

MATRUSRI TARIGONDA VENGAMAMBA

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"SVETA".T.T.D:Tirupati



By

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Retd., S.E., Tirupati.

Publisher

Executive Officer

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams Tirupati

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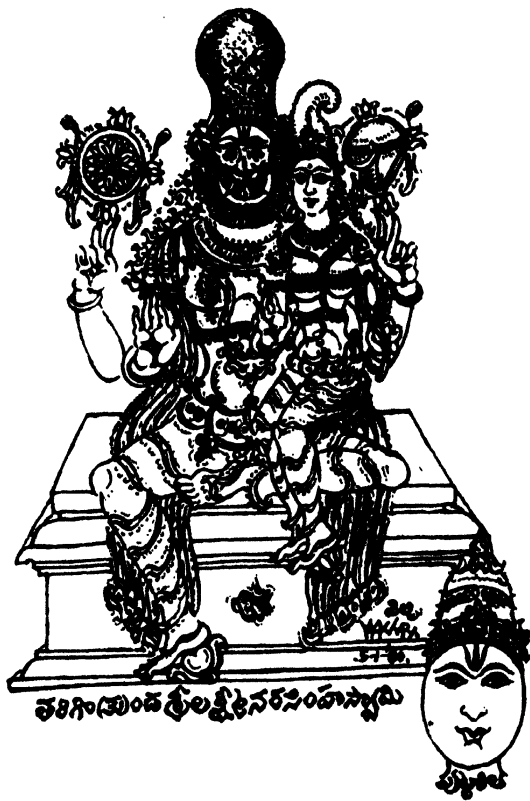
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Prologue

It is a well known fact that devotion is the only way to cross the ocean of Samsara. There are a number of ancient books like Bhagavatam which explain the spirit of devotion. Even today devotees of God are inspired by the writings of sages.

The tradition of saints still continues in our country. We come across many such holy sages in our history.

Even though there are many Gods in Hinduism, Lord Venkateswara is the most important of them all and is worshipped daily by thousands of devotees coming from all over the World. Saints like Annamayya propagated the cult of Sri Venkateswara, through their divine literature. Following Annamayya there were other devotees like Hathirambavaji, Tarigonda Vengamamba and recently Sri Malayala Swamy.

Sri Tarigonda Vengamamba was an embodiment of devotion of Lord Venkateswara. She dedicated her life to the Lord of the Seven Hills. She also refused to obey some social restrictions imposed on women by the society of those days. Therefore, she is considered as not only a devotee but also a social reformer. Her courage to oppose the beliefs, in spite of her being a woman, is highly appreciable.

We are propagating Sankeertana literature of Annamayya, not only in India but also in foreign countries. I came to know that there is a lot of interest among the people of foreign countries to know and follow the tradition initiated by devotees like Annamayya.

Sri Tarigonda Vengamamba also produced a lot of devotional literature in Telugu extolling the incomparable divinity of the Lord of Seven Hills. Tarigonda Vangammaba Project was started with the above intention. To spread this message in this age, translations of books into English

are necessary. Therefore, the present book by K.Hanumanthu, compiling the life and other details of her works, is welcome. I appreciate the efforts of K. Hanumanthu, and other officials of the Tirugonda Vengamamba Vangmaya project in bringing out this book.

Bhumana Karunakara Reddy

08-05-2008
Tirupati.

Chairman,
Tirumala Tirupati Devasthams.

Foreword

Lord Sri Venkateswara is the Supreme God in Kaliyuga and is being worshipped at present by lakhs of devotees from all over the World.

During the past centuries also, there were many devotees who considered Lord Venkateswara as their only refuge to attain Moksha. Annamacharya is the shining example of these devotees. Matrusri Tarigonda Vengamamba walked in the foot-steps of Annamacharya and took Lord Venkateswara as her all.

We have started recently a project in the name of Sri Tarigonda Vengamamba to propagate her literature full of devotion amongst the common people. Sri Bhuman, the Director of this project is trying his best on these lines with the assistance of Sarva Sri Dr. Chenchu Subbaiah and Dr. K.J. Krishnamurthy. He has already brought out some books authored by Tarigonda Vengamamba including a collection of essays on her literature.

One more book by Sri K.Hanumanthu, in English is now published which helps non Telugu – speaking people also to know the greatness of Tarigonda Vengamamba and her devotional literature. It contains not only her brief life-history but also gists of some of her other works already published by this project.

I wish that this book would receive wide circulation among the devotee readers.

- K.V. Ramanachary. I.A.S.

08-05-2008
Tirupati

Executive Officer,
Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams.

Preface

The relationship between God and devotee is so strong that it can never be broken. Our ancient religious literature speaks volumes of these devotees who attained the grace of God due to their sincere devotion.

Many incarnations of God, are also described in our Puranas. Lord Venkateswara is Archavatara who can be worshipped by anybody in this age. Foremost amongst these who attained Moksha by worshipping Lord Venkateswara, was Tarigonda Vengamamba. Like Ammanacharya, she also praised Lord Venkateswara and her literature in Telugu is very very popular. Sri Venkatachala Mahatmyam written by her is a shining example of her intense devotion towards Lord Venkateswara. She also wrote a number of other works, the total works being eighteen. She translated Yoga Vasista also in Dwipada form.

We have recently conducted some seminars in different areas of A.P. to perpetuate her memory and to propagate her works.

The enthusiasm of the people to know about her, inspired us to publish her works. We have already published many works and still continuing our efforts to bring out the remaining works. The papers presented at the seminar by eminent scholars were also brought out in a book form.

Sri Tarigonda Vengamamba is not only a devotee, but also a social reformer having a far-sight. To-day there is an awakening among our women-folk, but in those days of Tarigonda Vengamamba, it was highly impossible for a lady to resist and oppose the blind beliefs in society. Being a staunch devotee of Lord Srinivasa she could successfully oppose them and sages like Pushpagiri Pontiff were taken aback by her amazing boldness and spirituality.

We are really happy to propagate her ideas to the present - day society. Mr. K.Hanumanthu is well-known for his English translations of the books like the biography of Sri Malayalasamy, who volunteered to write a brief biography of Matrusri Tarigonda Vengamamba in English and approached me to get it published by T.T.D. Since it is written in English, there is every possibility of the book reaching a large segment of population, spreading her divine message beyond the shores of our country.

I thank Er.K. Hanumanthu, for giving this book to us and Executive Officer Sri K.V. Ramanchari for according permission to bring it out on behalf of Tarigonda Vengamamba Vangmaya Project.

08-05-2008
Tirupati.

'Bhuman'
Director
SVETA

Two Words

Ours is a land of Vedas. Three important ways of attaining Liberation were described in the Vedas. They are, Karma Marga, Bhakti Marga and Jnana Marga. Selfless service to Lord leads to devotion and intense devotion leads to self-realization.

The light installed at the door-step gives light to both the rooms. Similarly, devotion towards Lord, illuminates both the ways of Karma and Jnana. The sastras stress the importance of Bhakti in this age of Kali, since it is the easiest way to approach the Lord.

Our Puranas give an account of devotees belonging to ancient ages. Even in medieval ages and also at present, there are devotees in this holy land of Bharat, who show the path to others to attain Liberation.

One such eminent devotee was Sri Tarigonda Vengamamba, who lived in 18th & 19th century. She was a staunch devotee of Lord Venkateswara. She considered Sri Venkateswara as her spouse and dedicated her life to Him. There were many obstacles in her spiritual journey and she could overcome them all with courage and conviction. At last the people realized her greatness and worshipped her as a divine personality.

She wrote many books which are full of spiritual knowledge. Her writings inspire the readers even to-day to tread the path of devotion. Her writings include great works like Yoga Vasishtha.

T.T.D. started recently the project in the name of Tarigonda Vengamamba to highlight her divine message

among the people. A number of works written by Tarigonda Vengamamba were already published, evoking keen interest among the readers.

Now, we are bringing out a book in English written by Er.K. Hanumanthu which gives a brief biography of the divine mother and also some of her spiritual writings.

08-05-2008
Tirupati.

Dr. P. Chenchu Subbaiah,
Co-ordinator,
Vengamamba Vangmaya Project,
Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams.

Translator's Note

Driven by the desire to translate the book on life of Sri Tarigonda Vengamamba, from Telugu into English, which would propagate her greatness to non-Telugu knowing people of other states and countries, I approached, Sri 'Bhuman' to spare any literature available with him. Extremely warm was his welcome of the idea, and he instantaneously arranged a heavy load of books recently brought out by SVETA, and audio - cassettes, C.D's and directed me to meet Prof. K.J. Krishna Murthy, Parishkarta (Editor) for "Tarigonda Vengamamba Vangmaya Project", who was equally warm in receiving me and making available readily the rare literature available with him. I admired immensely the commitment, zeal, enthusiasm and utter sincerity with which they were both carrying on their chosen duties of this project. Dr. P. Chenchu Subbaiah, co-cordinator, who was acquainted later, has been extremely helpful in bringing out this book.

After translating the biographical data of Vengamamba, I felt impelled to refer to other books, namely "Tarigonda Nrusimha Satakam"; Bala Krushna Natakam"; "Sri Rama Parinayam"; "Chenchu Natakam"; "Sri Venkateswara Krushna Manjari" "Sri Venkateswara Mahatmyam"; "Ashtanga yoga Saramu"; "Vengamamba Sankirtana Ravali" and have attempted to very briefly prepare a gist of the contents of each book. The gists of books Vishnu Parijatam and Muktikanta Vilasamu, have been added later.

I am deeply indebted to Sri Bhuman for having undertaken to get this volume printed.

My thanks are due to Sri Nayanaru Appa Swamy, who had gone through the script and made some alterations; Dr. Samudrala Lakshmanaiah Garu for having guided me in preparing this volume; and my wife Smt. K. Anandamma who helped me too in many ways.

Born at Tarigonda and lived at Tirumala, Vengamamba had witnessed 1,000 moons. With her Mutyala Harathi and wave – offering with a garland of her poetic writings, she devotedly offered herself to Sri Venkatesvara and attained Moksha, liberation. To such a great devotee our heart-felt salutations are offered.

I trust the book would receive wide circulation.

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Matrusri Tarigonda Vengamamba

Viewed as a prolific women writer, or as a person with deep religious virtues, or as an exponent, of spiritual thoughts contained in our Vedas and Puranas, Tarigonda Vengamamba (1730-1817) ranks as an unique poetess of eminence. Nevertheless, in all the Telugu literature published so far, her great name and the illustrious life sketch along with her excellent writings, have not been unfortunately extolled adequately.

The birth place of Vengamamba is Tarigonda, a historic village four miles from Valmikipuram(Vayalpadu) of Chittoor District. In that small village, is situated an ancient and famous temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swami, which has a back-ground story.

Afflicted by famine, some families from Rayadurg of Bellary District, migrated to this fertile village with their cattle. Amongst them were one or two brahmin families. At dawn, one day, Lakshminarasamma, was churning butter milk in a pot duly singing in praise of her God Lakshmi Narasimha. At that time, she heard a sound from an obstruction to the wooden pole churner inside the pot. Finding nothing herself, she brought this fact to the notice of her husband who on close examination, found a small salagram (holy stone) out of black granite, of Lord Narasimha Swami. He took it out of the pot and kept it at a clean place and prostrated before it. Soon this news spread quickly to all the residents who gathered there. At that moment an unseen holy voice was heard, which proclaimed, "I have appeared here to protect you all. Worship me with devotion. All your difficulties would be mitigated".

That very night, Lord Narasimha appeared in a dream to Ramanaidu, the leader of those migrants and directed him to construct a new temple for Him and perform rituals regularly. This news when heard, instilled a strong desire in the residents to build a temple. On an auspicious occasion when they began digging the earth to lay the foun-

dation for the temple, a hidden pot of wealth was struck with which, they soon built a temple and installed a statue of Sri Lakshmi Narasimha in it. To the left of the Lord's statue, the Salagram found in the butter – milk pot, was also ceremoniously installed.

Ancient records say that the village 'Tarigonda' existed as early as in the sixteenth century, in the period of Krishnadevaraya and his brothers.

The Birth of Vengamamba & her Childhood

The brahmin family members who found the salagram in the butter milk pot, began performing the daily rituals to it. To this family belonged Kanala Krishnarya, of Nandavarika sect, with Vashistha gotra, who was pious, virtuous and disciplined. His wife was an understanding and a noble lady with sterling character, by name Mangamamba. This virtuous couple had no female child, unfortunately for a long time. They, therefore, undertook a pilgrimage to Tirumala Hills, the abode of Lord Venkatesvara and prayed Him soulfully to bless them with a female child. Devoted couple as they were, they soon were blessed with a female child, whom they named as Vengamma which in course of time became Vengamamba.

The God-fearing traditional atmosphere of the house, helped the girl develop devotion towards God. She spent her childhood blissfully, hearing happily the holy tales of Tarigonda Lakshmi Narasimha and Lord Venkatesvara of Tirupati.

