

**SANCTORUM OF  
LORD VENKATESWARA**  
(TRANSLATION OF HARI KOLUVU)

*English Version*  
**Dr. A.B. SAI PRASAD**

*Telugu Original*  
**JULAKANTI BALA SUBRAHMANYAM**



*Published by*  
**TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS  
TIRUPATI**

**2015**

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*English Version*

**Dr. A.B. Sai Prasad**

*Telugu Original*

**Julakanti Bala Subrahmanyam**

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## FOREWORD

***Venkatadri Samam Sthanam Brahmaande Nasthi  
Kinchana,  
Venkatesa Samo Devo Na Bhooto Na Bhavishyathi.***

Venkatadri, the abode of Lord Venkateswara, is the holiest place in this universe. Similarly Lord Venkateswara is the Supreme God of this universe. The universe may not witness one such God in years and ages to come.

About the abode and its significance, the greatest devotee of Lord Venkateswara, Annamacharya has said:

Venkatadri is not a mere mountain. It is infact, incarnation of all the four Vedas put together. This mountain is the source of holy water streams. This is the border to lovely Brahmaloaka. Above all, this is the abode of Lord Venkateswara.

‘Venkatadri’ name spells holiness. Venkateswara is one of the most wonderful name in this world. Lord Venkateswara’s self emerged (Swayambhoo) form is here and here only. He has Sri Maha Lakshmi on His chest. Because of presence of Sri Maha Lakshmi on His Vakshasthala i.e., chest, He gets the name Srinivasa. He is the embodiment of Parabrahma. Even His standing posture is most amazing one in this universe. He is considered to be a God who can liberate us from the cycle of life and death. He is addressed as “Samsara Saagara Samuththaranaika Sethu”, a bridge to cross the mundane world. He is the one, to whom every one is dear. He is the only God, in this Kaliyuga, who can

fulfil all our desires. He provides everything and all things to His devotees. He dwells in a place from where the happiness radiates. Tirumalappa has so many jewels, ornaments, garlands of pearls and flowers on His person. People forget themselves when they stand before the idol. It takes some time for devotees to come out of that holy meditation. When we try to describe His greatness, mercy and munificence our words fail us. He is beyond discription and even our sense of perception.

Lord Srinivasa is known as ‘Nitya Kalyana Chakravarthi’ i.e., everyday, His marriage is celebrated in a grand way. His daily poojas, Archanas too have acquired a special significance. Everyday, as per ancient Vaikhanasa Agama Tradition, ‘Shatkaala Archana’ pooja is performed six times a day at specified timings. Varieties of dishes are offered to Him daily as Naivedyam. The same will be distributed among devotees as prasadam. In an unique way, Brahmothsavams are celebrated annually. The processions that take place during festival days like Brahmothsavams, are considered to be very unique. About Him, people in this universe say ‘Na Bhooto Na Bhavishyathi’ i.e., Never before and may Never happen in Future.

Umpteen number of devotees like Thondaman Chakravarthi, Tirumala Nambi, Ananthavar, Annamacharyulu, Hatheeram Bavaji, Tarigonda Vengamamba etc., who whole heartedly served the Lord of Seven Hills, have achieved Salvation. Their stories are glorifying all providing nature of Lord

Venkateswara. He is popularly known as Bhakthajana Vatsala Srinivasa.

Many minute details pertaining to Lord Venkateswara, the Lord of Seven Hills, and Tirumala Kshethra which is Srinivasa’s abode, have been carefully recorded after intensive authentic research work. The stories about Lord Venkateswara’s merciful, benevolent and liberal deeds have been depicted in a simple lucid style in this ‘Hari Koluvu’ (the title of Telugu original).

Every day in the morning, in the precincts of the temple, auspicious piped music is played. This particular service or seva is known as “Hari Koluvu”.

This book ‘Hari Koluvu’ by Sri Julakanti Bala Subrahmanyam is his own humble, devotional, auspicious musical offering.

“Sanctorum of Lord Venkateswara” is a translation of Telugu Hari Koluvu into English, by Dr. A.B. Sai Prasad, with simulacrum. We hope that the holders of this book may enjoy the bliss after reading it. This book will give utmost information about the Lord of Seven hills and will also bless the thirstful believers. Hope the readers will get benefitted after reading this valuable book.

*In the Service of Lord Venkateswara*

  
**Executive Officer**

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams  
Tirupati.



**SRI VENKATESWARA SWAMY**



*Dedicated to  
Divine Feet of*  
**SRI ALAMELUMANGA**

## INTRODUCTION

*Smaranaath Sarva Paapaghnam  
Sthavanaa Dishta Varshinam  
Darsanaam Mukthidam Chesam  
Srinivasam Bhaje Anisam*

By remembering the name of Srinivasa, the sins get washed out. By praising the Lord Venkateswara we can get our wishes fulfilled. By just having darshanam of Balaji one can get salvation. I worship generous, liberal, benevolent, kind hearted Lord of seven hills every day.

Lord Venkateswara loves His devotees. He readily grants all our wishes. His self emerged form (Swayambhoo) has made Tirumala, a holier than holiest pilgrim centres of the universe. There are innumerable divine places, within the precincts of the temple and the architectural beauty of these places is jaw dropping one. All these places and mandapams reveal memorable sweet incidents connected with the lives of so many devotees who are dear to Lord Venkateswara. The divine comedies (Leelas) of Lord Venkateswara are visibly hidden in these mandapams.

In Lord Venkateswara's dwelling place Tirumala of Venkatachala mountain, every day auspicious things like Divine marriage, Inspiring spiritual festivities, Processions etc., take place. In Telugu they express it as Nitya (daily) kalyanam (apart from other auspiciously holy things, it gives the meaning of marriage), Pachcha

Toranam (green festoons). Not only 'Kalyana utsavam' other things like Suprabhatam, Thomala seva (offering colourful garlands to Lord Srinivasa) Sahasra Nama Archana (chanting 1008 names of god) Ekantha seva (Bed time rituals) etc., are performed every day. Special poojas like 'Ashta Dala Pada Padma Aaraadhana' and Sahasra Kalasa Abhishekam (giving holy bath to Lord Venkateswara with one thousand water pots), Tiruppavada, Poolangi Seva (offering flowers to god) Sukravara (Friday) Abhishekam are observed as weekly poojas. Some festivals like Rohini, Arudra, Punarvasu, Sravana etc., are celebrated as per the stars. Annual festivals like Koyil Alwar Tirumanjanam, Ugadi Asthanam (court) Padmavathi Parinayam, Jyeshtha Abhishekam, Anivara Aasthaanam, Pavithra (holy) Utsavam, Brahmotsavam etc., are celebrated on a very grand scale. Each and every pooja is considered to be an important and holy function. Hence varieties of dishes befitting the pooja and time of pooja are offered to Lord Venkateswara.

Some of the devotees may be rich. Some may have ample time at their disposal. In spite of this in this mechanical cum computer age it may not be possible for devotees to know completely about Ananda Nilaya. Similarly it may not be absolutely possible to witness and participate in each and every Utsavam or festival that is celebrated here. At the same time devotees may be eager to know details about different Utsavams that are performed as well as timings and significance of each and every Utsavam. To quench their thirst of

inquisitiveness I have taken up, not so easy task of writing this book. 'Hari Koluvu' (Lord's service) in the printed form of my sincere and honest effort is in your hands.

I am sure and confident that when one goes through details about Maha Dwara Gopuram, Krishna Raya Mandapam, Addala (mirror) Mandapam, Ranganayaka Mandapam, Bangaru (golden) Dhvajasthambham, Balipeetha Kshethrapalaka Sila, temples situated in Vimana Pradakshana (circumambulation) path, Ghanta Mandapam, Golden Doors, Snapana (holy ablutions) Mandapam, Ramulavari Meda, Sayana (sleeping) Mandapam, the Chief Idol of the Sanctum Sanctorum and the other Utsava moorthies etc., he will have a feeling that he is witnessing every thing with his naked eyes.

In 1992 the then Executive Officer of T.T.D. venerably honest Sri M.V.S. Prasad I.A.S inspired me to write a book giving all details about the Tirumala Temple. Not only that he further permitted me to move freely without any restriction in the temple for two full years. I availed that blanket permission to participate in each and every seva of Lord Venkateswara. I was allowed to watch every Utsavam and Seva from close quarters. Thus he helped me in gathering first hand information about Sevas and their significance. From the bottom of my heart I offer my salutations to him.

In 1995 the Executive Officer honourable Sri Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar I.A.S went through the



manuscript and expressed his desire that the book in printed form should reach devotees of Lord Venkateswara. Further he personally made arrangement for publication of 'Hari Koluvu' in T.T.D.'s monthly magazine 'SAPTHAGIRI' Telugu as a serial. I profusely thank him for publication and serialisation of 'Hari Koluvu'.

Serialisation of my Hari Koluvu in Sapthagiri, Telugu started from its September 1995 issue and continued upto February 2000. After the serialization, Sri I.V. Subba Rao, the Executive Officer T.T.D., under 'publication of religious books' scheme allotted funds for the publication as T.T.D. publication. I am deeply indebted to Dr. I.V. Subba Rao who is known for his scholarship as well as for his interest in musicology.

Reputed as well as well known scholars like Sri Veturi Prabhakar Shastri, Sadhu Subrahmanya Shastri, T.K.T.Veera Raghavacharyulu, M.S.Ramesan, Vedantam Jagannathacharyulu, S.K.Ramachandra Rao N.C.V.Narasimhacharyulu, Gopi Krishna, Prof. K. Sarvottam Rao etc., have written books about Tirumala Tirupati Temples, the significance of Tirumala Tirupati Temples and about the great and accomplished devotees of Lord Venkateswara. I have drawn inspiration from the books written by afore mentioned scholars. I am grateful to them.

The chief preist of Tirumala temple, the Vaikhanasa Agam scholar of T.T.D. Sriman Madambakam Srinivasa Bhattacharya, and T.T.D.'s retired engineer Sri

D.Vikhanasacharyulu have clarified all my doubts pertaining to Sevas and Utsavams. They have made some suitable suggestions apart from guiding me by their Valuable suggestions. I owe so much to them.

Sri Tallapaka Satyanarayanacharyulu who actively participates in Suprabhatam, Ekantha Seva, Nitya Kalyana Utsavam and in all other special Utsavams and Sri Raja Gopalan who recites Vedas have patiently explained about the specialities of Ananda Nilaya to me. My salutations to them.

In gathering valuable information about temple, Sevas, Utsavams etc., so many temple officers have helped me, like anything. With folded hands I acknowledge their help.

The civic administrative cum relationship officer Sri A.Subhash Gowd has helped me in composing and serializing 'Hari Koluvu' in T.T.D.'s Telugu Sapthagiri. I thank him for his help and guidance. My greatful thanks to Sapthagiri (Telugu) editor Dr. N.S. Rama Murthy.

May I request the 'Believers' to accept 'Hari Koluvu' as Lord Venkateswara's prasadam and relish it.

I take shelter under the famous adage "Aa Parithoshaad Vidoosham".

*I remain*

***Julakanti Bala Subrahmanyam***

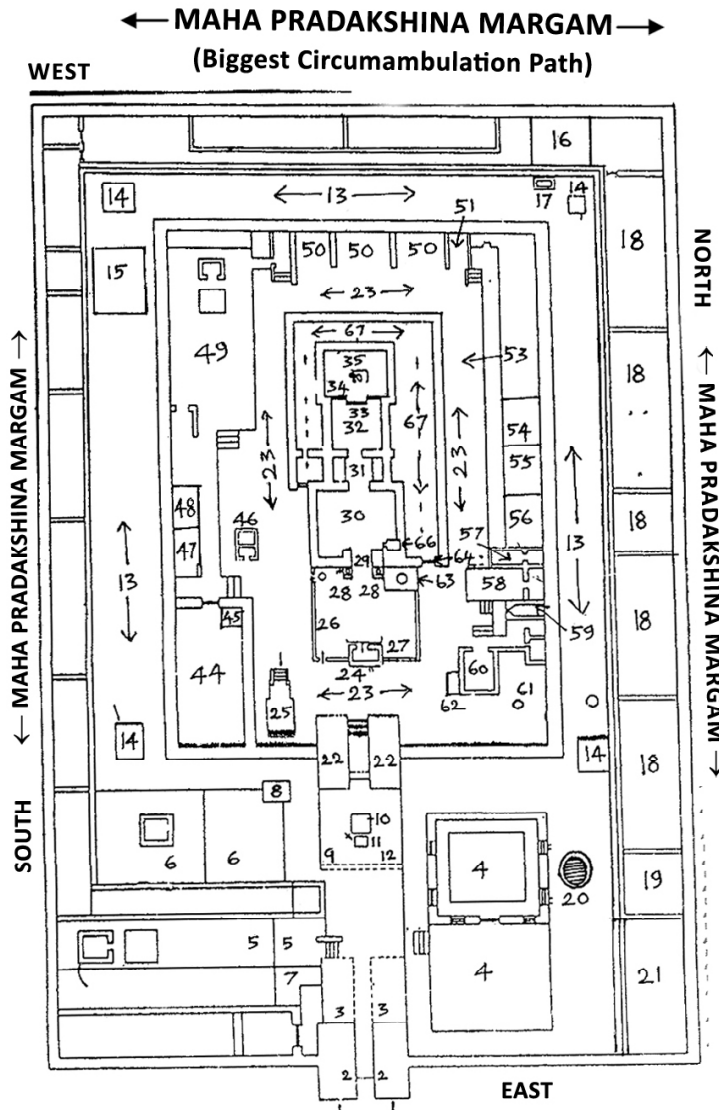
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**Sketch of SRIVARI TEMPLE BUILDING**  
Only important Landmarks are shown in this miniature sketch

## LORD'S SERVICE

TIRUMALA (Tirupati, A.P) is an universally acclaimed pilgrim centre of India. This place is popularly known as Kaliyuga Vykunttam i.e., Kaliyuga's Heaven. Here at Tirumala we find 'Swayam Vyaktha' or 'Swayambhoo' (self formed or self emerged form) image of Lord Venkateswara. This self emerged precious Holy Salagrama (ammonite) is being adored by one and all. He has innumerable names. Vaishnavites worship Him as Srinivasa. Telugus address Him as Lord Venkateswara. Colloquially they call Him as Edukondalavadu i.e., ('e' as we pronounce elephant) and Konda Meeda Rayudu as the Lord who Dwells on Seven Hills. To Kannadigas He is Tirumalappa or Timmappa. People of Tamilnadu will love to address Him as ELUMALAIVASA or Malayappa. In north He is popularly known as Lord Balaji. Since time immemorial Lord Venkateswara's abode is known as Ananda Nilaya i.e., Abode of Bliss.

As per popular belief Lord Srinivasa, with Maha Lakshmi in His bosom, Has appeared some, five thousand years ago. Seeing the beautiful Self Emerged Image of the Lord, the devotees have been constructing the Temple with Gopura (Tower) Prakara (rampart) and Mahadwara (Gateway). With greater devotion, pooja's (Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Yearly) are being continuously performed here.

Great rulers like Akasa Raju, emperor Thondaman, Pallava Queen Saamavy (Perundevi) a Vijayanagara

rulers Saluva Narasimha Rayalu, Sri Krishna Deva Raya, Tirumala Raya, Achyuta Raya etc., have liberally contributed for the Temple architecture. They have provided enough funds for Lord's 'Nitya Puja'. Now let us try to visit the temple and find out for ourselves the special features of this temple.

As per the prevailing conviction one has to have darshan of Sri Varaha Swamy before visiting Lord's Golden Abode.

### **SRI VARAHA SWAMY TEMPLE**

Lord has an exclusive Pushkarini (A flowery pond) for Himself. Facing towards East on North West corner of this Pushkarini there is a temple for Sri Varaha Swamy. Lord Maha Vishnu descended to this world as Adivaraha Swamy (Form of a wild boar). It is said after protecting Bhoo Devi (Mother Earth), He (Lord Adivaraha) stayed back. Because of this belief this place has become Adivaraha Kshetram (Adivaraha's dwelling place). After some time, Srinivasa descended to earth. As He (Srinivasa) was not having any place to stay He approached Lord Adivaraha with a request. He requested 100 square feet of land as a gift to Him.

*Sthalam Dehyavaneekanth Yavatkaliyugam Bhavet  
Ethi Tena Savignaptho Varaha vadno Harihi  
Vuvacha Vachanam Deva Sthalam Moulyena  
Gruhyataam  
Ethi vakyam Tata Sshrutwa Provacha Madhuram  
Vachaha*

*Prathamam Darshanam cha Syannaivedyam Ksheera  
Sechanam  
Eda Meva Param Dravyam dadami Karuna Nidhe  
Ethuyuktho Harinaa Potreeharaye Sthana  
Kankshine  
Tada tadau Sthalam Padasatha Matram Ramapathe*

Lord Adivaraha favourably considered Lord Srinivasa's request. The gift deed had the following conditions:

The devotees should visit Lord Srinivasa after visiting Lord Adivaraha.

The first pooja should be offered to Adivaraha first and then only to Lord Srinivasa.

The first Naivedyam (offering) should be offered first to Lord Adivaraha and then only to Lord Srinivasa.

Lord Srinivasa readily agreed to these three specific conditions and received 100 sq. feet of land as a gift from Lord Adivaraha. After getting Himself established firmly on Tirumala, slowly Lord Srinivasa's writ started running in Tirumala. Yet as per the agreement devotees visit Adivaraha Swamy Temple first and then go to Venkateswara Temple. Even today Adivaraha Swamy is worshipped first. Offering is offered first to Adivaraha Swamy. All the requirements of Adivaraha Swamy's temple are being supplied from main temple.

Lord Srinivasa will be more happy if devotees visit Lord Adivaraha Swamy's temple before coming to His temple:

***Varaha Darshanaat Poorvam Srinivasam******Namenna Cha******Darshanaat Pragvaraahasya Srinivaso Na******Tripyathi***

Lord Srinivasa will not relish those devotees who do not visit Lord Adivaraha Swamy temple before visiting His temple. To reap the benefits of pilgrimage one has to have darshan of Lord Adivaraha before visiting Srinivasa Temple.

Unfortunately ancient inscriptions about Adivaraha Swamy temple are not available. The earliest inscription dates back to 1380 A.D. In this inscription Lord Varaha Swamy is referred as Varaha Naayanaar. In 1476 A.D. inscription He is addressed as Gnanappiran (Bestower of knowledge). It is said, those devotees who have His darshan first will enter into Gnanamaya Kosa and can attain 'Anandamaya kosa' permanently without much effort. After visiting Adivaraha Swamy, those who visit Lord Venkateswara will be blessed with eternal bliss by Lord Venkateswara. These blessed devotees can easily attain Mukthi i.e., liberation from this mundane world.

For all practical purposes after 1481 A.D. Adivaraha Swamy was referred as Adivaraha Perumal. Northerns consider this Varaha Swamy to be the Adi (First) Guru of Lord Venkateswara. The God has to be approached only through Guru who is a bestower of knowledge. Only then the proximity with God can be easily achieved. This may be the reason why they insist that

Lord Venkateswara should be visited after visiting the temple of Adivaraha Swamy.

As per the Vykanasa Agama (A branch of science describing religious rites) thrice, everyday, the Lord Adivaraha is worshipped. The offerings from the Venkateswara Swamy temple are offered to Adivaraha Swamy before they are offered to Lord Venkateswara. Every Friday early morning Abhishekam (bathing) is performed with all religious fervour. But special festivities are not being organized for Lord Adivaraha Swamy.

On the North Western corner of the Pushkarini (Flower Pond) facing to the East the Adivaraha Swamy temple is situated. The protruded temple has Mukhamandapam, Ardha Mandapam, Antharam and Garbhalayam (Sanctum Sanctorum). The temple is beautified with attractive carved pillars. On the last day of every Brahmotsavam i.e., under Sravana Star day Lord Srinivasa with His two consorts Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi along with Chakrathalvar arrives for chakrasnanam (bath). After Panchamrutha Thirumanjanam (Holy Bath) Lord will have chakrasnanam in the Pushkarini. Similarly on Ratha Saptami Day and also on Mukkoti Ekadasi day Sri Chakrathalvar alone arrives here and he is given ceremonial bath.

In the precincts of Mukha Mandapam (porch of the temple) there is enough space for circumambulation i.e., pradakshanam. The area that you come across after crossing Mukha Mandapam (Pillared portions of the

temple) is known as Ardha Mandapam. This place is used for the circumambulation of Garbha Griha (Sanctum Sanctorum). Once you cross Ardha Mandapam you reach Antharalam (The space between Sanctum Sanctorum and the temple porch). Here you find two guards Jaya and Vijaya with Sankhu Chakra and Gada (Mace). Roughly six feet Tall Jaya and Vijaya idols are made of Panchalohas (An alloy of five metals). The idols are protected by two metal frames. After you cross these idols you come across 5 to 6 feet wide quadrangular space. To have the darshan of Sri Bhoovaraha Swamy one has to stand here.

In 7" X 7" Sanctum Sanctorum on a pedestal Sri Bhoovaraha Swamy's, a 2 feet long idol is installed. Sri Varaha Swamy has Sankhu (conch shell) Chakra (The holy wheel) in His two raised hands. On His left thigh Bhoo Devi (Mother Earth) is seated. It is a feast to watch Sri Varaha Swamy with His upright mark.

In the Sanctum Sanctorum we can also see two Pancha Loha (An alloy of five metals) moorthies (Idols) of Varaha Swamy and Sri Venkateswara Swamy. They are of equal height (nearly Foot long). Some Salagramams (Ammonite) are also there.

Very near to Sri Varaha Swamy, one foot quadrangular copper amulet (PALAK YANTRAM) is there. It is said that it is nothing but a gift executed by Lord Venkateswara. The script on the copper plate resembles Brahmi Script.

This temple is within the precincts of Maha Pradakshinam i.e., circumambulation area of Lord

Venkateswara, yet it has not got a separate Dhvajasthambham, (A vertical wooden frame of bars at the top to represent a flag). Because of the absence of Dhvajasthambham festivities are not separately conducted for Adivaraha Swamy. As both i.e., Adivaraha Swamy and Lord Venkateswara were born under Sravana star, there is no difference between Them. The poojas that are offered to Lord Venkateswara are considered, for all practical purposes, to be the pooja's offered to Adivaraha Swamy.

Around 1800 A.D., as the income from the Adivaraha Swamy Temple was less and negligible, the then rulers East India Company grossly neglected the maintenance of this temple. This resulted in dilapidation. Some where in 1900 A.D. the then temple authority Mahant Prayag Das collected the idols from the dilapidated Sri Adivaraha Swamy temple and kept Them in the glass house of Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple. After a decade's time Mahant Prayag Das took up renovation work of Varaha Swamy temple with all sincerity and reinstalled the idols in the temple. From that time onwards Lord Venkateswara Himself is taking care of temple maintenance.

Recently, to be more precise in the year 1982 from April 22 to 27 Maha Samprokshanam (A Ceremonial sprinkling of water or conservation) was religiously conducted for Adivaraha Swamy. Befitting the occasion the height of the pedestal, on which the Chief Idol of Adivaraha was seated, was raised. The Swamy was

given a golden Thoranam (a festoon of leaves). Even a longer Vimana (The upper dome of a temple over the sanctuary) was constructed and a golden Kalasam (The gild ornament on the pinnacle of a temple tower) was also firmly established.

Sri Varaha Swamy is the first deity to have appeared on Tirumala Hill. Hence, the Tirumala Hill gets the popular name of “Adivaraha Kshetram”. As per the tradition and also convention let us visit and then proceed to famous Venkateswara Temple. Adivaraha Swamy Himself has taken the form of Lord Venkateswara. Let us pray Sri Swetha Varaha Swamy who is generous enough to grant all our wishes thus:

*Varam Swetha Varaha khyam  
Samharam Dhavanidhavam  
swadamshtabhyam Dharoddharam  
Srinivasam Bhaje Anisam*

Let us always worship Lord Srinivasa who has brilliantly chiseled body features. He has killed Hiranyaksha, The abductor of Bhoo Devi (Mother Earth) and had by assuming the form of a wild boar rescued the Mother Earth with His tusks

*Govinda! Govinda !! Govinda!!!*

### **KONETIGATTU ANJANEYASWAMY**

#### **(Anjaneya Swamy of Tank Bund)**

Towards North East direction of Swamy Pushkarini (Tank) i.e., on the opposite side of Srivaraha Swamy temple (on the other bank of Pushkarini), there is one

temple dedicated to Anjaneya Swamy (Hanuman). It faces Srivaraha Swamy Temple. The idol of Hanuman with folded hands, as per the popular belief was installed by Vyasarayana in the 15th century A.D. On every Sunday Hanuman is worshipped with the panchamruta Abhishekam. Many offerings are offered on a grand scale.

*Sri madh Anjaneya Varada Govinda! Govinda!*

### **LORD’S GOLDEN ABODE**

#### **(Tirumala’s Balaji Temple)**

Being the place of Lord Vishnu’s manifestation, Tirumala has become the most holy pilgrim centre of India. By assuming the name of Venkata (vem = sins) Kataha (remover or destroyer), He has descended from His Heavenly Abode Vykuntta to bless the humanity. It is said, He is the only God to Humanity: “Kalou Venkata Nayakaha” Venkatachalapathi dwells on Seven Hills: Seshachalam, Garudachalam, Venkatachalam, Narayanachalam, Vrishabhachalam, Vrishachalam and Anjanachalam. Hence Telugu’s fondly address Him as Edu Kondalavadu and SapthaGireeshudu. As MahaLakshmi rests in His heart, people address Him as Srinivasa. As He stays in Tirumala He gets the name of Tirumalesha or Tirumalappa. He answers the prayers of each and every one. Some consider Him as their wish yielding tree (Kalpavriksha). He is a Cow of Plenty (Kamadhenu) as well as Chinthamani, the Wishing stone to His devotees. You ask Him anything with sincere devotion, that is given to you soon. You knock His door

with confidence, the door will open onto you. You seek that is immediately granted to you.

Tirumala is on 13.40"- 79.20" latitude. It is approximately 2800 to 3600 feet above the sea level. The area is spread over 7 peaks mentioned above. In the midst of seven peak range Lord Maha Vishnu has appeared as Swayambhoo (self formed image). This Self Made Idol of Lord Vishnu dwells in an attractively dazzling abode: This abode is named as ANANDA NILAYAM (An abode of happiness). People also call this Abode as a mansion made of gold. Saint Annamaiah refers to this temple as Hari Vasam (Hari's Dwelling Place).

Behold! This is a golden mansion. Each Mandapam (Porch) speaks about the sacrifice of one particular devotee. Mandapams actually represent those devotees. They prove their unstinted devotion. They narrate umpteen number of stories about them. They are the standing examples for Lord Venkateswara's Grace as well as His love towards His devotees. Let us now enter into this Golden Abode of Lord Venkateswara to Whom devotees are very dear.

Let us chant the name of the Lord:  
***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **1. THE GATEWAY'S TOWER**

Behold! The great gateway tower of Lord Venkateswara, the Universal God, the grandeur of this golden temple is worth watching. This east facing gold

plated tall temple tower stands like a Trumpeter trumpeting the glory of Lord Venkateswara. Let us chant the holy name of Govinda with folded raised hands.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

Now with sincere devotion we have approached the main gateway.

This main gateway is known as 'Padikavali' or "Mukha Dwaram" or "Simha Dwaram". In Tamil they address this gateway as Periya Thiruvasal i.e., the Big gate. This tall tower firmly stands on 38" X 32" well sculptured beautiful frame. In the 13th century A.D. it is said, this was constructed, step up step. During day time one can see the dazzling seven kalasas (the gild ornament on the pinnacle of the tower). The Tower stands 50 feet above the ground level. There is a Prakara (high raised stone wall) uniting the gateway. It is known as Maha Prakara. This 30 feet high stone wall has a width of 4 feet. To reach the temple we have to circumambulate this prakara (stone wall). This stone wall is 263 feet long on North-South side and 414 feet on East-West side. It occupies a total area of 1354 feet. Around the temple there are four main streets. They are known as Thoorpu Mada (East Street) Dakshina Mada (South Street) Paschima Mada (West Street) and Uttara Mada (North Mada) Veedhi. The road right in front of the main entrance gate upto Bedi Anjaneya Swamy temple is christened as Sannidhi Veedhi (The street near the temple). East street is 750 feet long where as the south and north streets are 800 feet long. The



west street stretches up to 900 feet. One walk around these four streets is considered as one Maha Pradakshanam (Great or Big circumambulation). All the festivities and processions will take place only in these four streets. The Maha Pradakshanam spreads over an area of 16 acres. The Lord Venkateswara temple, Sri Varaha Swamy temple, The sacred tank of the Lord (Maha Pushkarini), old sheds of the Pushkarini (Tank), the quarters for the temple priests etc., are in this area only. To facilitate free movements of the ever increasing devotees some of the buildings were demolished. Now we have broad roads around the temple.

When you enter through the main gateway to temple you will find 32 feet long and 99 feet wide path. To the east and west of the gateway as you enter you will observe carved fixed stone door frames. They are equidistantly placed. The fixed door frame which opens outside has giant wooden doors. Small bells adorn these two doors. In the northern wooden door there is one small opening. When the temple door is closed, the temple staff enter into the temple or go out of the temple through this opening.

Recently (January 1996) the doors are brass plated. So we can even call these doors as brass doors. As you enter into the temple through main gateway you will come across silver as well as golden doors. After sometime we will try to know about them.

Each and everyday of the calendar year is celebrated as a holy day with festoons. Auspicious activities are conducted, day in and day out.

The devotees who come for Swamy Darshanam before entering into main gateway have to pass through Vykunttam 'Q' complex or old Pushkarini sheds.

While entering through main gateway people loudly chant the holy name of Lord Venkateswara as Edukondalawada, Venkata Ramana

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **2. SANKHA NIDHI – PADMA NIDHI**

Stop for a while and look to your left and also to your right while passing through the main gateway. You will find two panchaloha (Alloy of five metals) idols of 2 feet high. They are the two celestial security guards of Lord Venkateswara. The guard standing on southern side i.e., to your right has two conch shells in His two hands. He is Sankhu Nidhi. Similarly to your left i.e., on the northern direction there stands the second guard. He holds two lotus flowers in his two hands. He is named as Padma (Lotus) Nidhi. These two celestial security guards are there to protect Lord Venkateswara's Treasury full of nine gems.

Near the feet of these celestial guards you will see six inches long idol of a king standing with folded hands. He is the Vijayanagara king by name Achyuta Deva Raya. Most probably he would have installed the two statues of those celestial guards.

As per Agamashastra (the Temple Architecture) the statues of such security guards are installed on the two sides near the third entry door of the surrounding wall.

This installation at the main entry gate of the temple proves the fact that the first enclosure (Avarana) indicates Mukkoti (three crores) Pradakshana (circumambulation), the second encloser as the Vimana (the upper dome of a temple over the sanctuary) pradakshanam and the third (enclosure) as the Sampangi (Gold Flower) Pradakshanam.

Let us bow to the celestial security guards and enter into the temple premises.

### **3. SRI KRISHNARAYA MANDAPAM**

#### **(Sri Krishnaraya's Portico)**

Abutting the main gateway i.e., inside, you will come across a sixteen pillared lofty portico of 27" x 25" size. People call this portico by the name Krishnaraya Mandapam. Some call this as Prathima (idol) Mandapam also. This portico is constructed as per Vijayanagara style of portico construction.

In the midst of this portico we can see life size copper idols. To the right and left of a male statue we can see two female statues. The male statue is that of the famous Vijayanagara emperor Sri Krishna Deva Raya. He is known for his command over sword as well as pen. He has the title of Sahiti Samarangana Chakravarthi. He is standing in the midst of his two consorts Tirumala Devi and Chinna Devi. Sri Krishna Deva Raya as per the available records had visited Tirumala Temple for seven times. When he visited the temple on 02.01.1517 with his two consorts, it is

believed that he himself carried out the installation of copper statues. The note worthy thing is, he is not in his kingly robes. He is in the robes of an ordinary devotee. The names are inscribed on the shoulders of the statues. From that day onwards the portico got the name of Krishna Deva Raya Portico.

Sri Krishna Deva Raya first visited Tirumala along with his queens in the year 1513 A.D. He had darshan of the Lord on 10th February. He offered a Nava Ratna Kireeta (Gem studded crown) and 25 silver plates to the Lord. His consorts offered two golden food bowls. In the same year (1513), on 2nd May and also on 13th June Sri Krishna Deva Raya visited Tirumala for the second and third time. During these two visits he offered valuable jewels to the main deity and three precious studded crowns to three Utsav Moorthies (movable idols). To meet the expences of daily naivedyam (food offerings to the deity) he gifted three villages to the temple. He made arrangements for special celebrations in memory of his departed parents. He requested the temple authorities to perform this special celebration in the Tamil month of Thai (Jan-Feb) every year without fail. On 6.7.1514 Sri Krishna Deva Raya visited Tirumala temple for the fourth time. He arranged for kankabhishekam (giving bath or pouring gold coins over the head of the deity) with 30 thousand gold coins (varahas). He gifted Tallapaka village (A village in modern Y.S.R. Kadapa Dist., A.P.) to meet the daily pooja (worship) expences. In the year 1515 from Vijayanagara his capital city he sent golden festoon with

a crocodiles head (Makara Thoranam) to the Tirumala temple for Lord's use. On his fifth visit i.e., 02.01.1517 to Tirumala he got installed his own copper life size image along with the images of his two consorts in the temple premises. On 09.09.1518 he offered 30 thousand gold coins to be used for the gold plating of the Vimana (dome above the sanctuary). His sixth visit to Tirumala occurred in the month of October, 1518. On 17.02.1521, he visited Tirumala for the seventh time. To mark this visit he offered a rare cap studded with precious stones and silk robes to the Lord.

