known as the Vimana Pradakshina has on its left an exquisitely carved Kalyana Mandapam. This mandapa, raised on a high pedestal, has rows of pillars in the post Vijayanagara style with riders on yalis. The robust life-like figures of the riders holding swords in their arms represent the resurgence of Hinduism in the midst of Muslim proselytisation.

The Mandapa has a beautiful pavilion surmounted by a Vimana. There is a row of sculptures depicting scenes from the Bhagavata on the roof of the Mandapa. Lord Venkateswara graces this Mandapa on special occasions like Brahmotsavam, Adyayanotsavam, Pavitrotsavam etc.

The Sub-Mandapam in Kalyana Mandapam

The sub-mandapam has four pillars. Each pillar is in itself a complex pillar with a main pillar square in shape to which are attached three smaller pillars.

There are musical pillars producing musical notes when sounded. This mandapam has several other exquisitely carved figures of Vishnu and His consorts.

The main pillars are carved perfectly depicting warriors riding on lions. The lions themselves are set on figures of elephants etc.

Anandanilaya Vimanam

The sanctum of Venkateswara's temple is surmounted by a gold gilded Vimana having three tier tower with a pinnacle. The Vimana has the usual compliment of kutas, salas and panjaras and also Dasavatharam idols surrounded by four lions at the four corners. Scenes from the Ramayana and the Bhagavata appear on the Vimana.

The famous Vimana Venkateswara gives darshan to His devotees on the northern face of the Vimana. The Lord stands in his usual form holding Sankha and Chakra. Even the vision of the Vimana Venkateswara blesses all his devotees to attain salvation or liberation. The Vimana is familiarly known as Swarna Ananda Nilayam i.e. the House of Divine Bliss.

Sabha Arai (Sabha Room)

Next to Tallapakam Vari Bhandaram, is the Sabha Arai which is the wardrobe of the used-up clothing of Sri Venkateswara. Devotees are permitted occasionally to touch or to press those sacred clothes to their forehead in veneration. Friday Abhisheka Theertham is given here to the devotees on special occasions if required.

Library of Songs

The songs composed by Tallapaka Annamacharya and his descendants were inscribed on copper plates numbering more than 2000, and preserved in a room in the temple on the Hill which goes by the name Sankir-

tana Bhandaram. In the same room two copper plates were discovered with embossed figures of men in singing posture and these were identified to be those of Annamacharya and his son, Pedda Tirumalacharya.

The hymns of Annamayya are sung in the temple before Lord Venkateswara at the time of Suprabhatham and Ekanta seva every day by his descendants.

Tallapaka Annamacharya

Tallapaka Annamacharya was born in 1408 A.D. at Tallapaka Village in Cuddapah District, then known as Pottapandu. He lived for 94 years and it is said that he began to compose songs from his 16th year till his death in 1503. Thirty-two thousand songs were said to have been composed by him. His descendants flourished in Tirupati as poets and composers for several generations. Most of his songs are in Telugu while a few are in Sanskrit. He was the pioneer in the Sankeerthana style of music compositions in Telugu. He was the precursor of the love songs of Kshetrappa and philosophical songs of Thyagaraja. Annamacharya was attracted by the glory of Archavatham, the sweetness of Saranagathi and the greatness of Sri Venkateswara. He became a Vaishnava by following the tradition of the Alvars. He propagated the Vedānta in the form of Telugu songs in easy and elegant style reflecting the teaching of the Upanishads, teeming with his spiritual experiences and surging with the sweetness of music.

Sri Ramanuja (Tirumala)

There is a shrine for Sri Ramanujacharya, the great Vaishnava saint who lived between the 11th and 12th centuries A.D., in the northern part of the inner prakara

of the temple. Sri Ramanuja is said to have installed Govindaraja and Andal icons in Tirupati. The persecution of the Vaishnavites by Kulottunga Chola made Sri Ramanuja and several Vaishnavas to flee to Tirupati with these icons which were originally in Chidambaram. Ramanujacharya prescribed the rituals (puja system) in Tirupati and also in Tirumala temple specially according to Vaikhanasa agama system. Even to this day, the priests scrupulously adhere to his religious instructions in the Lord's temple and in Tirupati.

The Musical Pillars

The temple of Lord Venkateswara has a Mandapa supported by musical stone pillars. It is in the inner pradakshina of the sanctum. The pillars are slender and graceful. As in Hampi (Vijayanagar) these pillars produce musical sounds. Some of them give the udatta, anudatta and svrita svaras of Vedic music. The pillars used to be played upon with two thin sticks made of cane or bamboo resembling Jalatarangini.

The musical pillars are carved with images of Lakshmi Narayana, Narasimha, Kinnaras, etc. On the walls of the Mandapa are sculptured panels from the Ramayana. The details of Vali Vadha, Seetha-Ramakalyanam, etc. are meticulously carved and these exhibit superb artistic talents of the sculptors.

Sri Yoga Narasimhaswami Varu (A shrine in Sri Venkateswara temple)

There is a shrine for Lord Narasimha in the northern side of the inner pradakshina of Sri Vari temple. The icon of Yoga Narasimha in meditation is seated on a high pedestal holding Sankha and Chakra in the upper

arms. The forehead is decorated with a thick Namam. There are inscriptions referring to the worship of this icon since the 15th century.

The Dancing Narasimha **A pillar carving in Tirumala Temple**

On one of the pillars in the Mandapa of Lord Venkateswara's shrine is an interesting image of dancing Narasimha. It is one of the rare forms of the Lord. He holds Sankha and Chakra in his upper arms. His lower arms are in Abhaya and Varada poses. His left leg is raised above the knee with the foot touching the hood of a serpent while his right leg rests on the pedestal.

A beautiful dance pose sculptured at **Tirumala Temple**

The figure of a beautiful female dancer in a joyous mood is carved on one of the pillars in the temple in front of Sri Yoga Narasimha Swami. The dancer's left leg is raised like a triangle. She touches the upraised left foot with her right hand. She wears necklace, armlets, bangles, besides a rounded hairdress. Her heavy and blooming breasts hang in the air as she is dancing in divine ecstasy. The graceful body of the dancer is boldly brought out by the sculptor.