Vengamma claims in her own writings that she never was taught any alphabets as such through any teacher in her childhood. The spiritual and literary atmosphere that prevailed in her home, enabled her to learn and write about the topics by her own self-learning.

Singing songs, slipping into a trance-like state and fetching the articles required for worship to the parents,

looked quite amusing to them at first. But her entering into an unconscious state and dancing, choosing solitude, without mixing with other children of her age, began disturbing the parents about her strange behaviour and her future life. Krishnaiah, thought that it might be a kind of madness in his daughter and worried about her marriage and began objecting to her devotional activities but without any results. Then he thought of a method of diverting her mind by engaging her constantly in house – hold duties without any leisure, but this method too failed as she, despite carrying out all the assigned duties meticulously, still was seen always devoted to God. As a last resort he thought that marriage would divert her mind towards the wordly matters.

Marriage

Child –marriages were widely prevalent during those days and many parents longed to reap the benefit of “Kanya-daan”, giving away of a girl in marriage, early. Observing the unearthly and unnatural behaviour of his girl – child, and as the practice of performing child – marriages was widely prevalent those days, Krishnaiah felt encouraged to find a suitable bride – groom for his daughter.

Jealous neighbours spoiled his efforts, by spreading false rumours that Vengamamba was a mad girl, afflicted with a strange psychological perversion. After many trials however Krishnaiah found a suitable boy by name Venkata Chalapathy whose father was a traditional brahmin, Injeti Timmayarya with, Srivatsa gothra, hailing from Naraguntapalam village, near Chittoor Town. The family members of the bridegroom, though had heard slightly of the strange behaviour of the girl, accepted the marriage with the hope that after marriage, the girl would mend her behaviour.

Vengamamba made her position clear that she was against this marriage, as her husband was only God, but

Krishnaiah argued that marriage for a girl was a tradition - bound duty and silenced her and performed the marriage forcibly.

After the marriage, the bridegroom and his relatives left for their place, as it was a child marriage. And Vengamamba, continued her worship of God, as before. Krishnaiah consoled himself that his daughter's unnatural behaviour would cease, when once she goes to her in-law's house. Meanwhile, he continued his efforts to wean away her mind to material life by counselling, but all his efforts proved futile. She argued with her father that in as much as even she had no control over her own body, how could any other person have it, to give her away in marriage. By thought, word and deed she had offered herself to Lord Srinivasa, but she was offered by force to others against her will.

On her attaining puberty, her father fixed her nuptial ceremony one day. On the first night, Vengamamba, as per one version, told the groom, "please treat me not as your wife. In thought, word and deed, I am devoted to Lord Sri Venkatesvara. Please pardon me for this" On hearing these unworldly, spiritual words, the groom got thoroughly disappointed and left the place the next day. Another version of this day's happenings says that Vengamamba appeared to the groom as his family deity Chauwdesvari Devi (instead of his bride) and he could not therefore approach her and walked away from the room, duly praying his family deity and left the place.

Deeply disappointed at the failure of his married life with a beautiful bride, Venkatachalapathi worried himself and died with a disease, after some time.

Krishnaiah and his wife were grief - stricken at the unhappy happening that befell their daughter, depriving her of the much - desired worldly pleasures. On the other hand, Vengamamba, never felt disappointed and indulged in increased devotional activity instead. Observing her

not being affected by the death of her husband, some jealous people spread the rumour that the boy had died because of the mental worries, resulting from the deprivation of family life and therefore she was responsible for his premature death. But, some others, declared that she was a holy person, with a sacred aim in life.

Denying that Injeti Venkatachalapathi was her husband, Vengamamba, declined to dispense with wearing bangles, having vermilion mark on her forehead and tonsuring head etc. which were ordained by custom for a brahmin widow. Many residents tried in vain to persuade her through her parents to change her ways.

She argued boldly and unwaveringly that her husband was Lord Sri Venkatachalapathi and she therefore did not become a widow, which could and would not happen. The elders were angry on one side, but on the other, they were surprised at the firm and bold stand taken by her.

Vengamamba pleaded with her grief-stricken parents that she would not bring disrepute to them, by her steadfast worship of God and detachment to worldly pleasures.

To ensure his daughter to lead a life in conformity with an ascetic and have peaceful future, Krishnaiah desirous of finding a way out, approached Sri Rupavataram Subrahmanya Sastri, of Madanapalle, an eminent spiritual scholar and requested him, after narrating the story of his daughter, to impart her the needed spiritual knowledge.

Teachings of Guru & Authorship of Books

Having heard about the attitude of the daughter of Kanala Krishnaiah, of a respectable family of Tarigonda, Sri Subrahmanya Sastri consented to the former's request. On an auspicious day, Krishnaiah took Vengamamba to Madanapalle, and entrusted his daughter to Sri Sastri's care. After asking some questions, and ascertaining her

right attitude towards spirituality, Sri Sastri accepted her as his disciple.

Sri Sastri began teaching vedantic knowledge to Vengamamba in the presence of his chosen diety Sri Somesvara Swami. Having complete faith in the dictum that, "Gurus Sakshat Parambrahma" meaning that" a teacher is virtually God", Vengamamba learnt the teachings from her Guru with absolute faith and practised them with much zeal and enthusiasm. Sri Sastri who taught her with all the affection as a daughter, in due course, gave her, "Mantropadesam'- the teaching of holy chanting – and the correct way of doing it. He taught her the reality of devotion (Bhakti Tattva) and the secrets of Yoga Sastra in great detail. She soon obtained the supreme knowledge due to her traditional family background and her incessant training and practice of the holy teachings of her Guru. Duly recognizing her spiritual growth with satisfaction, Sri Sastri, taught her some more ways of sadhana, explained their intricacies, and imparted her more teachings, before sending her back to Tarigonda.

Vengamamba began spending more time at the temple of Narasimha Swamy at Tarigonda after her return from her Guru. She used to spend much time at the shade of Anjaneya statue situated besides the temple, duly meditating, which nobody could observe. At her leisure time she began writing poetry.

Her maiden literary effort was "Tarigonda Nrusimha Satakam", 'by your mercy, Swami I have penned these hundred poems, with the help of the words granted to me' she wrote in that book. Some people termed her poems as poetry of confusion and ambiguity'. Nevertheless, Vengamamba undisturbed prayed Lord Nrusimha, to perpetuate her poems.

The next book the poetess Vengamamba wrote was "The story of the elegance of Nrusimha" in Yakshagana style based on the history of Prahlada, and dedicated it

to Lord Nrusimha Himself. Her next book in yakshagana style was, "the sport of Siva", 'Shiva Vilasam', which she dedicated to Sri Veerabhadra Swamy of Rayachoti.

Not tolerating her regular visits to the Nrusimha temple, some jealous people spread bad tales about her behaviour. Some others began talking derisively and even indulged in throwing small stones at her laughing mockingly. Vengamamba, however, believed that Nrusimha swamy, who punishes the wicked and protects the virtuous, would alone teach her tormenters a lesson in due course. She continued her yoga, and her authoring books, like a penance

During this time, the poetess wrote "Raja Yogamrutha Saram" a metaphysical 'Dwipada' metre and dedicated to Nrusimha Swami of Tarigonda. Later she wrote "Balakrishna Natakam" in 'yakshagana' style and dedicated it to Vasudeva (Sri krishna).

Telugu Meera

Just as we find similarity amongst male devotees, we find identity in women devotees also. Meerabai was most eminent of women devotees hailing from North India. On account of certain incidents in her childhood, Meera Bai became an ardent devotee of Giridhara Gopala and declared Him as her sole master and God and grew up perpetually with that thought. She asserted to her husband Kumbha Rana in no uncertain terms 'you are husband only to my physical body. I had dedicated my mind, long ago, to Giridhara Gopala'.

There is much similarity between the life history of Meera Bai and Tarigonda Vengamamba, due to which, Vengamamba is rightly called "Telugu Meera". Meera Bai attained corporeality by chanting the holy name of Nanda Gopala, and overcame all difficulties encountered by her with devotion on God. Similarly, Tarigonda Vengamamba overcame several difficulties faced by her with the strength of devotion to God. It is to be noted that both the devotees

avoided material and physical pleasures in life with the sole aim of attaining the supreme Moksha or Liberation.

The Power of Working Miracles

The spiritual way of life lead by Vengamamba was not to the liking of Brahmin community of Tarigonda. They called her many names such as, mad, ghost, demon, Mahakali (the terrible form of Goddess Durga) and heckled, that she was an youngster and had no knowledge of Sastras and spoking opposing them. They therefore were determined somehow to make her obey their words. They decided to socially boycott the family of Krishnaiah, if Vengamma, didn't agree to her widowhood and duly brought it to the notice of Krishnaiah, who felt very much disturbed at their blandishment.

Krishnaiah was torn between two opposing positions, one his own daughter disclaiming her widowhood and the second the pressure brought in by orthodox customs of the community members. Ultimately Krishnaiah yielded to the pressures of the Brahmin Society who were hell bent to tonsure Vengamamba's head. She bemoaned the pitiable state of her father and resolved to her fate and boldly prayed her family God. They took her by force and ordered the barber to tonsure her head. But on his approaching her, he was afflicted with enormous fear and he shivered uncontrollably like a lamb before a tiger and declined to do their bidding. Thinking that it was God's bidding, the brahmins abandoned their effort for the day.

Despite this happening by divine intervention, a section of the Brahmins, were ashamed and not contented at their helpless position. They decided to bring the matter to the notice of Sri Pushpagiri Sankaracharya, the Mutt Head, who happened to be touring in that area at that time. Approaching the Mutt Head, the Brahmins narrated to him in detail the refusal of Vengamamba to follow the age-old custom Srimadabhinavoddanda Vidya Nrusimha

Bharati Swami, thinking that a Brahmin girl being adamant not to confirm to the custom was against the Hindu tenets, sent word that he would visit Tarigonda personally.

The Swami stayed at the Nrusimha temple with his followers and sent word to fetch Vengamamba to his presence. She sent word that she would come after taking her meal, which not only angered the messengers but also the Swami who was surprised and grew furious. Thinking that great men should not be visited with empty hands, she took a cocoanut in her hands and stood before the 'Swami'. A cloth curtain was kept in front of the Swami. [Old custom stipulated that while talking with non-virtuous people haters of Vedas, abusers of God, and non-believers in God, a curtain has to be provided in between the Swami and the persons]

The Swami explained in great detail about the old customs rules of the caste system, and the regulation to be followed by a Brahmin girl and ordained her to obey the custom of tonsuring head as a Brahmin windowed girl.

In all humility, Vengamamba replied: "A chaste woman should not be touched by another male. The barber is another male. How can he be allowed to touch me? The virtue of chastity would vanish if a window keeps her hair in tact and would remain if the hair is removed! Could you, Swami tell which Sastra contains this stipulation? If the hair is removed, can the thoughts vanish? Even if, as per your orders the hair is removed to-day, can you ensure them not to grow in future?"

At these reasonable and apt questions, the Swami was not only angry but also completely surprised. Observing that Vengamamba did not do pranam to the Swami, the onlookers questioned her angrily why she did not offer her salutations. Unmoved by their queries, she kept her silence. The Swami asked the curtain to be removed and questioned her in a curt voice the reason for her not offering reverence.

With due obedience, she replied that if the Swami came out of the throne, he was sitting on, she would salute. He reflected for a moment the reason for her strange request, and thinking that she could be taught a lesson by his standing away from the throne, stood aside. Vengamamba then, offered namaskaras with folded hands to the throne, with full heart. Instantaneously a big sound was heard, and a fire broke out on the throne, reducing it to ashes immediately.

Fearing and taken aback at this strange happening by the power of Namaskar of Vengamamba, the Swami collecting himself after a few minutes, himself offered salutations to her and praised her variously as an incarnation of Prahlada Himself. He chided the brahmins assembled there for not realising the greatness of Vengamamba and took leave from her and left the place.

Though the Pushpagiri Mutt Head agreed to the greatness of Vengamamba, the brahmins of Tarigonda felt spited and harboured a grouse that their Mutt head was subjected to humiliation by Vengamamba. The responsibility for these unhappy happenings, they felt, was the father Krishnaiah and therefore they practised an undeclared social boycott, by not going to his house nor calling him to their houses on occasions of festivals and functions. They even avoided talking to him when faced which saddened Krishnaiah. Street boys jeered at Vengamamba, who was in her prime of youth, while she went to the temple and back, singing God's praise. Krishnaiah bemoaned this pitiable condition on account of his daughter and one day blurted out remorsefully that she could as well leave the house.

An Instigation

The harsh words of her father did not affect Vengamamba in the least as she had already resolved to her loathing as per the saying 'Mata Nasthi', 'Pita Nasthi', both mother and father were nonentities. As per God's

wish, she had played her part in the play of life thus far. Considering her father's words as those ordained by God Himself, she left her Home and began living in the temple of Nrusimha Swamy itself, day and night meditating on Him.