Sri Krishna Deva Raya the darling ruler of Telugus, who is known for his devotion as well as sacrifice, stands with folded hands in the golden abode premises of Lord Venkateswara. Telugu speaking people particularly are ever grateful to this benevolent ruler. He permanently dwells in the hearts of Telugus.

Similarly, to the left of the main entrance you will find another copper statue with folded hands. The figure in the statue is that of Venkatapathi Rayalu, the ruler of Chandragiri (the second capital of Vijayanagara kings). This generous ruler has generously donated for the protection of Tirumala temple.

Abutting the copper statue of Venkatapathi Rayalu, towards south, we can see two life size granite statues. In the garb of devotees the royal couple Achyuta Deva Raya and his consort Varadaji Ammani stand there. The available historical evidence says that the coronation

ceremony of Achyuta Deva Raya was completed after he was given the sacred bath. It is said that the Lord Venkateswara's golden conch shell was used to pour water on his head by the priests. In his name a Brahmothsavam was organized at Tirumala in the year 1530 as Achyuta Raya Brahma Utsavam. He has gifted number of villages to the temple for its maintenance. He was a great devotee of Lord Venkateswara.

These royal statues with folded hands are announcing to the world at large that if we have become rulers and benevolent kings it is because of Your (Lord's) Grace. We are Your humble (Lord's) servants only.

This sculptured pillar portico was constructed some where in the first half of 16th century. It has carved figures of Siva Dhanur Bhanga (Rama Breaking Shiva's bow), Sri Rama's coronation, Hanuman presenting Rama's ring to Seetha in the Ashoka Vana, Sri Krishna Leelas, Sankhuchakras, Urdhwapundram's (Upright marks) etc., these enchanting carvings are worth watching.

This particular portico has another special significance. After Utsav Moorthy's (moveable idols) procession through the streets of Tirumala, Swamy rests for a while in this Mandapa. At that time Sri Vaishnava Acharyas like Jeeyangars praise the Lord by singing Divya Prabandham (A Vaishnava Epic). After singing Divya Prabandham, the Lord is offered pious Nirajanam (waving a lamp or burning of camphor to avert an evil eye). Immediately after this Harati ceremony

(fumigation) Lord enters into the temple by going around the Dhvajasthambham in a clockwise direction.

Let us express our heartfelt gratitude to those rulers who are dwelling in this Krishnaraya Mandapam. They by their sheer service mindedness have strived to make Tirumala a holier than the holiest place and a Kaliyuga Vyakuntam (Lord Vishnu's Abode on earth).

Victory To Lord Venkateswara, The Universal God.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

#### **4. ADDALA MANDAPAM**

##### **(A House of Mirrors)**

Now try to look to your right towards north of Pratima (idols) Mandapam at a distance of 12 feet. You can see a large portico (Mandapam). This has been constructed on an elevated platform. People call this as a house of mirrors or Ayina Mahal in Hindi. (Ayina means mirror). This has two portions, Mukha Mandapam (A pillared entrance) and Antharalam (The middle space). Mukha Mandapam is a spacious construction (measuring 43" x 43"). Towards East there were once some small rooms. The priests used to sell their share of Swamy Prasadam (Food offered to the diety). These rooms were known as Prasadam Patteda (A formation of small plates). Oflate the temple authorities are receiving the prasadams from the priests and are distributing freely to the devotees. As such the rooms have been removed.

On western side of the Mandapam facing east in the Antharalam (Middle space) a 42"x42" construction is there. People call this Antharalam construction as Addala Mandapam (A house of mirrors). In this mandapam there is a hanging swing with strong chains. This swing is meant for Swamy's Dolotsavam (dola in Sanskrit means a swing or swing cot). There is a facility to circumambulate this quadrangular portico (Mandapam). The walls of this quadrangular mandapam as well as the roof have very big mirrors. When the Dolotsavam (The festival of swinging) takes place with the Lord on the swing cot the image is reflected in all the directions. This will be a feast for the eyes. It has to be experienced. It cannot be explained. The vocabulary fails to express this scene.

In the afternoon at about 2 pm the Dolotsavam takes place. Those who pay the prescribed fee only can watch this Utsavam. The details regarding this will be given afterwards.

This type of festivity is quite common in North Indian Temples. Sindhi's call Krishna by the popular name Jhoole Lal. The Mahants who originally hail from North have introduced this in Tirumala.

As per the available records the Dolotsavam is in Vogue since 1831 A.D.

Glory to you the omnipresent ! Govinda Glory to you

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

**5. RANGANAYAKA MANDAPAM****(Ranganayaka's Porch)**

Right opposite to the house of mirrors (Addala Meda) towards south of Krishna Raya Mandapam there is one elevated stone platform. A porch has been constructed. This porch is known as Ranganayaka Mandapam or Ranga Mandapam.

This 108 feet long and 60 feet wide lofty carved pillared construction has a 12" quadrangular temple. This temple is situated towards south, quite inside the Mandapam. It is said that Lord Ranganatha stayed here for some time and was worshipped by the devotees. During 1320-1360 AD. Sri Rangam was invaded by the Muslim invaders. The priests of the Sri Ranga Temple, shifted the utsava idol (Idols taken out during festival days) to Tirumala. They were preserved here and were offered poojas daily. When peace returned to Sri Rangam the idols were taken back. May be because of this, people have named it as Ranga Mandapam i.e., the portico where Utsava Moorthies from Sri Rangam were kept. To safeguard the Utsava Moorthies from the invader Malik Kaffer and for offering poojas to them at Tirumala, it is said the local ruler of Tirupati, Ranganatha Yadava Rayalu had constructed this temple inside the portico.

As Sri Ranganatha's Utsava Moorthies from Sri Rangam were kept in Tirumala temple, it is believed that reciting of Divya Prabandham and singing of

Tiruppavai, the Sri Vaishnava Tradition, during Dhanur Masam were introduced in Tirumala Temple.

This much history is behind this Mandapam. Victory to Kaveti Ranga, Ranga Ranga, Sri Ranga.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

Now this Ranganayaka Mandapam is being used as Vahana Mandapam to store Lord's Vahanas (vehicles). Paid Sevas like Vasanthotsav, Brahmothsav etc., are being performed here. In the midst of this Ranganayaka Mandapam we can see seven hooded Golden sesha (serpant king) Vahana. The mere sight of this Vahana thrills everyone. This is known as Pedda Sesha Vahana (The big sesha vehicle or carrier).

“He is the Sesha! The sesha of Venkateswara, He is as big as Garuda”.

This Ranganayaka Mandapam has another significant speciality. Twice in an year the Utsava Moorthy of Sri Venkateswara with His two Consorts, stays here for a longer period after stirring out of Ananda Nilaya. The two occasions are Dasara Brahmothsava and Vykuntta Ekadasi.

After Dhvajarohana (flag hoisting) function during Dasara celebrations Lord Venkateswara Who gets the name of Malayappa Swamy stays here upto Deepavali (for nearly one month). The poojas and naivedyam are offered to the Lord here regularly.

Eleven days before Vykuntta Ekadasi (the eleventh day of Hindu calender, both bright as well as dark period

of the calender) He leaves Ananda Nilaya and stays here for nearly 25 days along with His two Consorts – Sri Devi and Bhoodevi – During this period two poojas and Naivedyams (food offering) are offered to the Lord Malayappa Swamy.

Once upon a time Kalyanotsavams (marriage) used to take place daily in this mandapam. As the number of devotees has increased rapidly now Kalyanotsavams are celebrated in Sampangi Pradakshana towards south in a specially arranged place.

After the Darshan all the National and International dignitaries are led to this place. The learned pandithas (knowledgable people) then bless these dignitaries. The temple honours will be conferred on them. Prasadam too is given here only.

Let us chant the holy name of the Lord Govinda before proceeding to the next Mandapam -

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **6. TIRUMALA RAYA MANDAPAM**

Adjacent to Ranga Raya Mandapam there is one more mandapam. This is known as Tirumala Raya Mandapam. 10 feet away from the Dhvajasthambham (an erected pillar before the temple) towards south there is a pillared stone construction. It's measurements are 77" x 38". It was constructed in two stages. Towards south the first stage construction was taken up. This 42"x38" construction has an elevated platform. The

other construction is towards north. This 38" x 35" area is a plain area. It appears that in those days the Utsavams (poojas) used to take place on the elevated platform. The devotees used to watch from this plain surface. The entire mandapam stands on stone pillars. Lord Venkateswara who is known for fulfilling the desires of devotees might have fulfilled so many desires of Saluva Narasimha Raya the emperor of Vijayanagara kingdom. To express his heart felt gratitude he had constructed this elevated platform. He initiated an Utsavam by name Anna Ooyala Tirunalla (Swan Swing Celebrations). This was organized in the elevated area so that all devotees can see with this Motto. The 42" x 38" elevated constructions was ordered by the king in 1473 A.D. and was carried out. The Tamil word Anna means swan. With His two Consorts the Lord used to participate in the Utsavam. Devotees used to watch this beautiful utsavam with great interest and enthusiasm. This Ani (June-July) utsavam some how could not be continued for a longer period. This was discontinued.

This mandapam got extended in the second half of 16th century A.D. by the brother of Aliya (in kannada Aliya means Son-in-law) Rama Raya's brother Tirumala Raya. He was an emperor of Araveti dynasty. As it was constructed by Tirumala Raya, this mandapam gets his name. He had initiated one annual Vasanthotsavam (spring festival). During this festival a special prasadam (food offered to god) by name Tirumala Raya's pongali (Rice boiled with milk) prepared and was distributed

after it was offered to God. He was a generous king. Somehow even this festival could not be continued. It was discontinued abruptly.

Now Lord with His two Consorts arrives only during Brahmotsavam's Dhvajarohana (flag hoisting) ceremony. He will be seated on 6 feet quadrangular platform. Poojas will be performed on a grand scale at that time.

Now in the morning between 6 AM and 6.30 AM (dawn) as well as in the evening between 5.30PM and 6 PM (Dusk) temple musicians assemble here and play on the traditional musical instruments (a pipe bigger than shahanai, a drum and a large kettle drum). This is known as 'Koluvu Melam' (musical service offered to God). [The Telugu author is so enarved about the word koluvu (service) he gives Hari Koluvu as the title of the book. The English translation is in your hands.]

Two kings are solely responsible for the construction of this mandapam which is known as Tirumala Raya Mandapam. To show our regards to those two kings let us bow before this mandapam by chanting the holy name of the Lord of Seven Hills.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **7. THULA DANDAM**

**(The Scales)**

In Tirumala Raya Mandapam in the northern direction you will find big scales.

Once the desires of devotees are fulfilled like getting a child after worshiping the Lord, getting well after a prolonged illness etc., they come here and offer money, sugar candy, jaggary etc., equal to the weight of the new born child (in case the issueless gets an issue) or the person who has recovered from his illness.

Recently it has been shifted from its original place near Hundi (Donation box) to Tirumala Raya Mandapam. Let us bow to this holy scales.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **8. KING TODARMAL**

To the north west corner of Tirumala Raya Mandapam in the midst of 4 pillared portico you will find three life size copper statues with folded hands. These statues facing the deity are situated roughly 10 feet away from the Dhvajasthambham towards south. The names of the persons standing there are carved on their shoulders. One statue bears the name of Lala Khem Ram next to him we will find his mother Mata Mohan Devi's statue. On the other side his wife Pita Bibis statue is there. The turbaned person is known as Todarmal. He was in the court of Arcot (presently in Tamil Nadu) Nawab Sadatulla Khan. As his representative he was supervising the entire Karnataka.

In the 17th century when Muslims and English people invaded Tirumala he bravely fought against them and successfully protected Tirumala temple.



Being a merciful Lord, Sri Srinivasa has preferred to accept the services of Todarmal's family. Let us bow before Srinivasa to whom His devotees are dear. Let us chant the holy name of the Lord and proceed further -

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **9. DHWAJASTHAMBHAM'S PORTICO**

There is a quadrangular open space between Pratima Mandapam, Glass Mandapam and Ranganayaka Mandapam. When you look straight from this open area you can see the golden Dhawajasthambham (pillar erected before the temple). This lofty pillar is a symbolic representation of Lord Srinivasa's Graceful grandeur.

Right in front of this golden Dhawajasthambham, there is a three storied tower. On this tower there are seven shining or glittering kalasams (a gild ornament on the pinnacle of temple tower). Standing before this tower people without their knowledge bow their heads with folded hands.

Abutting the Dhawajasthambham towards eastern side of the tower there is a silver door – a big one. This is known as Nadimi Padikavali. The 20 pillared portico is constructed in 4 rows. In the midst of the portico there stands the golden Dhawajasthambham. On the eastern side abutting the pillar there is a Balipeetham (an altar). On the north east side of these things two statues of Kshethra palakas (celestial figures representing terrific forms of Siva) are erected.

It is believed that this Dhawajasthambha Mandapam was constructed in the 15th century. On the stone pillars beautiful carvings of Yoga Narasimha Swamy, Hanuman, killing of Bakasura by Bheema, Srinivasa Kalyanam (Lords marriage) etc., are there.

Let us try to know in detail about Dhawajasthambham, Balipeetham and Kshethrapalaka's stone.

## **10. DHWAJASTHAMBHAM**

Right in front of the silver door (Nadimi Padikavali) approximately 15 feet away from it on a carved stone pedestal you find a lofty wooden pillar. This pillar is known as Dhawajasthambham. From the bottom to the top this wooden pillar is covered with golden plates. This pillar has some carvings like Garuda (the celestial bird known as Garutmantha who carries the Lord Vishnu) standing in front of Swamy Varu (Lord Venkateswara). On the four directions you can find carved Hanuman. Apart from this Vishnu's weapons like Sankhu (conch shell) and Chakra (Wheel) Kaliya Mardhana (Balakrishna) dancing on the hood of Kalinga (serpant) are also there.

On the very first day of Brahmotsavam (annual festivity during Dasara) the Lord's flag is hoisted. This flag, hoisting is known as 'Dhawajarohana'. This is a symbolic gesture. This will herald the commencement of Brahmotsavam.

During this annual festival called Brahmotsavam they hoist a flag depicting the picture of Garuda.

Through this an open invitation is sent to all the celestial beings to come and participate in the Brahmothsavam.

In Tamil the Dhvajasthambham, is known as Kodikkambam. 'Kodi' in Tamil means 'flag'. There is one more importance of this Dhvajasthambham. Every thing that is meant for Swamyvaru whenever it is taken in or out has to be circumambulated around this pillar. Even to this day this tradition is strictly followed.

It is believed that till 1417 A.D. the Balipeetham (altar) and Dhvajasthambham, silver door were inside, behind the Garuda Mandapam. After the construction of Mukha Mandapam (pillared Entrance) before the silver door in 1417 A.D., as they found the pathway to be narrow the Dhvajasthambham and Balipeetham were shifted, as per the opinion of some research scholars, for convenience sake to the present location.

Usually the Dhvajasthambhams are made of wood. When the wood loses its strength the pillar is replaced. As recently as in 1982 the present wooden pillar was installed in the place of old one.

## **11. BALIPEETHAM**

**(An Altar)**

Abutting Dhvajasthambham on the eastern side an altar known as Balipeetham, can be seen. This raised stone platform has beautiful carvings. Even this is covered with gold plated, copper plates. In this Dhvajasthambha Mandapam, only this attracts the attention of the devotees first.

Let us now try to know about the importance of this Balipeetham, the altar. The food is first offered to the Lord and other deities in the premises of the temple. After this, the food is placed on 8 different places also known as Balipeethams in eight different directions along the Vimana circumambulation path. Finally the Archakas (priests) bring the food and place it on the Balipeetham right in front of the Dhvajasthambham. This is a vedic ritual. The food offered while chanting veda mantras, is meant for the different celestial beings who rule the four directions and four corners. The food offered on the main Balipeetham is meant for Spirits, demons and the other celestial beings who roam about the temple through out the day as well as in the night. After offering food in this way the priests will go to the Sanctum Sanctorum. The other pooja rituals are performed after offering food in this way.

Let us show our respects to Dhvajasthambham and Balipeetham by bowing our heads.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **12. KSHETHRAPALAKA SILA**

**(A stone of Kshethrapalaka i.e., an inferior manifestation of Shiva)**

In the premises of Dhvajasthambha Mandapam towards north east direction you can find an elevated stone platform whose height is 18 inches. This platform which is similar in shape to the Balipeetham is known as Kshethrapalaka Sila (Kshethrapalaka Stone).

Rudra (a synonym of Shiva) is the ruler of this holy pilgrim centre. It is said that this symbolic representation of Rudra is there, no one knows since how long. It is said that the manifested form of this Rudra Sila, with its glowing form, used to protect and guard the temple by going around it. The temple priests after closing the main door of the temple used to place the temple keys on this stone after bowing to it. Next day morning after saluting the stone, priests used to collect or pick up the keys to open the temple door. On one particular night when the stone was circumambulating the temple, a boy was crushed to death when he came under it. The priests never wanted this incident to be repeated. As a precaution it is believed that the main stone was shifted to Gogarbha Theertham (a holy place known as cow's womb) which is little bit away from Tirumla. The present stone, people say is a replica of it.

Now the Kshethra Palaka sila in its complete form can be found near Gogarbha Theertham and in its partial form in the temple near Dhvajasthambham.

On every Shiva Ratri day (Feb – March) the temple priests as well as the other administrative officers, tourists go to Pandava Theertham with temple archestra and perform Abhishekam (Give holy bath) while chanting Rudram and Chamakam. After Abhishekam they anoint the stone with Vaishnavite religious markings. They even fix silver eyes on the stone. After offering strict religious prayers 'Harati' (showing the lighted lamp) and food to that sila, Prasadam is then distributed. After the distribution of prasadam to the

devotees priests, officials devotees reach back the temple with temple archestra.

Even to this day early in the morning the priests who come to perform pooja, first see that the bunch of keys and the Crooked pole which is used as an opener of the gate (KUNCHAKOLA) touch the Kshethrapalaka stone and then they salute the stone. After this they circumambulate the Dhvajasthambham before entering into the temple. This process is repeated by the priests when they close the doors of the temple. This unbroken tradition is in vogue even to this day.

Tirumala is considered to be the Vykunttam (Heaven) of this 'Kali' Age. Lord Venkateswara Who is known as Srinivasa, is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. This Vishnu's abode is protected and guarded by Lord Shiva. Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva through this Are giving a perfect message to the world. They are loudly proclaiming to the world that there is no difference between Hari and Hara. This is to bring a harmony between the followers of Vishnu and Shiva.

Let us chant the Panchakshari Mantra "Om Namah Shivaya! Om Namah Shivaya!! Om Namah Shivaya!!!"

### **13. SAMPANGI PRADAKSHANAM**

#### **(The Gold Flower Champaka Circumambulation)**

In between the silver door tower (Nadimi Padi Kavali) and Main Entrance Tower there is 30 feet (approximately) wide circumambulation path. This path is called Sampangi Pradakshanam (Gold Flower

Circumambulation). As you enter through the main entrance, Sampangi Pradakshanam is the first circumambulation path. The Maha Pradakshana path outside the temple is not being considered as circumambulation path by the Pandits of Agamashasthra. This being the case, only Sampangi Pradakshana path is considered as the first circumambulation path.

In by gone olden days it is said that this particular path was known as Swamy garden. It had Plenty of flower particularly golden flower (champaka) bearing trees. This garden used to supply flowers necessary for the poojas. Hence people used to call this path as Champaka Aavarana (Champaka Precinct or Enclosure) Champaka Pradakshanam, Sampanga Pradakshanam and Sampangi Pradakshanam.

### **A TAMARIND TREE**

Once upon a time in the precincts of Sampangi Garden, near the main entrance, people say, there was a big Tamarind Tree with its big branches and sub branches. It had occupied a big area. The most amusing thing about this tree is its shade. It never used to change as per the movements of sun. Because of this peculiar nature of the tree people used to call this tree “Needa Thirugani Chintha Chettu” (A Tamarind Tree whose shade never moves). Some people used to call this tree as the Tamarind Tree which never sleeps. Some branches used to have tender leaves and used to bear flowers. Some branches used to have fruits. In other

words throughout the year the tree used to bear flowers and fruits. It is said that there was a big ant hill near the tree and Lord Srivinivasa was hiding in that ant hill for some time. Days passed away and after certain period, a Self Formed Image of the Lord emerged in the form of an idol and was in the ant hill. The Puranas say that the Tamarind tree was immovable form of Vasudeva (according to some Adishesha) and the ant hill under the shade of the Tamarind is Krishna’s mother Devaki.

Once a Vykhanasa Brahmin by name Gopinath came to this place. He had a vision. He could see the hidden Self Formed Idol of Lord Srinivasa which was towards south of Pushkarini (the pond) under the tamarind tree. He shifted the idol of Lord Srinivasa or Sri Venkateswara to the present place which is to the west of Pushkarini. He stayed back there and began to worship the Lord. One more devotee by name ‘Ranga Das’ too visited this place. He, it is believed, dug a well there and planted many gold flower bearing trees. He used to bring flowers and fruits from the garden. He meticulously developed the garden and gave the flowers and fruits to Gopinath Das, the then priest. He used to help Gopinath Das, the priest. People are of the opinion that the same Ranga Das took the form of king Thondaman in his next birth. As king Thondaman, he oversaw the construction of temple tower and temple Rampant (Prakara). As per the book ‘Venkatachala Mahathmyam’ (the glory of Venkatachalam) Lord Venkateswara appeared in the dream and directed king Thondaman to remove the tamarind tree and clean up

the entire area without cutting the everblooming champaka tree which is considered to be the abode of Sri Mahalakshmi. King Thondaman carried out the orders of Lord Venkateswara without touching the champaka tree which was in South West direction of the Tamarind tree.

The Champaka tree and the Tamarind tree of Tirumala are older than the temple at Tirumala. Today they are not seen. As per Chinnanna's Paramayogi vilasam (a Telugu book) the founder of Vishishtadvaita Sri Ramanujacharya in the 11th century A.D had worshipped this tamarind tree before entering into the main temple. The book Venkatachala Itihasamala says that Sri Ramanujacharya had personally made arrangements to look after the tamarind tree which absorbs the worries of its devotees. Poet Chinnanna while writing the biography of Annamacharya says that during his first visit to Tirumala temple Annamacharya had bowed his head before the tamarind tree after worshiping the 'Big Tower'.

In olden days in the precincts of Sampangi Pradakshanam (Gold Flower circumambulation), it is believed that there was a pathway leading to the temple tank (Pushkarini). This emphatically proves that there was no Rampant (Prakara) that we see today.

The Prakara, the Maha Prakara and 18 feet wide Mandapam's are the latter additions to the temple. Now only in Kalyana Mandapam (where Lord's marriage

rituals are performed) the pilgrims are allowed. On this Sampangi Pradakshana path (gold flower circumambulation) towards south we can see Kalyana Mandapam the marriage hall. There are some rooms towards west of this path. In these small Mandapams (Rooms) provisions to be used for the preparation of prasadam (offerings to god) are stored. In the north west direction of this path there is one warehouse or pantry. Things like, cashew, Dry grapes, Ghee, Camphor, Sandalwood powder etc., are stored there. Right in front of this pantry (warehouse) there is a well by name Viraja nadi.

On this path i.e., Sampangi Pradakshanam there is one kitchen. They call it by name Padipotu (kitchen). There is a well near this kitchen which is known as Potubavi (kitchen well), for preparing food items meant for Lord's Prasadam, this well water is used.

Towards east of this kitchen there is one 'Poola Ara' (A flower Chamber) by name "Yamunottarai". Abutting this on eastern side there is Vagapadi Ara (A chamber). Opposite to this there is one well, known as poolabavi (flower well).

On the four sides of this path in the four corners there are four pillared porticos.

#### **14. FOUR PILLARED PORTICOS**

Towards the west of Tirumalaraya Mandapam on the south east corner of sampangi circumambulation there is a four pillared portico. Being a lofty portico, all

the poojas that are performed in this portico can be witnessed from all the directions. On the other three corners also we can see similar four pillared porticos.

In olden days when there used to be less crowd, unlike present days, all the festivities used to take place only here. When idols of God were taken in procession along the Sampangi Pradakshanam, God's Idol will stay in these four pillared porticos situated in the four corners. During the God's short stay in these porticos poojas were also performed here.

Now on Krishnasthami Day Sri Krishna's idol will arrive in the North west corner of four pillared portico. Regular poojas as per the tradition and convention are offered to Lord Krishna.

These four pillared four porticos of four corners were constructed by Vijayanagara emperor Saluva Narasimha Rayalu in the year 1470 A.D. They are named after the king, his spouse and his two sons. These four pillared porticos look alike. But their measurements are not same. Porticos in the southwest and north west corners are in the shape of squares of 8" x 6". The porticos of south west are in the shape of a quadrangle of 11" feet. The portico of North East corner measures 12.2" long and 11.6" wide. By appreciating the services rendered by Vijayanagara emperor Saluva Narasimha Rayalu let us proceed further by chanting the holy name of God -

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **15. KALYANA MANDAPAM**

### **(Lord Venkateswara's Marriage Hall)**

Towards the south on the Sampangi Pradakshanam Path a marriage hall in the rectangular shape, can be seen. This hall is covered with sheets. People call this hall by name Sri Venkateswara Swamy Kalyana Mandapam (Lord's Marriage Hall).

Even to this day Lord's marriage is performed here. As Lord's marriage is performed on each and everyday, you can see the green festoons beautifying the mandapam. In Telugu about Tirumala they say "Nitya Kalyanam (daily marriage) Pachcha Thoranam" (green festoons). Lord Malayappa Swamy's marriage with Sree Devi and BhooDevi is performed on each and every day between 12 noon and 1 PM.

In olden days the Lord's marriage is to be performed in the portico situated in the Vimana Pradakshana path ('Vimanam' means the upper dome of the temple). To manage bigger crowd, till recently, the marriage was performed in the Ranganayaka Mandapam. Now the marriage is performed in the present kalyana mandapam. In this mandapam along with Kalyana Utsavam other festivities like Pavitra Utsavam, Pushpa Yagam, Jyeshthabhishekam etc., are also performed.

When you are in Swamy's Kalyana Mandapam, look at the enchanting Idol of Swamy with His two spouses. It will be a feast for your eyes.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

**16. UGRANAM****(The Warehouse)**

Ugranam in Telugu means a warehouse. On Sampangi Pradakshanam path towards west there are some rooms. These rooms are being used as store rooms to store items like Bengal gram flour, Jaggery, sugar, broken black gram etc., In the premises of this warehouse, you have a flour mill and giant size mixies to mix Bengal gram flour. Similarly, on the North west corner there are rooms where all essential things for preparation of Naivedyam (offerings) and pooja material are stored.

**17. VIRAJA NADI**

In front of this warehouse there is a well. It is known as 'Virajya Nadi' or 'Viraja Theertham' (theertham in Telugu means holy water). It is believed that the celestial river 'Viraja' flows under the lotus feet of Lord's idol. This well is considered to be a part of that celestial river Viraja. Hence the name Viraja Nadi.

Around this well a quadrangular shaped carved stone construction can be seen. Inside the ground level construction you can see sculptured stones. On the eastern side wall the sculpture of Rama and Lakshmana in the company of Vanaras (Monkeys) can be seen. Similarly on the western side wall we can see the carved figures of Seetha, Rama, Lakshmana, Hanuman and Sugreeva. The southern side wall has the carvings of Krishna dancing on the hood of Kalinga serpent and

Nagakanyas requesting Lord Krishna to spare the life of Kalinga, are there. On the northern side wall we can see the carvings of Lord Venkateswara commanding an elephant, Garuda and Lord Venkateswara riding on Garuda.

As the inside walls of ground level construction has beautiful carvings, people call it Bommala Baavi i.e., the well containing carvings on its walls.

Let us imagine that we have taken a dip in this Viraja Nadi and proceed further by chanting the name of Lord Venkateswara.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

**18. PADI POTU****(The Kitchen)**

On the path of Sampangi Pradakshanam abutting the warehouse towards north, there is a Mandapam. It spreads from west to east. This long mandapam is called 'padipotu' the holy kitchen of the temple. All the offerings like different sweets as well as savories are prepared here, on a large scale.

In the south east corner there is one small mandapam. This mandapam houses an idol by name Potuthayaru (kitchen goddess). This is a east facing idol.

There is a well near the kitchen. For preparation of all the offerings (naivedyam) only this well water is used. Hence it gets the name potubavi (kitchen well).



Adjacent to this kitchen, there is a room. It is known as poola Ara (Flower room).

## **19. POOLA ARA**

### **(Flower Room)**

By the side of padipotu i.e., the holy kitchen, in the eastern direction there is one room. As the flowers to be offered to Lord Venkateswara are stored here, they call it as poola ara, means flower room. Some people call it as pushpa mandapam (flower portico). Garlands meant for various Gods and Goddesses are prepared in this room.

In the Sanctum Sanctorum a special pooja by name 'Thomalaseva' i.e., flower decoration service is performed twice a day. The first seva takes place at 3.30 AM and the second seva at 7 PM in the evening. Garlands for this 'Seva' are prepared in the flower room. Similarly even for other poojas like Kalyana Utsavam, procession etc., the garlands are prepared here. This room is also known as 'Yamunottara' or Yamunottarai (In Tamil). Yamunottara or Yamunottarai means the banks of river Yamuna. The holy tank of Lord Venkateswara is considered as the river Yamuna. Lord Venkateswara is considered to be an embodiment of Lord Krishna of Dwapara age. To commemorate this incarnation of Lord Vishnu, a beautiful idol of Krishna playing on flute is installed here. The idol has two spouses of Lord Krishna i.e., Rukmini and Satyabhama by His side. This idols face south. This one foot long

idol attracts the attention of all devotees who come to Tirumala.

On every Krishnashtami Day Lord Venkateswara Who is an incarnation of Lord Krishna arrives into this flower room. On His arrival exclusive poojas are offered to the Lord. From there Lord Venkateswara starts to Yamunottara in a Palanquin. In another palanquin Krishna too reaches Yamunottara. Again here poojas are offered to both Lord Venkateswara and Lord Krishna.

This flower room has another significance. In the 11th century A.D. on one fine day Sri Ramanujacharya explains the excellence of Lord Srinivasa to his disciples in Sri Rangam. He told them that Lord Srinivasa of Tirumala loves flowers and loves to be worshipped by flowers. To please Lord Srinivasa the entire mountain range of Tirumala blooms with flowers of different varieties throughout the year. Because of these flower gardens Tirumala gets the name Pushpa Mandapam. Even Nammalvar the famous saint among twelve reputed devotees of Lord Vishnu speaks about Lord Srinivasa's love for flowers in his work 'Tiruvai Mozhi'. He further says that the best and the holy way of pleasing Lord Srinivasa is to offer Him flowers. It is said that Sri Ramanujacharya had sent his disciples to Tirumala to see that uninterrupted flower decoration takes place everyday. For this worship it is believed that he had made some permanent arrangements. At the behest of Sri Ramanujacharya, his disciple, Ananthavar had come down to Tirumala to offer flower

worship to Lord Srinivasa, throughout the year. Even before Ramanujacharya or his disciple Ananthavar, it is said that Sri Ramanuja's great guru Yamunacharya too had offered flowers to the Lord, as per Ananthavar's 'Sri Venkatachala Itihasa Mala' book. In fond memory of Sri Yamunacharya, even to this day the flower worship is known as Yamunottarai.

To show the deep veneration to Lord Venkateswara women devotees do not wear flowers. Flower wearing is infact prohibited in Tirumala. Flowers here are meant only for Lord Venkateswara. Hence no human being is allowed to wear them. There are number of gardens. Flowers from gardens like Perindevi Thota (thota in Telugu means garden), Ananthavar Thota, Tallapakam Vari Thota, Tarigonda Vengamamba Thota, Surapuram Vari Thota, Ram Bageecha etc., are exclusively used for Lord Venkateswara's daily pooja. A very great devotee by name Tarigonda Vengamamba while praising Tirumala Hills says "the hill that worships Lord Venkateswara with a variety of flowers". Now only for names sake we have above mentioned gardens. T.T.D. is now maintaining their own flower garden. Even to this day the flower worship is carried out with its age old traditional name "Yamunottarai".

The old flower room is now converted into a store room to store Swamy's prasadam like 'Laddu, Vada' etc., The flower room is shifted to the premises of Sri Yoga Narasimha Swamy Temple. From the present flower room in a predecided way garlands are sent to

main temple. Lord is decorated with flowers as per tradition and convention. They have not changed the decoration methods. Lord is decorated with seasonal flowers.