Srinivasa Padmavathi Kalyanam

The panel depicting Srinivasa Kalyanam or the wedding of Lord Venkateswara with Sri Padmavathi Thayar is beautifully carved out on the wall of the temple above the tap near Sri Yoga Narasimhaswami Temple. The marriage was consecrated by great sages and attended by Brahma and Maheswara, Vinayaka and other divini-

ties and rishis like Narada and Sri Suka. Garuda and Hanuman attended the wedding along with a host of celestial guests.

Parimalam Room

In the parimalam room the articles of perfumery required for the daily abhishekam of Bhoga Srinivasa murti and for the Friday abhishekam of Sri Venkateswara as well as punugu tailam, civet oil, turmeric paste, saffron paste and purified camphor are prepared here.

Devotees who pay for the performance of Friday abhishekam are given these articles in separate silver cups to carry round the Vimana Pradakshinam and then to deliver them in the garbhagriham before the abhishekam commences.

Sri Vishvaksena or Sri Senai Mudaliar (Tirumala Temple)

Sri Senai Mudaliyar who is the divine commander-in-chief of the Lord occupies the place next to Sri Mahalakshmi in the hierarchy of the Acharayas of Sri Vaishnavism. He is a resident of the Nitya Vibhuti viz., Sri Vaikuntham.

Sri Mahalakshmi is considered to be the Gnanaguru or Acharya of Sri Senai Mudaliyar.

His consort is known as Sutravati. It is said that he commands and rules over the animate and inanimate beings in all the worlds and helps Lord Srimannarayana in His governance. It is said he governs the world with the symbol of his cane and the movement of his finger.

He is all powerful and all mortals have to take his aid to attain the all merciful Srimannarayana. Let our obsequence be unto Him.

Koppera (Hundi)

It is in the northern side of the Tirumamani Mandapam (in front of Bangaru Vaakili) the daily parakamani takes place.

In its west quadrangle is placed a long Gangalam (large brass vessel) covered with a long canvas spout and guarded by peons and vigilant guards. All votive offerings from devotees are deposited in this vessel called Koppera.

They range from hairs removed from the shaven heads of men and women to diamond jewellery, ornamental necklaces, ear rings, gold bangles set with precious stones, bundles of currency notes, gold, silver, jag-gery, sugar candy, idols, vessels, wrist watches, promisory notes, lottery tickets and other articles, and coins of all denominations current and old.

It is sometimes a moving sight to see ladies removing all the valuable ornaments they wear so dearly and wrap them in a yellow cloth and drop the same into this koppera, then circumambulate it and go away contentedly.

Even those who have not taken a vow, deposit as many coins or currency notes as they can afford to offer in the Hundi as a token of their devotion to Lord Venkateswara.

The contents of the Hundi are emptied twice in a day in the presence of officials and devotees to credit the amount to the Lord's account, through the banks, and send the valuables etc. to the Devasthanam Treasury.

The sorting and counting process of the Hundi collection is known as Parakamani. Some of the respectable pilgrim devotees are invited to witness the Parakamani

and to attest after the counting and sorting is completed and categorically entered in the prescribed books by the Parakamani Peishkar on duty.

Virajanadi

Virajanadi is a subterranean river in Sri Venkateswara's temple and this is compared to Virajanadi flowing in Sri Vaikuntham.

This river is said to be flowing under the holy feet of Lord Venkateswara. Devotees get the same water through this Virajanadi which is visible, seen like a well in the Sampangi Pradakshinam near Ugranam room and this sacred water is also used to wash off their sins.

Padipotu

In Padipotu (Sweets and Savouries etc.) panyarams are prepared with ghee for being offered to the deity every day. Since these preparations are not to be mixed with Annaprasadams, the Annaprasadam potu is located separately where the deity of Madapulli Nachiar (Sri Vakula Devi), the foster mother of Sri Venkateswara is supposed to supervise all food preparations.

Since unused ghee, sugar etc. have to be separately kept for subsequent use the padipotu is located outside Nadimi Padikavali i.e., the north of Dwajasthambham (Flagstaff).

This Padipotu has a trenched type of lengthy ovens, pial type of platforms and also separate stores and grinding equipment to prepare easily thousands of panyarams such as manoharams, vadas, appams, jilebis, sukees, thenatholas etc. both for festival occasions and for sale to the devotees regularly.

Yamunathurai

The Yamunathurai is a room where fresh flowers and thulasi garlands, are daily made to the exact size required for decorating Sri Venkateswara Swami and other deities.

It owes its name to Yamunacharya or Sri Alavandar who is said to have given a start to this kind of work in his days of worship and religious service in Tirumala temple.

The connected legend is described in 'Sri Venkatachala Ithihasamala' sixth stabaka as given below.

Having heard that at one time Yamunacharya had a little cottage put up near the temple and from there, was doing the flower service, Anantaarya built a mandapam on the same spot. He generally strung the flowers together into garlands in that pavilion and took them over for service to the temple at the time of worship, carrying them on his head.

Even today the same service is being continued by the Jeeyangar.

Aina Mahal (Mirror Hall)

On the northern side opposite to Rangamandapam, there is a Mandapam with an enclosed room. This room is having a small squared mandapam in the centre. It is fitted with reflective mirrors on all sides including the ceiling. So it is called the Aina Mahal. (Addala Ara in Telugu). In an article contributed to Asiatic Society journal in 1831 by the highest revenue officer of the district, it is stated that Addala festival was being celebrated in the mirror hall of this mandapam. The mandapam is also fitted with innumerable electric lights

and the flooring is fitted with mosaic type enamel chips to give a decorative and grand appearance. The illuminated Aina Mahal is a beautiful sight.

Dolotsavam (festival on a cradle) to Sri Varu along with His consorts is celebrated here to fulfil the desire of the intending pilgrim parties.

Sri Krishnadevaraya and his two consorts

The huge bronze statue of Sri Krishnadevaraya, the greatest of Vijayanagar Emperors (1509-1529 A.D.) and also his two consorts Chinnadevi and Tirumaladevi, invariably attract the attention of all pilgrims on the northern side of the inner entrance of the main gopuram. The names of the Emperor and his consorts are incised in Kannada script which is akin to Telugu. Krishnadeva Raya made several visits to this temple in the midst of his successful campaigns against the 'Bahmini Sultans' and the Gajapathis. He made rich donations to the temple which are referred to in numerous inscriptions in Tirupati and Tirumala.