At times overcome by frenzy, she used to enter the sanctum sanctorum and worship the deity heartfully. When the archakas closed the doors and left at the end of the day, she used to chant God's name and spend her time in the front portion of the temple. Especially the sonorous songs sung by her at dawn waking up the Lord, filled the air of the temple with divinity and illumined the precincts.

From the beginning, Vengamamba used to spend many hours of her time meditating, sitting behind the statue of Anjaneya, situated to the left of Nrusimha Swami temple. Though many people knew about her visits to the temple, they did not observe her sitting behind the Anjaneya statue. One day she remained in a trance while meditating and continued to remain in that state for some days! Finding her neither in the village nor in the temple, people thought that she had left the place.

An archaka of Anjaneya at the time of worship happened to find Vengamamba and was afraid imagining her to be some devil. On closer observation, however, he found that she was no other than Vengamamba the daughter of Krishnaiah. Thinking that she was hiding herself with a bad intention abused her loudly and pulled her out with force by catching her hair.

Pained by the hair-pull her meditation was disturbed, and she opened her eyes. The Archaka fell down to a swoon, unable to bear her fierce looks. Recovering from the swoon after some time, the Archaka, by name Krishnamacharyulu, prostrated before her and begged for pardon.

She considered the disturbance caused to her meditation was a divine call to leave the place and after duly praying God heartfully, treaded her way to Tirumala Hills.

Pilgrimage to Tirumala

Not caring for food and shelter and not being afraid of even wild animals she walked her way to Tirumala, through thick forests, duly praying her family deity Sri Nrusimha Swami all the way. After an arduous journey of two days by foot, she reached a place near the gorge of the hills, by name 'Sandekavu Mogili Penta'. Sitting there before an idol of Anjaneya, she began severe meditation on Sri Venkateswara of Tirupati. That day she felt that Lord Venkateswara appeared before her, and invited her to come to Tirumala. Thanking Anjaneya for protecting her, she resumed her journey on foot through thick forests and reached Tirumala.

Seeing the tall Gopurams, sun-drenched bright golden temple, beautiful gardens, huts of ascetics, and temples, she felt immensely happy at the exquisite holy place and with due devotion had the darshan of Lord Venkateswara and was supremely satisfied.

The Mahant who had already heard about Vengamamba, the yogini, learnt about her arrival, and arranged a hut, situated on the East Mada Street near the stone temple car for her stay. He also arranged rice and sufficient provisions to be sent to her, every day. (The Mahant who thus extended hospitality to Vengamamba was Atmaramdas Dasji.

Vengamamba used to cook her own food and commenced writing books with devotion at other times. She reared Tulasi plants and flower creepers near her hut and made the leaves and flowers into garlands and offered them to the deity every day. After reaching Tirumala, her earliest writing was 'Vishnu Parijathamu' in the Yaksha Gana Style. Her invariable mention of Hayagriva in her

poems, leads us to believe that she was taught the Hayagriva Mantra there. This does not find place in all her writings made at Tarigonda. Her writings highlighted the beauty of her poems and the deep devotion to God.

The Intimacy with Thallapaka Family

Having come to know about Vengamamba's greatness of devotion and eminence as a poetess the descendant of Tallapaka Peda Tirumalacharya, the worthy younger son of his great father Tallapaka Annamacharya invited Vengamamba to live free of cost in a small house adjacent to theirs at North Mada street. She therefore shifted from her hut, to the terraced house provided by Annamacharya family and began living there. She planted different flowers and Tulasi plants and reared at the back yard. She performed puja everyday by adorning an idol of Srinivasa tastefully in her house.

As her neighbours were poets of eminence, she got acquainted with their ancestral writings. Vengamamba was particularly attracted by the book 'Subhadra Kalyanam' authored by Thimmamamba, the talented wife of Annamayya. Vengamamba later wrote on similar lines, her 'Ramaa Parinayam', a marriage song in 'Dwipada' style.

On the other side of her house, was the house of one 'Akka Ramaiah Deekshitulu' - a Government appointed priest, who used to oversee or deputise for the priests whenever necessary, to perform the daily rituals by the regular ones. As a head of the 'Archaka sangh' (society of priests), he was a rich person, with a large family and wielded much influence at Tirumala. Deekshitulu was jealous of the respect gained by Vengamamba as a poetess and by being allowed to adorn the deity with her garlands of Tulasi leaves and flowers everyday despite her being a widow excommunicated by her community for disobeying to follow the customs. Such a woman being neighbour of his orthodox family was intolerable to Deekshitulu, who

threw aspersions at her with his visitors and others in her presence. Pious and deeply religious as she was, she tolerated and ignored his abuses and continued her worship of Srinivasa as before.

Afflicted with pride, Deekshitulu indulged in throwing the defilements onto the sacred Tulasi and flower plants of Vengamamba. She cleaned the plants by removing the dirty waste leaf plates and pleaded with her neighbours many a time not to do so, but in vain. One evening she sat on a pedestal amidst the plants facing the Ananda Nilayam and was in a trance, deeply meditating on Srinivasa, for long hours about which nobody was aware. In the night, as usual, Deekshitulu's family after their night meal, threw the defilements into the court - yards of Vengamamba, which fell on her feet, disturbing her meditation. With unprecedented anger she, opened her red eyes and cursed unprompted 'Oh! Sinner let your race perish!'. As a result of this curse, many of the family members of Deekshitulu, died that night with vomittings and purging. A surviving son of Deekshitulu prostrated at the feet of Vengamamba and pleaded with her to take back the curse. Extremely indulgent and kind as she was, Vengamamba, said "you have repented for your mistake and hence are redeemed of the curse. However a single person would alone survive in each of your family", which is happening even to-day.

Penance

Getting disturbed at the God-willed happenings, Vengamamba longed to retire to a lonely place to meditate on God undisturbed. She decided that Tumburu kona was the best place and moved there without informing anyone. Dwelling in a cave there, she commenced to perform severe penance. [Tumburu Kona (Valley) is situated 12 miles north of Tirumala in a picturous valley and is inhabited by wild animals. Those ascetics who practice 'Pranayama' etc. alone can dare to live there. This has been stated by another great sage Sri Malayala Swamy, who did similar

Tapasya there]. The next day, not finding her at Tirumala, some concluded that she had merged with Srinivasa. Some others opined that she might be doing Tapasya somewhere in the Seshachala Hills.

At this time one brahmin by name Chandrasekhar, afflicted with leprocy, was disgusted with worldly life and somehow reached Tirumala to spend the rest of his life. As he was suffering form the deadly disease, he found it very difficult to have darshan of the deity, Lord Venkateswara. Leaving hopes of living, he treaded his way to Tumburu Kona and was found unable to move forward with thirst and hunger. His desperate cries were heard by Vengamamba who was doing Tapasya, at that quiet place.

She gathered a few fruits and water and offered to the helpless Brahmin and consoled him. She prayed Sri Venkateswara devoutely and said to the brahmin "you would be cured of your disease soon, by the grace of Srinivasa. But, you should not reveal that you have seen me here. If you inform, tragedy would befall you. Be careful and please close your eyes". As soon as he closed his eyes, he felt he was taking a dip in the Swami Pushkarini, the holy tank. When he opened his eyes, the pilgrims who were taking bath could see a person come up surprisingly from under the water suddenly. He was thence called "Pushkarateejudu" and began to live there, completely cured of his disease and in perfect health and vigour. The brahmin was respected by others as he had emerged from the Pushkarini and grew proud in due course. Ignoring the stipulation of Vengamamba, he revealed her whereabouts to other citizens, but soon died, grief stricken. The place where this Chandrasekhar died, a Tulasi Brundavan has been built and even to-day camphor burn offering is made.

Having come to know about Vengamamba's residence, the Mahant accompanied by a group of persons reached Tumburu Kona with Mangala vadyas and appealed to her

to kindly come back to Tirumala and bless them. Treating their call as ordained by Sri Sreenivasa, she consented to return to Tirumala and commenced living in a Mutt besides Tallapaka family residence.

The time of 5 or 6 years spent by Vengamamba at Tumburu Kona, was spent mainly in severe Tapasya. The contents of her writings of 'Chenchu Nataka' in Yakshagana style at that period, indicate her having lived in Tumburu Kona.

Some versions of history of Vengamamba say that she did not return to Tirumala, but left her physical body at Tumburu Kona. But, as many other writings followed her Chenchu Nataka, and as her Samadhi, Brundavana is located at Tirumala itself, it can be concluded that she did return to Tirumala from Tumburu Kona.

Brundavan

To the northern side of the house where she lived, Vengamamba occupied some space and began rearing Tulasi plants and flower plants, in a garden. In order to water these plants, she got one open well excavated. But water was not found, as it struck a stone slab. Thereupon she descended into the well and prayed Goddess Ganga as follows : Oh, mother, come here without inhibitions;

You were born in the foot of Sri hari

And have dwelled in the plait of God Siva,

You had become holy

And had received our worshipful prayers.

I had planted these Tulasi leaves to adorn Hari,

With your sacred water

To shine in the Hills of Seshadri

Come here with your brilliance.

Having deep faith in you

By selling my small possessions

With belief in your coming, I did this work.

Please do come here fast.

I sing in praise of Tarigonda Nrusimha

Who is Lord Srinivasa of Seshadri Hills,

Please have infinite mercy on me

and bale me out of this difficulty.

At the close of that prayer, water began gushing into the well from the four corners and filled it. On knowing about this miracle, people praised Vengamamba's greatness profusely.

In the foregoing song, in the third stanza, it is mentioned that she sold her scarce possessions which was helpful. This indicates that after her reaching Tirumala, she had with her, her younger sister's daughter, Mangamma, or some other child to assist her. [She might have sold out some of her jewels to defray the expenses of digging the well, this author opines]

During her stay at Tirumala, after her return from Tumburu Kona, Vengamamba spent much of her time in meditation seated on a stone slab, which is there even to-day. It is said that a white serpent used to stand behind her protecting her with its shade. All her writings during her stay at Tirumala, were from her sacred sitting place in the Brundavan. The first of her books from here was "Srikrishna Manjari".

Pearl Wave Offering

From the day Vengamamba stabilized her stay at Tirumala after arriving from Tarigonda, the divine service to the deity and worship in solitude in the evenings, the camphor burning offer was made by Vengamamba herself. Divine services to Sri Venkateswara, since ages, were being offered by Mahatmas and eminent people, while this was so, a widow, excommunicated by her community, who doesn't follow the tenets of customs, however high a devotee might be, being given the duty of offering the final services to the Lord every day, was not to the liking of the priests present there, who grew jealous of Vengamamba. One day they expressed words of their dislike in her very presence. "Thinking that this was to the liking of the Lord Himself, she finished her offering that day and left and from the next day onwards worshipped the idol of Srinivasa in her own house and stopped going to the temple. Knowing about her stoppage, the priests got contended that it was the effect of their jeering comments the previous day.

The next day happened to be the day of the car-festival. In all its splendour and glory, the temple car with Lord Venkateswara adorning it, moved with spectacular majesty on the Mada Streets. But as soon as it reached Vengamamba's house, it stopped and refused to move, despite the many efforts made by the Mahant and devotee pullers. The Archakas then understood that it was due to the influence of Vengammaba only and therefore went to her presence with repentance and begged her to excuse them. They entreated her to offer harati of camphor burning to the Lord seated in the temple-car. Conceding to their request made in repentent attitude, she came out of her house and offered camphor harati to the Lord in all humility and devotion. The temple car then began moving slowly and was pulled to its destination. This camphor offering, which was started by Vengamamba, has come to be known as "Tarigondavari Haarati" or "Mutyala Haarati", which is being continued even to-day. [A silver idol of

Tarigonda Nrusimha Swami, fixed in a plate made out of an alloy of five metals, is decorated with one of the ten incarnations of Vishnu with pearls mixed with vermillion and rice powder. A small vessel placed at the middle of the plate with camphor will be lighted and is offered by the family members of Vengamamba everyday, which is the last ritual to the Lord. The Camphor wave is first offered to the prime deity and then to the lying 'Bhoga Srinivasa Murthy' before close of the temple. Not only everyday, but also specially on the car festival day each year, this camphor waving would be offered duly brought out from Vengamamba's house, before the car is started on its celestial Journey]. This practice is followed even to-day and would be followed in future also.

One story says that Vengamamba adopted her sister's daughter, Mangamma to continue unfalteringly this offering to Sri Venkateswara. But, this contention has no authenticity in history. Vengamamba had adopted her sister's daughter Mangamma since the latter's childhood. Mangamma's in-laws hailed from Garidimitta of Vayalpad(now Valmikipuram) Taluk. Vengamamba had adopted one boy by name Injeti Narasappa, whose wife was Chengamma. Lakshamma was her daughter. The husband of Lakshamma was Gammanna. Gangadharappa was the son of this couple. He was the copier of the book 'Vishnu Parijatha'. [Garidimitta Subrahmanyam was the great grandson of Gangadharappa's younger brother].