Names of Garlands that beautify the Chief Idol of the Lord, are as follows -

Depending on the place they occupy on the Chief Idol of the Lord, the garlands get different names.

### **1. Sikha Mani**

From the top of the crown a garland of 8 cubits (a cubit is equal to the length of forearm. In Telugu they call it Moora) goes down from the shoulders. This is known as Sikha Mani.

### **2. Salagrama Mala**

From the two shoulders of the Chief Idol a hanging garland of Salagrama (a piece of ammonite, vaishnavites consider this as a type of Vishnu) touches the feet of Lord Venkateswara. Adjacent to this another lengthy garland adores the Chief Idol. These two garlands are of 4 cubits length.

### **3. Kantasari**

A two layered garland from the neck decorates two shoulders. This garland is 3.5 cubits length.

### **4. Vakshasthala Lakshmi**

Two garlands decorate the two spouses of Lord Venkateswara, Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi who dwell in the chest of the Lord. Each garland is of 1.5 cubit length.

**5. Sankhu (conch shell), Chakram (The Holy wheel)**

Two garlands decorate the Sankhu as well as the Chakra of the Chief Idol. Each garland will be of one cubit length.

**6. Katari Saram (Saram means chain)**

Near the navel of the Chief Idol there is a sword by name Nandaka. A garland of 2 cubits length decorates the sword.

**7. Thaavalamulu**

(i) Under two elbows (ii) from the waist upto knees and (iii) from knees to the feet three garlands will beautify the Chief Idol. First one is of 3 cubits length, second one is at 3.5 cubits length and the third one is of 4 cubits length.

**8. Thiruvadi Dandalu**

Two garlands of 1 cubit length taken around the lotus feet of the Lord.

On every Thursday in the evening a special garland apart from the afore said garlands is offered to Lord Srinivasa. This particular offering is known as 'Poolangi Seva' (a special pooja performed with flowers). At the time of this particular pooja or seva all the ornaments placed on the Chief Idol are removed. The Idol is decorated with fresh flowers.

Similarly garlands are offered to other deities of the temple, which is considered to be a 'Ananda Nilaya'

an abode of happiness. The details are given here under:

Garlands offered to Utsava (Mobile) Moorthies.

Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy	: 1 Garland
Koluvu Srinivasa Moorthy	: 1 Garland
Malayappa Swamy with spouses	
Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi	: 3 Garlands
Ugra (ferocious) Srinivasa Moorthy	
With Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi	: 3 Garlands
Seetha, Rama and Lakshmana	: 3 Garlands
Sri Rukmini and Sri Krishna	: 2 Garlands
Chakrathalvar (Sudarshan)	: 1 Garland
Anantha, Garuda and Vishwaksena	: 3 Garlands

Garlands that are offered to other idols of the temple:

Security guards of golden door	: 2 Garlands
Garudalwar	: 1 Garland
Varadaraja Swamy	: 1 Garland
Vakulamalika	: 1 Garland
Bhagawad Ramanujacharya	
(Chief Idol and Utsava Moorthy)	: 2 Garlands
Yoga Narasimha Swamy	: 1 Garland
Vishwaksena	: 1 Garland
Potu Thayaru	: 1 Garland
Bedi Anjaneya Swamy	: 1 Garland
Sri Varaha Swamy Temple	: 3 Garlands
Konetigattu Anjaneya Swamy	: 1 (only on Sundays)

Apart from these garlands which are offered to different deities on a daily basis, even the garlands for special occasions like Vasantha Utsavam (spring

festival) processions (the mobile idols – utsava moorthies are taken in a procession around the temple) are prepared in this Flower room only.

The different varieties of fragrant flowers and Tulasi that are used for preparing the garlands are grown in the flower garden specially and exclusively meant for God.

Twice every day i.e., in the morning as well as in the evening garlands are offered to God. This particular pooja is known as Thomala Seva (Flower worship). The Vaishnava Saints (Jeeyangars) carry these garlands prepared specially with the flowers with great devotion, on their head. To the accompaniment of auspicious music and the chanting of Veda Mantras the Jeeyangars, before entering into the Sanctum Sanctorum go round the Dhvajasthambham and Vimanam.

Let us chant the holy name of Pushpa Mandapadhipathi Lord Venkateswara.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **20. POOLA BAAVI**

### **(The flower well)**

Just opposite to Yamunottara flower room and adjacent to Mirror Mandapam, towards North, there is a well. This well is known as Poola Baavi i.e., flower well. Tulasi, flowers and garlands that are offered to Sri Venkateswara and to other Gods cannot and should not be used by the devotees. So these things are thrown

into this well. Hence this well is known as Poola Baavi. This well has another name. People have named it as Bhootheertham. As the days passed by the well became dry. After some time at the behest of Lord Srinivasa, a devotee by name Ranga Das (Thondaman in his previous birth) dug the dry well. It is said the well's spring became active once again. Ranga Das with the water drawn from this well Bhootheertham planted flower seeds. After some time this Ranga Das came to this world as the emperor Thondaman. Lord Venkateswara directed emperor Thondaman to renovate and reconstruct this well. Emperor carried out the orders of Lord Venkateswara. He became a dear devotee of Swamy Varu. It is said emperor Thondaman used to visit Tirumala by taking a secret tunnel under the Poola Baavi.

Emperor Thondaman was once defeated by his enemies. Through the secret tunnel it is said he came to Tirumala. At that time Lord Venkateswara was alone with His two spouses Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi. Seeing an intruder disturbing them while They were in the company of Their spouse Lord Venkateswara, both were put to blush. Sri Devi hid Herself in the chest of the Lord and Bhoo Devi went into flower well to hide Herself. Varaha Puraanam mentions this.

During his visit to Tirumala Sri Ramanujacharya saw this well which was known as Bhootheertham. He came to know about the prevalent story about the well. He took steps immediately to install an idol of Bhoo

Devi in the well. As Lord Srinivasa happens to be 'Theerthadhipati' Sri Ramanujacharya made all arrangements for the daily pooja. He oversaw the arrangements for depositing the used garlands and other flower decorations into this well as the well happens to be the dwelling place of Bhoo Devi. 'Sri Venkatachala Itihasamala' book mentions this. It is Sri Ramanujacharya who initiated this tradition. Normally, as it has almost become a convention, the used garlands and flowers are not distributed to the devotees. They break this tradition during Kartheeka (the eighth Hindu lunar month) Brahmotsavam of Tiruchanur on the Panchami theertham (Chakrasnanam) day. All the used garlands and flowers, along with other offerings like Saree, blouse piece, spices, laddus, vadas and other things will be brought from Tirumala in a traditional way and are given to Golden Padmavathi. People with all paraphernalia cover the distance from Tirumala to Tiruchanur by foot. The deity is decorated with the offerings received from Tirumala and after the poojas the goddess Padmavathi is given Chakrasnanam i.e., sacred bath. Of late as the quantity of used flowers and garlands has grown enormously these things are being disposed at a table land i.e., on the even ground of a mountain top where people do not tread.

Once upon a time the well had steps to climb down. Later round shaped well was built. Now it is covered with sieve like steel frame. Flower pots are now arranged on the steel frame.

Let us bow reverentially before this all significant well and then proceed further by chanting the name of Lord Srinivasa.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **21. VAGAPADI**

**(A store room from where things are distributed)**

Abutting the Yamunottara flower room towards east there is one long mandapam (portico). This portico is called Vagapadi room (the room from where offerings prepared for Lord Venkateswara are properly distributed).

After the offerings like laddu, vada, jalebi, poli, savories (all deep fry eatables) are prepared on a daily basis three times a day. They are brought to this place and from here they are distributed. For special poojas, kalyanotsavams (marriage for god) etc., also items (sweet and savory) are prepared only here. Even to those devotees who buy tickets for Arjita seva, Prasadam are sent from this room to their respective cottages.

After getting familiarized with the places that are within Sampangi Pradakshanam (circumambulations) let us reach Vimana (upperdome) Pradakshanam (circumambulation).

## **22. VENDI VAKILI**

**(Silver Door)**

The entry point opposite to Dhvajasthambham is known as "Vendi Vakili" i.e., Silver door. This infact is

the second entry point to the vicinity of Sanctum Sanctorum. After crossing the Dhvajasthambham devotees have to pass through the second gopuram (tower). This tower is a smaller tower when compared to the main tower. This tower stands on a granite frame. This frame has 24" (east west) and 9".5" (north-south) measurements. This is a three storied tower and has beautiful sculptures. On the top there are seven golden kalasams (gild ornaments). There are two door frames (Dwara bandham). These are fixed equidistantly on East west side.

The doors, threshold and sidewalls are covered with silver plates. Because of these silver plates the doors get the name of Silver door.

In the year 1929 on 1st October a donor by name Sri Ram Dwarak Das who hails from Nizam's estate (hailing from Hyderabad Nizam's territory) had donated these silver plates as per the inscriptions on the door. One inscription is in Hindi and another is in English. Even today we can see these inscriptions. On the walls of this tower we can see the sculpture of Srinivasa Kalyanam (marriage), Mahant Bavaji and Lord Srinivasa's game of dice, Rama's coronation etc.,.

Uniting the silver door tower there is stone rampant of 3 feet wide and 30 feet high. It is 160 feet long on North-South side and 235 feet long on East-West side.

The research scholars are of the opinion that to complete the construction work of second entry door tower, rampant wall they would have taken nearly 100

years i.e., between 12th century A.D. to 13th century A.D. The silver door tower was first repaired between 1472 – 82 and again between 1950-53.

## **23. VIMANA PRADAKSHANAM**

### **(Circumambulation of upperdome area)**

Once we enter in the vicinity of Sanctum Sanctorum after crossing the silver door we come across Vimana Pradakshanam pathway. This pathway is around the main temple. It is 235 feet long on East-West side and 160 feet wide on North-South side. It is in a rectangular shape. This pathway is actually in between the rampant of second tower and Lord's Vykunttam circumambulation path. This path which is around the main temple is 15 feet wide on East West side and 30 feet wide on South side and nearly 20 feet wide on North side.

This being the circumambulation path of Lord's Ananda Nilayam (abode of bliss) people call it as Vimana Pradakshanam.

Everyday early morning when the Suprabhatam is being recited, devotees after taking a dip in Pushkarini (tank) with wet clothes roll in clock wise direction to perform Anga Pradakshanam. Being the path for performing Anga Pradakshanam it is also known as Anga Pradakshana Margam (path).

On this path right in front of silver door on the wall we can see Ranganatha's sculptures. When we start circumambulation we come across Sri Varadaraja

Swamy temple, main kitchen, Golden well. Ankurapana mandapam (the portico of offering of buds to the Lord) yagasala, coin counting hall, currency counting hall, sandalwood room, darshan of Vimana venkateswarudu, record cell, hall for chanting Vedas, Tallapakam room, Ramanujacharya's temple, Sri Yoga Narasimha Swamy temple, Fragrance Room, Lord's Hundi and Vishwaksena temple. All these are around the main temple. They are known as "Chuttu Gudulu" (temples around).

Let us worship Lord Venkateswara by chanting

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **24. LORD SRI RANGANATH**

As you enter into vicinity of main temple after crossing silver door, you can have the darshan of Lord Ranganatha. Just above this gold plated small idol, you can see the idol of Sri Varadaraja Swamy. Below Lord Ranganatha's idol you can find idols of Sri Venkateswara. These three idols which are situated behind Garuda Mandiram (opp. to golden door) have their own significance. They represent three important pilgrim centres - Sri Rangam, Kanchi and Venkatachalam respectively.

The space above the idol as well as the space on the sides, right from top to bottom is covered with gold plates. The gold plating was done on 1st August 1991, Thursday. This Rs. 55 lakhs project work was taken up by U.B. group's Sri Vijayamalya.

From the vicinity of this temple or idol, devotees perform Anga Pradakshanam every day early morning. The Anga Pradakshanam starts and ends here. It is said that Lord Venkateswara immensely likes His devotees who perform Anga Pradakshanam. It is further believed that Lord Venkateswara will readily fulfill all their desires. All the devotees who come for Lord Venkateswara's darshan prostrate before Lord Ranganatha's idol.

Standing before the idol of Lord Ranganatha lift your head. You can have the view of three glittering kalasas (a gild ornament on the pinnacle of a pagoda or tower). They belong to Garutmantha's temple. Garuda faces the idol of Lord Venkateswara.

## **25. SRI VARADARAJA SWAMY TEMPLE**

Towards south of silver door at a distance of 9 feet one can see west facing Sri Varadaraja Swamy temple. This temple is constructed on a 3 feet high pedestal. It has two portions Antharalam (middle space) and Garbha Alaya (Sanctum Sanctorum). In the Sanctum Sanctorum we can have darshan of life size idol of Lord Varadaraja Swamy. He has a smiling face and sankham and chakra in his hands. The Abhaya mudra of Lord Varadaraja Swamy is worth watching. People who go for Lord Venkateswara's darshan do circumambulate Varadaraja Swamy temple.

Daily special poojas are not performed here. But offerings are offered everyday. On the Jayanthi day of



Varadaraja Swamy, poojas including Abhishekam are performed on a very grand scale. The exact period of installation of Lord Varadaraja Swamy's idol in the vicinity of Lord Venkateswara's Sanctum Sanctorum is not known.

## **26. GHANTA MANDAPAM**

### **(The pillared Mandapam)**

The pillared entrance to the main temple is known as Ghanta Mandapam. Its exquisiteness is simply beyond description. Facing north, devotees enter into this mandapam. Behold here you come across some doors. Gods like Brahma and other deities, sages and saints like Sanak Sananda's patiently wait here to have darshan of Lord Venkateswara. These doors are made of gold. Right in front of golden door we can see Garuda Mandiram (temple). A portico by name Mani Mandapam unites the aforesaid two. It is also known as 'Maha Manimandapam'. Some may prefer to call this as Mukha Mandapam also. This 43" x 40" portico has totally 16 carved pillars. We can see the carvings of Bhoovaraha Swamy, Nrusimha Swamy, Maha Vishnu, Sri Venkateswara Swamy, Sri Varadaraja Swamy and other gods. Recently these pillars are covered with frame and brass doors. In 1417 (August 25<sup>th</sup>) a native of Chandragiri by name Amatya Mallanna took up the construction of this portico and successfully completed it. He was a Minister of Vijayanagara empire. He is also known by the name Madhavadas.

In this portico as stated earlier there is a temple dedicated to Garuda, right in front of the golden door. A life size (6 feet) statue of Garuda with folded hands is installed here. He faces Lord Venkateswara. Daily, at 3 a.m. purohits assemble here and recite swamy's Suprabhatam. After the recital of mesmerizing Suprabhatam Lord's court 'Darbar' starts functioning. To the Lord, seated on a golden throne Panchangam (Hindu year, season, month, Thithi etc.,) is narrated. Not only this, even yesterdays balance sheet will also be read to God. This court is known as 'Srinivasa Darbar' or 'Srinivasa Koluvu'. The purohits will also loudly mention the names of all those donors who have generously contributed for 'NITYA ANNADANAM' (FREE MEALS TO DEVOTEES).

In this portico on every Wednesday, Sahasra kalasabhishekam (giving holy bath to the Lord with one thousand water pots) is performed to the idols of Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy, Sri Malayappa Swamy and Vishwaksena. Similarly, on every Thursday, a service by name 'Anna koototsavam' (Tiruppavada Seva) is also performed at the time of second hour. On these two days aforesaid Utsavams are being celebrated or performed. Apart from these, on the other important and significant days like 'Ugadi', Anivara Asthanam, Deepavali etc., in this mandapam right in front of Garuda Alwar, Sri Venkateswara Swamy and Vishwaksena are ceremoniously received and made to stay here.

Similarly on Sri Rama Navami day Sri Seetha, Rama Lakshmana and Hanuman are reverentially

received in this mandapam. On Gokulashtami day, Sri Krishna and Sri Rukmini are received. The idols do stay here for some time.

Towards south of Golden Door you will find two large bells tied to a wooden beam with strong and big iron chains. These bells will be rung when Lord stay here to receive special poojas. The person who rings these bells is called as 'Ghantapani'. The sound of ringing bells enchants the entire Tirumala. The ringing sound of the bells, indicates that offerings are being offered to the Lord. After hearing the sound of ringing bells devotees will have their lunch.

The Vijayanagara emperors, when they camp in Chandragiri, used to wait for the sound. The ringing sound was conveyed to them through bell towers constructed. After getting confirmed that Lord has been offered the daily offerings, they used to have their lunch.

As these bells are located just in front of the Golden Door, people call this mandapam as 'Ghanta Mandapam'.

'Mani' is the word for bells in Tamil. This being the reason Tamil knowing people will prefer to call this mandapam as 'Thiru Maha Mani Mandapam'.

## **27. GARUDA MANDIRAM**

**(Temple)**

Infront of the Golden Door, there is a mandapam. Facing the idol of Sri Venkateswara a statue of Garuda,

with folded hands and fully stretched wings, is installed. This is a life size statue (approximately 6 feet height).

The Garuda Mandapam's mention is found in the 1512 A.D. inscriptions. The tower constructed above the mandapam has three golden kalasams. One will see this tower while entering through the golden door. The three sides of Garuda temple are gold plated.

There is one small panchaloha idol (An alloy of five metals) of Garuda in Ramulavari meda. (Abode of Rama). Apart from this there are two more worth mentioning Garuda Vahanas made of silver and gold. They are in Ranganayaka Mandapam. On every Brahmothsavam, Lord Venkateswara magnificiently rides on golden Garuda. This Garuda Seva is worth watching one. Let us reverentially bow to Sri Garuda, the king among birds, who is ever ready to carry Lord "Kumkumankita Varnaya Kundendu Dhavalaya Cha. Vishnuvaha! Namasthubhyam Pakshirajaya te namaha".

## **28. JAYA VIJAYA**

There are two watchful guards who guard the golden gate round the clock. They are Jaya and Vijaya. They are celestial guards of Vykuntta. The same guards are guarding the golden gate (door). They are fully armed with Sankhu, Chakra and Gada (mace). These two idols whose height is approximately 10 feet, are made of Panchalohas (the alloy of five metals). Around these statues wooden frames are there. These wooden frames are also gold plated.

These two guards are pointing to the devotees, Jaya with right accusing finger Vijaya with left accusing finger to behave well. This area is free from dust. The guards are further warning devotees to purify their body and soul before entering into the main temple. Nobody knows when exactly these standing panchaloha statues were installed in the temple.

In an untiring way Jaya and Vijaya have been sincerely discharging their duties as devoted guards. Let us hail them and with their express permission, let us enter into Golden door or gate.

## **29. BANGARU VAKILI** **(Golden Door or gate)**

This is the main door through which one has to enter to have darshan of Lord Venkateswara.

These golden doors of Venkateswara are guarded by Jaya and Vijaya. May be because of this Venkatachala (Venkatachala Mountain) is considered to be the Vykunttam (Vishnu's abode) on earth. Here since time immemorial daily at 3 a.m. Swamy's Suprabhatam is recited (sung by the purohits).

At the entrance of golden door a 6 feet wide rock frame is there. To this rock frame two wooden doors are fixed. The rock door frame and the frame that covers the statues of Jaya Vijaya are gold plated. Because of this gold plating, the doors are popularly known as Bangaru Vakillu (Golden Doors).

These gold plated door frames are having beautiful creeper carvings. In the middle portion of the upper threshold, towards downwards we can see the carving of bloomed lotus. Similarly outside of upper threshold has carvings of elephants worshipping Lakshmi seated on a lotus.

The rock frame is fitted with two wooden doors. These two doors have quadrangular borders made from wooden ingots. In each border we can see the carving of Vishnu.

From the top there are four carved borders in a row. First one has Chakram, the second one has Lord Venkateswara, third one has seated Maha Vishnu, the fourth one has Sankhu.

In the second row we can see the carved figures of Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha in the same order. Again in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> rows the following carvings are there in a row.

3<sup>rd</sup> row : 1. Kesava 2. Narayana 3. Madhava 4. Govinda

4<sup>th</sup> row : 1. Vishnu 2. Madhusoodana 3. Trivikrama 4. Vamana

5<sup>th</sup> row : 1. Sridhara 2. Hrishikesa 3. Padmanabha 4. Damodara

In the last three rows i.e., 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> rows there are eight borders. The first and the fourth border of the 8<sup>th</sup> row has carvings of Avatars i.e., Lord's incarnations. In the second and the third border of row eight to close

the doors, padlocks with iron chains have been fixed. The other end of the chain will be attached to the threshold hook. There are three bolts. To the upper one as well as the lower one temple authorities have locking provision. To the middle bolt the chief priest will use his own lock and takes the key with him to his quarters, after locking. There is one more locking system. These doors have some circular openings. Through these wholes by using a crooked pole they lock the door by pulling a rod from outside and open the inside rod by pushing it from outside. This type of locking and opening is an art by itself. This is a hereditary one known to the family of Priests.

About these doors made of gold there is a mention by Tallapaka Annamacharyulu who belonged to the 15th century A.D. In one of his devotional songs he says that by standing at these glittering doors I had a very good darshan of Lord Venkateswara. It seems, no one knows how many times, as and when the gold plates required new plates, they are provided. As per the available records Mahant Dharma Das had provided new gold plates in the year 1884. In the year 1958 the Maha Samprokshanam was performed to the upper dome of “Ananda Nilaya”. At that time new plates were fixed to these doors.

Since time immemorial saints like Brahmendra have walked through these golden doors. Sanaksananda like celestial beings would have patiently waited here for having darshan of Lord Venkateswara. Number of Alwar

Saints, Hari Dasa devotees like Purandara and other saints of Karnataka, Tallapaka poets like Annamacharya, his sons and grand sons and sacred devotee like Tarigonda Vengamamba have visited this famous temple to have the darshan of Lord Venkateswara. Not only saints, kings but umpteen number of emperors have visited this temple. Being lucky and fortunate ones even we are having the unique unparalleled opportunity to walk through these golden doors. We have to thank our stars and the Lord for making us to visit this temple and have the darshan of Lord Venkateswara.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

### **30. SNAPANA MANDAPAM**

**(Mandapam of Holy Ablutions)**

As you enter through Golden doors you come across, not very much illuminated, a 27 feet quadrangular mandapam. This mandapam has four pillars in the middle portion. Sculptured figures of Balakrishna, Yoga Narasimha, Sri Krishna Kaliya Mardhana etc., can be seen on these pillars. It is known as “Tiruvilan Koil”, Tamil word for Sanskrit Bala Aalayam. Whenever repairs or renovation or reconstruction work of Sanctum Sanctorum, either inside or outside is taken up they will have a shift to temple Bala Aalayam. The potency (tejas) of Lord will be induced or transferred into another idol. In the year 614 A.D., it is said a Pallava queen by name ‘Samavayi’

(Perundevi) had offered silver replica of Manvaala Perumal i.e., Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy, to the temple. She oversaw the installation of the silver idol. Not only this, she made necessary arrangements to perform poojas as well as holy ablutions to Lord Venkateswara by granting necessary funds. Researchers are of the opinion that at the time of installation of Silver replica of Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy, the priests would have made use of this Snapana Mandapam i.e., mandapam for holy ablutions.

In this Snapana Mandapam on both sides of the door there are two rooms known as Sri Bhandaram. In the room to the right of golden door they store the offerings collected from the “Hundi”. Everyday night after “Theermanam” (end of seva’s for the day) which follows Ekantha seva (service offered to the Lord in solitude), ‘Hundi’ is opened and then sealed firmly. Well and firmly sealed Hundi then be taken to the “Bhandaram” (store house) which is to the north of Golden door. Because of this, the rooms get the name of Kaanuka (gift or offering) Bhandaram. There is one more room to the south of Golden door. Here the costly jewellery of Lord Venkateswara’s is stored. The decoration of Lord’s idol with costly precious jewellery is considered as a special service. This service is known as ‘Samarpanam’. There are three ways in which this samarpanam is carried out. They are known as sadaa (daily) samarpanam, visesha (special) samarpanam and mojaati (jewellery of historical importance) samarpanam. All these expensive jewellery, precious

stones, diamonds etc. are stored in the store room which is to the south of golden door.

### **Sadaa (daily) samarpanam**

Ornaments meant for daily adornment come under consideration for sada samarpanam. They include Golden crown, Golden hip hand (kati hastham), blessing hand, sword, an alligator shaped necklace, Lakshmi garlands etc., These are ornaments made of gold. These will be in the custody of archakas i.e., purohits. These things adorn the Lord daily. They are valued at more than 1 crore.

### **Visesha Samarpanam**

On special occasions like the visit of Prime Minister or President or any other dignitary etc., and on important festival days very valuable things like Diamond crown, diamond studded Sankhu and Chakra, Vykuntta Hip Hands etc., adorn the idol of Lord Venkateswara. The aforesaid ornaments are studded with costly as well as very costly precious stones. These things will be under the custody of one special officer who is known as ‘Paarupattedaaru’. These things are worth more than two crores.

### **Mojaati Samarpanam**

During Brahmotsavams, and other paid utsavas or special courts organized for Lord Venkateswara very old and precious ornaments of historical value (donated by kings and emperors of by gone days, as well as Kings and Zamindars of yester years adorn the Lord. Being

very valuable things they are kept safely in T.T.D.'s treasury. Before the Utsavams they will be taken from the treasury and will be returned after the Utsavams.

Sada (Daily) Samarpanam ornaments or jewellery will be in the custody of preists. They themselves keep these things in lockers of Samarpana mandiram.

Paarupattedaaru (A special officer in-charge of temple or a man in an authority) will be an overall in-charge of Lord's Ornaments and Jewels.

### **31. RAMULAVARI MEDA**

**(Rama's Abode)**

*Sri Rama Rama Ramethi Rame Raame Manorame  
Sahasra Nama Thath Thulyam Rama Nama  
Varanane*

As soon as you cross Snapana Mandapam there is a narrow 12" x 10" passage. This is known as Ramulavari Meda. Prior to 1262-65 A.D. the researchers believe that this was not there. They are of the opinion that this was a part of present Vykuntta Pradakshina path.

To enter into Ramulavari Meda from Snapana Mandapam we have to pass through Six feet wide stone door frame. Outside this door frame wooden door frame with doors is built for protection. Locking system is provided to lock inner doors. On both sides of Ramulavari Meda there are raised terraces or platforms. On southern side raised platform the utsava statues of Angada, Hanuman and Sugreeva, facing north are

installed. Similarly on northern side raised platform utsava moorthies of Venkateswara's family members like Vishwakshena, Anantha, Garuda are installed. These statues face south.

The Deities who belong to Rama's family -

**1) Sugreeva :** Being the king of Vanaras, he has a crown on his head. He is offering his salutations to Rama by joining his two hands with upward palms. He will participate in the coronation ceremony of Rama which will be performed on Dasami Day after Sri Rama Navami.

**2) Angada :** After seeing Rama's splendour in Lord Venkateswara of Venkatachala, Angada's jaw gets dropped. Angada's bewildered expression can be clearly seen in the face. Being crown prince he has a small cap like crown. He too will participate in the coronation ceremony of Sri Rama.

**3) Obedient Hanuman :** Obedient Hanuman is standing before Rama with his right hand covering his mouth. When he says 'Yes My Lord' to avoid spluttering he is covering his mouth with his right hand. Because of this particular behaviour he is known as most obedient Hanuman. He plays an important role when Rama's court gets assembled or at the time of Rama's coronation.

The Deities belonging to Sri Venkateswara's family -

**1) Anantha :**

Anantha is no other than Adishesha who becomes a comfortable bed for Lord Srinivasa by curling down. He has hoods and is showing blessing Mudra. This Moorthy is made of Panchaloha (an alloy of five metals). On the very first day of Brahmothsavams before hoisting temple flag a ceremony to invite eight guards who guard four directions as well as four corners, is performed. Anantha participates in this Gramotsav.

**2) Vishwaksena :**

Vishwaksena is the commander-in-chief of universal Lord Sri Venkateswara's army. He is also known as "Sena Mudaliyar" in Tamil. He has blessing hands and has Sankhu and Chakra. This moorthy is also made of alloy of five metals. He plays an important role in different courts - Ugadi, Deepavali, Anivara - He will head ceremonies like Ankurarpanam, Mrutti Sangraha (soil collection). Being commander-in-chief of Lord Venkateswara he occupies an important place.

**3) Garuda :**

He is swamy's aerial car. He will be ever ready to carry Lord with open wings. This panchaloha moorthy stands with folded hands. He participates on the first day of Swamy Brahmothsavam at the time of inviting rulers of all the eight directions. This Utsav Moorthy whose height is 1 ½ feet participates in all ceremonies.

The idols of Seetha Rama and Lakshmana which are now kept in Sanctum Sanctorum were once on the raised platform. Because of this placement that

particular area gets the name of 'Ramulavari Meda'. It is said the idols which were once on the platform were shifted into Sanctum Sanctorum. But the name continues to be Ramulavari Meda even to this day. The other small idols which were there on the raised platform were, it is said, shifted to Ankurarpana (sprouting) Mandapam which is near golden well. When crowd is more, devotees will have darshan of Lord Balaji from this Ramulavari Meda. Daily night Ekantha seva (solitude) will be performed here. At that time a descendant of Tallapaka Annamacharya with a Tambura (a stringed musical instrument) will sing a lullaby.

**32. SAYANA MANDIRAM****(Lord's Bed Room)**

As you cross Ramulavari Meda you will enter into a 13 ½ " by 13 ½" room. This room is called as Sayana Mandiram i.e., Lord's Bed Room. This is exactly in front of the Sanctum Sanctorum of Lord Venkateswara. This is also known by the name Ardha Mandapam. (A Moiety porch). As the name goes everyday night Lord goes to bed in this room after all the rituals (pavalimpu seva) are performed. There is one hanging broad taped cot. On a smooth silk bed Lord goes to sleep. In Telugu, Sayanam means sleep. Hence the room gets the name 'Sayana Mandiram' i.e., Bed Room.

By reciting the glory of the Lord (suprabhatam) Lord will be gently awakened. After waking him, He will be decorated with flowers. While flower decoration is going on vaishnava Swamys recite Divya Prabandham

(in praise of Lord in Tamil). After this pooja with flowers (pushpa alankarana seva), thousand holy names of Lord (Sahsra Nama Archana) along with Ashtothara Satanama archana, (108 holy names) is performed. With these things that are being chanted Lord enters into the Sanctum Sanctorum. While the entry is taking place, to the Moolavirat the Chief Image, pooja's are performed. On Fridays Abhishekam (holy bath) will be performed. The vedic scholars stand in this Sayana Mandiram and recite Sri Sooktham, Purusha Sooktham etc., Similarly on Tuesday also Ashtadala PadaPadma Aradhana (worshiping Lord with eight peteled lotus by keeping them at the feet of the Lord). On these days paid Sevas are also performed. Those who would have paid for the seva, will be seated in an orderly way in this Sayana Mandiram which faces Sanctum Sanctorum.

Near threshold of Sanctum Sanctorum i.e., right in front of the Chief Idol, all the offerings meant for the God are kept in Sayana Mandapam only. All the offerings are, under any circumstances not taken inside the threshold of Sanctum Sanctorum. Only curd rice offering which is known as 'Mantra' is taken inside and offered to the Chief Idol.

This mandapam serves two purposes. It becomes Sayana Mandapam i.e., bed room during nights and dining hall during day time. It is only in this bed room Lord Venkateswara's consort Alamelumanga whispers Her recommendations regarding some deserving cases into the ears of Lord Venkateswara at the appropriate time. Let us reverentially bow to Lord's Bed Room.

Only preists and Jeeyangars are allowed to enter into Sanctum Sanctorum. Other devotees will have darshan only from Sayana Mandiram. Ananthavar has described the handsomeness of Lord Venkateswara in these words :

***Hai Mordhvapundra Majahan Makutam Sunasam  
Mandasmitam Makara Kundala Chaarugandam  
Bimbaadharam Bahula DeerghaKripaakataksham  
Sri Venkatesam Mukhamaatmani Sanni Dohattam***

Fully garlanded, bejeweled Lord is feast for eyes. Words fail to describe him. As Tulasidas puts it: The eyes which see do not have tongue to describe and the tongue which can describe has not got eyes. We have to look at the Chief Idol of God with broad open eyes.

***Kandarpa Koti Sadrusam Kamaneeeya Vesham  
Mukthavalee Lalitha Kantta Mudaara Haaram  
Peethambaraa Dyuthi Virajitha Divya Deham  
Sri Venkatesa Vapuraathmani Sanni Dohattam***

Lord Venkateswara has umpteen names Yedukondala Vaadu (Lord of seven hills) Venkataramana, Srinivasa, Tirumalappa, Sankata Harana, Venkatachalapati, Govinda etc. Irrespective of the name devotees use, he showers his blessings on all alike. The place where the Chief Idol stands is known as Ananda Nilayam i.e., the abode of happiness.

In between Sayana Mandapam and Sanctum Sanctorum there is one sculptured stone door. This is the nearest threshold to the Sanctum Sanctorum. All round this threshold gold plating is done. We can reach



sannidhi i.e., Sanctum Sanctorum after crossing this threshold. But only priests are allowed to go near the Chief Idol. This all important Golden threshold is popularly known as Kulasekhara Padi.