The warrior-like image of Krishnadevaraya stands in Samabhanga with a conical kirita. He holds his hands in anjali. His consorts stand on his either side, also in anjali, with their sarees hanging like the hoods of serpents. They wear a variety of impressive ornaments. There is complete serenity of devotion and calmness in the faces of the Emperor and his consorts.

Special fame for the sacred panyaram called Manoharam

Of all the articles of sacred panyarams, manoharam which is regularly prepared from the inception of the temple, has acquired a special fame.

On occasions when high dignitaries of state, maharajas or great men of religious fame are received with temple honours in Tirumala as per custom and usage, manoharam, chandanam, and Sripadarenu are taken, on a silver plate and given at the entrance of padikavali (main gopuram) as a mark of distinction.

The sweet manoharam is made of cleaned green gram and rice fried in ghee pounded, mixed with jaggery treacle, and made into balls.

Although other highly delectable sweets have come into vogue, Manoharam claims antiquity, priority and distinction.

Akhilandam

The Akhilandam at the entrance of Lord Venkateswara's shrine is fronted by a huge oil lamp fixed to a brass tortoise below. It is only here the devotees were allowed to break the coconuts and offer deeparathana to the Lord.

To avoid congestion opposite to the Nadimipadi kavali the camphor Akhilandam with small Hundis, on either side to receive coins, currency notes, and tonsured hair and also the coconut kernel's Hundi, intended to receive the coconut kernels offered by pilgrim devotees, have recently been shifted to the northern part of the main prakaram wall in front of Vahana Mandapam.

Lord Venkateswara in Durbar (Koluvu)

It is the practice in Tirumala to place before Lord Venkateswara the daily accounts of the temple income. This ritual, called Koluvu or Durbar, is conducted in front of Bangaru Vaakili known as Mukhamandapam or

Asthana Mandapam. As in royal courts, the priests, temple officials and the pilgrims will be present while accounts are rendered before Koluvu Srinivasamurthy.

During this period the day's panchangam (almanac) is read out and submitted. Jaggery-mixed gingelly seeds prasadam after offering to the deity is distributed freely to the devotees etc., present at that Koluvu.

Sri Malayappaswami as Mohini on the fifth day of the Brahmotsavam

The Annual Brahmotsavam of Lord Venkateswara is a veritable festival of celestial grandeur. The fifth day of the festival is all important. On this day the Lord assumes the form of a beautiful damsel called Mohini avatar. The processional deity dressed like Mohini decorated with precious jewellery gives darshan to the people in an ivory palanquin.

The Garudaseva of Lord Venkateswara

The Garudaseva of Lord Venkateswara is the most auspicious event of the Annual Brahmotsavam. On the night of the fifth day, the processional deity ascends the Garuda, the vehicle of Srimannarayana, wearing rare jewels like Lakshmihaaram, Makara Kanti, etc. The spectacular sight of the Lord on Garuda can only be felt and not possible to be expressed in words. The vision of Garudaseva even once in a lifetime will ensure Moksha. (Salvation).

Another important feature of the day is adorning the Lord with the garlands of Sri Andal specially brought from Srivilliputtur to

symbolize the fact that Andal is called Choodikuduttha Naachiyar. (Aamuktha maalyada) alias Goda Devi.

Andal used to adorn the flower garlands before they were offered to Vatapatrasayi of Srivilliputtur by her adopted father Periyaalwar (Vishnuchitha).

Gem-set Vaikuntha Hastham Adorned to Sree Varu, Tirumala.

The Samarpana of the gemset Vaikuntha Hastham Kavacha to the Lord Venkateswara of Seven Hills took place on 11-6-1954. Thousands of pilgrims and devotees worshipped the God on the memorable occasion and received His blessings.

Besides the diamonds purchased weighing 171.55 carats, diamonds available in the treasury including those received through Hundi, were also used for setting in the jewel to the weight of 67.91 carats. The emeralds and rubies used were also from the treasury stock. The entire gold used was also from the treasury stock and from the receipts of the Hundi.

Sri Vari Karnapathrams

The T.T.Devasthanams has also offered gemstudded karnapathrams to Lord Venkateswara during Brahmotsavam at a cost of Rs. 12,19,715,96. These Karnapathrams contain 2,871 diamonds, 974 rubies and 852 emeralds, weighing totally 3 kgs 117 grams.

Srivari Vastram

1. A gold laced cloth - silk dhoti 12 yards and 2 yards width.
2. An upper gold laced cloth 6 yards length and 1 yard width.

Srivari Jewels

1. Suvarnapadmapeetham
2. Suvarna paadamulu
3. Noopuramulu
4. Paagadaal
5. Kaancheegunamu
6. Udarabandhamu
7. Dasavathararasanaa with Chirugantalu
8. Chinna Kantaabharanamulu
9. Pedda Kantaabharanamulu
10. Bangaru Puligoru Haaramu
11. Gopu Haaramu
12. Suvarna Yagnopaveethamu
13. Sadarana Yagnopaveethamu
14. Thulasipatra Haaramu
15. Chaturbhujalakshmi Haaramu
16. Astotharasathanama Haaramu
17. Sahasranaama Haaramu
18. Suryakatari
19. Vaikunta Hasthamu
20. Kati Hasthamu
21. Kadiyamulu-Kharabhushanamulu
22. Kadiyamulu-Bhujadanda Bhushanamulu
23. Nagaabharanamulu
24. Bhujakeerthulu
25. Karnapathramulu
26. Chakra Sankhamulu
27. Kireetamu (Aakasaraaju)
28. Saligrama Haaram

Special Ornaments

1. Ratna Kireetamu
2. Merupachcha
3. Ratnamaya Sankhuchakaramulu
4. Rathnamaya Karna Patramulu
5. Ratnamaya Vaikunta Hasthamu
6. Ratnamaya Kati Hasthamu
7. Ratnamaya Makara Kanti
8. Swarna Peethambaramu

Royal Benefactors

(i) The queen of Parantaka II, Sundara-Chola, "the king who slept at the golden-hall" and daughter of Cherman presented to Sri Venkateswara a pattam or plate for the forehead, set with precious stones in the 16th year of the reign of Rajaraja I equivalent to 1001 A.D. (No. 17 T.T.).