From the days Vengamamba returned to Tirumala, she used to worship devoutly Sri Venkateswara and Nrusimha Swamy of Tarigonda. This undivided devotion is reflected amply and repeatedly in all the literature she created. She also celebrated every year the Nrusimhaswamy Jayanthi festival. All the literature pertaining to Nrusimha Jayanthi, reached Vengamamba's house at Tirumala from her father's house at Tarigonda. During the ten festival days Nrusimha Jayanthi beginning from Vaisakha shuddha Chaturdasi day, poor feeding, dispensing of cool water free to pilgrims, etc. were duly organized with devotion. The celebrations culminated with

the idols reaching Vengamamba's house and by her offering Prasad or cooked rice etc.

The Centre of Literary activity

The fame of Tarigonda Vengamamba, both due to her famous writings and her greatness on account of her Tapasya, spread like the Moon shine, through the pilgrims to the four corners of the country. This is borne out by the fact that Zamindars, Palegars, rich men, land lords and even ordinary people, came forward to offer their lands and money to conduct the Nrusmhotsvams, initiated by Vengamamba. Such donors were from places like Dindigal in TamilNadu, to Golkonda in Telangana.

In due course, during the period of her writing Dwipada Bhagavatam, she had gathered 8 writers known as 'Ashta Ghanamulu', to prepare copies of her writings. Poets and Pandits etc. who came to Tirumala on pilgrimage, after darshan of Sri Venkateswara, used to visit Vengamamba and felt blessed after seeing her. Some of them got copies made from her writings before leaving. Nrusimha Vilasam, Vishnu Parijatham, Gopi Natakam, were some of the dramatic songs, written by her, in Yaksha Gana style, which were learnt by heart and enacted on appropriate occasions. Thus her fame spread far and wide. Those days her dwelling (Mattam) was very busy with literary activities and was a place worth visiting at Tirumala.

After writing the Dwipada Bhagavatam, Vengamamba wrote 'Venkatachala Mahatmyam' in verse (champu) form. The last of the writings of the poetess were 'Jalakreeda Vilasamu', 'Muktikanta Vilasamu' in yaksha gana style, and 'Vasishta Ramaayana' in Dwipada style. In addition, this poetess 'tapaswini', had written, with deep devotion on 'Tarigonda Seshakudharadhyasha', her family deity, many hymns, philosophy in poems and songs. Some of these are believed to have been printed, but they are not available at present.

Thus rendering yeoman services to the literary field, worship of the Swamy, giving spiritual discourses to innumerable male and female devotees, after having witnessed a thousand full moons, (approximately 85 years) Vengamamba' left her physical body in the year 1817.

Maha Samadhi

The sishyas and devotees of Vengamamba, with due reverence to the great soul, interned her holy body, at her flower garden where she used do perform Dhyana every day at Tirumala.

In due course a portico was built over her Samadhi and a garden of Tulasi plants was grown. In front of the Samadhi under the shade of 'Neredu' tree in a small cage an idol of God Anjaneya was installed. A tale is told that this idol of Anjaneya helped Vengamamba and saved her at Yuddha kala kshetra.

That sacred garden place exists even to-day with Tulasi plants and varied flower plants and is known as, 'Tarigonda Vengamamba Brundavan, or Tariganamma Garden. That garden place is worshipped with cocoanuts and camphor waves even to-day especially on Fridays by pilgrims.

Greatness

The life of Vengamamba abounds with happenings of miracles, as in other great persons' lives. Tales like Lord Sri Venkateswara visiting her house daily, or her going to the temple through a tunnel form Tumburukona to the Tirumala Temple and returning after worship, though look like stories told in the puranas, they could be as well taken as proofs of her greatness.

Readers would see that Vengamamba's life was pregnant with hardships, humiliations and oppositions all through. The poetess, however reveals very little of her

personal life in all her writings, which speak clearly of her humility, deep devotion, noble spiritual thoughts and worshipful nature.

Some historians say that even to-day Vengamamba gives darshan to her devotees and mitigates their difficulties. Another example is that of Sri Malayala Swami, who did Tapasya at Tumburu Kona around 1915, whose experience is described below by his devoted poet Naganaarya. "He (Malayala Swami) thus, spent some years doing severe Tapasya at Tumburu Kona. One day, he had the darshan of Vengamamba.

"I had read about the holy life of Vengamamba and reflected on her. She gave personal darshan. She was with a veil covering her head and was golden in colour and stood before me. She addressed, 'child, your worship of me has given immense pleasure to me'. She had a great historic background, and I prostrated before her in deep devotion, she dispelled all the doubts I had and blessed me with all affection".

Having been bestowed with her blessings Sri Malayala Swamy, continued his Tapasya as before. This is from the history of the life of Malayala Swamy, written by poet Naganarya.

Whenever Sri Malayalawamy spoke about women, their rights to acquire spiritual knowledge, or the greatness of sprititual knowledge, invariably he mentioned about Matrusri Tarigonda Vengamamba. This fact has been told by Swamy's trusted disciple Dr. Samudrala Lakshmanaiah, now special Officer, Purana-Itihasa Project, T.T.D.

Dr. P.T. Jagannadha Rao, an elderly resident of Tirupati, who had written the life of Vengamamba in both prose and poetry described the experience he had in 1932 in English as follows. (vide T.T. Devasthanams Journal, Vol XX (1969) No. 10 (October) P.P. 33-37).

" I came to Tirupathi in the year 1932-33 to settle down permanently. I went up the hill, stood before Lord Venkateswara, and prayed to Him.... I came down the hill to my residence. That night very early in the morning at about 4 A.M. I had a vision. It is not a dream. I will give the difference between a vision and a dream in the end before this article.

There was twilight. It was neither day nor night. I was moving towards Bangaru Vakill(the golden door). As I approached it, the doors automatically opened by themselves. There was none, I went in upto Kulasekhara-padi. Sri Venkateswara was fully decorated. He was shining in Gold and gems. I folded my hands and said, 'You are again appearing to me as an idol. I cannot understand you, nor can I converse with you'. Immediately the - idol transformed into Ahobila mutt Pedda Jeeyangar of 1916, from whom I had the first initiation (Samasrayanam), and said, 'Now come on, what do you want?'

I was overwhelmed with joy and thought I was the only fortunate person on earth. I forgot my issue and questioned Him, "Dear Swami, people say that Hatiram Bawaji, Tallapaka Annamacharya and Tarigonda Vengamamba merged in you. If it is a fact, I wish to see how you have taken them into you' 'Look here' He said and stretched His long hands horizontally side ways. Just before his stretched right hand stood Vengamamba clad in a simple cotton saree and a jacket. Her hair was knotted and turned in a tuft (koppu). She wore a long red Namam on her face. She was having a plate in her hands with burning camphor. She was slightly bent forward, out of devotion. Similarly, on the left side close to God was Hathi Ram a robust figure with a beard and North Indian Namam. Next to him was Annamacharya with his S. Indian namam and Thambura. Both were clad in white dhoties. Shri Venkateswara in the form of Jeeyangar brought them all close to his chest with His hands. They melted away into him. I could not believe my own eyes.... I went near Him

and prostrated before His feet. By the time I got up I saw the original Idol only. Suddenly I opened my eyes and woke up. It was about 4.30 A.M.”.

The foregoing account was the personal experience of the writer, by which we understand the truth that like Tallapaka Annamacharya and Hathiram Bawaji, Tarigonda Vengamamba was also an esteemed devotee who had merged with Sri Venkateswara. Many even today, narrate their numerous personal experiences about her, after meditation.

The poetess in all her writings like Venkatachala Mahatmyam, describes the Characters usually sporting smiling faces. This is an indication that on her lips there danced a spiritual smile always.

Even in her gift deeds, copious mention of Nrusimha swamy is found.

Tarigonda Vengamamba – the poetess

Having read about the life – sketch of this great Tapaswini, and the extra-ordinary powers she exhibited during her life – time, passing mention has been made about her writings at various times. Let’s now know more details about the books she had written or dictated.

The books she wrote with her spiritual experiences even while at Tarigonda are :

1. Tarigonda Nrusimha Satakam.
2. Naarasimha Vilaasa Katha (yakshaganam)
3. Siva Naatakam (yaksha ganam)
4. Raaja yogaamruta Saaramu (Dwipada Kavya)
5. Baalakrishna Naatakam (Yaksha gaanam)

It is to be recalled when Vengamamba was being taught Brahma Vidya and the methods of yogabhyasa, by Rupavataram Subrahmanya Desika at Madanapalle, one afternoon, when she was sitting with half-closed eyes after her yogabhyasa, bright shining letters from the sky descended and entered onto the face of Vengamamba. This event has been recounted by herself in her book Vekatachala Mahatyam. It can be said, therefore that she was the only poetess in whom the letters of Sarada manifested in the whole history of Telugu literary world.

At Tirumala, she had a group of eight writers who prepared the copies of her books. Zamindars of Venkatagiri, Sri Kalahasthi, Karvetinagaram etc. had copies of her books prepared and took them.

The list of books thus authored and prepared by her followers is as follows.

1. Vishnu parijatam (yaksha Ganam)
2. Rama Parinayam (Dwipada Kavyam)
3. Chenchu Natakam (Yaksha Ganam)
4. Sri Krishna Manjari (Manjari Dwipada)
5. Sri Rukmini Natakam. (Yaksha ganam)
6. Gopika Natakam (yaksha ganam)
7. Dwipada Bhagavatham
8. Sri Venkatachala mahatmyam (Padya kavyani)
9. Ashtanga yoga Saramu (Verse)
10. Jala kreeda Vilasamu (Yaksha ganam)

11. Muktikanta Vilasamu (Yaksha ganam)
12. Tattva Keertanalu (spiritual songs)
13. Vaasishtha Ramayana (Dwipada kavyam)

In addition to the above, there were many poems, slokas and songs recited extempore by her which are not available at present. These were all dedicated to Tarigonda Nrusimha swamy and Tirupati Venkateswara.

Sri Venkatachala Mahatmyam

The 'Magnum Opus' out of all her writings is "Sri Venkatachala Mahatmyamu" which not only describes the sacredness of Tirumala Hills, but also the magnificent story of how Lord Venkateswara came to dwell on it, in chaste Telugu Poems. *During the past two centuries to the great ancient story of 'Venkatachalam' was found in Sanskrit in Varahapuram, Bhavishyaottara Puranam, Padmapuranm etc. in about twelve puranas.* Collected from all the puranas by great scholars and prepared as a single book, is 'Venkatachala Mahatmyam'.

Amongst those eminent poets who rendered this purana, into Telugu poems from Sanskrit, Tarigonda Vengamamba stands foremost. She had gathered the story of Venkatachala Mahatmyam briefly from many legends, and elaborated the story from Padmapurana and described the beauty of the Hills from Kapila Teertham to Tirumala, including the many holy tanks and the grandeur of the temple which gladdened many a pilgrim. The book describes the account of the happenings in the Holy Hills, the story of the marriages of Sri Venkateswara, the details of His glory etc. in chaste, pleasing Telugu poems. This book has therefore gained wide publicity in the four corners of Andhra Pradesh.

Recounting the entire contents of this book would, in the opinion of this writer, amount to repetition of the story, contained in books already available on the subject.

And therefore, the attempt is not being made for the sake of brevity of this booklet.

This book Venkatachala Mahatmyam being published by T.T.D. for the first time is most commendable

Four poems from worthy and great work need special mention.

I Aswasa : in poem no 18, in all humility Vengamamba expresses her salutations to great poets : Valmiki, Sage Vyasa, Kalidasa, Annamacharya, Nannaya, Thikkana Somayaji, Pathana and other ancient poets and pandits and dedicates her book "Venkatachala Mahatmyam" to Lord Srinivasa Himself.

In poem no. 21, she expresses her humbleness that she never had any formal schooling ; nor did she study as a pupil of Acharyas; she did not learn the poems, which confirm to 'Chandas' (rules of prosody); nor did she hear heartfelt plays opems and shastras; nor did she examine books of ancient scripts and culture; but she had composed the verses as per the dictates of Tarigonda Nrusimha Swamy, which reflect her expression of limited capacities.

In poem no. 22, she says: the Veena which is manufactured out of wood, would sing as per the songster, similarly by the grace of Purushottama (Lord Srinivasa), Bhagavatha Purana has been spelled by her tongue, in Dwipada style and dedicated it to Srinivasa. Her present proposal to compose Sri Venkatachala Mahatyam may appear like a fly trying to cross an ocean and people may laugh at her effort.

In poem no. 24, she describes the glory of Tirumala with its Gopuras, temple cars, tanks, shining hill tops, temples, huge elephants, temple cows, parrots, peacocks, swans, heaps of fruits, plenty of Tulasi leaves and flowers.