### **33. KULASEKHARA PADI**

#### **(Kulasekhara's step)**

Kulasekhara was a Kerala king. He is considered as the greatest Alwar i.e., a Vaishnavite saint. In praise of Lord Venkateswara he has composed 11 pasurams (sacred poems composed in Tamil). In one of his pasurams he appeals to Lord Venkateswara to make him a threshold stone so that he can have Lord's Darshan everyday.

#### **“Padiyaay Kedendu Un Pavalavaay Kaanbene”**

As to fulfill his cherished desire the threshold is christened as Kulasekharapadi. Indeed Kulasekhara Alwar is a blessed soul. He is the one who has composed ‘Kundamala’ a booklet.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

### **34. SANCTUM SANCTORUM OF SRINIVASA**

Other than priests, no one is allowed to enter into Sanctum Sanctorum. The details about the Sannidhi are furnished by the priests. As it has been already mentioned the Chief Idol of Lord Venkateswara is not a stone carved one. It is a Self Produced or Self Formed Image of Lord Venkateswara. The place from where

He has emerged has been converted into Sanctum Sanctorum. This is otherwise known as ‘Ananda Nilayam’ i.e., an Abode of Happiness. A golden tower has been constructed over this abode. It has been named as Ananda Nilaya Vimanam. Sanctum Sanctorum is a 12.9" x 12.9" rectangular construction. The walls are much more wider (7.2") than Sayana Mandiram walls. The temple researchers are of the opinion that a wall was constructed afterwards abutting the wall which was already there. Because of this additional wall the total width of the wall has become 7.2". They further say that the Ananda Nilayam tower is standing on the new wall. It is believed that the tower might have been constructed between 1244-50 A.D. Based on this research it is now widely believed that prior to the construction of this new abutting wall there was space to perform the circumambulations of Sanctum Sanctorum. Over a period of time because of the construction of Sayana Mandapam and Ramulavaari Meda, the temple authorities would have blocked the old path of circumambulation.

In Sanctum Sanctorum it is Sri Mahavishnu Himself has come down from Vykunttam His holy abode to Tirumala. He has emerged as Self Formed Salagrama (ammonite) stone. This salagrama stone idol gets the name of Sri Venkateswara. He has Chaturbhujas (four shoulders) and is with His consort Sri Mahalakshmi who has occupied His chest portion. Have a look at Him with your wide open eyes. Since time immemorial poojas, Utsavams etc., are being performed as

prescribed in Vykanasa Agama (divinity describing religious rites). The Chief Idol (Moolavirat) is immovable, stable one. Apart from this there are four movable images - Utsava, Kouthuka, Bali, Snapana. All the four Movable Images are made of panchalohas i.e., an alloy of five metals.

Not only aforesaid four images, there are images of Sri Sudarsana Chakrathalvar, Seetha-Rama-Lakshmana, Rukhmini-Sri Krishna are also there in the Sanctum Sanctorum. Apart from these panchaloha idols there are holy salagramas in the Sanctum Sanctorum. Poojas and Abhishekams are offered daily to these holy salagramas.

In the Sanctum Sanctorum to the right side of the Chief Idol in the south east direction and to left in the north east direction there are two lamps which will emit light continuously on 24 x 7 basis. These lamps are known as 'Brahma Akhandam'. It is said these lamps were first lit by Brahma the creator. Let us chant:

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

### **35. SRI VENKATESWARA SWAMY**

#### **(The Chief Idol)**

The Self Emerged Idol of Lord Venkateswara is standing on a golden lotus base. Have a good look at the Lotus Feet of Lord Venkateswara. He has silk robes. The dangling garlands are further beautifying the silk robes. Near Lord's naval there is a sword by name Nandaka Khadgam. There is one waist belt made of

gold with gems and diamonds studded. The Blessing Hand is again studded with diamonds. The Lord's Hand on the Hip says that if you sincerely seek shelter with Me, I will see that it becomes a child's play for you to cross the ocean of mundane existence. On His Chest there is a Kausthubha Mani. He has many Navaratna Haras (necklaces) around His neck. Sri Maha Lakshmi Who is seated near His Chest is also blessing devotees with Her Blessing Hand. His consorts Bhoo Devi and Sri Devi too are having costly necklaces. With Sacred Thread (Yagnopaveetam), bejeweled hands, lengthy garlands of salagramas and Sankhu and Chakra, Lord Venkateswara is attracting devotees from the four corners of the world. The charming face with an Alluring Smile on His Lips, smooth shining cheeks, white camphor dot on the chin, the chistled nose, white religious marking on the forehead, the gems studded crown all these things make our Lord more attractive. One will not know whether bejeweled God is beautifying the jewels or jewels are beautifying God. These jewels, diamonds, gems, precious stones etc., are donations of devotees donated at different times. One will not know what made them to denote these jewels and why they have preferred only this temple for those donations. Let us meditate on this Ever Attractive Chief Idol of God by chanting :

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

Each and every jewellery has an interesting and absorbing story behind it. Each diamond narrates the sincere devotion of its selfless donar. The glitter of gems

adorning the idol reveal at length the sacrifices the devotee would have made and the blessing he would have received from the Lord of Seven Hills, when the devotee was in distress. The musical sound that bracelets make symbolically tells how benevolent the Lord is towards His devotees. The splendid shining of the crown is a proof for burning down the sins of devotees, committed knowingly or unknowingly, before seeking shelter near the Lotus Feet of the Lord. The Panchajanya (a conch shell) and the Sudarshan Chakra by giving clarion call would have punished wicked people who did much harm to the humanity. Through the broad smile Lord is acknowledging the prayers offered by devotees who would have received eye sight, some lame people who would have successfully, by the Grace of God, climbed the hills, the deaf would have got back their lost hearing ability etc., Those who have won their long pending cases too would have thanked the Lord for His solicited help. We may not know all the benefisheries. Only He knows them.

All devotees irrespective of their caste, creed, some times even faith whether they are Indians or even foreigners would have equally received the blessings of the Lord of Seven Hills. After receiving beneficial help from the Lord they would have contributed their mite. Some rich devotees might have contributed a portion of their profit. Ordinary devotees always contribute a part of their hard earned money. The devotees appeal to Him as Aapada Mokka Vada (one who removes all the obstacles) Vaddikasula Vada

(who collects even interest when the devotees fail to deposit the amount they would have promised to offer) Apadbandhava (a friend of all those who are in distress) etc., However simple or however complicated is your case, pray sincerely. He will come to your rescue at the right time. He will be by your side when others have ditched you. What He expects from His devotees is simple sincere devotion. Please have a good look at the Chief Idol. It is true that the thirst to see will not be quenched no matter how many times you visit the temple or how much time you spend in the Sanctum Sanctorum. Once you come out of the Sanctum Sanctorum you feel you are a blessed person. But you will have a feeling that I saw only the Smiling Face or the Blessing Hand, glittering crown, or Koustubha near the Chest etc., I have not seen the Lotus Feet. Each and every inch of the Chief Idol is so attractive that you will refuse to withdraw your eyes from that spot. Every time you visit the temple you will have a feeling that the Lord is more and more alluring than your earlier visit. Before trying to know more details about the Sanctum Sanctorum let us chant the holy name of the Lord :

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

The Self Emerged Salagrama Moorthy of Lord Srinivasa is exactly at the centre of Sanctum Sanctorum. This location is known as 'BRAHMA STHANAM'. Because of this, the Chief Idol is termed as 'STHANAKA MOORTHY'. Because it is immovable, people call it as 'DHRUVA (PERMANENT) MOORTHY' or 'DHRUVA BERAM' (Permanent idol or image). Here

He is not accompanied by His two Consorts. He has only VAKSHASTHALA (on the chest) LAKSHMI. Hence he gets the name of STHANAKA VARAHA MOORTHY.

With Vakshasthala Maha Lakshmi, Sri Mahavishnu left His Celestial Abode Vykunttam and came down to Bhooloka and preferred to stay on TIRUMALA HILLS and valleys as a Self Emerged Salagrama Moorthy. All other idols that we find in this temple are latter additions. For this reason Tirumala has been mentioned as ‘EKA BERAM’ (only one idol) temple.

This Self Emerged Salagrama monolithic idol has four shoulders. Upper right hand holds SUDARSHANA CHAKRA and left upper hand has PANCHAJANYA (conch shell). Similarly lower right hand has ABHAYA MUDRA and lower LEFT HAND IS ON THE HIP. On Chest we can see the insignia of LAKSHMI. The Idol appears leaning slightly towards left. Looking through corner of eyes with bewitching smile on face, the Moorthy enthralls the devotees. About the Sankhu and Chakra that we see on right and left hand respectively, it seems, were not there originally. May be during Ramanujacharya’s time or after him, seeing that the Chief Idol is without any weapon, they would have added gold plated copper plates to the Idol. This may be true. He is Mahavishnu with or without Sankhu and Chakra.

*“Padmaavatheem Vishaalaakshim Bhagavaanaatmaa  
Vakshasi  
Ari Sankha Viheeno Asau Katinyastha Karottamaha*

*Darshayan Paani naikena Dakshinena Vrishaakapihi  
Pada Padmam Suraa Aaraadhyam Gatim cha Paramaam  
Nrunaam*

*Katinyastha Karenaapi Nija Padaabja Kaaminam  
Nrunaam Bhava Payoraasim Katidaghnam*

*Pradanshyam*

*Viraajathe Venkatesaha sam Pratyapi Ramaapathi”*

### *-Venkatachala Maahaatmyam*

As He has kind hearted Sri Maha Lakshmi in His Chest, He discorred fearful Sankhu and Chakra. Therefore He has assumed pleasing form to clear all mundane fears of humanity. This Ramapathi, the Lord of Venkatagiri is pleasing every one by showering His countless blessings.

Earlier there took place a pitched battle between Thondaman and Sri Padmavathy’s brother Vasudas. It is said that Lord Venkateswara to whom devotees are more dear, had handed over His Sankhu and Chakra to Thondaman. The Venkatachala Mahatmyam further says that after the battle, Lord Sri Venkateswara had refused to take back His Sankhu and Chakra from Thondaman. As He had not received them, the Self Emerged Salagrama monolith idol is not having these two weapons of Sri MahaVishnu.

Apart from this according to Vykanasa Agama Shastra there is no hard and fast rule that all idols should have weapons. Some may or may not have weapons. As prominent place is given to Sri Mahalakshmi near

His Chest, undoubtedly proves that the Self Emerged Idol is that of Sri MahaVishnu only.

### **He is not Brahma, The creator**

As Lord Venkateswara is standing on a lotus base, some may think that He may be Brahma the creator.

Some assume that only Brahma the creator stands on a lotus base. Even if some body pays absolute cognizance to this particular factor, Brahma may not have Srivatsa insignia near His Heart. Therefore He cannot be Brahma the creator. Added to this it is generally believed by all devotees that even Brahma, the creator joins other celestial beings, everyday early morning, when the Suprabhatam is being recited. Even to this day the temple priest keeps a golden vessel containing water for the exclusive use of Brahma. The same water which Brahma uses to offer His worship to Lord Venkateswara will be given to devotees as 'Brahma theertham'. Not only this, every year the Brahmothsavams arranged by Brahma are celebrated on a grand scale. Hence the Chief Idol of Tirumala cannot be that of Brahma, the creator. There is one more significant reason. On the specific request of Brahma, Lord Vishnu has descended from Vykunttam to assume the form of Lord Srinivasa. Every day He is being worshipped by Brahma the creator. Let us pray to Lord Venkateswara by borrowing lines from Ashtothara and Sahasra Nama.

***Om Brahma Sthuthyaya Namaha***

***Om Brahma Rudradi Samsevyaya Namaha***

***Om Brahmothsava Mohotsukaya Namaha***

***Om Brahmadi Devadurdarsa Viswaroopaya***

***Namaha***

***Om Brahmaklupthothsavaya Namaha***

***Om Virinchitha Abhyarthithaneetha Sowmya***

***Roopaya Namaha***

In all these mantras Brahma is worshipping Lord Venkateswara.

### **He is not Shiva**

Earlier it has been stated that the original idol was not having Sankhu and Chakra. It is also mentioned that the Chief Idol has Naga Abharanas i.e., snake ornaments. Every year during Dhanur Masam i.e., the 9th month of Hindu calendar, Lord will be specially worshipped with Bilvapatra which is dear to Lord Siva. Taking all these things into active consideration the Smartha devotees frequently argue that the Chief Idol is that of Siva. Just because the original Chief Idol was without Sankhu Chakra one cannot jump to the conclusion that it is a Siva's idol. As we all know Siva will not have Sri Lakshmi in his chest, people may point out about Naga Abharanas. Every body knows that Adishesha is a staunch devotee of Lord Vishnu. He has agreed to become His bed. He is one of His attendants. There is one more connection as per Brahma Purana. Once there was a bitter conflict between Wind God and Adishesha. Adishesha was tossed and thrown by the Wind God. At that time Lord Vishnu caught him and cajoled him. Not only this, Lord Vishnu further assured

Adisasha that He will have Adishesha as an ornament on His person and will have curled Adishesha as his bed. Because of this assurance only Lord Vishnu got the name of Sesha sayana. He is further known as Seshachalapathi. In a nut shell the Chief Idol is that of Lord Vishnu only.

One may raise another pertinent question. Why Lord Vishnu is worshipped with Bilva Patras in the 9th month of Hindu calander. People should know that Sri Maha Lakshmi dwells in the Garden of Bilva trees. As she stays in the midst of Bilva trees, her Lord is worshipped with Bilva patras. There are five known Bilvas. They are Tulasi, Bilva, Nirgundi, Jambheera, Amalaka. But Siva is not worshipped with tulasi, a variety of Bilva. Where as Lord Srinivasa is worshipped with Tulasi everyday. As Siva is fond of 'Abhisheka', Lord Srinivasa is fond of flowers. He has special liking for Tulasi. The Ruling Deity of TIRUMALA is LORD VENKATESWARA. But Siva in the form of Rudra is the Kshethrapalaka of this area. During Brahmothsavams, Siva is specially invited as the ruler of North East direction. Hence the Chief Idol cannot be that of Lord Siva. Though the Lord is called as Venkateswara, He is for all practical purposes only Lord Vishnu. In Ashtothara Sahasra Nama Archana, Siva is said to have praised Lord Vishnu thus:

*Om Sankara Priya Mitraya Namaha*  
*Om Vamadeva Priyaya Namaha*

*Om Upatyaka Pradeshashta Sankara Dhyata Moorthaye*  
*Namaha*

*Om Hara Mohaka Mayavine Namaha*  
*Om Brahma Rudradi Samsevyaya Namaha*  
*Om Eesha chapa prabhanjanaya Namaha*  
*Om Suvarna Mukhia Teera Siva Dhyataree Padambujaya*  
*Namaha*

### **It is not Shakthi's idol**

Every Friday, without fail, 'Abhishekam' is performed to the Idol with haldi and kunkumam. Generally this is performed only to the idols of Shakthi. Then is it not the idol of Shakthi?

One more thing, around the Vimana of Ananda Nilaya there are figures of lion. Lion, as everybody knows is the carrier of Durga.

Most of the North Indians considering this as the idol of Bala Thripura Sundari and call the idol as Balaji. These things unmistakably prove that the Chief Idol must be that of Shakthi i.e., Durga.

We have an answer for every thing people talk about Haldi Kunkuma Abhishekam to the Chief Idol. Yes the Abhishekam is no doubt offered. But it is not offered to Lord Srinivasa. It is offered to His Consort Sri Maha Lakshmi who dwells in His heart. Because of this Lakshmi Abhishekam the Lord gets half drenched. Lord cannot be left half drenched. So the Abhishekam is performed to the whole Idol. This being the reason the

Friday Abhishekam has gained importance in Srinivasa temple.

Coming to the figures of Lion around the Vimana of Anand Nilayam, the figures of Lion and heads of Lion speak about valour. These figurative symbols are used not only in Saiva and Saktheya Agamas, but also are used in Vykhana Agama. Vykhana has particularly accepted Garuda. Because of this acceptance around the Prakara of Ananda Nilaya we have figures of Lion along with figures of Garuda.

Now coming to the name of BALAJI as used by North Indians, when they address Sri Venkateswara as Balaji they do not mean Goddess. In North India for Goddess Shakthi, names like Kali Mata, Santoshi Mata, Sarada Mata, Parvathi Mata are popularly used. Balaji never gives according to researchers and observers, the meaning of goddess. In some parts of North, Hanuman is addressed as Balaji Venkateswara. In places like Ajmer, Jhansi, Haridwar etc., there are Hanuman temples, which are known as Venkateswara temples. In North India a benevolent leader who works for common man and the poor is affectionately called as Balaji. These points do prove that the Chief Idol of Tirumala is that of Lord Srinivasa and not that of Shakthi.

*Om Daakshaayanee Vachasthushtaaya Namaha*

**He is not Kumarswamy either**

We have a Pushkarini (a lotus pond). It is known as Swamy Pushkarini. Generally, the word Swamy is

attributed to Karthikeya who is popularly known as Kumaraswamy. On the basis of this name people call this Chief Idol as that of Kumaraswamy. There is one more factor. Kumaraswamy temples are always on hill tops. Tirumala temple is also a hill top temple.

This particular argument may not be a convincing one. We believe that the tanks and ponds attached to temple are as sacred as the deity itself. As a mark of respect the word Swamy is prefixed to temple ponds and tanks. This rules out the belief that the Chief Idol is not the idol of Kumaraswamy. Our puranas say that Kumaraswamy, to get rid of the sin of killing a Brahmin by name Tarakasura, did severe penance on Tirumala Hills. Lord Srinivasa who was pleased with the severe penance liberated Kumaraswamy from the sin. The place where Kumaraswamy did penance is known as 'Kumara Theertham'. Considering Lord Venkateswara as the incarnation of Lord Vishnu devotee praise him in these words.

*Om Kumaaraa kalpa sevyaya Namaha*

*Om Kumaara Dhaaraa Theertha sthaya Namaha*

*Om Kumaara Dhaarikavasa skandabhishta*

*Pradayine Namaha*

**VAKSHASTHALA MAHA LAKSHMI**

**(Vyooaha Lakshmi)**

Sri Maha Lakshmi who is occupying the Vakshasthala (chest) of Lord Vishnu eloquently proves

that the Chief Idol of Tirumala is that of Lord Srinivasa only.

The Venkatachala mountain is considered to be a Vykunttam on earth. Lord Vishnu i.e., Srinivasa can be compared to thick blue cloud resting on the peak of Venkatachalam. Like a silver lining in the dark cloud Sri Maha Lakshmi appears as shining creeper of gold. She is no other than Alamelu Manga, the Chief Queen of Lord Venkateswara. Because of the shining of this Sri Maha Lakshmi only, dark cloud like Srinivasa looks more and more enchanting.

Let us pray the Universal Mother Padmavathi of Tiruchanur.

***Eesanam jagatoAsya Venkata Patheh Vishnoh  
paraam preyaaseem  
Tad Vakshasthala Nitya vasarasikam Tatkshanthi  
Samvardhaneem  
Padmaalankrutha pani pallava yugam Padma  
sanastham sriyam  
Vathsalyadi Gunojjwalam Bhagavatheem Vande  
Jagan Mataram***

JAGANMATA i.e., Universal Mother Sri Padmavathi is the proprietress of this world. She is the most Dearest Consort of Sri Maha Vishnu i.e., Sri Srinivasa. She generously contributes to the forgiveness of Lord Srinivasa. She is seated in Padmasana posture. She holds lotus flowers in Her silk like soft hands. She is the embodiment of noble qualities like love, pity,

kindness etc., She always likes to dwell in the heart of Lord Srinivasa.

All merciful and a synonym of love Sri Maha Lakshmi dwells in the heart of Tirumala's Lord Sri Venkateswara as Vyootha Lakshmi. In Thiruchanur, She is considered as ARCHA MOORTHY (A Moorthy meant for worshiping) Padmavathi. Some call Her as ALAMELU MANGA. Let us pray to Sri Maha Lakshmi.

***Matarnamaami kamale! Kamalayatakshi  
Sri Vishnu Hruthkamala vasini! Viswamathaha***

Because of this association with Sri Maha Lakshmi, Lord Vishnu gets the name of Srinivasa i.e., one who lives in Maha Lakshmi's heart. The Chief Idol's heart position is little bit protruded. On this protruded portion Alamelu Manga is seated. She is not sitting there for nothing. She first listens to the appeals, prayers and difficulties of all devotees and then conveys them to Lord Srinivasa. She even pressurizes Lord to solve their difficulties and generously grants boons to all deserving devotees. Lord Srinivasa will never turn down the request of His Chief Consort. He pleases Her by granting boons to devotees. He dispels the sins of His devotees. He helps them in solving their problems and finally blesses them with prosperity. Everyday the priests chant mantras in praise of Lord Venkateswara.

***Vakthrabje Bhagya Lakshmi karatala kamale  
sarvadaa Daana Lakshmi hi  
Dordande veera Lakshmir Hridaya sarasija Bhoota  
kaarunya Lakshmi hi***



***Khadgagre shourya Lakshmi, NikhilaGunaGana  
Adambare keerthi Lakshmi hi  
Sarvange sowmya Lakshmeeha sarva saamrajya  
Lakshmeer mayathu vijayatha***

The LORD WHO IS LAKSHMI SAMETHA FROM TOP TO BOTTOM, may grant victory to me. The aforesaid sloka further says Sri Maha Lakshmi occupying the Lotus Heart of the Lord appears as “Bhoota Kaarunya Lakshmi”. As He is always in the company of Sri Maha Lakshmi, He has become dear to all devotees. Staying in Ananda Nilaya He is continuously showering happiness and bliss on all His devotees.

One must know that Sri Maha Lakshmi who is sitting on a protruded portion of the Chief Idol is as important and significant as the Chief Idol itself. Without any hesitation we can say that She is more important and significant than the Chief Idol. Lord Venkateswara Has descended from Vykunttam to bless the people of Kaliyuga. That is why He is addressed as “Kalaou Venkata Nayakaha ( Kaliyuga’s Lord). By Her holy presence near the heart of Lord Venkateswara, His Chief Consort Sri Padmavathi is proclaiming to the world at large by saying look Lord Venkateswara of Tirumala is no other than Sri Maha Vishnu of Vykunttam.

After offering Thomala seva (worshiping with string of flowers and leaves) Archana and food offerings (Naivedyam) even to goddess Alamelu Manga who is seated in the heart of Lord Venkateswara, the aforesaid Sevas are regularly offered. We have already come to know about special Friday pooja with Haldi (Turmeric)

and Kumkum. This is offered to the Lord also, simultaneously. Let us pray this god who responds to our sincere prayers, who is known as Apadbandhava and Anantha Rakshaka.

***Srivatsa vakshasam Sri Sham Sri Lolam Sri  
Karagraham  
Srimantham Srinidhim Sridyam Srinivasam Bhaje  
Anisham***

This Lord has ‘Sri Vatsam’ mark in His Chest. He is Sri Lakshmi’s spouse. He is deeply immersed in love play with His Consort. He firmly holds the hand of Sri Maha Lakshmi. He is Omniscience. He is the converging point of wealth. Sri Maha Lakshmi meditates on Him and praises him. Let us whole heartedly say,

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

Sri Maha Vishnu of Vykunttam has directly descended on Tirumala hills. Hence He is addressed as ‘Venkatachalapathi’. Venkatadri is in the midst of seven hills known as Seshadri, Garudadri, Venkatadri, Narayanadri, Vrishabhadri and Anjanadri. Being on Venkatadri devotees call Him as Yedukondalavada (Lord of Seven hills) Saptagirisha and Srinivasa. Locally He is known as Tirumalappa, Venkataramana, Sankata Harana, Balaji, Govinda, Seshachalapathi, Venkatesha etc., Kannada people call Him by name Tirupathi Thimmappa. Tamilians call Him Malayappa, Yelumalai Vaasa, Lord responds to the calls of His devotees, no matter what name they use. Whatever be the form they worship Lord Venkateswara appears to them in that

form and fulfills all their desires. He will positively answer all their prayers. Irrespective of caste, creed, age and gender He equally showers his blessings. To Him all are equal and are equally dear.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

Tallapaka Annamacharya a great devotee of Lord Venkateswara praises Lord Venkateswara thus: Vaishnavite Devotees love to call you Vishnu. The philosophers address you as Para Brahma the supreme God. The Shiva devotees consider you as Siva, Kapalikas adore you as Adi Bhairava. All Supreme God Adi Vishnu of Vykunttam, who outshines crores of suryas, Has descended to the earth with His splendid Brilliance and is staying on Tirumala Hills. Therefore it is said that all celestial beings including Brahma and others come down during the wee hours of the day and chant veda mantras.

Devotees belonging to all religions and all castes visit Tirumala to offer their prayers. He never turns down the sincere prayers offered by the devotees. Hence devotees leave Tirumala with happiness and contentment.

The Chief Idol of Tirumala has its own greatness. The brilliance that one can see in this Idol cannot be seen elsewhere. Those who have darshan can only believe this. When you are right in front of the Idol you don't feel like withdrawing your eyes from the Idol. May be because of this inexplicable attraction devotees wish to visit Tirumala again and again. Every time they

visit they find hither too unseen beauty and attraction in the Chief Idol. Thousands of people visit everyday. They wait in long queue for hours together and get only a few seconds to have His darshan. These few seconds give them immense happiness.

There is a Sanskrit saying 'Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavathi'. As per your feelings or as per your imagination Lord Venkateswara appears before you. They experience presence of Lord in their midst. At the time of Suprabhatha Seva few feel His omni presence. Some view Him as a child. They see smiling playful face of Him. To some He appears as a young man and to some as an aged man. To some He is fountain head of enthusiasm and to some He appears as a very much tired person. To some who might have entertained some bad thoughts He appears like a warning military officer. To some He may appear like a true friend and extend His hand of friendship. On every Thursday during Nethra Darshana Utsavam – (on all other days the upright mark drawn on the forehead covers three fourths of His eyes. On Thursdays the upright mark on the forehead covers only a small portion of His eyes) to devotees He appears as a short but a tough person. On Thursday night when poolangi seva (worship with a variety of flowers) is performed He appears like a handsome new bridegroom to His devotees. This Abhisheka darshanam will drive away all the sins that one might have committed during his/ her previous births. Devotees will experience immense inexplicable joy and undisturbed peace of mind. They all feel that

their prayers have been heard. They forget themselves in the Sanctum Sanctorum. The expression fails to express the inner feelings of devotees. They long to have this wonderful soothing feelings through out their life and if possible even beyond their lives. One may not experience similar feeling when He is standing before any other Chief Idol. Only here, the devotees will have this type of subjective divine feeling. Nowhere else they can experience this type of holy presence. One should not think that only devotees will have such feeling. Even the Archakas and Priests who perform daily pooja also have undergone / are undergoing His divine presence. They also get wonder struck some times when they perform poojas. When they touch the feet, hands, and other limbs they experience they are touching soft hands and other limbs. It is said that the Chief Idol sweats profusely after Abhishekams are performed. The Archakas and priests who perform poojas and Sevas are really blessed souls. They have the feeling of touching the feet and hands of a person Who Has Life.

Not only yogis, saints, those who have mastered Vedas and pouranikas (one who knows puranas) but also Architects, geographits, expert sculptors have also confirmed that the Chief Idol of Lord Venkateswara is an ancient one.

1979 in the vicinity of main temple Archaeologists have found one natural stone arch or gateway estimated to be 250 crore years old. It is believed that Sri Maha Vishnu would have emerged from this ancient stone

gateway. The Geologists have confirmed that the height of this stone gate or arch and the height of the Chief Idol are almost same. This proves that this Venkatachalam and the Venkatachalapathi mentioned in Vedas and Puranas are one and the same. Even the modern geologists also have confirmed this theory after carefully examining the SilaaThoranam. The Chief Idol of Lord Venkateswara is not a carved one. The sculpture is beyond the imagination of any human being who claims himself to be a sculptor. No chistle would have succeeded in carving the sharp nose, half closed eyes, the eye lids, eye lashes, hair on the head, fingers, ornaments etc. When you look at the Chief Idol you will have the feeling that its form and beauty are changing, may be every second. The Chief Idol beyond the established norms, or rules of any Agama shastra. It appears all norms and rules in Agama Shastra have been framed only after this Chief Idol. It is the most enchanting idol of the world, because it has not been chistled by human hands.

Lord Venkateswara's Chief Idol is not a mere stone carving. To please some doubting Thomases, just for arguments sake even if one accepts the obvious fact, it will hurt the feelings of large number of devotees who sincerely believe that it is Lord Venkateswara Himself standing here after descending from heaven in his enchanting form. Though He appears outwardly, as if He is not taking any thing into cognizance, He actually knows everything that is happening around Him. He may not open His mouth but to His devotees He silently

conveys His feelings in their own language. Because a mistake committed unknowingly by His staunch devotee Thondaman Chakravarthy (emperor), we have permanently lost the opportunities to converse with him tete-a-tete.

It happened long time back. Once a Brahmin by name Koorma, went on a pilgrimage to Kasi. Before leaving for Kasi He requested king Thondaman to take care of his wife and children, till he comes back. King obliged the Brahmin. He allotted a palace for them. After providing everything for their comfortable life, he locked up the palace for their secured life. After that he forgot about Brahmin's family. The stocks got exhausted after some time. As fresh stocks did not arrive, the family was starved to death. After one year the Brahmin returned from Kasi and enquired about his wife and children. The king Thondaman remembered that he has forgotten about Brahmin's family. He rushed to the locked up palace. To his shock and surprise he found the skeletons of the Brahmin's family. To cover up his unpardonable mistake he told the Brahmin that his family has gone to Tirumala to have the darshan of Lord Venkateswara and are expected next day. The king requested the Brahmin to take rest. After telling this blatant lie the king rushed to Tirumala and prostrated before Lord Venkateswara. The king requested Lord to help him. Lord first assured him, as the king happens to be His staunch devotee. But told him: Look you have committed a terrible sin. Because of your forgetfulness all the members of that Brahmin family have lost their

lives. You have to undergo the punishment. But as I have given shelter and assurance I will protect you, I will see that you overcome the sin of killing Brahmin's family. I will give life to the members of Brahmin's family. But now onwards I will not appear before any one as I was appearing till now, I will not directly talk to anyone henceforth. Because of this vow Lord Venkateswara stopped appearing before people and talking to them directly i.e., Tete-e-Tete. But He gave life to the members of Brahmin's family.

Brahma and other celestial beings came to know about Lord Venkateswara's vow. They appealed to him to stay on there atleast till the end of Kaliyuga. They said 'Oh Lord, human beings life span is short and added to that they are weak. If you stop talking and appearing where else they can they go. Please stay on and listen to prayers and fulfill their desires'. Lord agreed to this request of Brahma and the other Celestial Beings. From that day onwards, He is standing there as a divine Chief Idol. He told Brahma, look I will not talk to anyone. But I will listen to the prayers and answer their prayers silently. Lord Venkateswara further said that He will become famous as "Kalou Venkata Nayakaha". On that day, Asvayuja month under sravana star He emerged as Salagrama Sila Moorthy. In that auspicious Asvayuja month under Sravana star as desired by Brahma, Thondaman took up and completed the construction of temple with Gopuram. Brahma with his own hands has lit two lamps in the Ananda Nilaya. These lamps are continuously burning and will continue to burn in years

to come. After this with the permission and consent of Lord Venkateswara festivities were organized for ten days. Over the years these festivities got the name of 'Brahmothsavams'. We are blessed ones. We must profusely thank our stars. Even though Lord Venkateswara is not directly appearing and talking to us, we have the good fortune of having the darshan of this divine Salagrama Sila Moorthy. He is blessing humanity by fulfilling their desires. Let us show our gratitude to Lord Venkateswara by chanting his holy name.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

Even though He has taken a vow not to appear before anyone and not to talk directly with anyone, He is forgetting His oath after His devotees like mother cow which goes after its dear calf. He has served number of people. He has played with number of people. He has even spoken personally to many a devotee. More than becoming the centre of attraction, He himself is attracted towards His sincere, selfless devotees. He has been carrying the sweet memories of His devotees on His person. Not only that He makes us remember those devotees by giving their names to the Nitya Poojas that are being performed, day in and day out. Because of His generous gesture on His part their names have been not only been immortalized but also so many hither too. Unknown stories have seen the light of the day. They speak volumes about soft and benevolent nature of Lord Venkateswara to whom devotees are very dear. There

are number of inspiring stories about His devotees. Let us try to know some of them.