(ii) A Pallava queen, by name Samavai, who presented a kiritam (diadem), a necklace of four strings and other ornaments for the hands, waist and feet of Sri Venkateswara, and consecrated a silver image of His under the appellation of Manavalapperumal, provided for processions for this image and endowed the temple with lands in (Tiruchanur), in the third-quarter of the 10th century, (Nos. 18 and 19 T.T.).

iii) Jatavarman Sundara Pandya I (1225 to 1275 A.D.) placed a gilded kalasam over the vimanam of Sri Venkateswara shrine.

iv) Tiruvenkatanatha Yadavaraya, a sub-ordinate of the last Hoyasala King Vira-vallal III, granted in the thirties of the 14th Century, two villages to the temple

as Sarvamanya (tax-free) for propitiating the deity daily with food offerings.

v) Saluva Mangideva Maharaja does not appear to have been keen about enriching the temples either in the form of lands or money. His fancy was for splendour and magnificence as testified by his covering the Vimanam or the tower over the central shrine at Tirumala with gilded copper-plate, and placing a gilded kalasam over it in Saka 1281.

vi) Devaraya II merited extensive divine grace through the help he rendered towards arranging the Vedaparayanam in Sri Venkateswara's shrine at Tirumala in Saka 1355. He had already granted three villages to the temple in Saka 1335 as the usual royal benefaction.

vii) Krishnaraya not only presented diadems and ornaments set with precious stones, but also gold and silver vessels, both for the Mula Murthi (the chief deity) viz., Sri Venkatesa and the Utsava Murthis (the processional images) but also endowed the temple with villages in the taluks of Chandragiri, Udayagiri and Penugonda.

viii) Matla Kumara-Anantaraja is the latest of the royal benefactors. An inscription enumerates his variegated charities at several centres of pilgrimage, among which Tirupati figures as the recipient of three golden Asva (horse). Gaja (elephant) and Samarabhupala (chariot) vahanams; one padmapitham (lotus-shaped seat), one Ratna-kiritam (gem-set crown), one naivedyabha-janam (plate or dish for offering food), one unnata-keli-mandapam (a lofty porch for pleasure swinging for the deities), one sopanamarga (flight of steps on the side of the front hill) and one agra (top or front) gopura (tower); all these services were rendered in the name of Sri

Venkateswara; the golden elephant and horse vehicles for Sri Govindaraja; and the charity of one anna-satram (free feeding house) at the Alvar-tirtham at the foot of the front hill and another on the way up the same hill.

The Maharajas of Mysore and Lord Venkateswara

Sri Raja Wodeyar was perhaps the first of the Mysore Rajas who made grants to the Lord of the Seven Hills. He is said to have given Pearl Umbrella (Mutyala-chatri) and other articles for daily worship, besides clothes, and ghee for burning a Nandadeepa and the conduct of Sahasranamaarchana.

Ranadhira Kanthirava Narasaraja Wodeyar (1638-1659) had made grants for the Lord by offering jewels and clothes. His successor Dodda Devaraja Wodeyar (1659-1672) cultivated a garden of Tulasi (basil plant) for daily worship (Sahasranama), donated a Mandasana decked with precious gems, gave two huge gold vessels for pongal naivedya, arranged for the burning of Nandadeepa and gave grants for the maintenance of the servants to look after them. Besides he performed free Upanayanam and marriage ceremonies of the poor inhabitants of the place.

Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar (1672-1704) while continuing the grant for the pongal naivedya in additional gold vessels every day, gifted a gold umbrella and made grants for daily worship and Nanda-deepa and clothes. His lavish charities and kindness bestowed on all subjects and temples brought him enormous riches and he styled himself as Navakoti Narayana.

Non-Hindus worship Sri Venkateswaraswamy [Sir Thomas Munro's Gangalam]

Once Sir Thomas Munro, the Governor of Madras presidency was suffering from acute pain in stomach which could not be cured even by medical treatment. A Hindu secretary who was a staunch devotee of Sri Venkateswara advised Sir Thomas Munro to take a vow that he would visit the sacred seven hills en route to Chandragiri and pay his obeisance to Lord Venkateswara by remaining outside the temple as in the case at all non-Hindus and all such persons will get relief as per belief by many thousands of devotees visiting the holy shrine.

Accordingly, Sir Thomas Munro took his vow and visited the sacred hills and to his astonishment, he got complete relief from his chronic stomach pain. He then created an endowment to offer one big Gangalam of rice prasadam (Pongali) to the Lord every day to fulfil the vow taken by him and then to distribute the said Pongal prasadam freely to all the devotees during sarva darshanam.

For this purpose an endowment was created by gifting the revenue collections etc. of a village called Kotabayalu, in Vayalpad Taluk of Chittoor District as a permanent measure of charity called Munro Gangalam. The endowment of Sir Munro is being continued by the T.T.D. even to this day.

Lord William's 'Chalipandili'

A high official of the British government by name Lord Williams had a chronic disease which could not be cured in spite of expert medical treatment.

A Hindu official who was a devotee of Lord Venkateswara advised him to take a vow that he would visit Tirumala after getting relief.

After hearing the fulfilment of a vow taken by Sir Thomas Munro and a permanent trust to offer pongali prasadam to Lord Venkateswara and get the same distributed to the devotees every day, Mr. Williams also visited the holy hill and prayed from outside the temple.

To his surprise, he got miraculous relief from his illness and then created a charity called Lord William's chalipandili (drinking water shed) at first mile from Tirumala on the footpath (near Neredu Maakulu) where the pilgrims can quench their thirst. This charity is being continued and a pucca water shed is existing there to supply drinking water freely to the pilgrims. This charity is continued by the management of T.T.D. even to this day as a permanent measure.

According to legend Beebi Nancharamma, a staunch Muslim devotee of Lord Venkateswara also worshipped Sri Venkateswara Swamy Varu.

The Poola Baavi.

The Poola Baavi is the well where flowers are thrown. It is a step well into which all the flowers and Tulasi used for the decoration of the deity, are thrown after removal. This practice was initiated by Sri Ramanuja when he visited the temple in the 12th century A.D. The connected legend is described in the 'Venkatachala Ithihasamala'.

The tradition is that flowers on the hill should be used only for God and not for human beings. According to Agamas the flowers removed after use by the Deity should be deposited in a well or tank.

The flowers and Tulasi used for adorning Sri Venkateswara Swamy Varu will be distributed to the devotees only on Panchami Theertham day after decorating Sri Padmavathi Ammavaru after Thiruppavai Sathumurai and Sthana bahumanam at Panchami Theertha Mandapam in Tiruchanoor, where Goddess Padmavathi's temple is located. This is the only day when we can get the flowers, Tulasi, Turmeric etc. used for both the deities at Tirumala and Tiruchanoor.