Vengamamba had praised Tirumala Hills with 18 names and had explained the reason for each name. Sounaka and other sages queried 'Suta' to explain how the names of Seshadri, Kreedadri, Venkatadri etc. were obtained. Suta explains about the 18 names. Relieves the worries of devotees and satisfies their desires, and hence called "Chintamani"; bestowing on the devotees knowledge 'Jnana' it was called as "Jnanadri". As it contained holy tanks which granted liberation; 'Moksha' to devotees it was called, "Teertachalam". Caters to the needs of devotees doing 'Tapasya', there are lot of pushkarinis, and hence it was called 'Pushkara sailam'. Vrushabhasura carried on penance here and hence it was called "Vrushbhadri". Even to Gods the temple looked like shining Gold, and hence was called "Kanakachalam". A holy Brahmin by name Narayana did penance and was hence called 'Narayanadri'. As Garuda, the bird God, brought it from Vaikuntha and hence called, Narayanadri. The Hill is the place where Prahlada was saved by Lord Narsimha and was called the "Narasimha Giri". As Anjana Devi gave birth to Anjaneya on the Hills after penance and hence it's called "Anjanadri". Varahaswami had manifested here and hence called "Varahagiri". One monkey king Neela did Tapasya here and attained liberation and hence called "Neeladri". It is the dwelling place of Mahalakshmi and therefore called "Sri giri". The splendour of the husband of Lakshmi, Maha Vishnu is enjoyed happily here and hence "Sri pati Giri". Accompanied by her followers Sri Rama played in these gardens and hence called 'Kreedachalam". As "Garuda" brought the hills from Vaikuntha, it was called "Garudadri". It is in the shape of 'Sesha' with all its glory and hence called "Seshachalam". The letter "Vem" is source for nectar, letters ka and 'ta' bring happiness and prosperity, and therefore the hill is called "Venkatachalam".

Sri Rama Parinayam

A brief story - elements in this booklet published by the T.T.D. for the first time under the general editorship of Sri B.S. Reddy (Bhuman) and edited ably by Acharya K.J. Krishna Murthy, is as follows :

When Srimannarayana was performing yoga, Brahma accompanied by other gods, approach Him and request him to marry the girl who was born out of the milky ocean while churning it and who did Tapasya to marry Him alone.

Consenting to their request, Lord Vishnu incarnates as 'Venkateswara at Venkatadri Hills. He sent Brahma and others to the God of seas, to fix up a date for the marriage, which they did happily.

Sri Venkateswara went to the Lord of the seas, along with his entourage on his vehicle, Garuda. After performing the usual rituals of, 'Vara Puja', 'Perantam', 'Mangala Snanam', 'Snathaka Vratam', Kasi yatra, the grand marriage function of Venkateswara and Rama Devi was celebrated under the leadership of Rishi Kaasyapa. As was the custom after the fourth night, after playing the flower - ball game and having meals, Venkateswara goes to rest house stealing the golden vessel. The bride goes to him and pleads with him to come back, which he did after persuasion. The marriage customs described relate to those prevailing in Rayalaseema area including variety of food preparations.

Venkateswara, invites His father-in-law, and mother - in - law to visit Venkatadri, which they happily accepted. After customary feasts and festivals, Lord of seas, as per the advice of Vakuladevi leaves the bride behind at Tirumala and returns to his place. Venkateswara, calls his bride with the appellation 'Alamelu Manga' and adorns her on his chest and lives happily in Ananda Nilayam.

While churning the ocean of Milk, as per the 8th chapter of Bhagavata, the daughter of the sea God, Lakshmi Devi was born and loved Lord Vishnu and married him. Vengamamba did not take this legend as it was, but had taken the marriage part of the story element alone and composed this booklet in Dwipada form. The book highlights that Srinivasa is no other than, Vishnu Himself in a pleasing and delightful description.

Bala Krishna Natakam

(The Play of Balakrishna in Yaksha Gana)

A brief gist of the contents of the above book authored by Vengamamba is as follows :

Sri Krishna exhibited various kinds of sports, on different occasions at Brundavan. During a full – moon night of the eighth lunar month, Sri Krishna was playing the flute sweetly, on the Banks of river Yamuna. At that time Lord Eswar (Talakona Siddheswar) in the guise of a crow-hunter, approached Sri Krishna, hunting for crows. He demanded Krishna not to play his flute which scared away the crows. On Sri Krishna demanding to know who he was, the crow-hunter puts a counter question to let him know first who the flute player was.

On acquainting each other, Sri Krishna shows all affection to the crow-hunter and sent him away with due reverence.

Attracted by the sonorous flute play, all the shepherd women Gopikas of Vrepalle, came running to the spot and praised the boy-Krishna. Reacting to their gathering thus at night Sri Krishna chided them that they should have not left their homes, which would lead to inviting blame on them and asked them to return to their homes. Testing their mental ability thus for some time, Sri Krishna, treated them to sumptuous experience of sweet romantic happiness by his flute play and group dance. Suddenly again, to test – them, he disappeared from their midst. Grief stricken they searched for him on all sides. After hearing their pitiable pleas, He reappeared and moved to a lotus pond to play water games with them pleasantly.

Meanwhile, Radha Devi, duly having a bath with rose water, beautifully dressed and bedcked with jewels and accompanied by her female companions arrived at Brundavan. But, not finding Sri Krishna, and quite disap-

pointed went in search of him and queried affectionately the trees, hills, birds plants and other natural habitats about the whereabouts of Sri Krishna. She called him aloud, thinking that he may be taunting her for fun. Just then, Maayika (the wife of pseudo crow-hunter Eswara), arrived there searching for her husband.

Radha and Maayika came to know of each other and on the latter informing Radha that Sri Krishna was playing water sports along with Gopikas at the lotus pond, felt acutely sad. She cursed the moon, Manmatha (love – God cupid) and the sweet air and in infatuation, swooned and fell down. The female companions brought her back to senses by sprinkling cold water. Radha then requested Maayika to fetch Sri Krishna back.

Hearing the aggrieved condition of Radha through Maayika, Sri Krishna returned to Radha's presence. But she pretended anger. Gopikas return to this place meanwhile, and Radha quarreled with them. Maayika naturally came to the aid of Radha. Displeased with her intervention Gopikas tied Maayika to a tree and beat her. Radha valiantly fought with the Gopikas and released Maayika.

By the intervention of Sri Krishna, Radha and Gopikas came to terms. To the suggestion of Maayika that on alternate days, Radha and Gopikas could meet Sri Krishna, a truce was struck and both parties agreed to this suggestion. Radha Devi then offered camphor wave, without the sight of Sri Krishna and the play ends happily.

Tarigonda Nrusimha Satakam

In Telugu literature, composing of 'Satakas' – one hundred poems – is an ancient practice as well as modern. Characteristics for 'Satakam' are mainly three. i) The repetitive addressing of the God of one's liking. ii) the number of poems to be not less than one hundred, iii) The prosody of all the poems to be the same throughout.

'Satakams' in Telugu language are mostly based on Bahkti, devotion. Amongst the numberless 'Satakams' published in Telugu the "Tarigonda Nrusimha Satakam" written by Matrusri Tarigonda Vengamamba, stands unique. It was the first book written by her, while she was in Tarigonda.

This contains 103, stanzas, out of which 65 are in 'Utpalamala' and 38 are in Champakamala metre. "Tarigonda Nrusimha! Dayapayonidhi" is the repetitive address (Makutam) in each poem. It means, "Tarigonda Nrusimha! The ocean of compassion".

Vengamamba's was not only a maiden attempt at writing, but also the satakam was a written word of her devotion to the deity. By expressing her deep desire to reach His unequalled state, the poetess reveals her aim of attaining Moksha, liberation, clearly. Her future writings as well as her first writings all show her desire to reach the goal of Moksha, liberation.

In her present book, she highlights the following items: 1. Devotion, 2. Morals, 3. Details of spiritual yoga, 4. Self-part.

1. Devotion : Her true devotion is seen in many stanzas. She prays all the Dasavataras (ten incarnations of Vishnu) in a chapter. In some stanzas, she exhibits sweet devotion assuming the role of a mistress.

2. Morals : As a natural flow from her pen are stanzas on morals found in her book. [In stanza no. 92, she eulogises to have charitable disposition and in stanza 95, she abhors adultery.]

3. In about 40 stanzas, she dwells on subjects like the living being, the soul, the Almighty, the greatness of a good teacher etc. and deals with spiritual matters. Depending on the prominence of Vedanta and Yoga topics, some have categorized the book as spiritual sataka.

4. Her first book, mirrors self-part clearly. As soon as she began writing poems, some critics branded them as not poems at all, but look-alike-poems. But the present book reveals that the critics were all prejudiced and jealous people. The poetess says in her book, that by the time the book was commenced she was a married woman and her husband's name was Injeti Venkata Chalapati, as per the last stanza.

In addition, she declares that by the touch of her teacher's foot, the writing on her head (Brahma Vraatha, destiny) had changed completely. It can therefore be concluded that by the spiritual teachings of her Guru, a new enthusiasm had been granted.

Even by the time this Satakam was written, it can be understood clearly that Vengamamba had acquired fully the grace of Lakshmi Nrusimha Swamy.

Though it was her first attempt, Vengamamba had exhibited sweet diversity abundantly. We observe shades of ancient poets Bhagavata by Bammara Pothana; Sri Kalahastheeswara Satakam by Dhurjati; Daasarathi Satakam by Kancherla Gopanarya. Some great qualities make it an independent self-effort.

The superiority, in her work is reflected :

- i) Right from her expression of salutations to her teacher initially, till the end, she had shown in her writings a natural native trait, with purity of devotion to her God of liking.
- ii) The style of this 'Satakam' flows lucidly any unevenness with purity devoid of any pomp and unrestrained, often times similar to the writings of ancient poets and with a speciality of its own.
- iii) With the most natural divine thoughts, spiritual ideas born out of one's own experiences; woven into her writings, this book shines as a unique spiritual text.

Chenchu Natakam

(Yaksha Ganam)

In the Seshachala forest, of Tirumala Hill Range, there was a habitat of Chenchus near Tumburu Kona, a beautiful valley. One day a young Chenchu woman, with her baby tied to her waist, carrying a bow and arrow, started for hunting, accompanied by her husband. While hunting after some time, her husband was lost in the forest and she came near Tirumala temple searching and called aloud for her husband.

Hearing her loud calls, the gate keepers, Jaya and Vijaya, called her near, and enquired about her story which she narrated as follows. The chief of the Chenchus was Sikkhinayak, who had two daughters. The eldest was Chenchu Lakshmi who had been married to Tarigonda Nrusimha. The second daughter was herself and married to one youth from Vindhyaadri. He had accompanied her for hunting and was lost in the forest. She asked the sentries, if they had seen him. They asked her to describe him.

She described him as having a short beard, swelled forehead, lame hands, crude talks, cat eyes, knotted cheeks, slender buttocks, curved ears, big potted stomach, short and bent back, but holding strong bow and arrow. He was the co-son-in-law of Tarigonda Narasimha.

The gate keepers replied that they had not seen a person with such description, and asked her about the places where Chenchus lived. In reply, Chenchita told them the details of their habitations, where they spend happily in the islands and seas.

She had seen many mountains but this mountain appears queer and expressed her surprise : "All the four sides there is plain ground but as stacked boxes there are hills alround" she queries innocently. They replied, "Dear lady these are not hills, but rows of buildings belonging to

revered priests on all four Mada streets where the Swamy travels on festive days". Similarly Chenchita queries with an effort about Gopuras looking like high hills; the wall on all sides of the temple whether they are slate hills, the shining Gold Ananda Nilayam, whether a glittering post hillock. Jaya and Vijaya explain to her in detail about all these.

On being queried about the customs in a marriage in their caste, Chenchita explains the details about it. She then questions intelligently, " I am seeing one Venkateswara in Tumburu Kona. Whether this Venkateswara is superior or the one seen by me, I would like to see myself and know". The gate keepers query Chenchita more intelligently, about the details of Venkateswara of Tumburu Kona and how they worship Him. On knowing all those details, they allow her to see Lord Venkateswara.

Meanwhile, Chenchu Naidu, the husband returns and brands Venkateswara as an adulterer and a thief and prevents his wife Chenchita from seeing Venkateswara. She then hands over the child to him and goes in search of sweet gourds in the forest. Just at that time a tiger appears and snatches the child and runs away. Hearing the cries of Chenchu Naidu, the wife returns running to him. Knowing about the loss of child, she swooned. Recovering after some time, Chenchita pleads in many ways with Sri Venkateswara to give back her child. At that movement, Lord Venkateswara possessed one of the Dwarapalakas and spoke thus "Oh! Chenchu lady, you said you would see me, but without seeing you had gone away. That was the reason why your child was stolen by a tiger. So you now bring presentations to me and keep them in my presence and take back your child to your dwelling place". Sri Venkateswara also informed her of the pieces of money hidden by good people, the place and the way of finding them. Chenchita consents with gratitude, and the dead child returns to her arms. Chenchita prays at Ananda Nilayam, with all happiness and returned to

Tumburu Kona hamlet accompanied by the child and her husband. The story thus ends with a happy note. This story indicates that the male partner exercised undue authority over his wife in those days. Also, the description of husband shows the humorous element inherent in Vengamamba.