### **LORD'S LOTUS FEET**

Look at the Lotus Feet of Swamyvaru. He is standing in a majestic way on a Lotus Seat. Everyday morning all celestial beings including Brahma the creator with crowns studded with gems, diamonds and other precious stone bow their heads reverentially. Attractive colourful fragrant garlands adore Swamyvaru upto trinkets of feet (ANDELU in Telugu). This eye arresting sight gives immense pleasure to devotees. Whenever you look at the Lotus Feet, no matter how many times and how long you might have had the darshan of Venkateswara's feet, your eyes will have an unquenchable thirst to have darshan again and again. Every time you look at the Lotus Feet of Lord Venkateswara you have a feeling as if you are looking at the feet for the first time. Srinivasa's consort Sri Maha Lakshmi with Her Soft Lotus Stem like hand, massages Lord's feet with great care, love and devotion. About Srinivasa's feet Rigveda says: They are not the feet of Sri Maha Vishnu of Vykunttam but are two springs of sweet honey. By pointing His feet with His right hand Sri Srinivasa is confirming that 'Yes these are the two springs of honey. His left hand on His hip further says that if you seek shelter, then crossing this mundane ocean will be as easy as walking in knee deep water. Sri "Venkatesa Charanou Saranam Prapadye".

The feet of the Lord will always be decorated or filled with flowers and Tulasi. Only when the

Suprabhatam is being chanted in the early morning, one can have the darshan of bare feet. The Feet of the Chief Idol will always be covered with gold plated sheets. Only on Fridays when the Abhishekams are performed devotees can have the darshan of bare feet.

Everyday after Suprabhatam, before Thomala Seva (worship with flowers), the gold plated covers are taken out from the feet. The plates will be kept on bath seat. The Abhishekams will then be performed. Along with Chief Idol even to Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy's idol, the daily Abhishekam is performed. This is performed daily in solitude. No body will be allowed to see this Abhishekam. On all Fridays Chief Idol will have special Abhishekam. After adding all aromatic things to the Akasa Ganga water, Abhishekam will be performed. After paying specified fee devotees can see the Abhishekam.

For all Abhishekams that are performed everyday as well as Friday Abhishekams to Chief Idol and to Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy idol, the water will be brought in the morning itself from Akasa Ganga. The Akasa Ganga water will be brought in a ceremonial way. Archakas carrying silver pots filled with Akasa Ganga water will ride on elephant. Some body will hold an umbrella over the pots. Piped music will be played and these players will accompany the elephant. The Akasa Ganga Theertham (Lake or water source) is 5 Kms away from the main temple.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D. a Vaishnavite devotee by name Tirumala Nambi used to bring water for Abhishekam. This devotee is also known by the name Sri Saila Poorna. Tirumala Nambi had revealed the secrets of Ramayana to Sri Ramanuja near Alipiri. Tirumala Nambi was not only a Guru to Ramanujacharya, but also His maternal uncle. Even to this day the descendants of Tirumala Nambi only help people in bringing holy water from Akasa Ganga.

Lord Srinivasa used to address Tirumala Nambi alias 'Sri Saila Poorna' as Grand father (Thatha in Telugu). As Sri Saila Poornaji had participated in bringing Akasa Ganga water and served Him, Lord Srinivasa Has granted Sri Saila Poornaji's descendants the exclusive right of bringing water for His Abhishekams. Before trying to know about the incident that occurred between god and His devotee let us praise Lord Srinivasa thus:

***Oh! Bhaktha Jana Parijata! Govinda Govinda  
Yedu Kondala Vada! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

### **Tirumala Nambi**

In 10th century A.D. there lived a great Vaishnava devotee by name Yamunacharya in 'Sri Rangam' a popularly famous Vaishnavite pilgrim centre. With all the sincerity he had at his command Sri Yamunacharya was serving Lord Sri Ranganatha. Being an authority on Vishista Advaita he was also imparting the intricacies of Vaishnavism to his disciples. In one of his discourses he mentioned about Lord Srinivasa of

Venkatachala (Kshethra). He told his disciples that Lord Srinivasa stays in a Pushpa Mandapam and is fond of Abhishekas particularly, with varieties of flowers. According to Namma Alwar, who is known as 'Parankusa Divya Soora', this is the best service that a devotee can offer to Lord Srinivasa. Yamunacharya further said, "I had the opportunity to serve Lord Srinivasa for a short period of time". I could not withstand the attack of insects as well as the chill weather. So I came back. If someone can go to Tirumala and get water as well as flowers for Abhishekam and pooja we will be showing our respect to great Namma Alwar (after saying this he anxiously looked at his disciples). There was a pin drop silence for sometime. After some time one disciple by name Sri Saila Poorna i.e., Tirumala Nambi stood up and said Guruji, I will go over to Tirumala to offer the poojas explained by you. With the blessings of Sri Yamunacharya, Tirumala Nambi reached Tirumala.

Everyday Tirumala Nambi used to get water from a near by Theertham Papanasanam, ten miles away from the temple for the Abhishekam of the Chief Idols of Lord Venkateswara as well as other utsava moorthies. Apart from this he used to collect flowers from the garden and prepare colourful garlands for Srinivasa and the other idols of Sanctum Sanctorum. While bringing water for Abhishekam he used to chant the holy name of the Lord. The Archakas with that water used to perform Abhishekam to the Lotus feet of the Chief Idol which will be covered with gold plated sheets. The silver

idol of Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy which is also known as 'Mana vala Perumal' was also given a holy bath with the water brought by Tirumala Nambi. Tirumala Nambi used to carry out the wishes of his guru Yamunacharya by serving Lord Srinivasa. This daily activity of bringing water from Papanasanam and preparing garlands for decoration continued for many years. Lord Venkateswara of Tirumala wanted to bring His devotee's selfless services to the notice of each and every one. As usual one fine morning Tirumala Nambi was carrying water from Papanasanam for Lord's Abhishekam. He was in a hurry to reach the temple well before Abhishekam time. As he was returning to the temple carrying water a young hunter with a bow and arrows addressed him as 'Thatha Thatha' (a Telugu word for grand father as well as a word of address used to address elderly people). Tirumala Nambi stopped for a while and looked back. He saw an attractive young hunter. The young hunter said, 'Sir I am very very thirsty, please quench my thirst by giving some water you are carrying'. Tirumala Nambi said, 'this water is meant for Lord's Abhishekam. I cannot give it to you. Give way to me. I am already late'. By saying this he started walking briskly towards the temple.

The young hunter followed Tirumala Nambi. He aimed one arrow and released it. The arrow went and struck the mud pot and made a small hole. The water started dripping and fell into His cup shaped two hands. Tirumala Nambi turned back after hearing the sound of dripping water. He saw the young hunter drinking the

dripping water. Tirumala Nambi, turning with anger said: 'You dirty fellow, by drinking the water meant for Lord Venkateswara's Abhishekam, you have polluted this. Oh! God!! I don't have much time to go back and fetch the water. What can I do!'. He with raised hands prayed Lord saying 'please forgive me. I could not carry water for Abhishekam in time'.

Seeing Tirumala Nambi crying like a child, the young hunter said: 'Oh! Old man! Don't worry. There is one more tank nearby. I will show you. You just follow me. Tirumala Nambi followed him. They went down into a valley. There was no water tank. Then the young hunter released one arrow. The arrow went and hit a bend of the hill. From there water started gushing. The hunter pointed that water source and said 'you take that water to the temple'. After that the hunter said: 'Look, from tomorrow onwards you carry only this water for my Abhishekam'. Lord Venkateswara who Had assumed the form of a young hunter disappeared.

Tirumala Nambi was thrilled. Before he could come to conclusion that the young hunter with Whom he was talking a while ago was no other than Lord Himself. He was fortunate to have seen and spoken to Lord Venkateswara. Totally immersed in ecstasy he reached the temple by drawing water from Akasa Ganga. When he entered into the Sanctum Sanctorum an Archaka being possessed by Lord Venkateswara said loudly 'Tirumala Nambi you have already quenched My thirst by offering soothing cold water. I had water to My heart's contentment. From tomorrow onwards you bring

water from Akasa Ganga only for My Abhishekam'. Thus He made a public announcement about the greatness and sincere devotion of Tirumala Nambi. Further, about Lord Venkateswara people could come to know that to Him devotees are more dear.

There is one small temple dedicated to Tirumala Nambi on the path of Maha Pradakshina i.e., circumambulation. This north facing temple is towards the southern side of circumambulation path. Tirumala Nambi the first ever person to dedicate his life for the sake of Theertha seva, it is believed, had a hut here in those days. Even to this day whenever Lord Venkateswara comes out in procession He is offered Harati first here. After this ceremony only He proceeds to south mada street. The Jeeyangaras leading the procession will be chanting verses from Divya prabandham. This proves the important significance that is given to Tirumala Nambi. Lord Venkateswara Himself has addressed Tirumala Nambi as 'Thatha' i.e., Grandfather. He thus became thatha to all. May be because of this, people began to address him as 'Periya Tirumala Nambi'. The prefix 'periya' in Tamil gives the meaning of elder in English. He is also known as Sri Saila Maha Poorna.

Tirumala Nambi, who served God was also a great scholar in Sanskrit as well as Dravidian language i.e., Tamil. He was one among the five gurus of Sri Bhagavad Ramanujacharya who advocated Vishista Advaita philosophy. Not only this, Tirumala Nambi was Sri Ramanujacharya's maternal uncle.



Once Sri Ramanujacharya came to Venkatachala kshethra. He was staying near Alipiri the foot of Venkatachalam, under a Tamarind tree. There it is said Tirumala Nambi taught him i.e., Ramanujacharya the secrets about Srimad Ramayanam. After offering his services to Lord Venkateswara and after receiving the prasadam, Tirumala Nambi used to come down near the foot of Tirumala hill...to teach his nephew Sri Ramanujacharya, who stayed in Tirupati for nearly one year. After having the darshan of Lord Varadaraja Swamy, the elder brother of Lord Venkateswara, Ramanuja used to reach Alipiri before the arrival of Tirumala Nambi. Tirumala Nambi revealed the inner and hidden meaning of Ramayana to Ramanuja for nearly 18 times. He never repeated the meaning once given to Ramanuja. Such a great personality was Tirumala Nambi. While giving discourses on Ramayana, one day Tirumala Nambi thought for a while. He thought I am able to serve Lord Venkateswara only twice i.e., once in the morning and again in the evening. During afternoons as he comes down to Alipiri, he never gets an opportunity to serve god. He was very much worried. On that day night Lord Venkateswara appeared to Tirumala Nambi in his dream. He told Tirumala Nambi, not to worry about not offering any seva to Me. Lord said 'Don't you worry, you continue your Ramayana discourse. To serve Me in the afternoon when you give your discourse My foot prints will appear and you can worship those foot prints'. Next day after noon Tirumala Nambi could see the emergence of Lord's foot prints at

the place where he gives his discourse. Same foot prints of Lord Venkateswara are there. We all can have darshan of these foot prints when we try to walk the distance from Alipiri.

According to historians Tirumala it seems is Tirumala Nambi's birth place. He dedicated his entire life to serve Lord Venkateswara. History further says that Tirumala Nambi breathed his last at Tirumala. As narrated earlier in this chapter once Lord Venkateswara appeared before Tirumala Nambi in the guise of a hunter and had His thirst quenched. To mark that day even now every year a ceremony is organized at Tirumala. It is known as "Akasa Ganga Theertha Utsavam". Tamilians call this as 'Tanneer Amuda Utsavam'. Amudam in Tamil means amrutam. This utsavam goes on for 25 days continuously. It actually starts 11 days before 'Vyakuntta Ekadasi' and ends fourteen days after Vyakuntta Ekadasi. A day after this utsavam-festival-Tirumala Nambi's Tirumanjanam (sacred bath) Theertha Kainkaryam (Divine Service) utsavam is celebrated. Descendants of Tirumala Nambi carry water in silver vessels from Akasa Ganga theerthams for Lord's sacred bath: Lord Venkateswara seated on a golden seat moves in a procession with all temple paraphernalia accompanied by temple orchestra, to receive those silver vessels. When the procession meets the people carrying water, Harati is performed. After that they are carried on the back of temple elephant. It circumambulates the temple. At each and every step during its procession poojas are offered. Finally the kalasams (vessels) are

handed over to the Archakas in the Sanctum Sanctorum. Archakas with the Akasa Ganga theertham wash the Lotus Feet and the other usual limbs of the Lord. After this sacred bath the Lord is offered all the traditional poojas. The poojas will be followed by felicitation to the descendants of Tirumala Nambi. This particular utsavam was initiated by Sri Ramanujachari. In an uninterrupted way this Utsavam is being continued even to this day. Lord Venkateswara loves to drink sacred water brought by those Vaishnavite devotees who follow very strictly all the religious duties as prescribed in our scriptures. The same Lord once relished food offered by an innocent illiterate pot maker.

It is firmly believed that under His Lotus Feet a river by name Viraja flows. This is supposed to be a celestial river. Everyday morning Sahasra (1000) Nama Archana (pooja) with Tulasi leaves, follows Thomalaseva (pooja with flowers and leaves). They chant: ‘Om Venkatesaya Namah, Om Virupakshaya Namaha, Om Visveshwaraya Namaha... the thousand names of Lord. Finally they chant Om Venkatadri Gadaa Dharaya Namaha’. These 1000 names are found in Brahmanda Purana. These 1000 names are different from Vishnu Sahasra Nama that starts with “Om Viswam Vishnuhu Vasatkkaro”...

During afternoon pooja, night pooja Tulasi leaves are offered to the Lotus Feet of Lord Venkateswara. They then chant 108 holy names taken from Varahapurana’s Venkatachala mahatmyam. It starts with “Om Venkatesaya Sri Venkatesaya Namaha” and ends

with “Om Srinivasaya Sri Venkatesaya Namaha”. After offering poojas in the morning, afternoon and in the night they take out the Tulasi leaves offered to the Lotus Feet and offer it to Lakshmi who is seated in His Heart with 24 holy names. These names start with “Om Sriyai Namaha” and end with “Om Abdijaayai Namaha”.

Only during Dhanur Masam while chanting Sahasra Namas, Bilwa leaves are selected instead of usual Tulasi leaves.

Every Tuesday the Chief Idol of Lord Venkateswara is worshipped with golden lotus flowers. They chant aforesaid 108 names of Lord Venkateswara. This worship is known as Ashtadala Padapadma Aradhana. This is a paid seva. Those who pay the prescribed fees can witness this special pooja.

It is believed that daily during night time after the final seva and after locking up the doors, Brahma the creator and the other celestial beings come to earth and offer poojas to Lord. To felicitate their pooja near the Golden Door, they place a golden vessel filled with sacred water. Not only a vessel but they keep a ball of Sandalwood paste near Lords Lotus Feet. After Suprabhatam the same water is offered to the devotees as Brahma Theertham.

## **LORD VENKATESWARA’S FEAST**

Sri Mannarayana who dwells in Vykunttam, as it is firmly believed, descended to the earth and had preferred to stay in Venkatachala Kshethra as Lord

Venkateswara. From that time onwards He has personally spoken to number of His devotees. He has even played with them. It is a tasteful feast to our ears when those conversations, those plays are narrated. When we mention the word 'feast' one memorably amazing incident comes to our mind. The Lord who had quenched His thirst by the holy water offered by a staunch orthodox Alwar, had even evidenced keen interest in relishing ragi balls kept in an earthen platter offered to Him by an illiterate person. He ate the food and greatly relished it. He had contentment in eating. He happily had that food. Before knowing the details about that food, let us repeat the name of Lord Venkateswara Yedu (7) Kondala (hills) wada, (Oh Dweller of Seven Hills) Venkata Ramana

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

### **KURUVA NAMBI**

#### **(Potter Nambi)**

Lord Venkateswara appeared as a Self Emerged Idol on the hills of Tirumala. Having come to know about this emergence the local king Thondaman started worshiping the Chief Idol with Golden Tulasi leaves. The priests used to chant the thousand eight names of Lord Venkateswara. After uttering a name they used to place one Golden Tulasi petal near the Feet of the Chief Idol. This was the daily routine of the king Thondaman. Slowly king Thondaman had a feeling that no other devotee of Lord Venkateswara can offer golden Tulasi

petals to Lord, like himself. He was rather proud of this. On one fine morning Thondaman visited the temple. To his shocking surprise he found that near the Lotus Feet of Lord there are flowers of a glue yielding tree. His Golden Tulasi petals were pushed behind. Suddenly Thondaman heard the voice of Lord Venkateswara. The Lord said: 'there are many devotees who are very dear to Me. Among them there is one potter by name Bhima. He prepares mud pots required for temple utilization. Not only this, he had one wooden carving of Mine. He worships Me with all sincerity that he has at his command. He makes earthen flowers and offers them to Me. Today morning you have seen only those flowers. Towards north at a distance of 10 miles he lives in a village. I love mud flowers offered by him. Hence don't be under the impression that you are the only devotee dear to Me'. King Thondaman came to his senses. By giving up everything and his kingly paraphernalia he walked the distance and reached the dwelling place of Bhima the potter. He offered his salutations to the dear devotee of Lord Venkateswara. Because of the tiresome journey he fell down and lost his consciousness. Suddenly to the surprise of the potter, Lord Venkateswara appeared there. He praised the Lord and humbly requested the Lord to be his guest for the day. Lord readily agreed and ate Ragi Balls offered to Him in an earthen platter. Seeing unusual scene celestial beings from heaven showered flowers. Meanwhile a heavenly chariot descended to earth. With their mundane body the potter couple i.e., Bhimas were taken to

heaven. As a token of remembrance even today Naivedyams are offered to the Chief Idol by keeping them in a broken earthen pot. They call it as “ODU”. Over the years, the potter Bhima came to be known as ‘Kuruva Nambi’ and Kuravarathi Nambi. This incident proves the fact that Lord Venkateswara cares only for sincere devotion and not for caste creed or riches of the devotees. He enjoyed the food offered by the potter and ate Ragi Balls served in an earthen platter. Number of items are prepared for naivedyam every day. But all these preparations are not taken into Sanctum Sanctorum. They are kept on the otherside of Kulasekhara padi, gadapa i.e., threshold. Only a part of the preparation kept in a half broken earthen pot is taken inside and is kept near the Chief Idol. Lord Venkateswara relishes only this food. Every day the naivedyam is offered in a new earthen (half broken) pot. For this simple reason, people call him as Thomani Pallalawadu i.e., each and every naivedyam submitted to the Chief Idol is always put in a new earthen plate (odu) and not in a reusable plate.

Let us once again take the name of Bhakthavatsala Balaji

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

### **LORD’S DIVINE PLAYS**

**(Leelas)**

Lord Venkateswara is a wonderful prankster. He loves to play pranks with His devotees. Some times

His practical jokes may boomerang. In Dwapara yuga His cowherd friends had abused him mouthfully. Some times He was even beaten up. He loves being abused by His childhood friends. All these qualities he has acquired from that mischievous Gopala Krishna. Even in this Kaliyuga Tirumala Nambi, a great devotee had abused Him profusely for drinking water from the pot meant for Lord Himself. There is one more incident. Once by changing His guise He went to His devotees house and became a bonded labourer. The devotee once had beaten Him to pulp when bonded labourer failed to discharge His duties to the best satisfaction of the master. The severe beating had left a mark on His face. Even to this day we can see a scar on the face of the Chief Idol. Archakas cover it with crude camphor. This coating makes the idol more beautiful and enchantingly attractive.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

### **ANANTHALVAR**

Bhagawad Ramanuja (1017-1137A.D) the founder of Vishista Advaita was once giving discourse on Saranagathi, Prapathi (seeking refuge) to his disciples. He was explaining different ways of worshiping the God. During his discourse he mentioned the significance of three holy places namely Sri Rangam, Kanchi and Venkatachalam. These three places have three different names. Sri Rangam is known as Bhoga Mandapam. The Kanchi as Thyaga Mandapam and Venkatachalam as Pushpa Mandapam. He further said Sri Srinivasa of

Tirumala hills is fond of flowers. He wanted to know whether there is one among his disciples who can go over to Venkatachala Kshethra and devote himself to plant a beautiful flower garden there. He said that it is not that easy to grow flowers. One has to bear the vagaries of nature. Not only that the place is full of insects. After raising this question he kept quiet for sometime and looked around. There was total silence for some time. Breaking the silence one disciple by name Ananthacharya stood up with folded hands. He slowly said: Guruji I am ready to carry out your orders. I will go to Tirumala. Please permit me. Ramanuja was happy to hear the words of Ananthacharya. By patting his back he said: 'Anantha you are the man (Anpillai in Tamil)'. He permitted him to go over to Tirumala and serve God with flowers. From that day onwards he became famous as Anandan Pillai in Tamil and Anantha Purushudu in Telugu and Sanskrit.

'Anandan Pillai' considered his Guru Bhagavad Ramanuja as God. This made him to proceed to Tirumala along with his wife with greater devotion. He started collecting different types of colourful fragrant flowers. He made beautiful garlands out of those flowers and offered them to Lord Venkateswara. He got good information about flowers from Tirumala Nambi who had devoted his mind body and soul to fetch water from Sri Ganga Theertham for God. Not only this, Anandan pillai also came to know that his Guru Ramanuja charya's own Guru and his guru's Guru i.e., Paramaguru Yamunacharya too had stayed in Tirumala and offered

floral service to Lord Venkateswara (incidentally Tirumala Nambi too was disciple of Yamunacharya). Anandan Pillai was happy to know about Yamunacharya's floral worship to Lord Venkateswara. He decided to offer the floral service to the Lord on behalf of his Guru's Guru Yamunacharya. With this determination, in the precincts of temple, he began to grow a garden by the name Yamunottara Pushpa Mandapam. From that day onwards the different types of garlands are being prepared in this pushpa mandapam. Anandan Pillai used to prepare garlands daily twice for the floral service of the Lord. The garlands prepared by Anandan Pillai used to adore the Chief Idol of the Lord. In previous pages we have already come to know about Yamunnottarai in detail. Though Anandalwar was doing his best by preparing colourful garlands to adore the Chief Idol of Lord Venkateswara, he was not quite happy. He wanted to grow varieties of fragrant flowers to please his God Lord Venkateswara. He thought of developing a big garden for this purpose. A big garden needs a tank which can supply water continuously throughout the year. He decided to build a big tank. Being an orthodox Sri Vaishnavite he never wanted to take help from labourers. With the help of his wife, he decided to dig a big tank. At that time his wife was carrying. Still she co-operated with him. He selected a place for the tank and started the digging work. That was on the southern side of the temple.

After offering garlands to god and after having theertha prasadam from the temple he used to go to

the spot and start the digging work. His wife used to carry dug soil in a basket and deposit it at a particular place. Though it was not an easy task, the couple carried out the work with all sincerity they had at their command. Lord Venkateswara was very happy to see the progress of the work. He wanted to extend His helping hand to His devotee. He took the guise of a 12 year old boy and approached Ananthacharya. He humbly requested Ananthacharya to permit Him to help them. Ananthacharya was much impressed by the gleaming form of the boy. He told him “Look my dear boy, we are doing this work at the behest of our Guru Sri Ramanujacharya. This is a divine work. We do not want to take help from others. Moreover we don’t want to take work without paying wages. Hence please do not disturb and pester us”. Lord Venkateswara who was in the guise of a boy was very happy to know about the firm determination of his devotee Ananthacharya. Yet Lord Venkateswara decided to extend His helping hand, somehow or the other.

The work went on briskly for some days. It was a hot afternoon. Ananthacharya was giving a basketful of dug earth to his wife. She took that basket on her head and emptied it at a designated area. This was going on in an uninterrupted way. Ananthacharya’s wife was in an advanced stage of pregnancy. Slowly she was carrying the basket on head. Ananthacharya was concentrating on his work. He was very eager to complete the digging work so that the tank can have water upto its brim level. Once the tank is full he can

plant varieties of flower giving plants with fragrance. With abundant flowers he can make more and more beautiful garlands which can beautify the life size Chief Idol from top to bottom. Being absorbed in these thoughts he forgot every thing other than the work that he was executing. Even his wife was equally interested in completing the work as early as possible. To her, her husband was everything. To serve her husband, who is a staunch devotee of Lord of Ananda Nilaya, sincerely, she thought is her one and only duty. She felt she is fortunate enough to have a husband like Ananthacharya. However difficult it is to carry the basketful of fresh earth, she decided to carry out as long as she can. While walking to the spot to download the basket that too in an advanced stage of pregnancy she used to chant the holy name of the Lord to forget the strain.

On one occasion Ananthacharya’s wife deeply immersed in chanting the name was carrying the basket full of dug earth. Lord Venkateswara in the form of a boy approached her. He asked her to hand over the basket she was carrying to Him, so that He can empty it at the designated spot. Without waiting for her consent He took it from her. Somehow she could not say no to boy’s request. Every time the boy used to meet her in midway and take the basket from her. Quickly he used to give empty basket to her. Ananthacharya was wondering how come she is coming back with empty basket even before he could dig. He wanted to know how she is able to empty the basket so fast. Almost swallowing the words she told him that a boy is helping

her. After coming to know about the boy's help, fuming with anger he came out of the pit. He went to the boy and started scolding him. You fellow! We do not want your help. We are actually doing this work for the sake of God of Ananda Nilaya. You have cheated my wife to take part in this divine work. I cannot spare you. With an iron crowbar Ananthacharya ran after the boy. Seeing dangerously approaching Ananthacharya the boy took to his heels. Ananthacharya some times reaches him with in the striking range. But somehow he could not strike him with his iron crowbar. Disgustedly Ananthacharya threw the iron crowbar at the boy. The iron crowbar struck the chin of the boy. Blood started oozing from the injured portion of the chin. Somehow the boy managed to run into Ananda Nilayam and hid Himself. For some time Ananthacharya searched for the boy. He could not find him. As Ananthacharya was dog tired he could not try further to locate the boy. He knew that He will be there somewhere and he can find Him if not tomorrow atleast on some other day. He thought I can catch hold of that boy and punish him.

After sun set and after performing evening 'Sandhya Vandanam' Ananthacharya entered into Ananda Nilayam to have the darshan of the Lord. He found some commotion in the Sanctum Sanctorum. He eagerly enquired the reason for that prevailing commotion. The priest pointed his finger to the chin of the Lord. From there blood was oozing continuously. The priests started applying crude campher to arrest the oozing. The priests thought the Lord would have played some prank with

some devotee. Anantha stood motionless for a while. He could put two and two together. He could realize the wrong committed by him. He prostrated before the Chief Idol and begged the Lord to pardon him. Ananthacharya could see the figure of that boy who came forward to help his pregnant wife. He could see the smile on the face of the Lord. To the happiness and surprise of everybody in general and Ananthacharya in particular Lord said: You! Ananthacharya, do not feel sorry for what has happened. I wanted to tell the world about the noble service oriented work you are doing. The injury on the chin caused by you will leave a permanent mark on My chin. From tomorrow onwards the priests will apply crude camphor on that scar. The crude camphor covering the scar will reveal the work done by you. This will make all My devotees to remember you. Thus you will be immortalized. From that day onwards, the crude camphor application on the chin started further beautifying the enchanting smiling face of the Lord. People are attracted towards the face uncontrollably. No one would like to withdraw his eyes from the face as long as they stay in front of Lord. Great Tallapaka Annamacharya has beautifully described the divine plays of the Lord thus:

*He is a benevolent Lord*

*Grants easily big sized boons*

*He patronaged Bhima the potter*

*And fulfilled all his wishes*

*Opened the eyes of emperor Thondaman*

*Made him to accept the greatness of  
mudflowers  
Appreciated the hardwork of Anantha  
Acharya  
Readily became a bonded labourer  
Played pranks with Tirumala Nambi  
Sportively listened to abuses of Nambi  
He is a benevolent Lord, Grants easily big  
sized boons*

***Govinda! Hari Govinda! Govinda! Hari Govinda!!***

After that unfortunate sweet incident Ananthacharyulu could complete the tank work quickly. He could raise a beautiful garden around the tank. As if to immortalize the name of his beloved Guru Sri Ramanujacharya, he christened the garden as Ramanuja Udyana Vanam. He developed that beautiful garden as if it is his child. The garden slowly began to bloom with variety of fragrantly beautiful flowers of all shades and all colours. This garden apart from catering flower needs of the temple, became the centre of attraction to all those who visited Tirumala. It is said Lord Venkateswara to whom flowers are very dear, used to roam in this garden with His Consorts, day in and day out. It is further said that Lord used to feel and talk to each and every flower bearing creeper and plant. To celebrate His love for flowers on a particular day of year even to this day Lord comes out with His two Consorts with all His paraphernalia. The priests will be chanting Veda Mantras and the piped music will be

played by pipers. This stoutly proves that to Lord Venkateswara His devotees are more dear.

What happened on that particular day which is being celebrated even today!

Moving heaven and earth Ananthacharyulu with the active co-operation and help of his wife, could complete the tank work. After successfully completing the work he began to plant different plants and creepers which can give fragrantly beautiful flowers. From the bloomed flowers he used to carefully pluck only beautiful fragrant flowers. With great devotion he used to prepare life size garlands. These garlands used to further beautify the ever handsome Lord Venkateswara and made him more attractive and enchanting.

Ananthacharya had whole heartedly dedicated his entire time to the development of the Ramanuja Udyana Vanam. Keeping the beautification of Lord with garlands in his mind, he used to think about various permutations and combinations. While preparing garlands, he even adapted, trial and error method. To him the size and appropriate place was very important. He used to think about size and colour combination of flowers in making a garland which can adore the crown of the Lord.

Ananthacharya used to spend his time only in the garden. He was quite familiar with each and every plant and creeper. He particularly knew how much watering the plants and creepers require to bear attractive flowers. When ever or where ever he finds any weed he used to weed it out immediately. He knew perfectly well when



to arrange for a support (prop) for a plant or creeper. He used to experience wonderful thrill when he finds attractive half opened buds at the further end of a plant or creeper. He knew the pulse and the heart beat of each and every plant and creeper by simply touching them. The garden slowly became a home for parrots, butterflies, cuckoos and rabbits. He befriended with them. Everyday Ananthacharya used to prepare different types of garlands. Adored with these garlands God used to look more and more handsome day after day.

Lord Venkateswara who was completely enamoured by the garlands prepared by Ananthacharya decided to see the garden raised by him. After the Ekantha Seva (a retirement pooja for the night) and after the Ananda Nilaya's doors were closed as per the norms, Lord Venkateswara along with His Consort Alamelu Manga started freely roaming in the beautiful garden raised by Ananthacharya. He appreciated the efforts put forward by Ananthacharya in shaping and pruning the garden. Enthusiastically He started to smell each and every bloomed flower. Some times He plucked some alluringly beautiful fragrant flowers and placed them in the locks of Padmavathi's hair. When He comes across another beautiful flower He plucks it and decorate the tress of Padmavathi by removing the one He had put earlier. Even Padmavathi started moving freely without any inhibition. She too started appreciating the grandeur of the garden. She also used to pick up a flower and go to Lord Venkateswara saying

dear look at the beauty of this bloomed flower. Through out the night with hand in hand they roamed in the garden. Seeing that it is Suprabhatham time they silently returned to Ananda Nilayam.

As usual in the morning Ananthacharyulu entered into the garden to pluck bloomed flowers. He was shell shocked to see crushed flowers, cut stems, withered buds, broken branches etc., He could find spit pan juice. Seeing the completely damaged garden Ananthacharya's blood began to boil. He thought somebody has stealthly entered into garden and has totally destroyed it. He scolded the unknown thief profusely. He went round the garden to locate and catch the thief. He was disappointed. His anger knew no bounds. He decided to stay back in the garden even during nights from that day onwards. By burning the mid night oil he spent the night in the garden. But that mischievous prank loving Srinivasa began to pluck flowers, buds, break branches twist stems etc., almost everyday. This distruction continued for eight days. In spite of his vigilance he could not catch hold of the thief. He was in a state of helplessness. He was just wondering at the bad time he was passing through. He thought why God is putting me to this tough test. As of my knowledge I have not knowingly or unknowingly hurt anyone. Still some unidentified person is stealing and destroying the garden which is exclusively meant for Lord Venkateswara. Whom shall I approach for help. Is there any way out or not. Finally he appealed to God to come to his rescue. He prayed: 'Oh! Srinivasa though

not me, at least you could have caught hold of that wicked thief'. He was almost in tears.

As every body knows Lord Venkateswara is one God who is within the reach of His devotees. He listens to the prayers of His devotees and helps them. Lord Venkateswara decided to bring to the notice of one and all how sincerely and devotedly Ananthacharyulu is offering his floral service to him. On the ninth day night also Ananthacharya came to the garden to catch the thief. It was midnight, Ananthacharya heard some movement among thickly grown Tulasi plants. With wide open ears and eyes, he slowly moved towards the Tulasi bush. He could notice two persons. Seeing them he came to conclusion that they are young couple. Slowly he realized one is male and another is female. They were holding each other's hand. He understood that Both are very delicate persons. He was carried away by Their brilliant lustrous form. Fragrant smell was radiating from Their body. He thought They may be a kingly couple. May be to spend some romantic time They would have selected this garden. He came to his senses soon. He thought what if they belong to a royal family. Because of Their act They are, for all practical purposes only thieves. They are wicked couple as They have destroyed the garden exclusively meant for my Lord Sri Venkateswara. I should not spare them. I will have to give a good dressing down. With this in his mind he jumped between Them. With his two arms around Them he could hold Them in his grip firmly. They were two, where as he was only one. The

youngster some how succeeded in releasing Himself from the steel grip of Ananthacharya. But poor Young Girl could not free Herself. Instead of worrying about the youngster who could manage to escape Ananthacharya was content with his catch. He started asking that young woman some pertinent questions. Who are you! Are you celestial beings or human beings ? Do you belong to any royal family ? You are hypocrites that I know for sure! Are you not ashamed over your act of destroying my garden. What made you to select my garden for romance. Why you have preferred the flowers of my garden for your love play. You have committed a great sin. The flowers are meant for the spouse of Lord Venkateswara i.e., Sri Maha Lakshmi. But you see what you have done, you have plucked them. Not only that you have smelled them. After smelling you have crushed them. You have nipped the buds, cut the branches. You cannot be excused for this sin. Let me hold you as my prisoner. I am sure your husband will come here to rescue you. Each and every husband will try to release his spouse from the clutches of his enemies. Don't think I will let you go. With these words he took that young woman and tied her down against a tree with champaka creeper.