The Lord of the Seven Hills

The Lord is called "Edukondalavadu" in Telugu or "Ezhumalayan" in Tamil meaning the Lord of the Seven Hills.

When Srimannarayana desired to come down to the Earth from His sacred abode - Vaikuntam, he chose the sacred Seven Hills for his earthly abode and came down straight there. The Seven Hills are Seshachalam, Garudachalam, Venkatadri, Narayanadri, Vrishabhadri, Vrishadri and Anjanadri. Each of these names has a puranic significance attached to its nomenclature and they are described at length in 'Sri Venkatachala mahatmyam'.

Seshachalam - This name is given to this sacred hill as at one time Lord Vishnu ordered Adishesha to proceed to the earth and take the shape of a mountain, so that He could come and reside there.

Garudachalam - Garuda was directed by Siva to do penance here to atone for his sins committed while killing his cousins. The Lord blessed the divine bird here and hence this name for the second hill.

Venkatadri - The word 'Kata' signified sin and 'Ven'- means the burning of such sins. Madhava, a brahmin who fell in love with a chandala woman, was asked to ascend this sacred Hill, to wash his sins. He did so. All his sins were burnt down.

Narayanadri - Sage Narayana, suggested Lord Vishnu this sacred place for his earthly abode which the Lord accepted.

Vrishabhadri - The place where the asura Vrishabha was slain by the chakra of the Lord and his name was given to this place as prayed by him to the Lord.

Vrishadri - Place where Vrisha was directed to do penance by the Lord and whom Venkatesa blessed with moksha (Salvation).

Anjanadri - Anjana Devi went to Tirumala as directed by Dharma (God of Righteousness) and stayed on the banks of Akasa Ganga doing severe penance. She was deep in meditation and took nothing as food. Worried at her state of health, Vayu, the god of wind dropped a fruit daily in her hands, which alone she ate. After some time, she became pregnant and a son was born to her. This was Anjaneya or Hanuman, who even as a child flew into the skies to catch the rising sun. Brahma blessed this child with longevity and immense strength and at the request of Anjana the place was named Anjanadri or Anjanachalam.

THE APACHARAS

What one shall not do in a place of worship.

There are about thirty transgressions to which a worshipper of the Deity is liable:-

1. To ride into the premises sacred to a deity or to enter a place of worship (even) wearing footwear.

We should not enter a place of worship wearing footwear. Even doing prayer with foot-wear is not permissible among Hindus. Whether it is wooden footwear or wooden sandals or leather foot-wear, it will have to be removed before entering a temple proper, or even a place of worship in one's own house.

2. Failure to celebrate or attend (when invited) sacred festivals such as the Radhayatra (procession on Chariot) on the day appointed for the same, Janmashtami (the birthday of Lord Sri Krishna) and so on.

This is subject to the work one has got and the nature of the business one has to attend to. In any case, every believer should attend the festivals, chariot processions etc, on festive occasions, nearest to his place of residence and wherever possible.

3. Failure to salute an image of the Deity after beholding it.

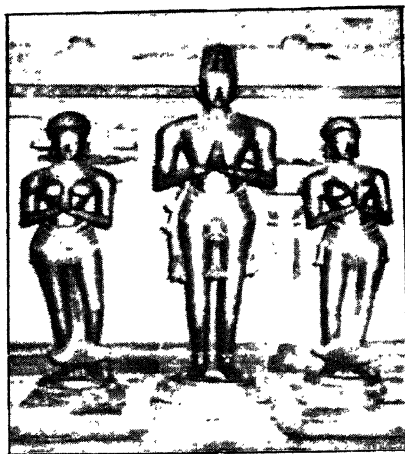
Very rarely will a Hindu fail to salute an image of the Deity after seeing it. The devout will resort to bowing and prostrating before the Deity.

4. To visit a temple in an impure state.

It is improper to go to the temple without properly cleaning one's body. Therefore, it is preferable that one goes to the temple immediately after bath. Though bathing is not considered a pre-requisite to go to a temple, one should clean his hands and feet and put on his caste mark and go to the temple.



Garudalwar



Sri Krishnadevaraya and his consorts



Koluva Srinivasa Murthy



Bhoga Srinivasa Murthy



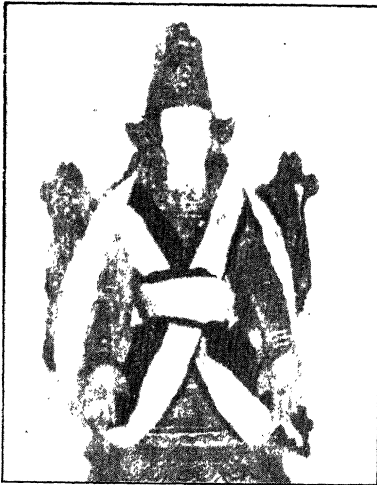
Ugra Srinivasa Murthy



Sri Krishna with Rukmini



Sita Rama and Lakshmana with Hanuman



Yoga Narasimha Swamy

5. To salute the Deity by raising only one hand:

No one will salute the Deity by raising one hand. It is a universal practice among Hindus to raise both their hands to salute the Deity. It will be considered a mark of respect only when both the hands are raised to bow to the Deity.

6. To go on walking round the Lord without pausing a while before Him after every full round, or merely walking round in front of the Lord.

Walking round the Deity is called "Pradakshina." It is not enough if one walks in front of the Deity. When doing more than one Pradakshina (for every Pradakshina) every one should bow to the Deity with properly raised hands and mind fixed on the Idol.

7. To squat with one's legs stretched in front of the Deity:

To squat with one's legs stretched before the Deity is an apachara. One should not squat with one's legs stretched even in the presence of elderly persons or devotees. This is considered a mark of disrespect. It is objectionable to squat or stand before the Deity.

8. To squat with one's knees up and encircled by one's arms before the Deity:

To squat with one's knees up and encircled by one's arms is a mark of disrespect not only before the Deity but also in the company of respectable people and before elders. This is a very common apachara which has to be avoided.

9. To lie down before the Lord:

One should not lie down before the Lord. One should with all respect stand or sit properly. It is not for

lying down before the Lord that one goes to the temple. This is a mark of disrespect and inattention, This should be avoided.