Ashtanga Yoga Saramu

(The essence of the Eight Yogas)

In the third chapter of Sri Venkatachala Mahaatmyam, Adi Varahaswami describes to Bhudevi the superiority of the knowledge of yoga in 86 poems. These details are all the practical self-experiences of the poetess, which are in simple language and easy style.

Some enquirers had requested the poetess that if the specialities of yoga knowledge are collected in a special book form, it would be convenient to study and teach others. As per their request she had prepared this booklet from the bigger book, Sri Venkatchala Mahaatmyam. This proved more convenient to read matter written in those days on palmyra leaves. By the foregoing facts, it could be surmised that in those days, Vengamamba's books had already proved popular with large readership.

The story :- In Naimisaranya, Maharshis like Saunaka etc. had heard from Suta Muni, the Purana Dharmas (Ancient righteousness from legends) and requested him on one day to describe to them the difficult and different Yoga methods. Sage Suta then replies as follows " I had heard from Gurudev Veda Vyasa these methods of the eight Yogas, as taught by Adivarahaswami to Bhudevi (Goddess Earth) I would narrate them to you, which please hear.

One day, Bhudevi questions the white Varahaswami (Boar God) who had incarnated at the Seshadri hills thus: "When people are with a sole goal of achieving final emancipation by paths of Jnana, Vairagya, Bhakti (knowledge,

renunciation and devotion), can they dear Swami, abandon the path of action? or are they to continue to perform these good actions, please tell me".

In reply, Adi Varahaswami said: "Bhudevi, whatever experience has been gained by the path of knowledge, renunciation and devotion, actions ordained by Vedas should not be discontinued. Appropriate virtuous actions are to be performed meticulously, but their fruits are to be left to Sri Hari. Such desireless actions would lead one to Brahamacharya, Celibacy Garhasthya, family life; Vanaprasta (hermit life, retiring to woods); Sanyasa (Mendicant life); Avadhuta, an ascetic (who has renounced all worldly attachments) and ultimately merge with Brahman, God. Some others, who do not leave the fruits of their actions to God, take birth, meet death and would be reborn again, repeatedly. Whoever leaves the fruits of their actions to God, with ardent Yogabhyasa, attain Moksha, final liberation".

Bhudevi then questions, "Dear Sir, please explain to me the methods of the great yoga practices". In answer to her query, Swamy explains to her the eight methods of yoga practice. All these details, Sage Suta, explains to Sounaka and others, with which the book ends.

Vengamamba explains briefly, with her own self-experience in easy and simple language, the cream of the eight Yogas.

For the sake of readers, the eight yogas are detailed below.

1. Yamamu (self control): Knowing and restraining or controlling the passions of the body in the world from sensual desires.
2. Niyama, (Principle): To retain virtuous thoughts about Brahman.

3. **Asana** : Posture of sitting etc. whichever posture enables one to sit comfortably to think about Brahman constantly, is termed as Aasana.
4. **Pranayama** : "To reject the world is exhaling. Inhaling is the act of thinking. " I am myself Brahman". To mix these two operations is "Kumbhaka", the exercise in which the breath is suspended. By considering everything as Brahman, divine state is obtained, in which all bodily parts are restrained which is pranayama.
5. **Pratyahara** : By finding the self in all actions, concentrating the mind on that consciousness and ultimately becoming that.
6. **Dharana** : Finding Brahman wherever the mind goes and turning it inwards.
7. **Dhyana** : To gain the firm knowledge that " I am the Brahman" and retain it" permanently.
8. **Samadhi** : To have undisturbed mind and think that every thing is Brahman and in the end forgetting even that thought, is the state of Samadhi (final emancipation) which is beyond the reach of description of the mind or word.

Vengamamba finally advises those practicing these yoga methods not to have egotism which would spoil them.

Sri Venkateswara Krishna Manjari

Sri Venkatesvara Krushna Manjari is a composition dedicated to the holy feet of Sri Venkatesvara. Devout poetess Matrusri Tarigonda Vengamamba, after doing Tapasya (Penance) for about five years at the Valley of Tumburu Kona of Seshachala Hills, returned to Tirumala. From the Tulasi and flower garden she brought up at Tirumala, she stood on one leg and recited extempore

these verses in praise of God.

Manjary is a native prosody, which has no limitation of Prasa (the second letter being in rhythm) in the second line. These verses are told to indicate the indivisibility of Sri Venkateswara and Krishna and hence contain the address "Krishna" in the end of every second line. This address is so exquisite that Vanguri Subba Rao, has categorized as it 'Dwipada Satakam'.

Manjari prosody is a very convenient form to write in praise of God, said an Anantamatya, Appakavi etc. who knew the grammatical, prosodical or other similar sciences. The present writing of the great poetess proves that they were very perfect.

Srimadbhagavata mentions about the nine types of devotion – in which the three paths, Pada Samsevanamu – worship of the feet, Daasyamu, servitude and Atma Nivedanam, self – dedication end in taking refuge. Vengamamba practised these paths herself, and this is amply clear and beautiful in those poems. Not only these, Dwayamu, two mantras namely, srimat Narayanaya namaha; Srimannarayanu cheravau saranam prapadye Charama Slokam, a verse which is considered to be indisputably final in the path of devotion, seshaseshi Nyayamu, Lord Srimannarayana is seshi, the world and all the Jeevas are seshas, the relationship between these two; Markata Kishora Nyayamu, the monkey child hugging to the mother for safety, Marjala Kishora Nyayamu, the kitten being held with the teeth of the mother cat for its safety etc. and theories of 'Visishtadwaita' do appear as per context in her natural style.

With the nominative address of "Krishna" repeating in every verse, collection of these sweet poems, is convenient for singing everyday.

Women devotees hailing from places like Tirupathi, Madanapalle, Guntur, Nellore, Kadapa, etc. used to sing

these beautiful slokas in song form and derive pleasure. A manuscript was found even at Hosuru, and therefore it can be claimed that these poems were popular in other South Indian areas as well.

This composition imagines Sri Venkateswara as Sri Krishna and therefore wielded much influence on the devotees.

Though this booklet had gone into eight editions so far copies of it are rarely found. As per the manuscript library of the theosophical society, Adayar, Chennai, this booklet has been prepared after carrying out corrections duly comparing it with the printed versions available.

Maatru Sri Tarigonda Vengamamba Sankirtana Ravali

(Swara Samputi)

This booklet published by the T.T.D. in its Religious publication series, has been set to music by Sangeeta Kalanidhi Sri Gunti Nageswara Naidu, first grade artiste T.T.D. Annamacharya project. He has selected 25 of the most melodious songs written by Tarigonda Vengamamba and set their music exquisitely. This booklet would be useful to all musicians and music lovers, who love to practise and hear the devotional and excellent songs.

A Solicitation

Considered either in quantity or in quality, the literature on Lord Vishnu produced by Tarigonda Vengamamba, is not in any way lesser than that of Annamayya. She was a great poetess, popularly known as Telugu Meera and is comparable in certain respects to the great poet Pothana.

She worshipped Lord Srinivasa with her exquisite poems and songs in Telugu literature, which are lights

shining bright in Lord Venkateswar's literary temple, which express His splendour in words. As already written in her biographical sketch, she was a jewel of a poetess in the whole of Andhra Pradesh.

She was a revolutionary, raising the banner of revolt against the time - worn and outmoded customs, suppressing child widows socially in inhuman ways. Her revolt was not necessarily for her own benefit, but to the benefit of all hapless women folk.

She had authored not only satakas, yaksha ganas, Dwipadas, spiritual books, songs, but also great literary works like Venkatachala Mahatamyam, her magnum opus.

Realising the eminent personality of Sri Tarigonda Vengamamba, a scholar and cultured officer, the then Executive Officer, T.T.D. Sri A.P.V.N. Sarma, had constituted "a Tarigonda Vengamamba Vangmaya Project", and had appointed Prof. K.J. Krishna Murthy, a scholar of eminence, as editor. He had also decided that the project would function under the control of "SVETA", of which Prof. Bhuman Subrahmanyam Reddy is the Director. Sri P. Chenhu Subbaiah is incharge co-ordinator, T.V.V.Project.

Himself a talented scholar, Prof. B.S. Reddy (Bhuman) plunged deep into the Project and quickly arranged a two-day national Seminar on Vengamamba literature, which proved a thunderous success, with many scholars presenting interesting papers from all over the State. The proceedings of the seminar have since been brought out in a booklet form. Thanks to the inimitable initiative and zeal shown by the director and his Co-ordinator, Prof. K.J. Krishna Murthi, eight booklets of Vengamamba literature have also been printed already.

The songs have also been brought out in the form of audio C.D's. A trip to Tarigonda village was organized by Bhuman, and the T.T.D. has also adopted the

Nrusimhaswamy temple there for maintenance and improvements. Annual seminars are planned at Tirupati and other places of the State.

It is hoped Vengamamba songs would soon become as popular as Annamacharya songs and she would be remembered for ever, as a great devoted poetess.

Brief English literature on Tarigonda Vengamamba, has been found, though scarcely, in the following publications.

"Saints and sages of India", by G.R. Sholapurkar, published by Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, New Delh-1992.

Women writers in India. 600 B.c. to the present volume -I, 20th century, edited by Susive Tharu and K. Lalita, published by Oxford University Press, New Delhi-1991.

Brief life-sketch in Telugu also was published by National Book Trust, New Delhi in February 1969, under the title "Prakapaschima Pavitranganalu", p. 73-79. This is a translation of the original in English by Swami Chirantananda, by Swami Siva Sankara Sastri.

Other Publications in Telugu are :

1. "Tarigonda Vengamamba" (Brief story of Cinema Novel) by Dr. Inturi Venkateswara Rao, Chennai.
2. "Tarigonda Vengamamba", a Novel, By Dr. Muktevi Bharati, Hyderabad.
3. "Parama Yogini Vengamamba", A Novel, by Dr. N. Ananta Lakshmi, Hyderabad.
4. "Matrusri Tarigonda Vengamamba", a play, by Dr. Rasani Venkatramaiah, Tirupati.

The following is the list of books authored by Tarigonds Vengamamba, which have been published by T.T.D. and yet to be published.

Already Published :

1. Tarigonda Nrusimha Satakamu.
2. Balakrishna Natakam.
3. Rama Prinayam.
4. Chenchu Natakam.
5. Sri Venkateswara Krushna Manjari.
6. Ashtanga yoga Saramu.
7. Sri Venkatachala Mahatmyam.

To be Published :

1. Jalakreeda Vilasamu
2. Vishnuparijatamu.
3. Raja Yogamruta Saramu.
4. Vasishta Ramayanamu.

Books which have not so far been printed.

1. Siva Natakam.
2. Dwipada Bhagavatam.
3. Muktiknata Vilasamu.

4. Golla Kalapamu

5. Dana Patralu.

The biography of Tarigonda Vengamamba is so appealing that the following, it is understood, have made efforts to film it.

1. Sri B. Padmanabham Garu, Cine Actor.
2. Smt. P. Bhganumati garu, Cine actress and Director.
3. Sri Turlapati Rama Rao Garu (understood to have scripted the story to make a film.)
4. Efforts are also understood to have been made to prepare a film, by Sri B. Viswanatha Reddy Garu (Son of Sri B.N. Reddy), under the direction of Kalatapaswi K. Viswanath Garu.
5. A T.V. serival is being prepared by Sri V. Doraswami Raju ex M.L.A., Nagari, as per his recent announcement.

The Philosophy Taught By Vengamamba

From ancient times, legend says that many Maharshis performed penance at Tirumuala Hills. Even during recent times, the father of Sankirtana compositions Tallapaka Annamacharyulu, Hathiram Bavaji, Tarigonda. Vengamamba, Sri Malayala Swami, after the 15th century, did penance at Tirumala. All these Mahatmas received the blessings of God Sri Venkatachalapati.

Well-known is the abundant musical literature created by Sri Annamacharya. Similar is the case of Tarigonda Vengamamba, who had composed poems and prose, explaining spiritual philosophy, equally abundantly. Historians say that she had written eighteen books out of which some are lost.

Famous amongst them are, Sri Venkatachala Mahaatmyam, Vaasishta Ramayanam etc. In her writings in yakshagana style also, explanations of Vedanta are often found.