Helpless young lady started pleading with Ananthacharya. She said 'Sir, I am like your daughter. Please leave me. I appealed to My husband not to enter this garden. But He turned a deaf ear. He said look this is a beautiful garden. Let Us spend Our quality time. We married woman you know cannot turn down the

orders of the husband. You being an elderly person know these things very well. How can I know where My husband has gone and where He stays. He is a big deceiver. It is not very easy to catch Him. Right from the day I got married to Him I have been observing Him. He is a deceitful person. You see what He has done now. He has left Me to My fate. I don't think He will come back. Father, be kind and merciful. Leave Me. I will go away from this place'. The young lady pleaded with folded hands. Ananthacharya did not budge even an inch from his stand.

After tying Her with a strong creeper against a tree Ananthacharya left that place. He went out of the garden in search of that young man. At one place Ananthacharyulu spotted Him. Seeing Ananthacharyulu menacingly approaching Him the young man started running. He ran towards the southern street. Ananthacharyulu chased that young man who was running in an anticlock wise direction around the temple. He covered the entire area of the temple and disappeared near the garden. Even Ananthacharyulu in his desperate attempt to catch that young fellow reached the garden. Seeing Ananthacharyulu the young lady once again appealed to him to show some mercy. He did not oblige Her. He simply said wait till dawn. As he was dog tired he slept for a while.

As usual early in the morning the priest opened the doors of Sanctum Sanctorum to wake up the Lord. They looked at the Chief Idol. They were shocked. They could not find golden picture (Pratima) of Sri Maha Lakshmi

near Lord's Chest. To relieve the Archakas from the shock Lord Venkateswara told them not to worry. He further said 'Alamelu Manga has been tied down against a tree by Ananthacharya. Please go over there and bring Her back with all temple honours'. With temple paraphernalia priests went to Ananthacharyulu's garden. They conveyed Lord Venkateswara's wish. They praised Ananthacharyulu. They said: 'Oh! Ananthacharya you are a lucky person. Being a great devotee of Lord Venkateswara and Alamelumanga, you have tied Her down to a tree'. After listening to priests Ananthacharyulu realized his mistake. Immediately he prostrated before Alamelumanga and requested Her to pardon him. He requested Her to sit in a basket and he carried that basket to the Sanctum Sanctorum. Seeing Ananthacharyulu carrying Mahalakshmi, Sri Venkateswara addressed him as Mama (Father-in-law). Lord further continued saying that in a traditional way you are offering your beloved daughter Sri Mahalakshmi to Me as My wife. People assembled there, saw Sri Mahalakshmi taking Her designated place. Lord felicitated Ananthacharyulu with new set of clothes and Thamboolam.

Just to commemorate this memorable occasion or event even to this day i.e., during Brahmotsavams in the Kanya Masam of Solar calendar a day after Dhvajarohanam, a ceremony by name Sri Vari Bagh (Garden) utsavam is celebrated. During this utsavam the utsava idol of Lord Venkateswara will be taken in an anti clockwise direction around the temple. This is also

known as 'Pursai Thota Utsavam'. 'Pursai' in Tamil gives the meaning of 'purusha' or Man. The title 'purushai' was confirmed by the Bhagawad Ramanujacharya when Ananthacharyulu came forward to go and serve Lord Venkateswara with flowers. On this day only Lord Venkateswara moving in an anti clockwise direction reaches the garden maintained by Ananthacharyulu. There the Lord will be offered poojas. After the regular poojas the garland worn by the Lord will be placed on the Ananthacharyulu's Brindavanam i.e., the place where Ananthacharyulu's body was laid to rest. There stands a Vakula tree, to day. After this, the Utsava Idol is taken out of the garden. When the Idol comes out of the garden the 'sattari' a cup like vessel bearing Lord's Sandals will be gently sprinkled. Then the Idol will proceed to Ananda Nilaya in an anti clockwise direction. The priest conducts the ceremony of offering garland to Brindavanam and keeping the sattari in an inclined position on Brindavanam. Then he goes straight to Swamy Pushkarini. He will take bath and then enter into the temple to conduct poojas.

Similarly, on every solar year during the month Adi (i.e., karkataka month which starts on Ashadha Bahula Prathama and continue till the Sravana Shukla Poornima) under the star poorva phalguni a utsavam by name "Thiruvai" pooram is organized on this day. The utsava idols of Sri Varu along with His two Consorts Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi will be taken in procession. This procession around the temple will move in clockwise direction. The procession will reach Ananthacharyulu's garden. There Sri Varu will receive all

traditional poojas. After the poojas Sri Vari's garland will adore the Vakalu tree which has grown on the land where Ananthacharyulu's mortal body was laid to rest. As usual the Sattari will come into contact with that tree and then Sri Varu with His two Consorts reaches Ananda Nilaya. It is believed that in the month of Adi (Tamil month) under the star poorva phalguni Ananthacharyulu breathed his last. There is one more happy coincidence. It happens to be the birthday of Goda Devi who is popularly known as Andal. After performing the poojas to Ananthacharyulu's Brindavan's Vakula Vriksha the priest takes bath in Pushkarini and enters into the temple to continue further poojas.

Ananthacharyulu was younger to his guru Sri Ramanuja by 36 years. It is believed that he was born in 1053 A.D. and lived for 84 years. After serving Sri Varu for a longer period, Sri Ananthacharyulu breathed his last in vicinity of Sri Varu. Sri Varu had played pranks with Ananthacharyulu not once but number of times. We cannot know how many times Sri Varu would have had fun with him.

Ananthacharyulu had initiated one particular service known as 'Yamunottarai' pushpa kainkaryam. Even to this day T.T.D.'s department of horticulture is religiously observing this festival. Ananthacharyulu had started this particular service in memory of his guru Sri Ramanujacharya. The continuation of this particular service proves the fact that to Lord of Ananda Nilaya His devotees are very very dear.

The dwelling place at Ananthacharyulu is well preserved within the precincts of Ananda Nilaya. It is towards south east direction on the path of circumambulation. There is a garden abutting this house. Towards south of this garden i.e., by the side of present day Vykunttam complex there is a tank. We can have look at this garden and the tank. This tank was dug by Ananthacharyulu along with his wife. This tank is known as Ananthacharyula tank. The cottages are also known as Ananthacharyulu tank cottages (ATC). The tank water is now being used for the general usage of pilgrims.

On the rampants of Ananthacharyulu's house and the mandapam, there in the garden, we can find stone carvings of Ananthavar, his spouse, son and other servants. There is one well with steps to step down opposite to his house. Ananthavar used to draw water from this well for his daily needs.

The place where his mortal body was laid to rest, there is one Brindavanam (tomb). A vakula vriksha (tree) has come up at that place. Even now this tree can be seen.

As if Ananthavar had expressed his last wish to a tree or creeper or bird on the table land a Vakula tree has come from the tomb. From that day onwards, considering the Vakula tree as the incarnation of Ananthavar, temple priests are offering poojas to this tree. Of late in the place of dried up Vakula tree a big banyan tree is coming up.

Every year twice Lord Venkateswara visits this garden. A day after Brahmotsavams Lord comes to this garden in an anti clockwise direction and offers His felicitation to the tomb. This is known as Bagh Savari. On Samadhi day of Ananthavar, which also happens to be the birthday of Goda Devi (who is popularly known as Andalu) too, Lord Venkateswara arrives in clock wise direction along with His two Consorts and reaches the stone mandapam and offers a gift and respects to Ananthavar before returning to Ananda Nilaya. Even on the days when special poojas are offered to Lord Srinivasa, while circumambulating the path the procession stops at Ananthavar's house and proceeds further after receiving Harati. Lord Venkateswara immensely loves to receive Harati at the door step of Ananthavar's house. This tradition continues even today. The descendants of Ananthavar now perform this Harati.

Without knowing who actually the boy was who had come to help them while they were digging the tank Ananthacharyulu had hurt the chin of Lord Venkateswara. Lord Venkateswara took that sportively. He had asked the priests to cover the scar with crude camphor. Even to this day He is proudly sporting the scar to His devotees. He feels that He is further beautified with crude camphor covering the scar. Even the iron crowbar which was responsible for the scar on the chin, is immortalized. This can be found inside the doors of 'Padikavali'. It is hung to the wall. All devotees

either while entering into the temple or while going out of the Maha Dwaram can see the iron crow bar that was used by Ananthacharyulu. While alive the only duty of Ananthacharyulu was to prepare colourful garlands which can adore the Chief Idol of Lord Venkateswara. Apart from being a very good gardener Sri Ananthacharyulu was considered to be a great scholar of Sanskrit and Dravidian languages. He had written poetry in Sanskrit praising Lord Venkateswara.

***Haimordhwa Pundra Majahanmakutam***

***Sunaasam***

***Mandasmitham Makara Kundalachaarugandham***

***Bimbaadharam Bahula Deergha Kripa***

***Kataaksham***

***Sri Venkatesa Mukhamaatmani Sannidhattaam***

He (Lord Venkateswara) has a white upright mark on the forehead (Namam), a majestic crown, chistled nose, enchanting smile, rosy shining cheeks, bimba like glossy scarlet coloured lips, bright eyes showering mercy through the corners. Let this attractive form of Lord Venkateswara ever dwell in my heart. This particular prayer in Sanskrit holds a mirror for his poetic talent. Apart from this he has also penned 'Sri Venkatachala Itihasa Mala' in Sanskrit. This book has been rendered into Telugu by Sri N.C.V. Narasimha Acharyulu. It has undergone number of reprints. This dear desciple of Bhagawad Ramanuja and a staunch devotee of Lord Venkateswara, because his dedication

to the temple service, has become an inseperable part of temple history.

During the days when Ananthacharyulu dug a well and raised a beautifully colourful enviable garden of fragrent flowers, his Guru Bhagawad Ramanuja had come to Tirumala to serve Lord Venkateswara. It is said he climbed the hill with his knees. Bhagawad Ramanuja had personally seen how sincerely he was serving the Lord by offering Him beautiful garlands. He had profusely praised the dedication of Anantha charyulu. He had showered His blessings on Ananthacharyulu. One more interesting thing too happened then. On the specific request of Ananthacharyulu Bagawad Ramanuja had embraced His statue and presented that statue to Ananthacharyulu as his replica (symbol). Afterwards Ananthacharyulu installed the same statue right opposite to Hundi. The sattari (i.e., an upside down brass vessel having the insignia of Lord's feet) has Bhagwad Ramanuja's feet as insignia. Ananthacharyulu gave his own name to it. The garden which he had developed with fond devotion, was christened as Ramanuja Nandana Vanam. He was a worthy desciple of great Bhagawad Ramanuja.

Apart from Sri Venkatachala Itihasa Mala, two more works are also penned by him. They are "Sri Ramanuja Chatussloki and Sri Gode Chatussloki". In coming pages we will come to know more about the attractively beautiful form of Ramanuja and his memorable services to the Lord.

People may have a billion dollars worth doubt. They may even try to debate over the issue, who is a great devotee? devotees like emperor Thondaman, Potter Bhima the Kuruva Nambi, Tirumala Nambi, Ananthacharyulu etc., are great or Lord Venkateswara, who danced to the tunes of His devotees forgetting the fact that He is God and His devotees are mere human beings, is great. No one can solve this problem. The ways of God cannot be understood by mortal beings like us. God is beyond our perception, imagination and even thinking. The great devotee of Lord Venkateswara Tallapaka Annamacharyulu who is considered to be an incarnation of Lord's Nandaka Sword has sung the greatness of Lord Venkateswara thus: 'Oh! God Venkateswara who can understand Your greatness? Even Brahma and Maheswara have failed to understand You. This being the reality how can ordinary human beings understand You. People had an idea about Your greatness when You Lord Venkateswara addressed Tirumala Nambi as 'Thatha' the grand father. When You received mud flowers offered by Kuruva Nambi people could understand what makes You happy. People could know Your acting talents when You carried the basket full of excavated earth. We came to know the easy way You started earning money by granting a boon for one coin (Gold or silver or copper) near Garuda Gambham. When You gave wealth to emperor Thondaman Your generosity came to lime light'.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **GOVINDA**

Lord of seven hills has so many names. You take any name of your choice, He will answer your prayers. But of all the names that He has, He loves and prefers to be addressed as Govinda. When somebody addresses Him by His favourite name He becomes nostalgic. He travels down the memory lane and remembers fondly His childhood days and childhood friends. It is said that of all the duties He had discharged during the Dwapara Yuga He immensely likes to be called as "Aalakaapari" or "Pasula Kaapari" i.e., Gopalak or cowheard. When a devotee addresses Him as Govinda, that word transforms Him to a different world. The word to Him is sweeter than the chanting of Veda Mantras. More than veda mantras He prefers the sweet enchanting, mesmerising music that comes out from a flute. He is known as "Venu Gana Vilola". To him the name Govinda is as dear as calf's moo or cow's lowing. He likes the name because it is as sweet as ripple of Yamuna. He will remember those carefree days when He used to swim in Yamuna along with His other friends. He further remembers the taste of cold rice (yesterday's left over rice to be eaten in the morning) and hot pickles. He will further remember the butter balls He had eaten. When we address Him as Govinda He will rush to our help. He remembers those incidents. Responding to S.O.S. calls from people, He had helped them by killing demons by name Vatsa Asura, Sakatasura, Dhenkasura etc., He will recall how He had protected cowherds and the cattle from the poisonous bite of Kalinga Sarpa.

Tallapaka Annamacharya knows the mind and heart of Lord Venkateswara. He says to his mind, 'Oh! Mind you repeat the name Govinda mentally as well as orally'.

Lord Vishnu has taken many forms. He has taken the forms of Matsya, Koorma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parasurama, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Kalki. etc., Of all the names and forms God likes the form Gopala. In this Avatara He was in the midst of common people. He could understand aims, aspirations and happiness of a common man. From that Avatara onwards even to this day He has been rushing to help those who are badly in need of help and support.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

Lord Venkateswara even to this day has not forgotten His old habit of drinking cows milk, eating butter and relishing thick curd rice. Every day morning after getting up from the bed He drinks cows milk. He is given fresh butter. After that, curd rice is also offered to Him. By relishing the aforesaid things He is making all His devotees very very happy. One more old habit, which shows how much He loves His old devotees cum friends, is also in vogue. Even before Celestial beings like Brahma and other could have the holy darshan of the Lord, even before the priests start morning poojas, one cowherd boy will enter into Sanctum Sanctorum and will have the first darshan of Govinda. This is a old tradition being continued even today. The descendants of that cowherd boy will have the privilege of the first darshan till the end of this Kaliyuga. Now people may

be eager to know who that fortunate shepherd devotee is. We will know in the following page.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

### **FIRST DARSHAN**

Every day early morning to recite Suprabhatam temple priests stand before the closed golden doors. The descendants of Tallapaka Annamaiah will also join to wake up Lord Venkateswara by singing songs composed by Tallapaka Annamacharya. Administrative staff members and others assemble before the closed doors of Ananda Nilaya. They will all wait for the arrival of a cowherd. He is known as 'Sannidhi Golla' i.e., temple shepherd. After arriving there, Sannidhi Golla will open the golden doors partially with a torch in his hand. After opening it, he first enters into the temple. The priests and the other staff follow the Sannidhi Golla. The golden doors are closed soon after the entry of everyone including the Sannidhi Golla. Then the priests start singing Suprabhatam. While the suprabhatam is going on Sannidhi Golla will have the days first darshan. From time immemorial Sannidhi Golla is enjoying the privilege of having the first darshan of the day. The legend says that the Sannidhi Golla was the first person to have the darshan of Lord Venkateswara when He appeared on the hills of Tirumala after leaving His permanent abode Vykuntta. Lord Venkateswara blessed the cowherd or shepherd and granted Him a boon. The descendants of that shepherd too have the exclusive



right of having the first darshan of Lord till the end of Kaliyuga.

Now, Let us know in detail about the first darshan:

### **THE GOD WHO BEGAN TO DWELL IN AN ANT HILL**

There are only two places where Sri Mahavishnu loves to stay. One is, as everybody knows, Vykunttam and the other place is Venkatachala Kshethram which is considered to be the Vykunttam on earth.

Sri Vykunttam, it is believed, is a perfectly peaceful divine place. Here Sri Vishnu dwells with His two Consorts Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi. Lord Mahavishnu tranquilly rests on sesha Serpent bed. Only Celestial beings like Brahma, Saints like Sanaka Sananda, and divine rishis like Narada can only meet Him in Sri Vykunttam. At times Sri Mahavishnu used to descend to Sri Venkatachala Kshethra and roam like a personification of kindness. Only pious rishis could see Him. But most of the time He was not visible to the naked eyes. This reveals the fact that Sri Venkatachala Kshethram is as divinely holy as Vykunttam itself.

Once Bhrugu along with the other rishis performed a Yagna. They were in search of a divine celebrity to whom they can offer the fruits of Yagna. Bhrugu visited Brahma and Siva. He felt that they do not deserve the divine offering. At the end Bhrugu visited Vykunttam. As Lord Vishnu was in the company of Sri Maha Lakshmi, He did not notice saint Bhrugu's arrival.

Fuming with anger saint Bhrugu kicks Lord Vishnu's Chest portion. Even after being kicked by Bhrugu, Sri Vishnu did not loose His cool, Instead He honours him. Bhrugu decided to offer the fruits of Yagna to Sri Maha Vishnu and left that place. Chest is the place where Sri Maha Lakshmi stays. Bhrugu has kicked that place. Instead of becoming angry Sri Mahavishnu has honoured Bhrugu. Sri Maha Lakshmi did not approve this particular behaviour of Her husband. Sulky Maha Lakshmi to register Her unhappiness left Vykunttam. She comes down to earth and settles down in Kolhapur of Modern Maharashtra. Sri Mahavishnu, who could not bear the pangs of separation comes to earth in search of His beloved Consort Sri Maha Lakshmi. He could not find Her. Being dog tired He comes to Sri Venkatachala Kshethra. He finds an Anthill under a big Tamarind tree which was on southern bank of Pushkarini. He was thirsty and terribly hungry. Brahma and Siva together go to Sri Maha Lakshmi who was staying in Kolhapur and explain to Her about the pathetic condition of Sri Maha Vishnu. Sri Maha Lakshmi turns down the request of Brahma and Siva. Finally She agrees to quench His thirst and hunger.

As per their mutual understanding Brahma and Shiva assume the form of cow and calf respectively. Lakshmi becomes Shepherd woman. They together reach Sri Venkatachala Kshethra. In those days this area was under the rule of Chola kings. Lakshmi goes to the court of Chola kings and convinces him by saying that

this cow and calf are not ordinary cow and calf. They can only adore the cattle shed of king like you. After selling them She leaves that place. From that day onwards, king's cowherd took them for grazing along with the other cattle. The cow after reaching the grazing field stealthily used to reach the anthill where Lord Vishnu was staying. From a convenient place the cow used to empty its udder. Lord Vishnu who was in the ant hill used to have milk to His heart's contentment. After emptying its udder the cow used to join other cows and together with other cows or cattle it used to reach king's cattle shed. The queen wanted to give this new cow's milk to the prince. She ordered the cowherd to milk that particular cow which was recently added to the king's cattle. The cowherd tried to milk that cow. The cow was not at all yielding any milk. The queen was angry. She reported the matter to the king. This continued for two or three days. The king thought that the cowherd himself is consuming the milk given by the cow. The cowherd was beaten to pulp. Unable to bear the pain the cowherd appealed to king saying that 'Oh! King, don't kill me. I am innocent. Give me a day's time. I will find out why the cow is not giving milk'. The Chola king took pity on him. He said 'O.K. I will give a day's time. By tomorrow either you milk that cow or you have to tell me why it is not giving milk. If either of these things do not happen by tomorrow you will be killed'.

Next day as usual he took the cattle for grazing. He was carefully watching each and every movement

of the cow. He in his heart of hearts praised its divine appearance. He offered his prayers to it. He said if you do not give milk today the king will give me severe punishment. I may be beheaded. Absorbed in these thoughts he was watching the cow. To his shock and surprise he saw the cow moving away from the other cattle. He covered his body and face with a black blanket and followed it. He had an axe in his hand. After crossing the hills and valleys it reached the Pushkarini area. It went up to a convenient point and started emptying its udder. The cowherd had followed the cow's track. Now the cowherd could put two and two together. He came to know the reason why the cow is not giving any milk. He thought this cow eats in the king's cattle shed and drops milk in the ant hill, Is it nourishing the king of all snakes or is it somebody who is doing penance in the ant hill, drinking the milk. Finally he decided, I am not bothered who the person is in that ant hill. I will have to punish the cow. He approached the cow on his tip toes. He raised his axe. The axe in the air was about to hit the neck of the cow. The cow sensing trouble suddenly ran from that place. Seeing that cow is not dropping milk Lord Vishnu at that time rose from the ant hill. The axe which was aimed at the cow hit the forehead of Lord Vishnu. It could make a deep cut. Blood began to flow continuously from the forehead of Lord Vishnu. The cowherd was taken back to see a Divine Person coming out of the ant hill. He saw the blood coming out of the wound. He realized his mistake. He requested the Divine Person i.e., Lord

Vishnu to pardon him. Due to shock he fell down and breathed his lost.

Seeing the cowherd falling down the cow ran to the palace. It stood before the king with eyes full of tears. It started lowing pathetically. King could understand that something terrible has happened. He followed the cow. The cow led the king to Pushkarini. He saw the dead body of the cowherd. Sensing some commotion Lord Vishnu came out and started cursing. Lord Vishnu said: You have committed a terrible sin. You have to undergo a severe punishment for the sin you have committed. Seeing a Divine Person before him, the king with folded hands said 'Oh! Lord I have not committed any sin'. Lord Srinivasa said: 'you have asked your servants to whip this innocent cowherd. For the sake of cows milk you have even pronounced death sentence. Due to fear of death and to save himself he tried to hit the cow with his axe. The cow escaped, but you see I have been hit by the axe. Seeing the unexpected thing that has happened he has died because of shock. The king is responsible to all sins committed by his subjects. So you have to bear the brunt. May you become a ghost. This is my curse'. The chola king slowly gathered his strength and appealed thus : 'Oh! Lord: who ever gets a chance to see You, will be free from all sins. You are a all Merciful Lord. Being a kind and generous hearted God, how come You are cursing me'. Lord Srinivasa, to whom His devotees are very dear said: 'Oh! King don't worry, very soon Akasa Raju will give his daughter Padmavathi in marriage to me.

He will offer a golden crown to me. You will assume your human form as soon as the crown offered by Akasa Raju adores My Head'. Soon after this assurance the Chola king became a ghost and left that place.

After blessing the Chola king Lord Srinivasa turned towards the family members of the dead cowherd. He gave a boon to them. He said from today till the Kali yuga comes to an end the descendants of the dead cowherd will have first darshan in the morning. After him only the others will have darshan and priests will perform the Nitya Pooja i.e., daily Poojas. From that day onwards even to this day only the descendants of that cowherd are having the first darshan in the morning that too even before the chanting of Suprabhata Seva.

The cow which fed Lord Srinivasa, Who was in the ant hill, by emptying its udder is known as "Gouthami Dhenuvu". These things are recorded in a book by name "Sri Vari Kainkarya Ratnavali". Even to this day when Lord Venkateswara gets up from the bed, He takes cows milk first. This particular deed makes us to remember about the cow's feeding. Similarly to Brahma who took the form of a cow to feed him. Lord Srinivasa has granted the first opportunity to have His darshan even before the golden doors are opened.

We have come to know about the calf which followed the cow. Lord Shiva had assumed the form of a calf. To express His gratitude Lord Srinivasa has made Lord Siva as the Kshethra Palaka.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

**SANNIDHI GOLLA****(The Temple Shepherd or Cowherd)**

We have come to know that Lord Srinivasa had granted an unique boon to the descendants of the cowherd, who died of shock and fear. His descendant is known as Sannidhi Golla. He gets up daily at about 2.30 a.m. After morning ablutions with religious markings on his forehead and a torch (they call it Pounju) in his hand walks upto the chief priests house. After offering his salutations to him the Sannidhi Golla humbly invites the priest to the temple.

**PRIESTS OF THE LORD**

By the time the Sannidhi Golla calls on the chief or designated priest, at least two of them would be ready to follow him. They would have got up at 2.00 a.m. after finishing ablutions, they would have even completed morning Sandhya Vandanam. With 12 religious marks on their person they will carry with them a crooked pole which serves the purpose of gate opener (KUNCHAKOLA in Telugu) on their shoulder. They will also take along with them the temple keys. While walking with the Sannidhi Golla they will not talk to each other. They will be silently chanting the holy name of Lord Venkateswara.

The Sannidhi Golla will guide the priests to the main entrance. He will see that no body touches them. He will be uttering “Give way to Archaka Swamys who are going to perform poojas to Lord Venkateswara”.

The priests on their way to the temple mentally worship and circumambulate Sri Bhoo Varaha Swamy's tower. When the priests reach main entrance, drums will be beaten announcing the arrival of priests and the Sannidhi Golla. These drums are situated on the upstairs of a building which is right opposite to main entrance (on the southern side). After the drums are beaten or bell is rung the main door will be opened. The temple staff will provide a safe passage to priests who are led by Sannidhi Golla. They (priests) pay their respects to the divine guards of the main door by chanting Veda Mantras and then enter into the temple. Then the priests reach the Dhvajasthambham and Kshethra Palakasila (Rudra). The priests will see that door opener pole and keys will gently come into contact with Dhwaja sthambham and Kshethra Palakasila. They will prostrate before Bali Peetham of Dhvajasthambham and directly go to silver doors (Nadimi padikavali the name for the middle door in Telugu) in a clock wise direction and reach the golden door chanting the holy name of God mentally.

**JEEYANGARS**

Sannidhi Golla then requests the priests to wait near the golden doors. He will then proceed to Sri Pedda (senior or big) Jeeyangar's matt which is adjacent to Sri Bedi Anjaneya Swamy temple. Even before the arrival of Sannidhi Golla Jeeyangar would have finished his morning Anushtanam (an observance of religious ceremonies) and will be ready with his attendant, a

servant by name Ekangi. Sannidhi Golla will invite them to follow him to the golden doors.

### **PESHKAR**

By this time temple officer Peshkar would have joined others.

### **TEACHERS CHANTING SUPRABHATAM**

Three or four teachers, who recite Sri Venkateswara Suprabhatam at that holy hour, would have by that time arrived there to recite Suprabhatam.

### **MATIN SONG SINGERS**

Traditionally a descendant of Tallapaka Annamacharya, (who is considered to be an intimate devotee of Lord Venkateswara) will have an opportunity to sing Matin songs composed by their ancestor. He too would have reached the golden door by that time to sing a Matin with a Tambourine in his hand .

### **DEVOTEES**

Devotees who would have paid the fixed fees to witness Suprabhata Seva will be allowed to enter the temple through Vykunttam 'Q'. All the men folk will stand on southern side of golden door. The women folk will be standing on the northern side of golden door.

### **KEYS OF GOLDEN DOORS**

Once all the designated people i.e., the Priests, Jeeyangar, Temple officers, Vedic Scholars, descendants of Tallapaka Annamacharya, the devotees who would

have paid the fixed entrance fee, are gathered with Sannidhi Golla in the lead, the priests with the help of 'Kunchakola' (door opening pole) will tactfully unbolt the closed door from inside by inserting it through an opening. This technique of opening the bolt from inside is known only to priests. After that with the keys they have in their possession unlock the big lock. After unlocking the lock of golden door the priests will step aside.

This will be followed by unlocking of three locks of the door by the Sannidhi Golla. After main lock is unlocked, the Sannidhi Golla will walk up to Peshkar and collect a sealed bag containing keys. In the presence of each and everyone Sannidhi Golla will open the seal of the bag and take out three keys. After examining closely the sealed locks he will unseal them one after the other and open the locks one by one. He opens the three locks in the august presence of Priests, Jeeyangar and the Temple Officer. If one of them is not present neither the golden door will be opened nor closed.

Soon after unlocking the three locks of Golden doors, Sannidhi Golla gently opens the door with a torch in his hand. He steps into main temple. As he enters, the priests start singing Suprabhatham's first sloka.

"Kousalya Supraja Rama, Poorva Sandhya Pravarthathe, Uttishta Nara Sardhoola Kartavyam Daiva Mahnikam" and follow the Sannidhi Golla. The priests will receive the plate containing fresh cows milk, sugar, butter, tamboolam etc., from either Jeeyangar's

Ekangi or from the people of Mahanthu Matt. Soon after receiving the plate, the golden door will be closed. The teachers who are there to recite Suprabhatham start chanting Suprabhatham loudly. Simultaneously the descendant of Annamacharya standing by the side of golden door starts singing Matin song.

As soon as Sannidhi Golla, Priests, Ekangi one after another enter into the temple, the golden doors will be kept ajar. With torch in hand the Sannidhi Golla will lead the priests upto the Sanctum Sanctorum. The Priests will then open the locks of Ramulavari Meda (Rama's house) and go around the bedroom bed where Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy is sleeping, in a clockwise direction and then finally enter into Sanctum Sanctorum.

Sannidhi Golla standing near Kulasekhar Padi (step) will have first darshan of Lord Govinda by directing the torch light towards the Chief Idol which has its own glow. He will have darshan to his hearts contentment. When the Sannidhi Golla comes very near to the Sanctum Sanctorum, the Ekangi will pick up the torch from the hand of Sannidhi Golla. After lighting the lamps with the help of the torch he will promptly return that torch to Sannidhi Golla. After the lights are lit in the Sanctum Sanctorum Sannidhi Golla will light all the lamps of the area i.e., from Kulasekhara Padi upto Golden door.

When all the lamps are lit, then priests proceed upto the Lotus Feet of Lord Venkateswara. They will reverentially touch the feet and then bow before them.

After worshipping the Lotus Feet of Lord Venkateswara the priests will proceed to Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy's bed chamber. After bowing there, they will wake up Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy by gently clapping their hands. Once Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy wakes up, then he is invited near the Lotus Feet which is considered to be a Jeevasthanam (Spiritual place of life). After serving the Lotus Feet and offering Mangala Harati they will verify whether all the ornaments are intact or not. This inspection is known as 'Sabooth'.

### **KSHEERA NIVEDANAM**

#### **(Offering milk to Lord)**

After completing the inspection called sabooth, the priest will walk up to Kulasekhara Padi (step) and bring down a curtain. Archakas (priests) will perform morning ablutions like brushing the teeth, cleaning the tongue with tongue cleaner, sipping water (Achamanam) etc. After these things, the cow's milk sent by Mahanthu Mattam is offered to God. This will be followed by Harati. After coming to Sri Venkatachala Kshethram from His celestial abode Vykunttam Lord Venkateswara was hiding in an ant hill. Brahma assuming the form of cow by name Gouthami Dhenuvu had emptied the udder to quench the thirst of the Lord. To commemorate this even to this day cow's milk is offered as first item to Lord Venkateswara. The priests then take that offered milk first and then give to Jeeyangar, Ekangi and to Sannidhi Golla. By this time chanting of suprabhatam

and the matin song of Annamacharya by the descendants of Annamacharya would have come to an end. As a mark of the completion of every thing, half closed golden door of Sannidhi will be opened completely. The priests then will offer the butter brought by Mahanthu Mattam to the Lord. They will then perform Harati by burning crude camphor in a golden plate. In the dim light of burning camphor people will have the darshan of bright Lord Venkateswara. After this the holy water offered to Lord by Brahma, sandalwood paste etc., will be received by the priests first and then will be given to Ekangi. He in turn will give Brahma, theertham and sandalwood paste to Sannidhi Golla. Sannidhi Golla will also receive the first Thamboolam kept in a golden plate. Thus the tradition of allowing the descendant of that cowherd who had the opportunity to have the darshan of Lord Venkateswara when He came down to Venkatachala Kshethra, first, continues even today. Blessed are the descendants of Original Sannidhi Golla.

‘Sannidhi Golla’ is a blessed person. He will have the first darshan of Lord Venkateswara, everyday morning. He has the unique honour of leading priests, Jeeyar Swamy, Ekangi and others in the morning. Not only this whenever special poojas are offered to the Lord, he will go to the dwelling place of Vykhanasa priests and devotedly invites them to the temple, apart from leading them to the temple. He offers his service when Thomala seva (offering of garlands) Ekantha seva (solitude service), Paruveta (a festival of hunting) are being conducted.