10. To dine before the Deity:

Dining before the deity is a mark of disrespect and also classed as a misdeed but this does not include prasadas taken in Srivaishnavites' temples. Dining in this context means regularly eating. In the Ahobila Mutt, there are aradhanas regularly arranged when people take their mid-day or night meal-but one should not dine before deity. One should take only prasadas given which do not form a regular food.

11. To tell a lie before the Deity:

Telling a lie even in the ordinary course is wrong; but uttering a lie before the deity is more sacrilegious. It is for eliminating our sins and omissions that we go to the deity but not to accumulate sins by uttering lies.

12. To speak loudly before the Deity:

One should not disturb the devotees by speaking loudly before the deity. Speaking aloud is a sign of disrespect to the deity. It will be noticed that disciples close their mouths with their hands partially and talk in a low tone as a mark of respect to their teacher. This should all the more be the case before the deity.

13. To talk with another before the deity:

One should not disturb one's concentration by talking to others in front of the deity. One must concentrate only on the deity. Talking should be done only outside the temples and not before the deity.

14. To exclaim in front of the Lord:

One should not try to get information or discuss politics or other social topics in the temple.

15. To quarrel in front of the deity:

It is not for quarreling that one goes to the temple. Quarreling even outside the temple is bad but in the precincts of the temple is worse. On the other hand, one should pray to the deity that he should be saved from quarrels.

16. To torment another before the Lord:

We should not give any trouble to anybody either before the Lord or anywhere. By trying to torment before the Lord, the concentration of the person who torments and also the victim is lost and the purpose of going to pray to the Lord is defeated.

17. To bless another before the Deity:

It is for the blessings of the Lord, we go to the deity. It is not for receiving blessing of another that one goes to the temple or to the place of worship. If it is a question of receiving blessings from anybody else, it can be received somewhere other than the place of worship. But it is quite in order to show our respect to the Acharyas in the temple when they come to the temple.

18. To speak harsh words to another before Deity:

One should talk in a pleasant, truthful and beneficent manner when one goes to the temple as generally referred to in the 17th Chapter of the Gita. By speaking harsh words, one loses one's temper and consequently concentration also.

19. To cover oneself all over with a blanket before the Deity.

One should take his upper cloth, tie it on his waist, so that nothing can hinder his view of the Deity. If one covers himself all over with a blanket, or any cloth he may not see the Deity. To maintain respect for the Deity, one should keep his clothes clean and when then properly and not allow the view of the deity to be hindered or let his blanket hinder the view of another devotee, who is in the temple.

20. To revile another before the Deity:

One should not abuse others either before the Deity or outside the temple. One should not speak ill or think ill of another man. This is the ancient adage. By reviling another man, one reviles himself. One becomes impure.

21. To extol another before the Deity:

As the Deity is the highest genus sought for and being the object of concentration, nobody should praise on ordinary person or anyone else before the Deity. One should chant prayer to the Deity but not sing praises of anybody else before the Deity.

22. To utter indecent words before the deity is not good:

23. To fast before the Deity:

This is prohibited even in the scriptures. There were occasions when fasts were observed by great men to achieve a political end. Many people started fast even for material purposes. If a great Men does anything objectionable the world also is inclined to follow the same. Fasting before the Deity for material or spiritual pur-

poses is not considered religious. It is hoped this aspect of fasting will be looked at in its proper perspective.

24. To worship the Lord with ordinary materials even when one can afford to offer him more valuable articles.

On occasions, when preparations are made for making offerings to the Deity, people purchase inferior ghee while they themselves use superior ghee for domestic use. This is most objectionable. We must offer the best available to the Lord and after offering, we may take the same. Under no circumstances should we indifferently offer inferior articles to the Deity when we can afford to offer more valuable articles.

25. To eat or drink anything that has not been offered to the Deity:

Whether we take leaves, flowers or fruits or water, we must offer them to the Deity first and then take it for ourselves. The Lord is so magnanimous that if you offer any of these things with devotion, he will take them.

26. Failure to offer to the Lord a fruit peculiar to the season before giving it to anyone else:

During mango season, one should offer mangoes to the Deity; otherwise, throughout one can offer plantain in good condition and according to the season and availability we must offer to the Lord and then give it to anyone else or take ourselves.

27. To sit with one's back against the Deity:

One should not sit showing his back to the Deity. It is a serious apachara which should be avoided. On and off out of forgetfulness young boys may slip into this

error. But they should be cautioned against this particular slip (apachara).

28. Failure to greet one's preceptor, enquire after his health and extol him:

This is called (the omission) Bhagavata Apachara. We must all devote attention not only to God but also to real bhaktas. Bhagavatha apachara is considered to be worse than the apachara to Bhagavan.

29. To indulge in self-praise.

Last but not the least, one should not indulge in self glorification or self-praise before the Deity. Self glorification or self-praise is always bad whether before the Deity or anywhere else.

30. To revile any Deity whatsoever:

One should not talk ill of any Deity; to whatever persuasion a man may belong, he should respect other deities. A Vaishnava should not talk ill of Siva and a Saivite should not talk ill of Vishnu. These deities are different aspects of the same Supreme being. Therefore, nobody should indulge in reviling another man's faith or the deity another man worships. But everyone can have his preferences in the matter of worship.

Sri Venkateswara in 'Nalayira Divya Prabandham'

A group of inspired saints, popularly known as the Alwars, flourished in South India and sang in praise of Vishnu. They propagated Bhakti of Vaishnavism. These saints are assigned to the period 400-800 A.D. The Alwars visited many Vishnu temples of the time and went into trance on looking at the images of the Lord. Their

inspired songs have been collected and arranged later and this collection goes under the name of the 'Nalayira Divya Prabandham'.

Sri Venkateswara temple on Tirumala is hymned by Poygai, Alvar, Bhudattalvar, Pey Alvar, Tirumalisai Alvar, Periya Alvar, Andal, Nammalvar, Tirumangai Alvar, Tiruppanalwar, and Kulasekhara Alvar. All these Alvars have sung in praise of this God of Kaliyuga.