Traditionalists contend that only to explain the purport of Vedas the puranic literature was born. Even by story – telling the essence of Vedanta is explained. They say that Sita was 'Jeevatma' the individual soul enshrined in the human body; Sri Rama is Paramatma the Supreme Being, considered as the soul of the Universe, the person who united them when they were separated, was the son of God of air Hanuman, who carried out his ordained duty. Similarly, it is contended that Kurukshetra was the heart, Pandavas were virtuous qualities while Kouravas were bad qualities and ultimately good alone triumphed and prevailed. Thus Mahabharata story is explained by commentators. And in Bhagavata, interpretation of Vedanta in the form of stories is abundant. They have been told to teach detachment and practical morality but not merely literary beauty.

In literature the place of Vedanta Tattava is unique, which we find in Vengamamba's literature abundantly. She was a great devotee, when she reached the supreme state and attained enlightenment. She was an embodiment of devotion and knowledge.

As a child widow, she became spiritual minded instead of leading a- mundane family life. She obtained spiritual knowledge from Sri Subrahmanya Swami of Madanapalle. She made this knowledge amply real in all her writings. She had referred to Annamacharya in her writings which no other writer had done before and this shows she was well-acquainted with prose literature.

Pothana had disowned his authorship of Bhagavatha by declaring with humility that Lord Ramabhadra had dictated it to him. Annamacharya, similarly, claimed that God Himself made his tongue spell out the songs. Vengamamba

too declared that whatever was told to her by Nrusimha Swamy of Tarigonda, she had reproduced. In her poem, she wrote that only as ordered by Tarigonda Nrusmha Swamy, she had written and it was not her own creation.

She claimed that just as when the artist plays, the Veena produces sounds, she had written the Dwipada Bhagavatam as spelled out by Purushottama. Sri Vedanta Desika had also made it known in all humility, that his 'Daya Sataka' was written similarly due to grace of God. This is a sign for the practical knowledge of Vedanta and such scholars do not own their authorship in extreme modesty and humility. As told in the Bhagavad Gita, only fools own their doership of their works performed. Vengamamba had shown Vedanta not only by expounding in theory, but also in actual practice.

Vedanta has to be learnt from a good teacher, who is none other than the sun dispelling the darkness of ignorance, Vengamamba said in her Narayana Satakam. One has to earn the knowledge of Vednata, by the grace of the all-merciful God, duly serving at the lotus feet of an excellent, highly learned teacher. Without a teacher no knowledge can be acquired and training under a teacher is a must.

She described the qualities that a teacher should possess. He should be indifferent to wordly attachments, be kind and merciful; and a scholar in Vedanta, who is rare to find. The pupil should search and approach such a teacher under whose training he would prove successful. She also explained the four kinds of practices for a pupil to succeed.

Beings are of four kinds, namely; 1. Those born from the womb; 2. Those born from the egg. 3. Insects or worms generated by heat and damp and 4. Those which sprout or germinate, viz. vegetable, plant, tree. The most superior is the human birth which is to be made fruitful by acquiring knowledge of Vedas. This fact has been ex-

pounded by Vengamamba in the *Narayana Satakam*, which has become most popular. She had also explained the ultimate 'Truth', which is but *Sat Chit Ananda* – Existence – Consciousness and Bliss.

After obtaining self – knowledge it was contended by some pseudo Vedantins (false monks) that one could do anything, and no sin would accrue. This opinion had been condemned by Sri Malayala Swamy in his book, "Shuska Vedanta Tamo Bhaskaramu" – "The sunlight of Truth Dispelling the Darkness of Empty Metaphysics". Vengamamba also, after acquiring knowledge from her Guru, categorically stated in her '*Venkatachala Mahatmyam*' that no sinful acts should be performed. "However many a sin had been committed previously if one takes refuge under a guru, all sins would vanish, and one should not commit any sins after taking refuge of a Guru" states her poem, in *Venkateswara Mahatmyamu*.

"This knowledge of reality is the greatest. The wrongs committed unknowingly are remedied by the teacher. Those wrongs committed knowingly are not tolerated by Him. In addition all these wrongs will reflect on the Guru himself explained Vengamamba.

She was a practical spiritualist. To prove this there are many instances. Usually if one is praised, one would get elated, if one is blamed one would sink. But a man of spiritual knowledge would look at praise and censure; respect and insult equally, say our scriptures.

Even *Bhagavad Gita* was expounded by these factors. Vengamamba had reached this supreme state, which is corroborated by her life history. She had faced many ups and downs, was heckled by society but was undisturbed and remained steadfast – fast to her meditation. In her song she says as follows:

What is bad, what is good?

Hesitant, what is it about you feel anguished?

What if the body is abused?

Whoever can abuse seeing at the soul?

Why is argument between your and evil
desparadoes

The Swamy is all-pervading benefactor.

Has anybody seen the consciousness?

Has anyone eyed the qualities of it?

Have they enquired about existence and non-ex-
istence?

Is it proper to get startled at empty words?

Why grieve at hearing abuses?

Seeing the jewels why get elated?

Those who hate are alone well-wishers?

Overcome anger and stop quarreling.

There's no greater enemy than desire

This root of pain is hard to overcome.

My enemy is the desire which I am unable to over-
come

Vishnu would sure punish It.

The crisis of consciousness suffered by her is patent form the above song, during her Sadhana days. After reaching the stage of liberation, she became even and steady-minded. Even towards the Pushpagiri Peetadhipati, who reproved her, she never exhibited hatred. She revealed her greatness by her advocating reverence to

Sankaracharya.

Though she was a unique devotee, she claimed she belonged to the 'Advaita' tradition. In Siva Natakam she said; 'Our tradition is the sacred Advaita Gurukulam, which shines all over the world.

The Truth that exists is one only. But scholars describe it in many ways. They perceive unity in diversity. Yet, there were occasions, when the devotees saw differences in Siva and Kesava. There are books written by them claiming superiority of Siva by some and Kesava by some others, duly accusing Dwaita, Advaita and Visishtadvaita mutually. But Vengamamba never got this disease, she looked at Siva and Kesava as indivisible and one only.

In 'Rama Parinayam' She wrote:

Oh! Vishnu, yourself and the spouse of Parvati
(Siva)

Are mighty and happy ones all over

None is greater than the other

Because there's no difference between you two.

In one of her spiritual songs, she describes the oneness of Siva and Kesava thus:

What if we call Him Siva or Kesava

There's no difference between their roles

Mahavishnu Himself is the form of Siva

This great philosophy is the meaning of Truth.

He is Soma or Narasimha Himself.

Vengamamba had understood the essence of

Dwaita and Advaita philosophies perfectly as reflected in her writings in Venkatachala Mahatmyam and Raja yoga Saramu. Gold is the same but the jewellery made out of it are of many kinds. Mud is the same, but the pots made out of it are of different kinds. Brahman is one, but the world is of different kinds. Upanishads have proved this philosophy elaborately.

"God is the same; jewels are many.

By decorating they look different

The shapes of gold, if different

Is there a difference in the gold itself".

The illusion of rope and serpent, the confusion of water and mirage, are often quoted in Vedanta philosophy. Vengamamba had understood all these tenets, which she refers in her writings here and there.

When she wrote Bhagavata as a poem in Dwipada form she explained these philosophies so as to be understood by even common people.

In Vedantha, it is expounded that all works performed are to be dedicated to God. Even Bhagavad Gita postulates this teaching in its 11th Chapter.

Even in Rajayoga Sara, Vengamamba mentions the same idea as follows:

Searching into oneself in one's mind

Works performed are to be offered to Eswara.

Leaving desire, the enjoined deeds

Are to be performed by a kind - hearted person.

Yogavasishta rendered in Dwipada form by

Vengamamba is the greatest of books, which contains 32,000 slokas in Sanskrit. It is the teachings made by sage Vasishtha to Lord Rama. There are many books which have been published containing brief versions of this book. This book is based on Advaita philosophy. Vengamamba has written in Dwipada form as a very brief account. Bond is born out of desire; without desire, liberation is obtained, there is only one supreme Being, says Yogavasishtam.

There is only one Charming Supreme Being

There's none other, the meaning of Truth is this

You need no doubts about it

The desire of self is the bond

To leave off desire is salvation.

Blessed soul is Vengamamba, who had described the Truth of Vedanta, so as to be understood by common people in poems, songs, Dwipadas and Yaksha Ganas. She was the first woman who wrote poetry in an excellent manner. By not confining her writings to merely stories, she had expounded Bhakti (devotion); Jnana (knowledge), Paramartha ; spiritual knowledge) to the society and had earned a permanent place in Telugu literature.

Let us hope that all her hitherto forgotten writings would see the light of day soon.

MUTYALA HARATI SONG

Note : Before the close of the temple of Sri Venkateswara daily at Tirumala, it is customary to sing Mutyaala Haarati Jaya Mangala geetam written and sung by the greatest devotee Sri Tarigonda Vengamamba even to-day. Similarly Laali Paata written by Annamayya is also sung every day.

The Mutyaala Haarati song is given hereunder in English script.

Sripannagadrivara sikharagra vasunaku
 papandhakara ghana bhaskarunaku,
 a paratmunaku nityanapayiniyaina

mapali alamelu mangammaku

Java mangalam nitya subha mangalām,

Java mangalam nitya subha mangalam ||1||

Sarananna dasulaku varamittunani birudu

dhariyinciyunna paradaivamunaku,

maruvavaladibirudu niratamani patini ye

maraniyanalamelu mangammaku ||jaya|| 2

Anandanilayamandanisambu vasyinei

dinulanu raksincu devunakunu,

Kanukala nonagurci ghanamuga vibhuni san

manincu alamelu mangammaku ||jaya|| 3

Paramosaga navantu narulakani vaikuntha

maraceta cupu jagadatmunakunu,

sirulosaga tanavantu siddhamani nayakuni

uramupai koluvunna saradhisutaku ||jaya||

Telivito mudupulitu temmu temmani parusa

nalikinci kaikoned i yacyutunaku,

yelami pakambu jeyinci yandara kannu
malayakepudosage mahamataku ||jaya|| 5

Mariyu citravicitra mantapavalulakunu,
tiruvidhulaku, divyateerthamulaku,
Paraga ghanagopura prakaratatulakunu
ciramulai tagu kanakasharamulaku ||Jaya|| 6

Tarucania dharmasatramulakunu, Phalapuspa
bharita srngara vana panktulakunu,
muruvoppu ugranamulaku, bokkasamulaku,
sarasambulagu pakasalalakunu ||jaya|| 7

Ahivairi mukhya vahanamulaku, godugulaku,
rahinoppu makaratoranamulanu,
bahuvidha dhvajamulaku, patuvadya vitatulaku
vihita satkalana vedikalaku ||jaya|| 8

Dara cakra mukhyasadhanamulaku, manimaya
bharana divyambara pratatulakunu,
kara carana mukhyanga ganasahitamai subha
karamaina divya mangalamurtiki ||Jaya|| 9

Kalita sujnanadi kalyana gunamulaku,
balamoppu amita prabhavamunaku,

valagonina sakala parivara devatalakunu,
celagi panulonarinu sevakulaku

||Jaya|| 10

Alaraga bramhotsavadhulai santatamu
Valanoppu nityotsavambulakunu,
polupondur visvaprabhutva mulambunaku,
naluvondur varavimananbulakunu

||Jaya|| 11

Araya Tarigonda Narahari yagucu nandariki
Varamulosage Srinivasanakunu,
muriyucunu visvotiomukhu nittu bhariyinci
sirula velayucunundu Sesadriki

||Jaya|| 12

Jaya mangalam nitya subha mangalam,
Jaya mangalam nitya subha mangalam

English Translation

Hail welfare, happy welfare be every day.

Hail welfare, happy welfare be every day.

To Him who dwells on the top of the Pannagadri, hill
To Him who dispels the darkness of sin
To that God and to our dear Alamelu Mangamma.
who is ever present with Him.

Hail welfare, happy welfare be every day.

Hail welfare, happy welfare be every day.

To God par excellence, Who has gained the title of
One who grants boons to all those who seek refuge in Him
To Alamelu Manga, who constantly
Reminds Him ot to forget this tile ||Hail|| 2

To HIm Who dwells always in the Annada Nilayam
And protects the helpless devotees
To Alamelu Manga Who felicitates her
Consort by making offerings reach Him abundantly ||Hail||3

"It's My responsibility to grant boons to people"
So says He the soul of the entire Universe
And shows Vaikuntah in His palms
To the daughter of the ocean, who dwells
On the chest of her consort. She says that
It is Her responsibility to give all kinds
Of wealth to the devotees. ||Hail|| 4

To Him Who cleverly invites the devotees
To bring offerings again and again and accepts them
To the great Mother Who gets the food prepared
And serves tirelessly and constatnly to the devotees
||Hail|| 5

Also to all pretty and surprising Mandapas
And Mada streets around the temple and sacred waters

To grand Gopuras and Prakaras

And golden peaks of the temples ||Hail|| 6

To charitable choultries in plenty

And beautiful gardens full of flowers and fruits

To the pretty store - houses, treasuries

And tasteful kitchens ||Hail|| 7

To Vahanas like Garuda, umbrellas

And Makara thoranas (festonoons shaped like crocodile)

To different Dwajas (banners) various musical

Instruments and best Kalyana Vedikas ||Hail|| 8

To Chief instrument like the sacred conch and Chakra,

Devine jewellery embedded with diamonds

And the collection of sacred dress material ||Hail|| 9

To the divine auspicious deity

With limbs like sacred hands and feet etc.