## **AT THE TIME OF THOMALA SEVA**

### **(Garland offering service)**

Everyday the service of garlanding the Lord, takes place twice. Thomala literary meaning is garlands prepared out of Tulasi. Offering of these garlands to Lord Venkateswara is called Thomala seva. The word ‘Thol’ means shoulder, in Tamil. ‘Mala’ means garlands. ‘Thomala’ means the garland that adores shoulder. Tulasi garlands are offered twice, morning as well as evening in a day, everyday. There is a store room by name ‘Yamunottarai’. Here the garlands are kept after preparing them. Garlands of different sizes will be made as per available seasonal flowers and will be kept ready for Lord’s use. They are preserved in a thin bamboo basket.

After the garlands are prepared and kept ready for use in a bamboo basket, Vaishnav Jeeyangar or his representative will reach ‘Yamunottara room’ to take them. At that time, Sannidhi Golla will arrive with a torch in his hand and humbly invites Jeeyangar or his assistant Ekangi to follow him to the temple. As requested by the Sannidhi Golla, Ekangi will carry the bamboo basket containing garlands and follows him. Sannidhi Golla will be asking people to give way to him as well as those who are following him. As he walks, traditional music will be played by the temple musicians in the midst of drum beats. With temple paraphernalia accompanying, the party will go round the Dhawaja sthambham in a clockwise direction and will enter the

Nadimi Padikavali i.e., silver door which is inside. After circumambulating the Vimana, the things are taken to the Sannidhi. The music and paraphernalia stops near golden door. Only Sannidhi Golla with a torch in hand proceeds further. Ekangi then enters into Sanctum Sanctorum through golden door with the basket containing garlands. He will keep them in the Sanctum Sanctorum. Sannidhi Golla stops near Kulasekhara Padi. But Ekangi alone will enter into Sanctum Sanctorum to offer garlands. Thus twice in a day - morning as well as evening - Sannidhi Golla with torch in his hand will go to Yamunottarai room to invite Ekangi. Ekangi who follows Sannidhi Golla will enter into Sanctum Sanctorum with a basket full of garlands and personally offers them to Lord Srinivasa.

### **EKANTHA SEVA**

#### **(At the time of solitary service)**

Every night, bed time service is offered to Lord Venkateswara. When it is bed time in the night the Idol of Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy which will be kept adjacent to the Chief Idol's feet will be taken to the bedroom which is on the otherside of Kulasekhara padi. There, on the hung broad taped wooden cot Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy is made to sleep. Silver chains will be holding this hung wooden cot.

When Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy goes to bed Sannidhi Golla will approach the hanging cot and light two lamps which will be seen before the cot with his torch and silently slips out of Lord's bed room. The

Sannidhi Golla is a lucky man. He enjoys the privilege of lighting two bed lamps kept before the cot, every night.

By accepting cow's milk and fresh butter offered to Him every day morning, Lord Venkateswara is heralding to the world at large that He is no other than Govinda of Dwapara Yuga. On every Thursday He appears in the simple robes of a cowherd. It is known as Nethra Darshanam. He will be in His simplest attire. He will have a thin and vertical line i.e., namam on His forehead. Attractive crude camphor paste on His chin. This will serve as if it is there to caste of evil eyes. He will have a white turban on His Head. The black body with a broad smile on His face will be apple of every devotees' eye. Seeing the attire and simple looks people call Him Gopala Veshadhari (God in the guise of cowherd).

Everyday morning 1008 names of Lord Venkateswara are chanted. Similarly in poojas that are performed in the afternoon as well as in the evening 108 names of the Lord are chanted. In these chantings Lord Venkateswara is addressed as the Krishna of Dwapara Yuga:

*Om Devaki Garbha Sambhootaya Namaha*  
*Om Yashodekshna Laalithaaya Namaha*  
*Om Vasudeva Krithasthothraya Namaha*  
*Om Nandagopa Manoharaya Namaha*  
*Om Neelakuntalaya Namaha*  
*Om Poothana Prana Samharthe Namaha*



*Om Thrinavartha Vinasanaya Namaha*  
*Om Gargarohitaaya Namankithaya Namaha*  
*Om Vasudevaya Namaha*  
*Om Gopika Sthanyapayine Namaha*  
*Om Balabhadranujaya Namaha*  
*Om Vatsajithe Namaha*  
*Om Vatsa Varadhanaya Namaha*  
*Om Ksheera Sarasana Rataya Namaha*  
*Om Daddhi Bhanda Pramarddanaya Namaha*  
*Om Navaneethapa Harthare Namaha*  
*Om Vatsantha kaya Namaha*  
*Om Baka Dhveshine Namaha*  
*Om Mahajagara Chandagnaye Namaha*  
*Om Sakata Pranakantakaya Namaha*  
*Om Akroora Sstatuthi Sampreethaye Namaha*  
*Om Kubjjayavvana Dayakaya Namaha*  
*Om Krishnaya Namaha*  
*Om Krishnaa sakhaya Namaha*

All the names mentioned above directly speak about Dwapara yuga's Krishna. During solemnization of his marriage with Padmavathi he introduces himself as Devakiputhra 'younger brother of Balarama and as Krishna'. As he cannot forget his past as Krishna of Dwapara Yuga, even on the day of Gokulashtami i.e., Sri Krishna's birthday he enthusiastically participates in 'Uthla Utsavam' i.e., breaking a hanging pot filled with butter by climbing a greased oily pole on a particular festival day. Even on hunting day festival (paruveta) he dresses himself as Sannidhi Golla.

## PARUVETA (Hunting Festival)

A day after Makara Sankranti, every year, Lord Venkateswara equipped with His Five Traditional Weapons, goes for hunting. There is a separate place towards North of the temple for this purpose. Declaring Himself as Lord Krishna of Dwapara Yuga He arrives here in a Palanquin. After hunting gets over, He goes to near by garden. In this garden at a particular place the descendants of original cowherd, known as Sannidhi Golla will be waiting to offer milk, butter and fruits to Lord Srinivasa. The Lord receives them and in turn felicitates them. Whenever Lord Venkateswara goes on hunting, He will certainly felicitate Sannidhi Golla. Thus the Lord recalls His association with the original cowherd.

## MORE ATTACHED TO DEVOTEES

Lord Venkateswara likes Venkatachala Kshethram more than His Celestial Abode Sri Vykunttam. Everyday thousands of people come to Him and sincerely seek His shelter. They will be longing to have darshan of Lord Srinivasa who is a SANKATA MOCHAN God for them. People from distant places, distant lands come to Him, not minding the difficulties that they may have to undergo for this journey, come to Tirumala as they all firmly believe that He is the only God who can protect them and who can fulfill all their wishes. Lord Venkateswara likes all those who come to Him in large

numbers. He will happily and willingly fulfill all their wishes and makes them happy.

The Chief Idol's right hand by pointing to the two feet says like Krishna of Mahabharatha: 'Give up every thing and come to Me. I am the only go for the humanity'. Whoever surrenders to Him by giving up every thing, as per His promise, He takes care of them. The left hand on the hip says look from time immemorial, I am standing Here in this Tirumala Kshethra to Help and Protect You. Come to Me. I will take care of you. Lord's happiness is in the happiness of His dear devotees. So it is said:

*Vykunttam Naa Parithyakshye Na Bhakthaam  
Sthyakthu Muthsahay*

*Maythi Priya Hi Madbhaktha Iti Sankalpa Vanasi*

"I can better prefer to leave Vykunttam than giving up My devotee. They are more dear to Me and I Am more attached to them". This is My Promise. To keep up His promise He has come to Bhooloka. Since then He is protecting and providing shelter to His devotees tirelessly. Sometimes He becomes one with His devotees. He plays pranks and when the devotees abuse Him He will take it playfully. He will never take it seriously. There are innumerable incidents. Let us know about this particular episode.

Once Lord Venkateswara of Ananda Nilaya came out of His Golden Palace He went to the house of a devotee who was staying in Tirumala. He played the game of dice with him. Once He had extended His

Helping Hand to this devotee when he was going through very bad period of his life. From that day onwards everyday Lord has been relishing cow's milk, butter etc., offered by that devotee in the small hours of the day. After relishing the food sent by him, He allows this devotee even to perform Harati. Here are the details:

### **SRI HATHEE RAM BAVAJI**

In the south west direction of Ananda Nilaya, there is a big beautiful palace on a hillock. This palace is known as Mahanthula Mattam (monastery of Mahanth). Mahanth means a saint or a monk. A saint by name Bavaji had established this Mattam (a monastery). He was a great devotee of Lord Venkateswara. People out of respect used to address him as 'Hathee Ramji or Hathee Ram Bavaji.' Hathee Ramji belonged to the Bhakthi Tradition started by Swamy Ramanandji of North India. He was a great Vaishnavite.

About 500 years back there was a Ramanand Matt in a village called Kredal Krela some 25 miles away from Delhi. A monk by name 'Abhayanandji' was heading the matt. He was known Mahanth of that matt i.e., monastery. Hathee Ramji was his disciple. At the behest of his guru, Hathee Ram Bavaji started visiting holy places. Finally he visited Tirumala Kshethra. Seeing the serenity of the place he selected Tirumala Kshethra for doing penance. He was further attracted by Lord Srinivasa's Grace, Kindness and Benevolence. By that time people used to say that if there is any God in this Kaliyuga, He is Venkata Nayaka (Kalou Venkata

Nayakaha). So he decided to stay back there permanently. This determination made him to establish a monastery on a small hillock very near to Ananda Nilaya. Hathee Ramji was a great devotee of Rama. He thought Lord Venkateswara is no other than Ayodhya Ram and started worshipping Him more devotedly.

Bavaji had a feeling that God is not only dwelling in Ananda Nilaya but also in the hearts of His devotees. He could see God in each and every devotee who came for Lord Venkateswara's darshan. This made him to offer food to pilgrims and saints. Lord Venkateswara was very satisfied with the selfless services rendered to His devotees by the Bavaji. People say Lord Venkateswara used to answer every call of Bavaji. Because of these feelings devotees started visiting Bavaji's monastery after having the darshan of Lord Venkateswara. This became rather a routine to each and every pilgrim. Bavaji became very popular with pilgrims. They started giving first preference to Bavaji. They felt that Bavaji's darshan is as good as Lord Srinivasa's darshan because Lord Srinivasa Himself has special liking for Bavaji.

Every night after Ekantha seva silence used to prevail upon Tirumala Kshethra. When everybody is resting in their respective houses, Lord Venkateswara used to step out of Ananda Nilaya. He will visit Bavaji's monastery and spend some time with Bavaji. They used to play game of dice. The play it seems had even some betting also. During the play they used to have some heated discussions. Whatever be the discussion it is

only Bavaji to the upper hand. May be Lord Venkateswara used to lose the play to make His devotee win. Lord used to derive immense pleasure when His devotee wins and He loses the game. This was a daily routine in the monastery during nights.

The disciples of Bavaji and his followers had a feeling that during nights their Guruji is talking to some one. Sometimes they used to hear the rolling sound of brass dice. But nobody could see Lord Srinivasa. Soon the news of some invisible man playing dice with Bavaji spread like a wild fire. People's esteem doubled as far as Bavaji was concerned. To show their respect to Bavaji people right from commoners to Kings started donating according to their mite. With donations received from one and all Bavaji began to provide tasty food to pilgrims as well as visitors to the matt. He was providing sumptuous food to one and all. But everyday he used to eat one leaf by name "Rama Patram" and used to fast and meditate. People had high regard for Bavaji. They all knew that Bavaji is a favourite devotee of Lord Venkateswara. People became disease free when they had darshan of Bavaji. Their problems were solved by going near to Bavaji. By his touch people received solace. He fed people but never had anything. His name and fame reached nook and corner of the world.

King of Chandragiri once thought of testing the great pious monk Sri Bavaji. He called him and started criticizing him. He said: "People say that you not only converse with Lord Venkateswara but also play game

of dice with him. This is a publicity stunt to collect more and more money from innocent followers. You are cheating people. If what people say is true, then you eat cart load of sugarcane and prove your greatness and spiritual strength. If you fail to prove yourself you will be driven out of Tirumala Kshethra". On that night he ordered many cart loads of sugar cane to be brought. The king locked Bavaji in the cattleshed and left the place. As usual even on that day Lord Venkateswara came to Bavaji. As usual they played the game of dice. While playing with Bavaji He assumed the form of a Giant Elephant and started eating them. People outside the locked cattleshed heard elephant's roaring. Some body peeped through the key hole. They saw a giant elephant. When they opened the door of the cattleshed, they could neither see the elephant nor the cart load of sugarcane. People were taken aback. They got themselves convinced that Bavaji is a great devotee and could do some miracles. Out of respect they began to address him as 'Hathee Ram Bavaji'. In Hindi Hathee means an elephant. Having come to know about the miracle, emperor Giridhar Das felt very happy. He approached saint Hathee Ram Bavaji and prostrated before him. He asked to pardon him and take him as one of his disciples. He became Giridhar Das. He became a Viragi i.e., Bairagi. Some began to address him Bairagi. Disciples of Hathee Ram Bavaji began to call him by the name Viragi emperor, Bairagi emperor. From that day onwards Hathee Ram Bavaji had kingly status. He had crown, throne, palanquin etc. The palaces

belonging to king in Tirupati became the monasteries of Mahanth. Even though Mahanth Hathee Ram Bavaji had no administrative control over temple management he became a prominent person in most of the affairs connected with the temple and its day to day activities. The tradition of offering fresh cow's milk, butter in the morning was introduced from that day onwards. He also started giving crude camphor Harati to the Chief Idol. Even to this day these services like offering fresh cow's milk and butter are being carried out only in the name of Hathee Ram Bavaji. Afterwards because of disciples and their donations, he acquired lands and property. Because of enormous movable and immovable property the monastery acquired the status of kingdom. It has now become a prominent guest house for pilgrims coming from far north and south.

After spending many years in the service of Lord Venkateswara, Mahanth Hathee Ram Bavaji settled down in an Ashram built between Gogarbha Theertham and Akasa Ganga. He started spending his time by observing silence and also doing penance. He used to have some what sweet Rama Patram only as his food. His penance was disturbed because of ever growing number of his devotees. Therefore on a Bahula Thrayodasi day of Aswayuja month, near Homagundam, a fire place of Venugopala Swamy temple which he had himself constructed, attained Jeeva Samadhi. A day before Naraka Chaturdasi in the Aswayuja masa i.e., two days before Deepavali even to this day his death anniversary is celebrated on a grand scale in the

monastery. It is called 'Sri Hathee Ram Bavaji Barsi' (tomb). On that day the Idol of Laddu Gopala Krishna will be taken upto Venugopala Swamy temple which is very near to Akasa Ganga Theertham, in procession. Even to this day T.T.D. provides two big umbrellas, two elephants and also piped music party for this grand procession. There at the Venugopala Swamy temple poojas will be performed on a very grand scale. At the Samadhi apart from Abhishekam even special poojas will be performed. Large number of devotees of Hathee Ram Bavaji, pilgrims, the natives of Tirumala actively participate in this celebration. On the southern side wall of silver door (Nadimi padikavali) entrance we can see a sculpture. This sculpture depicts dice play being played by Hathee Ram Bavaji and Lord Venkateswara. By their side we can also see the sculpture of Giridhar Rayalu (Giridhar Das) the king of Chandragiri interestingly watching the game of dice. Even this sculpture is gold plated. The silver door entrance tower, it is said, was last renovated during the years 1472-1482 A.D. There is one more similar sculpture at the exact point where Hathee Ram Bavaji and Lord Venkateswara played the game of dice. This sculpture is placed on an elevated platform in Mahanth Hathee Ram Bavaji's monastery.

### **NAVANEETHA HARATI**

#### **(Butter Harati)**

Even to this day everyday morning after Sannidhi Golla opens the golden door and lights two lamps, Lord

Venkateswara is offered fresh milk. This will be followed by Harati with butter. These things are conducted on behalf of Hathee Ram Bavaji. The Matt only supplies these things to the temple.

Everyday early morning after finishing the morning ablutions a monk from Hathee Ram Bavaji's matt will carry a plate containing fresh cow's milk, butter and crude camphor. This plate will be covered with a silk cloth. He will carry it to golden door. There he will wait for the arrival of Sannidhi Golla. He will be silently chanting the name of God. Exactly when 'Kousalya Suprajaa Rama' chanting starts Sannidhi Golla along with priests and Ekangi enters into golden door. While entering he will collect the covered plate brought by the representative monk of Sri Hathee Ram Bavaji's matt. The priests will then offer fresh cow's milk and butter to Lord Venkateswara. After these offerings the crude camphor Harati will be performed by the priests. After recitation of Suprabhatam is completed, the theertha prasadam are given to descendants of Annamacharya who sings matin song, Tarigonda Vengamamba and to the monk of Mahanthula Matt respectively. They will also be given sandalwood paste. They will be honoured with Sattari (a vessel containing the image of Lord's feet on the bottom upside down). Not only everyday morning even on festive occasions like Ugadi, Sri Ramanavami, Anivarasthanam (the day on which Sun starts drifting to southern side i.e., Dakshina Ayana, Deepavali, Brahmothsavams, Rathoathsavam etc., also the monk from Hathee Ram

Bavaji's monastery brings fresh cows milk, butter etc., Even on those days Lord Venkateswara after receiving their offerings, honours them.

Every year during 'Paruveta Mahothsavam' i.e., hunting festival, when Lord returns from Paruveta, He will go around the temple in procession. This procession T.T.D. conducts on behalf of Hathee Ram Bavaji's monastery in the name of Mahanth Hathee Ram Bavaji. After the procession the representative of Hathee Ram Bavaji's matt will receive temple honours.

Sri Venugopala Swamy Temple is on the way to Papanasanam. Those who go to Papanasanam can visit Sri Venugopala Swamy temple as well as Sri Hathee Ram Bavaji's Samadhi (tomb). Those who visit the temple and Samadhi will be given 'Rama Patram' the leaf which Hathee Ram Bavaji used to eat. The temple and the Samadhi are in the control of Hathee Ram Bavaji's Matt. Every day poojas are offered here. Hathee Ram Bavaji Matts i.e., monasteries are established in the following places also apart from Tirumala, Tirupathi, Thiruchanur, Chittoor, Vellore, Sholingar, Vriddhachalam, Thanjavur, Madhurai, Nasik, Panchavati, Sugur, Mumbai, Bhagalkot, Gujarat, Ayodhya, Nabha etc. In the monasteries of Tirumala and Tirupati, there are temples dedicated to Sri Rama and Hanuman. We can also see hundres of Salagramas here. On important festive days free food is served to the devotees who come on pilgrimage from North. Particularly Banjaras, Sugalis and many North Indians will visit first Sri Hathee Ram Bavaji Matt and then

only proceed to Ananda Nilaya to have Lord Srinivasa's darshan.

Prior to the arrival of English men, the temples of Tirumala Tirupati were under the kings of Vijayanagara, Chandragiri, Karvetinagaram etc., East India company took over the administration of Tirupati temples in the early part of 19th century. As per Madras State Revenue Board's 7th act of 1817, North Arcot District collector took over the Tirumala Tirupati temple. During that period only the then Government passed on Act. As per that act, the government was prohibited from interfering in the beliefs, temples and religious trusts of the natives. According to this act the then government requested the Maharajas of Mysore and Venkatagiri to take over the temples of Tirumala Tirupati. As the kings of Mysore and Venkatagiri were busy with the administration of their kingdoms, they expressed their inability to take over the administration of Tirumala Tirupati temples. The Sri Vaishnava Peethadhipatis (heads) till then, were having an important role in temple worship. Quoting this particular point both Pedda Jeeyangar (elderly head) and Chinna Jeeyangar (younger head) appealed to the North Arcot collector to handover the temple administration to them. As these heads were totally immersed in conducting daily, weekly, monthly, yearly poojas, the Collector of North Arcot felt they may not administer temple affairs efficiently. Added to that because of two subsects, Thengal (south) and Vadagal (North), they were having differences among themselves. Considering all these

things the collector refused to handover the Tirumala Tirupati Temple's administration to either Pedda Jeeyangar or to Chinna Jeeyangar.

By that time Hathee Ram Bavaji's desciple had established the monasteries in many places. Not only this, they were utilizing their movable and immovable properties for noble causes like providing shelter to pilgrims as well as followers of their matt. Most importantly without any caste or creed they were providing free meals to each and everyone. Though they too were Sri Vaishnavites they never had the division as seen among the local Sri Vaishnavites. Hathee Ram Bavaji Matt people treated both North Indians and South Indians, equally. Considering all these positive points as per the 'SANAD' was handed over to the Hathee Ram Bavaji's matt, the administration of Tirumala Tirupati Temples on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1843.

### **ANIVARA ASTHANAM**

**(16.07.1843)**

At the time of handing over total administration as well as movable and immovable assets including jewellery and other precious things of the temple to the Hathee Ram Bavaji's monastery, Saint Sevasasji was heading the matt. He was appointed as 'Vicharana Kartha' i.e., an inquiry officer. To this effect, necessary orders were passed on 10.07.1843. He took charge on 16.07.1843. That was the first day of Dakshinayana. That day i.e., 16th July 1843 is celebrated as Anivara

Asthanam Day. This is considered to be a very very important day in the history of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam. From 16th July 1843, every year on 16th July, this day is celebrated on a grand scale by T.T.D. On that day the key bunch of the temple will be ceremoniously handed over to Executive Officer of the temple.

From 16.07.1843 the head of the Hathee Ram Bavaji Matt became the Executive Officer of the temple. Mahant Sevasasji was the first Inquiry Officer. He continued in that capacity for 21 long years.

### **SERVICES OF MAHANTHS**

In 1849 i.e., Soumya Nama years, Bhadrpada Suddha Trayodasi, Thursday under Sravana star Mahant Sevasas renovated Swamy Pushkarini. As per belief there are totally 9 theerthams on all the directions. They are Markandaya Theertham (East) Agni Theertham (South East) Yaamy Theertham (South) Vasishta Theertham (South West) Varuna Theertham (West) Vayu Theertham (North West) Kubera Theertham (North) Galava Theertham and Saraswathi Theertham (North East). After renovation he initiated a festivity by name Sri Devi Bhoo Devi Sametha Venkateswara Jalakeli Mantapa Utsavam.

Mahant Dharma Das renovated the Kapila theertham Pushkarini of Tirupati. The renovation included even the Sandhya Vandana Mandapam. On 10.02.1865 i.e., Maagha Suddha Pournami of

Rakthakshi year, Mahanth Dharma Das took up and completed repair work of Sri Vari Padikavali Gopuram (Mahadwara Tower) and the construction of other mandapams on 11.09.1875 i.e., Bhadrapada pournami of Bahu Dhanya year.

In the year 1900 A.D. Mahanth Prayag Das was appointed as an Inquiry Officer of T.T.D. He directed an officer of his matt Ram Lakshman Das to supervise the work of the gold Kalasam fixing or placing on the top of Ananda Nilayam. This was completed on 30.09.1908. The gold plating of the Vimana of Ananda Nilaya was done for the first time in 1260 A.D. So far the gold plating of the Vimana of Ananda Nilayam has taken place for 5 times. We will know the details in coming pages.

Mahanth Prayag Das served as an Inquiry Officer of T.T.D. for 33 long years i.e., from 1900 A.D. to 1933 A.D. Under his inquiryship the temple registered enormous progress. Many pilgrim friendly projects like: construction of Choultries for pilgrims both at Tirupati as well as Tirumala, repair of steps from the foot of the Hills up to Tirumala, construction of towers, roads, hygiene and cleanliness of pilgrims, medical facilities, drinking water, electrification of foot paths etc., were taken up and completed during Mahanth Prayag Das, Tenure as I.O. of T.T.D.

Apart from socially useful works mentioned above he took special interest in establishing educational institutions in Vellore and Tirupati. He is responsible

for starting a Veda Patasala, Prachya Kalasala (Oriental College), an Ayurveda School, Research pertaining to temple inscriptions, printing. Jewellery, crowns etc., were offered to Lord Venkateswara.

During his period, electrification of Tirumala roads was taken up. He had made arrangements for illumination of Tirumala streets during nights by fixing Washington lights. He made arrangements for the free distribution of cow's milk for babies in arms or infants. He further made arrangements for free meals to school going children. But there were plenty of allegations particularly about misappropriation of temple funds on previous mahanthas who were Inquiry Officers. Even Mahanth Prayag Das was affected by these allegations. Considering complaints about the misappropriation of temple funds the then Madras Governor appointed a team of trustees to take care of temple administration in the place of an Inquiry Officer. Thus Mahanthas of Hathee Ram Bavaji Matt lost control over temple administration once for all. Matts inquiryship came to an abrupt end in the year 1933. Here is the list of Inquiry Officers of Hathee Ram Bavaji Matt.

<b>Name</b>	<b>From - To</b>	<b>Total years</b>
1.Mahanth Seva Dasji	1843-1864	21
2.Mahanth Dharma Dasji	1864-1880	16
3.Mahanth Bhagwan Dasji	1880-1890	10
4.Mahanth Mahaveer Dasji	1890-1894	4
5.Mahanth RamaKrishna Dasji	1894-1900	6
6.Mahanth Prayag Dasji	1900-1933	33
<b>Total</b>		<b>90</b>



Inspite of many ups and downs mahanths had the reins of temple administration in their hands continuously for 90 long years.

Now their role is limited to only certain things. The fresh cow's milk and butter Harati, even to this day comes from Tirumala Mahanthu Mattam, at the time of chanting of Suprabhatam in the small hours of the day. Similarly on festive days like Ugadi, Sri Rama Navami, Anivara Aasthanam, Koluvu etc., the milk and camphor comes from the matt. Only Harati and Sattari honours are given to them. Now the properties belonging to Mahanths movable and immovable are under the jurisdiction of Andhra Pradesh's Religious Endowment Department.

### **LORD VENKATESWARA AND TARIGONDA VENGAMAMBA**

As if eyes have tongue and tongue has eyes, Tarigonda Vengamamba we can aptly compare her to Meera of Rajasthan and Andal of Tamilnadu in selected words has described, the Handsomeness of Lord Venkateswara. She says let me describe my Lord Venkateswara as He appears before me. He has a bright sparkling form. Around His Head He has a crown of beautiful garlands. The crocodile shaped earrings are enhancing His looks. Camphor mark on His cheeks, religious marking on His forehead, befitting jewellery and the silk robes are competing with each other and feel proud to be in their respective places. His neck has a bewitching carcanet. He holds a Conchshell in one hand

and Sudarshan Chakra in another hand. He has a beautiful sword by name Nandaka in His left hand. Right hand points His feet and is telling that you devotees come to Me and seek shelter with Me. Actually Heaven is dwelling near His feet. He has arresting looks. The turquoise complexion and attractive smile makes more and more adorable. You will be longing to see Him again and again. It is a feast for eyes to watch Him.

Lord Venkateswara immensely likes His devotees. He loves to play pranks with His devotees. We have already come to know how He enjoyed the abuses of one devotee and how He took to His heels when chased by an angry devotee. Once He relished Ragi balls offered by His devotee and preferred mud flowers rather than gems and precious stones. Similarly in the case of Tarigonda Vengamamba also who happens to be an ordent devotee of Lord Venkateswara. She considered Lord Venkateswara as her husband. In several respects she is like Meera Bai of Rajasthan. She used to perform Harati to Lord Venkateswara, particularly before Lord's Ekantha Seva. Once she did not go to Ananda Nilaya to perform Harati. Lord became rather stubborn and forced the priests who stood in her way to go to her and bring her to Him. Let us chant the holy name of Lord Venkateswara before knowing full details about Tarigonda Vengamamba and her Muthyala Harati (Muthyam means pearl in Telugu).

Venkata Ramana Sankata Harana Govinda! Govinda!!

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

**TARIGONDA VENGAMAMBA**

There are number of places around holy Tirumala. Many great people, saints, Avadhootas (naked mendicants) have taken birth in this holy pilgrim centre. Tarigonda is one such holy place. Vayalpadu is the nearest town to this village. In thirties of 18th century there lived a holy couple by name Kaanaala Krishnaiah and Mangamma. They had five sons. They were longing to have a daughter, so that they can have fruits of performing Kanyadanam i.e., giving daughter in marriage to a person whom the parents of the bride think is a good person. With this desire in their mind they visited Tirumala. Standing before Lord Venkateswara they earnestly prayed for a daughter. All merciful and benevolent Lord Venkateswara heard their sincere prayer. He blessed the couple with a daughter. Kaanaala Krishnaiah and Mangamma named their child as Venkamma after Lord Venkateswara. Right from her birth Venkamma devoted her time and energy in Lord's service. For hours together she used to meditate on Lord. Parents were happy in the beginning. Afterwards they felt that the girl should not spend her entire time in meditation and prayer. She should evince interest in things like cooking and preparing herself for the marriage and the responsibility that may befall on her after her marriage. People began to discuss about Venkamma's detachment to worldly things. People thought either she might have gone mad or she should have come under the influence of some evil spirit. People appreciated her devotion. But nobody was

prepared to give his/her son in marriage to Venkamma. Before the news of Venkamma's detachment to worldly things spreads like wild fire Venkamma's parents had vigorously started to find an alliance for their daughter. When Venkamma came to know about this, she told her parents not to search a groom for her. She further told them, Lord Venkateswara is her husband. Yet the parents of Venkamma fixed an alliance. They selected one groom by name Injeti Venkatachalapathy and arranged marriage for their daughter. Unfortunately even before the couple started their conjugal life Venkatachalapathy breathed his lost. Not paying much attention to worldly things and customs she began to lead her life as sumangali (without giving up Vermilian mark on forehead or not having flowers in her locks of hair).

Seeing this unwidow like life his daughter is leading Krishnaiah approached Sri Roopavatharam Subramaniya Shastry of Madanapalli. Sri Shastry initiated Venkamma into spirituality. This initiation proved rather beneficial to Venkamma. From that time onwards she started using her entire time to devotion. She almost became a Sanyasin. Effortlessly she started composing songs. Seeing her spiritualistic life people began to address her as Vengamamba. They even started worshipping her.

Slowly Vengamamba started commanding more regard and respect from the people. Some traditionalists who were given to envy declared Vengamamba and her

family as out castes. At that time Sri Sankaracharya of Pushpagiri Peetham visited their village. People carried tales against Vengamamba. Yielding to their pressure Sri Sankaracharya of Pushpagiri summoned her and her family members to call on him. Along with others Vengamamba visited Sri Sankaracharya. Like any other devotee or disciple of Pushpagiri Sankaracharya, she carried with her all the traditional items like coconut, flowers, fruits etc. She reverentially offered those things to the Peethadhipati. Vengamamba did not offer her salutations to the Peethadhipati. He asked her: 'Tell me why you are not leading your life like other widows'. Vengamamba gently told him, 'Swamyji, Lord Venkateswara is my husband. Hence I am leading the life of a Sumangali. I am a 'nitya sumangali'. To convince you I will have a clean shaven head. Can you assure me that the hair will not grow on my head'. The Peethadhipati could not answer the question. Changing the topic: 'Well, You know I am a head of one Hindu Peetham. Yet you did not offer your salutations! May I know why?' Vengamamba said: 'Oh! Is it. Then please get up. I will offer my salutation to the seat on which you are sitting'. Sankaracharya got up from the seat. Vengamamba offered her salutation to the seat with folded hands. Oh! The seat caught fire and was burnt down to ashes. The entire gathering saw this. Everybody including the Pushpagiri Sankaracharya was taken aback. He thanked his stars in his heart of hearts. He then declared to the assembly that Vengamamba is a divine Sanyasin. Ordinary rules are not applicable to

her. Allow her to lead her life as she wants. He hurriedly left that place.

There was a Narasimha Swamy temple in that village. Vengamamba regularly used to visit that temple and used to worship the Lord personally. One fine morning she sat near the idol of Hanuman and started her meditation. A group of people who were jealous of Vengamamba came to her. They said why don't you go to a sacred place to do meditation. Why you are after our life. While abusing her like this they dragged her by her hair. Vengamamba's penance was disturbed by this act of the wicked people. She opened her eyes. The abusers could see wild fire emanating from her eyes. They prostrated before her and begged her to pardon them. "Why don't you go to a sacred place to do your meditation" – these words of the priest inspired her. She could sense gods command in these words. She decided to leave the village. She left her village Tarigonda and reached Tirumala, passing through a dense forest. After reaching Tirumala, 20 years old Vengamamba has described the exclusive beauty of its towers, enclosures, porticos, temple cars, holy tanks, golden towers, cluster of temples, matts belonging to different peethams, beautiful milch cows, parrots, peacocks, swans, fruit gardens, including Tulasi gardens, crowded streets and last but not least the ever attractive beautiful benevolent Lord Venkateswara.

The first thing she did after reaching Tirumala is to have the darshan of Lord of Seven Hills, Srinivasa. From that day onwards everyday she used to visit temple to

have the darshan. Standing before Lord Venkateswara instantly she used to compose songs and satakas (a book containing 108 verses) and recite them. Hearing her songs and compositions people used to get lost in a divine ecstasy as if they have entered into a trance. They used to bow before her to show their respect to her. She became the talk of the town. Seeing her devotion to Lord they thought she must be a great mendicant (female) or a great devotee of Lord Venkateswara. But nobody could think of providing a shelter to this shelterless woman.