Poygai Alvar refers to this God in eight verses. He says that Vengadam destroys all sins and that Vishnu stands on it wearing a Tulasi garland. The scholars and philosophers of the time are said to have gone to him with flowers, lights and incense, worshipped him and obtained true knowledge. This God is said to be Krishna who blew the conch and who dispelled Arjuna's ignorance: viz; Mohini for whom the asuras lost their heads; Narayana who sleeps on the milk ocean; Rama who killed Ravana and Trivikrama who measured the earth.

Bhudattalvar has seven verses in praise of Sri Venkateswara. This god is identified with Krishna who tore the mouth of a demon horse. All the celestials are described as placing their crowned heads at his feet. He is Vishnu who took His abode here a long time ago. He is often dressed as Krishna. His body is smeared with sandal paste and decorated with fine ornaments and garlands.

Pey Alvar praises the Lord in ten verses. It is stated that God is self-manifest, and that He is Trivikrama and Krishna. We are also informed that on his chest shines the Divine Lady seated on a lotus flower.

Tirumalisai Alvar praises the Lord in fourteen verses. He mentions the celebrations of the Onam (Tiruvonam-Sravanam) festival at Tirumala. Brahma and Siva are said to worship this God daily. God's feet are said to be decorated with flowers placed there by the devotees. It is also stated that the deity is visible from everywhere.

Tiruppanalvar has two verses in praise of Sri Venkateswara. He says that the celestials worship him daily and that the same God stands at Vengadam and sleeps at Arangam or Srirangam.

Kulasekhara also says that Brahma, Rudra and Indra worship the Lord. He also wished to be the doorstep and worship Him for ever.

Nammalwar states that the Lord manifested himself at Vengadam and that he is the one who destroyed Vali. He is said to be having Alamelumangai on his chest.

Tirumangai Alvar sang ten mellifluous verses on Lord Venkateswara. He got enormous strength on chanting 'Namo Narayana' - the Ashtakshari - many a time. He viewed Lord Venkateswara as Sri Rama and Sri Krishna. He looked at the deity of Venkateswara as Lord Narasimha giving benediction to bhakta Prahlada.

Peria Alvar's hymns on the glory and grandeur of the Lord of the seven hills are soul-stirring. He imagines Sri Venkateswara as Sri Rama and as young Krishna also.

Peria Alvar imagines himself as mother Yasoda who wails over the tired and weary condition of Krishna returning from the woods after tending His cows. Here, the Alvar experiences the strain himself and cries out on seeing Lord Venkateswara whom he visualises as Lord

Krishna returning from the woods barefooted after a hot day.

Sri Andal, the only lady saint of the 'Vaishnavite Twelve' deeply adored Lord Srinivasa. She was pining for whom she was expecting every day to appear before her. At times, she appeals to her chosen cuckoo bird to be on vigilant watch for Venkateswara's appearance and announce His arrival then and there.

Sri Venkatesa and Sri Vedanta Desika

Sri Vedanta Desika, the illustrious disciple of Sri Ramanuja and the great devotee of Lord Venkateswara, belonged to the 14th century A.D. He was a crusader for the high values set by Sri Vaishnavism and endeavoured all his life to carry on the message of Sri Ramanuja across the length and breadth of the Indian subcontinent.

Sri Desika, the symbol of unfettered brahmacharya and the noblest principles of Vedanta lived the life of an ascetic despite his matrimony, all through his life singing the glories of Lord Venkateswara, Varada Raja and Sri Ranganadha.

According to tradition, Sri Desika was the embodiment of the holy bell in Sri Venkateswaraswamy temple, Tirumala. Desika, after the demise of his uncle Appullar, went on a pilgrimage to the holy places in South India. At the famous town of Tiruvahindrapuram, Sri Vedanta Desika worshipped Lord Devanadha and recited *vainateya* mantra. Later he visited Madhurantakam, Kanchi and other places. His desire to have the darshan of Lord Venkateswara had become irresistible as he grew up in age. Hence he set out to Tirupati from Kanchi in his early thirties. He worshipped Goddess Padmavathidevi

at Tiruchanur and Govindaraja at Tirupati before ascending the holy hill on foot.

Sri Vedantadesika climbed up the hill and on the way paid his respects to Sri Ramanuja. After a bath in the holy tank (Swami Pushkarini) in Tirumala, he prostrated before gnanappiran. Then he stood before Sri Ramanuja's shrine with reverence and folded hands. Later Sri Desika entered the sanctum and sanctorum and standing near Kulasekhara step sang the Tamil verse "Akalakillen" etc., and worshipped Lord Venkateswara.

Sri Desika felt an electrifying sensation when he saw the resplendant image of the Lord. Thus the Lord and His holy disciple were in communion for a long time. Forgetting all about himself, Sri Desika started meditating upon the Divine and auspicious characteristics of the Lord. At the behest of the Lord, he composed 'Dayasatakam'.

The visit of Sri Desika to Tirupati marked an important development in the history of Vaishnavism in Tirupati. He revived and inspired Vaishnava theism and rituals connected with the worship of Lord Srinivasa, the cynosure of all eyes. He organised the mutts in the Tirupati region and arranged for their proper upkeep. Sri Vedanta Desika's life and work has become immortal. His was a career of unparalleled devotion to Vaishnavism and erudition in Sanskrit poetics. Thus "The bell of Srinivasa" at Tirumala has been ceaselessly ringing in the vaishnava world ever since the birth of the illustrious swamy Desikan.

Sri Venkateswara and Vikhanasa Maharshi

The rituals in Vaishnava shrines are conducted as per the agamas ordained by the great Acharyas. Among

them, Acharya Vikhanasa Maharshi is the author of the sutras which go by the name Vaikhanasa sutras governing the rituals at Sri Venkateswara Temple, Tirumala. On the other hand, the Pancharatra Agama sutras are followed in the rituals at Sri Padmavathi Ammavari temple Tiruchanur, Sri Ranganadha temple, Srirangam and Melkote shrines. Lord Vishnu himself is said to have delivered the Pancharatra sutras followed in some of the above mentioned shrines.

It is said that Acharya Vikhanasa was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu who came down to the earth to organise the Lord's worship in the archa form (image worship) for the welfare of the humanity. The work of the Acharya is titled 'Vaikhanasa Kalpa sutra' (one among the Kalpa sutras). It is supposed to be the guide for Vanaprasthas. The disciples of Vikhanasa acharya, Bhrigu, Mareechi, Atri and Kasyapa expounded Vaikhanasa sutras and expanded the Agamic school started by their teacher. There is a shrine for the Acharya at Tirupati.