To the auspicious qualities like

Sujnana (wisdom)etc. limitless prowess and majesty.

To all gods around and also servants

Doing service with enthusiasm ||Hail|| 10

To daily rituals and grand retulas like brahmotsavams held
always etc.

To the very bright source of the world administration
To the beautiful upper domes of temples

||Hail|| 11

To Lord Srinivasa, Who becoming Tarigonda Narahari
Grants boons to all
To Seshachala which shines with wealth
And bears all-pervasive and everlasting Lord with pleasure.
||12||

Hail welfare, happy welfare be every day.
Hail welfare, happy welfare be every day.

. Vishnu Parijatamu, Yarshaganamu

Sage suka, the greatest of yogis, while narrating Srimad Bhagavata to King Parikshit, tells the detailed story of Srikrishna bringing the flower Parijata from Swargaloka.

Seer Narada brought one day the flower Parijata from Amaravati and presented it as a previous gift to Sri Krishna at Dwaraka. Sri Krishna presented the sacred flower to his consort Rukmini. Having come to know of this, Satyabhama, the other consort of Krishna, doesn't receive him kindly, and exhibits anger. Understanding the cause Sri Krishna cajols her that he would bring the very tree from Swarga as a sweet presentation to her. Reconciled thus, they spend a happy time, while Satya slips into sleep.

At that moment, Sri Krishna leaves her palace. He was fully and tastefully dressed and playing flute as he reaches the pleasure-garden. He asks the gardener.

Vikatabhashana, to fetch Rukmini and other ladies. Jester as he was, he amused all, with his funny talks. Rukmini, and other ladies soon arrive at the garden.

While they were searching for Krishna, the gardener's wife, Vakrabhashini, encounters them. By her perverse speech, that surpassed her husband's, she gets revelation of their marriage secrets with Sri Krishna from Rukmini, Jambavati, Kalindi, Mitravinda, Nagnajiti, Bhadra, Lakshana and Radha. Sri Krishna then joins them and spends a very pleasant time.

Satyabhama wakes up, and not finding Sri Krishna, is taken aback. Fully dressed, she goes to her play garden, in search of Him. Vakrabhashini meets her and informs all about Sri Krishna's location.

She sends word through Vakrabhashini to Sri Krishna, to remind Him of His promise to fetch her Parijata tree and to bring him here. Satyabhama had also taken an oath, that till the Parijata was brought, she would resort to a fast, without even water. On Sri Krishna responding and reaching her garden, she refuses to talk to Him, in extreme anger. Stung by this rebuff, Sri Krishna returns to the company of Rukmini and other ladies. Satyabhama then bemoans and suffers redouble dregrets.

She calls another female companion and requests her to go and fetch Sri Krishna. On her demand, Satyabhama promises to present her costly jewels and money. The lady replies that she needs no such impermanent material presents, but grant her pure devotion towards Sri Krishna, who is no other than Lord Narasimha at Tarigonda and Sri Venkateswara at Seshachala. Also she requests Satyabhama to give her a letter addressed to Sri Krishna, as He is angry. She writes a letter on a gold leaf, with her sharp nails and sends it to Sri Krishna, who

upon reading it remains unresponsive and sends a negative reply.

Meanwhile, Goddess Saraswati comes to Satyabhama, in the guise of a gypsy and foretells that soon Sri Krishna would return to her place, and would rear her pleasantly. Only she has to perform a japa chanting the name of Sri Krishna ten crore times. He would fetch her, her desired flower too. Immensely pleased with her forecast, Satyabhama presents the gypsy and her small son (Narada) costly jewels and money. The gypsy (Saraswati) returns home with her spouse, singanna, (Brahma) who was in search of her.

Later, Satyabhama, requests another companion to call Sri Krishna again and decides to undertake the ten-crore Japa, as suggested by gypsy if He declines. Accompanied by her, Satyabhama goes personally to Sri Krishna and entreats Him to return to her, to which too He declines, upon which she abuses Him in many ways and returns to her palace disappointed and begins Krishna Japa sitting in Padmasana pose, in a corner.

Pleased with this Japa of Satyabhama, Sri Krishna relents and comes back to her palace, duly convincing Jambavati and others to go home. Satyabhama demands that unless He brings the sacred flower Parijata as promised, she would not near him. Sri Krishna then commences his journey to fetch Parijata immediately. Uddhava takes back Rukmini and others from the pleasure garden to their respective palaces, as per orders of Sri Krishna. He sends Manmadha to bring his vehicle Garuda, who was performing Tapasya on the banks of the sea of milk. Later accompanied by Satyabhama Sri Krishna, travels on Garuda and reaches Pragjyothisha pura and kills Mura and Narakasura. He frees the sixteen thousands princesses,

who were imprisoned by Narakasura, and sends them back to Dwaraka.

To give back the jewels like ear-rings etc. to Indra won in the war with Narakasura, Sri Krishna, leaves Pragjyotisha for Amaravati accompanied by Satyabhama and reaches. Presenting the jewels to Aditi the mother of gods, Sri Krishna receives warm hospitality from Indra and goes later for a walk to Nandana vanam, accompanied by Satyabhama. Despite protests by the gardener, He placates the Parijata and keeps it on Garuda. Informed of this incident Indra comes on his Iravata and obstructs Sri Krishna. A fierce war between them ensues and ultimately Indra with his Vajrayudha and Sri Krishna with his Sudarshana Chakra get ready to fight. At this instant, Prameswara descends between them, and convinces both of them to avoid this world – destructing war. Repenting for his misadventure, Indra as per counsel of Parameswara, begs excuse from Sri Krishna, and presents the Parijata tree personally to Him and goes back.

Satyabhama, then offers some Parijata flowers to Parvati and Parameswara, with due respects, who bless Satya and Krishna. Parvati and Parameswara then return to Kailas, while Satya and Krishna return to Dwaraka. Implanting Parijata tree in the play garden of Satyabhama, was a matter of envy to Jambavati and others fellow-wives. They all demand Sri Krishna to fetch them each a Parijata tree. A quarrel between them (the fellow wives) ensues.

As per the desire of Sri Krishna, Rukmini strikes a compromise between them. As suggested by Sri Krishna, Satyabhama distributes sandal, betel leaves and arecanuts, along with Parijata flower to Sri Krishna, Rukmini, other wives, and Radha, with all affection and cordiality, which results in around – happiness. The story ends happily and satisfactorily with a few of the ladies singing holy songs.

Muktikanta Vilasamu, Yakshaganamu.

The ruler of the Universe who carries on the activities of creation, sustenance and extinction, one day goes to the dwelling place of Mukti kanta, and requests the door – keeper, Vicharatmaka, to open the door. After ascertaining the name and purpose of His visit etc. the door – keeper replies as follows : "Swami! If you can remove the veil of illusion and come inside, you can enter the home of Mukti Kanta". Swami does as desired by the door-keeper, who opens the first door to the palace, of Mukti Kanta. As Swami crosses that door, the attendants praise and welcome Him with all respect and devotion.

Jnana Kanta, the chief of attendants to Mukti Kanta, then closes the second door for the Swami, who protests. Jnana kanta replies that Mukti Kanta was then in Nirvikalpa Samadhi (Complete mental absorption) and therefore, could not be disturbed by entering with all followers. At that moment, Bhakti kanta enters the scene and chides Jnana Kanta that she should not treat Eswara on par with ordinary beings.

But Jnana Kanta stands her ground and asserts that in as much as the visitor was with illusory powers, He could be let inside only after testing Him. She further requests secretly Vairagya Kanta to test the visitor with her powers of wisdom. Vairagya Kanta, makes the followers of Swami to lose sight of the Trigunas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas (Principle of Wisdom, Passion and Inertina). Nevertheless Swami remains clam and cool. Bhakti Kanta admonishes Viaragya Kanta for still testing Eswara.

She avers that she was testing Him for fun's sake and nobody could test God. Jnana Kanta then prepares a letter in the name of Mukti Kanta and sends it on to the waiting Swami. He replies suitably. After exchange of these letters thrice between the Lord and Mukti Kanta, she orders for the opening of the 2nd door. Vicharatmaka, the

door keeper making funny and intelligent comments, opens the second door.

As the Swami crosses the second door, Mukti Kanta closes the third door. A conversation in the form of question and answer ensues between them. Getting pleased by the answers of Swami, she opens the door and lives with Him happily thereafter. To the sacred couple, Bhakti, Jnana, Vairagya forces sing auspicious songs.

As the Ruler of the Universe was desireless in the company of wife Mukti, the activity of creation comes to a stand still. At this situation Maya feels very sad and accompanied by friend Chitta approaches Jnana, Vairagya and Bhakti kantas and queries pleadingly where her husband swami is.

Failing to get a satisfactory answer from them, Maya becomes fear – stricken for having imprisoned her children, Trigunas, Arishadwargas etc., Maya abuses Vairagya. Intervening on this occasion, Jnana argues in different ways and wins over her and tries to drive Maya away.

Intervening between them, Bhakti Kanta consoles Jnana not to use excessive force on a weakling Maya. She then tells Maya, "The Ruler of the Universe, your husband, while entering the palace of Mukti Kanta, has delegated all the powers of this Government to Sri Venkateswara. If you approach Him, He would reveal the place where your children are and would be subdued by you and would protect you". Thus consoling, Bhakti Kanta takes Maya to the presence of Sri Swami.

Maya Kanta prays Swami in anguish on this occasion. Swami comes out with fury on Bhakti Kanta and dispels the doubts and fears of Maya and sends her away duly consoling her. The remaining Jnana Shakti, Vairagya Shakti, Bhakti Kanta, Viveka Shakti stay behind with Swami. Vairagya shakti gives wave offering and sings songs in

praise of Swami. Swami comes back to normalcy, subduing His fury on Bhakti Kanta, and donning his original frame, rules over all the worlds, along with His entourage.

Prior to Vengamamba, no one else had attempted to write on such a brilliant and imaginative subject of Truth, in Telugu literature.

Golla Kalapam

Golla Kalapam is one of the writings by Matrusri Tarigonda Vengamamba, in Yakshagana style, the story element of which is philosophical. This play consists of a conversation between a shepherd caste girl who was fashionable and humourous in nature, and a brahmin youth who was proud of his high caste and learning. The girl explains to the youth about spiritual matters. This play has several different names, like 'Gopika Vipra Sambhashana' and Gopika Natakam, Gopika vipra Samvadana, Gopika Vipra Sambhashana 'Golla Katha'. The entire story centres round the conversation that took place between the girl and the youth.

Srimati Annabattula Lakshmi Manga Tayar, a native of Mummudivaram, East Godavari District, and manager of 'Nrutya Niketan, has this to inform about Golla Kalapam of Tarigonda Vengamamba. "Atukuri Subbararayudu, a pandit, migrated from western districts to eastern districts of Andhra in the early part of the 20th century and settled down at a village by name Anatavaram. The village was residence of many brahmin families belonging to Dravidian origin. That Subbarayudu was an expert in teaching the play, 'Golla kalapam' written by Tarigonda Vengamamba. Around the year 1915 A.D. one woman by name Annabhaddula Puli Satyabhama (a resident of Mummudivaram) sent her 7-8 year old grand-daughter, Annabattula Bulli Venkata Ratnam, to A. Subbarayudu at Anatavaram, with a request to teach the girl Natyam and other arts. The girl stayed there till she attained the age of 15-16 years and learnt thoroughly 'Golla Kalapam' and other fine arts from her Guru". The above referred Lakshmi

Manga Tayaru is the grand - daughter of **Bulli Venkataratnam**. These families were expert traditional temple artists. Through these artist the information about the four parts are known, 1. The birth and origin details of shepherd caste people, 2. Pindotpatti (the origin of embryo or fetus) 3. Yajnapu pattu (Atma yagnam) 4. Tripurasura Samhara Ghattam (the chapter on the killing of demon Tripura)

Sri Lakshmi Manga Tayaru has by - hearted 'Golla Katapam' and by her oral enactments this play is preserved, as on date. This play has to be prepared as a book, by gathering the manuscript and other literature available in other libraries and with individuals. This is best done by the T.T.D. Tarigonda Vengamamba Vangmaya Project authorities at an early date.



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మహా నిర్వాణము :- శ్రీ.శ. 1817 ఈశ్వర-శాసన పుస్తక సమమనాదు - ఈ మహాజ్ఞాని,
మహాయోగిని, భక్తకవయిత్రి, తిరుమల పుణ్యక్షేత్రంలో శ్రీవేంకటేశ్వరుణ్ణి
స్మరిస్తూ, సజీవసమాధి చెందింది.

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