The main difference between Vaikhanasa Agama and Pancharatra Agama is that the former stands on the bedrock of the Vedas without deviating from the sruti while the Pancharatra sutras take a liberal interpretation of the Vedas, upanishads and other spiritual works, Sruti and Smritis, in organisation of temple worship.

It is a fact that idol worship was first started by Vikhanasacharya and later adopted by the Pancharatrikas.

Srinivasa and Tirumala Nambi

Life-long service and devotion to Vishnu is the best means of salvation. Srisailapoorna or Tirumala Nambi was the first citizen (Pradhama Acharya Purusha) of

Tirumala. He was the maternal uncle of the great Vaishnava preceptor Sri Ramanuja. In fact, Sri Ramanuja is stated to have learnt textual and spiritual knowledge at his uncle's feet.

Tirumala Nambi devoted his whole lifetime to the service of Lord Venkateswara. He ascended the hill daily to perform Abhishekam (sacred bath) to the Lord. In spite of his old age he performed this service personally with utmost devotion.

One day when he was carrying Tirtham (sacred water) in a pitcher to perform Abhishekam, the Lord appeared to him in the guise of a young urchin, and accosted Srisaila poorna to spare Him some water to drink. Tirumala Nambi told Him that the water was intended for Lord's Abhisheka and that he was too feeble to go again and fetch water for the Lord from the water source which was far away from the place. But the boy stealthily punctured the pot, from behind, with a pebble, and quenched His thirst. Tirumala Nambi could not discover the trick until the pot became empty. He felt extremely sad and helpless, for there has been a break in his sacred service.

The boy smilingly led Tirumala Nambi to a mountain ridge close by and showed him a perennial spring of fresh water gushing forth from the jaws of a cleft boulder (the present Akasaganga Theertham) and disappeared from the spot.

Eversince, Tirumala Nambi and his descendants have been performing Abhishekam to Lord Venkateswara. Even today the family members of this great Acharya purusha are having the privilege to receive the first sacred theertham in the sanctum sanctorum.

Tirumala Nambi Tirumaligai (the house where Tirumala Nambi lived in the last quarter of the 10th century A.D.) was the first building in the South Mada street in Tirumala.

In later years, when Sri Ramanuja visited Tirumala as the acknowledged leader of all Sri Vaishnavas, his uncle Tirumala Nambi received him with temple honours. Tirumala Nambi's second son Tirukkuraippiran Pillan was adopted by Sri Ramanuja as his gnanaputra. Sri Ramanuja is said to have arranged a committee consisting of the Archaka, Tirumala Nambi and Anandalvan.

Yamunacharya was Tirumala Nambi's grandfather. In fact it was only after hearing his exposition of a portion of Nammalvar's Prabandham in praise of Sri Venkateswara, Tirumala Nambi came to Tirumala and dedicated himself to the service of the Lord.

There is a shrine for Tirumala Nambi in Sri Govinda raja's temple at Tirupati.

The descendants of Tirumala Nambi and Anandalvan who were the Acharya Purushas of the temple appear to have been the only Sri Vaishnavas associated with the priests in daily worship.

MANGALA SAASANAM

*"ākāla-tattvam āsrāntām, ātmanām, anupasyatām
atruptyamṛta-rūpaya Venkatesāya mangalam."*

Mangalam to Lord Sri Srinivasa, who is the unquenchable nectar (amrita) to all those who adore Him as the Supreme Lord unceasingly for all times-without any break or diversion.

There had not been any other deity except Lord Sri Venkateswara as "Eko Narayana Hari" whose charming archa form has lured people in this Kaliyuga. There is a never-ending stream of devotees seeking His darsanam and as time progresses, the stream not only continues, but widens converging more and more adherents to His sacred Feet.

. "Kavitārkika siṃhāya kalyāṇa guṇaśāline —
 Śrīmate Venkateśāya Vēdāntaguravē namaha —"
 "Śrīyaḥ kāntāya kalyāṇa
 nidhaye nidhaye'rdhinām
 Śrī Venkaṭa nivāsāya
 Śrīnivāsāya Maṅgaḷam"

"Śrīnivāso Vijayate"

"Lokā ssamastā ssukhino Bhavantu"

Maṅgaḷāni bhavantu.

Hariḥ Om.

* * *

PANORAMA OF THE BOOK

This booklet on Lord Srinivasa written by Sri T.Varadachariar of Tirupati, deals with the greatness of the Holy Tirumala and Lord Srinivasa right from the Vedic Age. The most ancient of the Vedas, the Rig Veda, speaks of the sanctity of the Hill as the abode of Lord Srinivasa. The puranas declare that the image of Lord Venkateswara is self-manifest (Swayambhu)

The book is written in simple English and the reader will find it both interesting and instructive. The author has arranged the contents in proper sequence for the guidance of the pilgrims starting from the Holy Kapi-latheertham in Tirupati. The beautiful descriptions of Svami Pushkarini, the architectural and sculptural excellence of the various Mandapams in the Holy Tirumala Temple such as the Bangaru Vakili, the Bangaru Bavi, the Kalyana Mandapam including the Sub-Mandapam and the gold gilded Ananda Nilaya Vimanam without excluding even the dance pose of a beautiful female dancer carved in one of the pillars in front of Sri Yoga Narasimha Swamy Temple, depicting her shapely breasts vertically hanging in the air in divine ecstasy speak volumes of the pious aesthetic taste of the author. On top of all, the imposing image of Lord Venkateswara, keeps the visitor spell bound and even atheists are bound to become theists in the presence of the Lord. Fools who come to scoff, remain to pray.

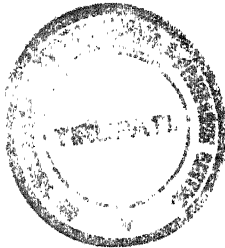
The author has taken pains to collect the pictures of all the Deities in the Holy temple for incorporation in the book. He has taken care to write a brief description on each of the shrines having the images of the Hindu Pantheon. He has done great service by including in

the book the inspired songs of the illustrious Alvars, the Srivaishnava saints, in praise of Lord Venkateswara through their Divya Prabandham.

I have no doubt, that the book will become popular and it is bound to be of indispensable value for the pilgrims.

Allur,
Nellore District A.P.

M. Narasimhachari, M.A., L.T.
(Retd.) Principal.



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