Shelterless Vengamamba used to spend her nights either in precincts of a temple or a portico. One day she appealed to Lord Venkateswara to provide her a shelter. As usual on that night she was sleeping in the precincts of the temple. She had a dream. Appearing in her dream Lord Venkateswara said: 'Look I do not have any objection if you want to stay in Tirumala permanently. Better you offer your prayers to Sri Vyootha Lakshmi who is dwelling in My heart. If she agrees you can stay here. Next day morning she woke up. She contemplated on Alamelu Manga and offered Her sincere prayers. She earnestly requested Alamelu Manga to be kind enough to permit her to stay in Tirumala. As everybody knows Alamelu Manga and Lord Venkateswara are not two different individuals, but they are one : In showering their choicest blessings on devotees they compete with each other. At times on behalf of devotees Alamelu Manga used to plead with Lord Venkateswara. Thus both after consulting each

other, together used to shower their joint blessings on devotees. Both Venkateswara and Alamelu Manga heard the prayer of Vengamamba. They together decided to provide a permanent shelter for her in Tirumala. He inspired Mahanth Atma Ram Das (1745-50) who belongs to the long list of disciples of Swamy Hathi Ram Bavaji of Mahanth Matt to provide a permanent shelter for Vengamamba.

Mahanth Atma Ram Das the head of Swamy Hathee Ram Bavaji Matt personally went to Vengamamba. He told her: "Oh! Mother Vengamamba ! may be because of some divine inspiration I have come here to provide a permanent shelter for you in Tirumala. For God's sake do not refuse my offer. Please be here in Tirumala and serve Lord Venkateswara as well as the devotees of Venkateswara. Afterwards he got one thatched hut specially constructed for her, by the side of Lord's stone chariot in the east mada street. Not only this, in the name of Vakula Matha, the mother of Lord Venkateswara who supervises the kitchen where sweets for Naivedyam are prepared, he made arrangements for permanent ration like rice, vegetables and other things for preparing food. This happened nearly hundred years before the temple administration was handed over (1843-1933) to the Mahanth of Swamy Hathee Ram Das Bavaji Matt by the Arcot collector of East India company. Even before the temple administration was given to them the Mahanths of Swamy Hathee Ram Bavaji Matt were providing shelter and food to those pilgrims who used to visit temple as well as matt.

Because of this tradition the matt people began to provide daily ration to Vengamamba. Thanking Alamelu Manga and Lord Srinivasa profusely for making permanent arrangements, Vengamamba gladly accepted Mahanth Atma Ram Das' shelter and ration.

By the Grace of Alamelu Manga and Lord Venkateswara her shelter problem was solved. Now a new worry, worry about Lord Venkateswara began to disturb her mental peace. She, some how or the other wanted her entire time to be spent in the precincts of the temple. She used to return to her hut only after the temple doors are closed. After reaching her hut she will indulge in cooking. She used to have her food only after offering it to Lord. Day in and day out she used to think only about Lord Venkateswara. Lord Venkateswara had become everything for her. He was the one and only go for her. Whenever she contemplates about Lord Venkateswara He used to appear before her. He attentively used to listen to Her. He used to dance whenever she starts singing songs in praise of Him. Suddenly she entertained one idea. She thought how beautiful it will be if I get a chance to prepare garlands and offer it to Lord in the morning when the temple doors are opened. She also wanted to offer camphor Harati just before the temple doors are closed for the day.

To implement her plan she planned for a Tulasi garden. Vacant place behind her hut, she thought will be suitable to have a Tulasi garden. To water the garden she thought of digging a well. At a particular depth

she found a hard rock. She got down and reached the hard rock with all sincerity. She offered poojas to Ganga and came out of that half finished well. Soon the hard rock gave way and water started gushing out. People who were witnessing this praised Vengamamba's miraculous powers and offered Harati to her. The well with steps supplied continuously water required for her Tulasi garden. Daily she used to collect bloomed flowers and Tulasi from her garden and prepare garlands for God. Religiously she started offering garlands prepared by her to the Lord in the morning for Lord's Sahasra Nama Archana. She used to offer Tulasi garlands also. Similarly everyday evening she used to offer camphor Harati to God before He retires for the day.

The well (with steps to descend) dug by Tarigonda Vengamamba is there in Tirumala. We can see it even today. On our way to Papanasanam there is one stable for Lord's elephants. Very near to this stable there is a well. People call it as Ammori Bai (Mother's well). The word Ammoru (mother) refers to Vengamamba. This well water, even to this day is used for gardening purposes or to water Lord's garden.

The Tulasi mala (garland) prepared by Vengamamba, Lord Venkateswara loved to wear. This garland used to further enhance the beauty of Lord. Similarly when Vengamamba performs the final Harati for the day, it used to further add new glow to Lord's Idol. When she finds some time to relax she used to sit on a plain rock in the garden and used to compose songs

in praise of Lord Venkateswara who is known for giving shelter and place to His devotees. One such collection of songs is known as Vishnu Parijaatam. She has dedicated this Yaksha Ganam (a kind of folk song) to Lord Venkateswara.

People who came to know about her poetic talents and unquestionable devotion to Lord Venkateswara, began to adore her. Pilgrims used to gather in a flock to have her darshan after visiting the main temple. It was rumoured in those days that Lord Venkateswara used to visit her hut, listen to her poems, dance to her songs and talk to her personally. So they thought Vengamamba is a divine person. People started to even worship her.

The descendants of Tallapaka Annamacharya came to know about Vangamamba's dedicated devotion to Lord Venkateswara and her devotional poetry. They further came to know that she too belongs to Nandavarika Sakha of Brahmanas. They invited her to come and stay with them in their house which is behind the Varahaswamy temple in North Mada street. They offered free accommodation to her. From that day onwards leaving her thatched hut she began to stay in the portion given to her by the descendants of Tallapaka Annamacharyulu. Even there Vengamamba developed a Tulasi garden and continued to offer garlands to Lord Venkateswara. She began to spend her entire day in the service of Lord Venkateswara.

By the side of Vengamamba's house there lived a priest by name Akka Ram Deekshit. He was a chief or

official priest. Being an official priest he was actually rolling in riches. He was, because of his status as the chief priest, considered as a VIP. The power and status both directly went to his head. Some how he did not tolerate the simplicity as well as the popularity of Vengamamba. He thought every body, significant as well as insignificant, pays his/her respects to me. But this Vengamamba neither cares nor pays her respects to me. When everybody started praising and paying their respects to her, he did not relish it. He envied her. He thought I have the unique honour of touching the idol and performing poojas to the Lord. There cannot be a better devotee than me. Thus Vengamamba cannot claim herself to be a better devotee than me. This egoistic feeling made him arrogant. He started abusing her. He criticized her by saying a person being driven away from her own village, cannot boast herself as a greater devotee of Lord Venkateswara. Being a widow she is leading a life of a sumangali (who's husband is alive). Added to this he could not digest the fact that temple authorities are allowing her to prepare garlands for the Lord and permitting her to perform Harati in the evening. These people are considering her a pious and noble woman. Not only the temple authorities, even the descendants of the great saint Tallapaka Annamaiah have given shelter to her. In her presence as well as in the presence of general public he used to loudly abuse her. Vengamamba did not bother about the meaningless criticism. She ignored him. Her silence added fuel to his burning anger and jealousy. He became furious. He

ordered his relatives to throw the spittle plantain leaves into her Tulasi garden every day, twice. Even this defiling act she tolerated patiently. She gently requested them not to throw the spittle plantain leaves into her Tulasi garden. But they turned a deaf ear to her request.

As was her daily routine, on one particular day she went to Lord's Sanctum Sanctorum and offered garlands to the Lord. God with those garlands on His person was looking more handsome. After receiving prasadam she returned to her house. She sat on a platform and got completely immersed in meditation. She was not conscious about the surroundings. It was mid day. As usual after having their lunch the relatives of Chief Archaka started throwing their spittle plantain leaves. Some spittle leaves fell on the person of Vengamamba. Her meditation or penance was disturbed.

When devotees abuse or hurt Him Lord Venkateswara may not become furious. But He will certainly not tolerate if one of His staunch devotee is abused or hurt. When Vengamamba opened her eyes, God entered into her body. Now possessed Vengamamba with angry looks cursed Akka Ram Deekshit. God said: "Your entire family will perish. There won't be a single person alive in your family. Every body will die". As soon as she uttered the curse members of Akka Ram Deekshit's family started vomiting blood. They all experienced unbearable excruciating pain and were about to lose their life. One son of Akka Ram Deekshitulu managed to reach Vengamamba by crawling. By touching her legs he

begged her to spare his life. By this time Vengamamba had cooled down. Lord Venkateswara who was dwelling in her body took pity on that son of Akka Ram Deekshitulu and said 'hence forth only one member in your family will survive'. From that day onwards only one person is surviving in the family of Akka Ram Deekshit. People will reap fruits for abusing the devotees of God.

For some reason the traditionary priests of Mirasi clan or family were not allowed to perform their duties in the Ananda Nilaya by the East India Company authorities. Till then they were looking after the day to day administration of Tirumala temple. To see that the temple poojas are not disturbed the government appointed one more Vykanasa Archaka. This person was called Sarkaaru (official or Government) Archaka (priest). From that day onwards the sarkaaru archakas are discharging their duties in the temple. There is one Harati known as Devasthanam Harati i.e., Temple Harati. It is also known as Devasthanam Utsavam or temple ceremony. On that day evening in a depressed mood Vengamamba performed Harati. She was worried over the curse given to Akka Ram Deekshit's family. Seeing her dejected face Lord Venkateswara spoke to her. He told her: "Look Vengamamba I am responsible to what has happened. You need not worry about that. You know, wicked should be punished at any cost. I could not tolerate when that Sarkaaru Archaka started abusing you. He deserves it and that has happened only

because of Me. In no way you are responsible for that curse or punishment. You forget it and come to Me everyday evening and offer the Harati with your hands". These consoling words of Lord Venkateswara had wonderful effect on her. She was relieved of that depression which was haunting her. After recovering from that guilty feeling she went to the temple in the evening and performed Harati. This she continued to perform Harati everyday with out any break. Not only this, everyday for hours together she used to sit in meditation before that Lotus Eyed Lord Venkateswara who has Sankhu, Chakra, in His two hands and is giving abhaya with one hand and showing the easy path for liberation with another hand. Even the temple priests not minding some simple inconveniences caused by her continuous presence showed their respects to her. Even devotees who come there to have Lord's darshan never took any objection to her presence there in the Ananda Nilaya.

Some Archakas did not approve a widow performing Harati and offering poojas to Lord Venkateswara as if she is a sumangali. They did not like "more loyal than the king" attitude of Vengamamba. They loudly pronounced that from tomorrow onwards we will not allow Vengamamba to enter into Sanctum Sanctorum to perform puja. As Vengamamba was not a deaf person she clearly heard the utterance of Archakas. She silently left the temple with a heavy heart. Next day she contemplated on the issue raised by the Archakas. If my going over to the temple and offering

garlands, Harati and poojas is hurting the sentiments of the people why should I go to the temple. She decided not to go to temple and offer Harati to the Venkateswara. She felt I can stop offering Harati to Lord. But I cannot stay back without having the darshan of the Lord. To make Archakas happy she decided not to go to the temple. For seven continuous days Vengamamba did not go to the temple. Archakas were very happy. They had a satisfaction that they have successfully prevented Vengamamba from entering into the temple.

But Lord Venkateswara was unhappy over the absence of His dear devotee Vengamamba. Daily he was expecting Harati and Tulasi garlands from Vengamamba. Lord decided to once again teach a lesson to the Archakas.

Next day happens to be the last day of Brahmothsavam. As per the tradition along with His two Consorts Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi He ascended the temple chariot. Sitting beautifully in the chariot He began to bless all. In two Mada streets i.e., South mada street and West mada street the chariot moved freely. After entering into North mada street it moved upto a particular point. When the chariot neared the house of Vengamamba the chariot suddenly stopped. Those Archakas, temple officers, pilgrims, natives of Tirumala etc., who were there tried their level best to set the chariot in motion. Even to an inch distance the chariot could not move. It stood there like a rock of Gibraltar. They all tried, tried and tried. But the chariot could not move. The other schedules were disturbed. People



thought some body somewhere would have hurt the feelings of Lord's devotees. May be because of this, the Lord is angry and refusing to move. The Archakas suddenly remembered the incident that happened a week back. They recollected that they have insulted saintly Vengamamba. Seeing the chariot standing firm near the house of Vengamamba they tried to put two and two together. Archakas went to Vengamamba's house. They prostrated before her. They explained what has happened, outside her house. They requested her to come out of the house and perform Harati to the Lord. "If you all think", said Vengamamba to the priests, "that by my performing the Harati the chariot can move, well I will definitely perform the Harati". She came out and after performing Harati requested the Lord to allow the chariot to move, God listened to her prayer. The chariot moved and reached its destination. From that day onwards the Archakas started behaving properly. They waited till the arrival of Vengamamba and allowed her to perform the Harati.

Vengamamba had almost a fixed routine. Everyday morning she will offer Tulasi garland to god. Afternoon she will spend her time in composing poetry. In the evening she will go over to Ananda Nilaya and perform Harati with her own hands. Again in the night she will attend to temple's Ekantha seva and reach back her house. After temple doors are locked Lord Venkateswara will comedown to her house and spend some time in some spiritual discussion. This routine continued for many days.

As usual one day, in the evening she went to Ananda Nilaya to perform Harati. When she was performing Harati, with her naked eyes she could see God's Dasavatarams and the corporeal form (virat roopam) of Lord Venkateswara. She was literally thrilled to see the corporeal form of Lord Srinivasa with her naked eyes. From that day onwards Lord Venkateswara, by appearing in the dream of Archakas, told them: "You let Vengamamba to perform the last Harati, for the day. After her Harati no one will offer Harati to me. Soon after the Harati, temple doors should be closed". The Harati that Vengamamba offers after Ekantha seva is known as Muthyala (pearls) Harati. This tradition continues even today. After Muthyala Harati only, the temple doors will be shut for the day. Vengamamba adopted her sister's daughter Mangamma. Even to this day the descendants of Magamma only are allowed to perform Muthyala Harati.

Vengamamba was very much excited to know about the interest that Lord Venkateswara has so far evinced or evincing in her. This made her to get more attached to the Lord. Her thoughts as well as her actions were centred around Lord Venkateswara. Every minute of the day she began to spend in meditation. During nights she used to write songs in praise of Lord Venkateswara. Lord Venkateswara, the legend has it, used to come to her house to listen to her poetry. At times He used to dance gently to vigorously. She at times used to appreciate her descriptions, her similies, her imageries. In His presence Vengamamba wrote Sri Krishna

Manjari, Rukmini Kalyanam, Gopika Natakam, Jalakreeda Vilasamu, Ashtanga Raja Yogam, Mukthi Kantha Vilasamu, Vasishta Ramayanam etc., and many books on philosophy, dramas, dwipadas (a metre like 'Doha' of Hindi) etc.

Even after listening to her poetry Lord Venkateswara was not completely satisfied. He wanted a better monumental work from her. During his visits in the night, one night assuming the form of Bala Krishna He told her to compose Bhagavatpurana. He told her: "Oh! Mother you are good at narrating stories. You narrate these stories to Me. I will listen to them while making indistinct sound (to convince the narrator that He is listening to what is being narrated)". He gave her a copy of Bhagawat Purana. Vengamamba was very happy. She told him: "Look my dear Krishna when did I say no to Your request. Whatever You want me to write or narrate I will write and narrate. I know You only put words into my mouth". Next day onwards in a simple, lucid Telugu she started writing Krishna Leela's in Dwipada metre (couplets). During nights, after performing Harati and Ekantha Seva, she used to prepare very delicious dishes. Lord Venkateswara used to relish Vengamamba's poetry as well as her delicious dishes. He used to enjoy His pranks in Krishnavatara as depicted by Vengamamba. Before it is Suprabhatam time, He used to go back to Ananda Nilaya. Lord's night visits continued uninterruptedly. During one such visits Vengamamba said: 'Oh! Lord, why don't You stay with me forever. Without You before my eyes I cannot



**SRI VARAHASWAMY TEMPLE**





**SRI VARAHASWAMY**



**KOLUVU SRINIVASAMOORTHY**





**SRINIVASA IN VASANTOTSAVAM**



**BHOGA SRINIVASAMOORTHY**





**MALAYAPPA SWAMY WITH HIS CONSORTS SRIDEVI - BHUDEVI**



**SRI VENKATESWARA SWAMY  
IN HIS VAJRAKAVACHA ROBES**



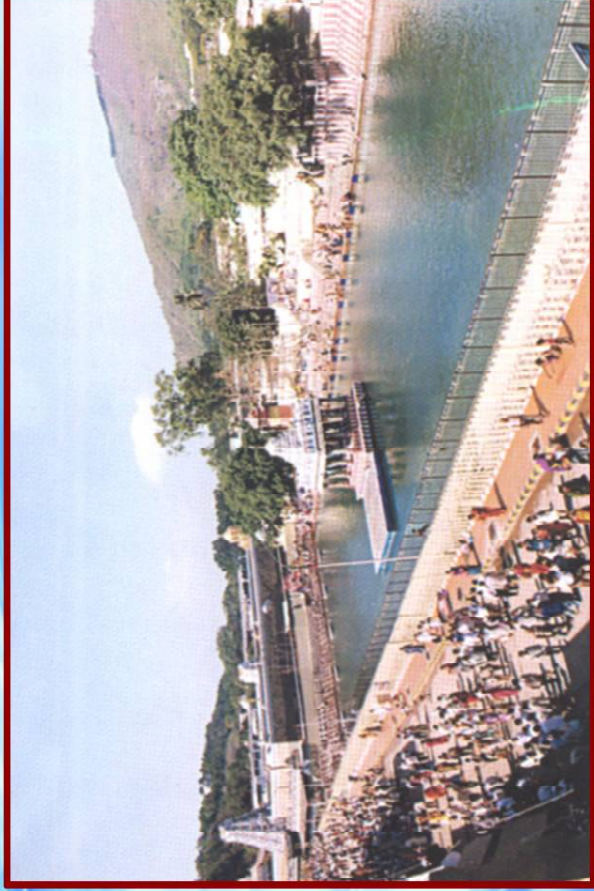


**SRI MALAYAPPA SWAMY**

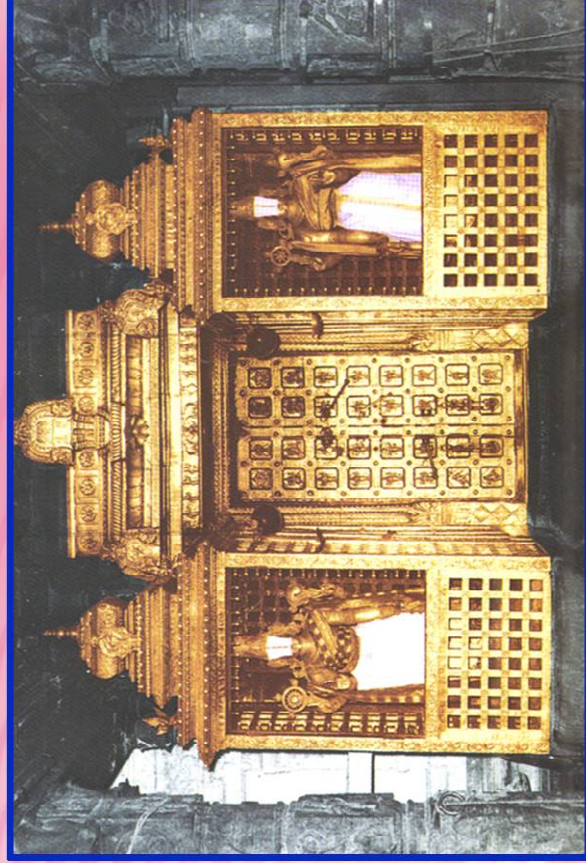


**SRI MALAYAPPA SWAMY**





**SRI SWAMY PUSHKARINI**

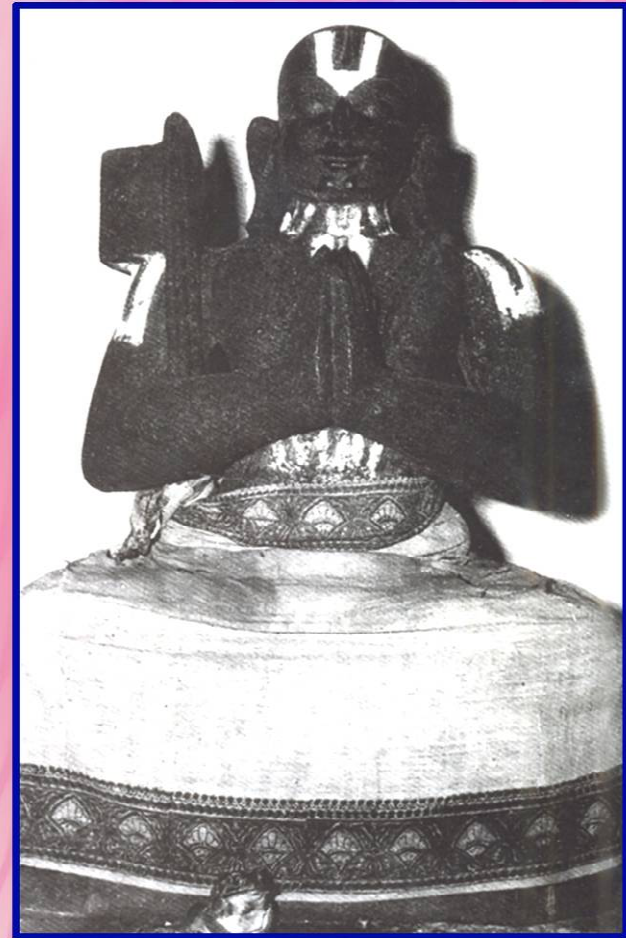


**GOLDEN DOOR**



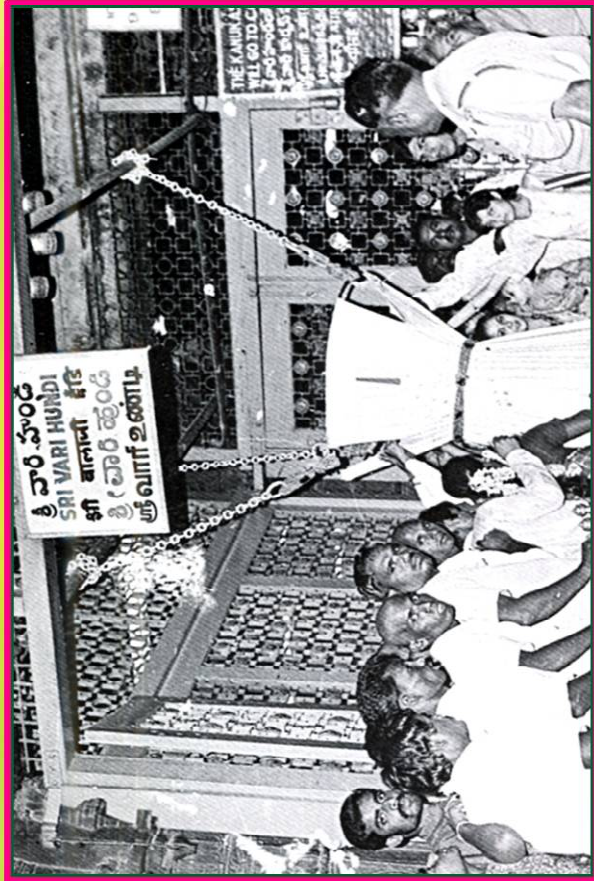


**ANANDA NILAYAM**



**TROVA BHASHYAKARULU**  
**SRI RAMANUJACHARYULU**  
(Last part of Mountain Steps)  
Tirumala Pathway





SRIHARI HUNDI

live. Please stay with me'. Lord Venkateswara gently turned down her request. He said: "Oh! My mother, you know I have many more staunch devotees like you. I have to satisfy them with My presence. Added to this from distant places, not minding the inconveniences and troubles they may have to undergo, thousands of devotees come to Me. When they reach Tirumala I have to give them darshan. In these circumstances how can I stay with you alone. Please tell Me". Vengamamba listened to Him. By holding His robes she said: "I know You very well. You are beginningless, middleless and endless. You are omniscience, omni present as well as omni potent. Don't bluff. I know wherever a devotee searches, You appear there in the form in which a devotee wants You to appear. In upanishads it has been said "ANORANEEYAAN MAHATO MAHEEYAN" So do not try to fool me by Your innocent looks and words". Lord Venkateswara further wanted to convince her. Meanwhile Archakas in the Ananda Nilaya started chanting "Kousalya Supraja Rama". Hearing Archaka's chanting Suprabhatam Lord Venkateswara disappeared from there so as to present Himself in Ananda Nilaya. He never had time to request Vengamamba to leave the robes she was holding. In that struggle a piece of silk robes remained in the tight grip of Vengamamba. Archakas after opening the door of Sanctum Sanctorum began to feel the statue of the Lord before offering poojas. To their shock and surprise they found that the silk dhoti of the Lord is torn and is not completely covering His Lotus Legs. First they

thought some thief would have stolen the silk robes of the Lord. They searched every nook and corner of the temple. They could not find the torn piece of silk dhoti. The archakas then composed themselves. They came to conclusion that it is not the work of a thief. It should be the work of thief of thieves, Lord Venkateswara. He is known for stealing butter from the houses of Gopis. He would have visited some devotee and played pranks with that devotee. It must be the outcome of that prank. They all decided to search the houses of all the devotees. They thought there cannot be a staunch devotee who can compete with Vengamamba. So they all went to the house of Vengamamba and narrated about the torn silk dhoti of Lord Venkateswara. After listening to them Vengamamba said casually: 'Is it' ? Then she went inside her pooja room. She told them : "Look here is a piece of cloth. Please tell me whether this is what you are searching for?"

The priests followed Vengamamba to her pooja room. Reverentially they unfolded the piece of silk cloth which she had kept in her pooja room. They were pleasantly surprised to see Sri Venkateswara's untorn dhoti. They all felt that in between God and His ordent devotees so many things are happening. These things are beyond the imagination of human beings. By keeping that untorn silk dhoti in a silver plate the Archakas brought it back to the Sanctum Sanctorum in a procession. To their shock and wonder they could not see the torn dhoti which was adoring the Lord's statue. They offered the silk dhoti which was given by

Vengamamba to Lord Venkateswara. They could understand the value of those silk robes given by Vengamamba. They also realized how dear is that dhoti offered by Vengamamba, to Lord Venkateswara. They thought that Vengamamba is an incarnation of Lord Venkateswara. With further reverence they all started worshiping her. Everyday people started coming to Vengamamba to have her darshan as well as her blessings. Her name and fame reached every nook and corner of India. Many landlords, petty chieftains, rulers and other rich people offered money, lands and gifts to her.

Vengamamba did not try to retain the donations she received from rich people, with her. She spent every pie she had received for the welfare of pilgrims and devotees who come from distant places, just to have a glimps of Lord of seven Hills. During summer she used to provide water to pilgrims by arranging water in big pots. At the time of Brahmotsavam she used to arrange for free distribution of food to pilgrims. In Vysakha month for ten days she herself arranged Narasimha swamy Jayanthi celebrations. During these celebrations she used to feed all devotees and pilgrims. Right from her childhood Vengamamba worshipped Narasimha Swamy of Tarigonda which was her native village. This attachment to Nrusimha Swamy made her to mention the name of Nrusimha Swamy in all her writings. As far as she is concerned there is no difference between Nrusimha Swamy and Venkateswara Swamy. Even to this day Lord Venkateswara along with His Consorts

Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi comes down to Vengamamba's house during Narasimha Swamy Jayanthi to receive offerings and poojas.

For preparing copies of her kavyas (poems) she used to spend money given to her by donars. It is said she had eight copy writers who were known by the name Ashta Ghantamulu. The rulers of Venkatagiri, Kalahasthi, Karveti Nagaram, Kuchipoodi Bhagavathulu (gurus) etc., used to visit her and take down the copies of kavyas. "Sri Venkateswara Mahatmyam" kavya is considered to be a most popular, magnum opus of her writings. This kavya summarises the life and divine miracles of Lord Venkateswara. It contains 2000 poems as well as prose. It has six cantos. Lord Venkateswara is depicted as eye witness and also as an auditor i.e., listener. Some times He used to make some sound to convince Vengamamba that He is listening attentively. This inspired Vengamamba to compose poems more effectively. The legend has it that who ever recites this epic, good will happen to him or to her. When the unmarried girls recite it they will get married soon. Because of this belief pilgrims preferred to stay back in Tirumala to have a copy of this ever popular holy epic. Even to this day this work of Vengamamba is not only popular but also much in demand.

Tarigonda Vengamamba's popularity elevated her as a motherly figure. Many started visiting her. People thought mere darshan will liberate them from all sins.

Some approached her for her blessings. After having come to know about her devotional songs in praise of Lord Venkateswara, many came to have a look at this great devotee of Lord Venkateswara. Because of continuous flow of visitors Tarigonda Vengamamba felt that her spiritual sadhana is being affected. She could not spend her time in meditation. She wanted to find a way out of this situation.

As usual even that day night Lord Venkateswara visited her. He noticed that she is not in her usual moods. The signs of disturbance were quite visible on her face. He asked her, "what is the matter? You are much disturbed. Please tell me". She said: "Oh! Lord Srinivasa because of these visitors I am not able to concentrate My Mind. My spiritual activities are getting affected. I am rather fed up. Please allow me to become one with You".

"You may have to continue your penance for some more time in this Venkatachala kshethra. I will show you a calm and a serene place for your penance. It is nearly 12 miles away from Tirumala." Lord Venkateswara said. He immediately took her to that place which was known as Thumburu Theertham. There Lord Srinivasa showed a cave and said "you spend your day time by doing penance and during night times through this tunnel reach My Abode Ananda Nilaya". From that day onwards after the golden doors are closed Vengamamba used to reach Sanctum Sanctorum and spend the night in worshipping the Lord without any disturbance.

This practice continued for some time. The Archakas noticed that in the place of flowers that were on the Person of Lord, fresh flowers in the morning. Not only that the flowers and garlands offered by them before closing the golden doors were kept aside and fresh flowers and garlands are adorning the Lord. They thought some devotee is visiting the Sanctum Sanctorum in the night and offering poojas to Lord. As the whereabouts of Vengamamba were not known some thought she may be secretly visiting the Ananda Nilaya and offering fresh flowers and garlands to the Lord. Yet they thought this must be probed further.

The then head of Hathee Ram Bavaji Matt entered into the temple before the golden doors were closed and hid himself in a corner. Without even having a wink he wanted to know about the person who is visiting the Lord during night times. Exactly at 12 o'clock in the night there appeared an opening near the Lotus Feet of Lord. Then Vengamamba as if she is the personification of divinity appeared with a plate containing all necessary things for pooja. The Mahanth could not stand the glow of Vengamamba's appearance. He lost his consciousness instantly.

Next day morning after Suprabhata seva the golden doors were opened as usual. They saw unconscious Mahanthu lying on the floor. After first aid which was given to Mahanthu he gained his consciousness. He slowly narrated the scene that he had seen the previous night. Then people came to know that mother

Vengamamba is staying some where in the vicinity of the temple and visiting Ananda Nilaya to offer her worship during night times. They started to search for her vigorously.

At that time a peculiar Brahmin came to Tirumala. He had ulcers all over his body. Only his eyes and mouth were free from ulcers. Puss and blood were oozing from his ulcers giving out obnoxious foul smell. Every body including his family members had boycotted him. Fed up with ill treatment of his own people he came to Tirumala to spend his last days in Tirumala. Even here no one entertained him. He was not allowed into the temple. Physical pain, mental torture and pangs of hunger made his life miserable. In a desperate mood he made up his mind to commit suicide. He reached Thumburu kona (gorge or dell). As he could not bear the pain he prayed to God saying: "Oh! Lord Govinda, please show mercy on me. I am unable to bear the suffering. Please be kind enough to take life out of me and give me relief". He started crying loudly. The cries of the lepper Brahmin reached the ears of Vengamamba who was deeply immersed in her penance. She came out and saw the miserable condition of the lepper Brahmin. Her heart came to her mouth. She appealed to Lord Venkateswara to relieve him from the pain. She offered him some fruits to eat. As he had not eaten anything he started gulping up the fruits. He thanked her profusely. He thought she is a fairy and has fed him. Vengamamba told that Brahmin not to tell anybody about her. Do not reveal my whereabouts. If you reveal,

your head will break into thousand pieces. She asked him to close his eyes. He obeyed her orders and closed his eyes. When he opened his eyes he found himself in the waters of Lord's Pushkarini. He got up from the lake. He felt his body. He was surprised to see himself. He was free from the disease with which he was suffering. The devotees who were taking their holy dip in the Pushkarini saw a person whom they had not seen before getting down into Pushkarini and emerging from the waters. They named him as Pushkarineejudu i.e., one who is born in the Pushkarini. They anxiously started enquiring about him. Remembering the words of Vengamamba he did not open his mouth. He went on to stay in Tirumala.

Some people who had seen the Brahmin with bleeding ulcers could recognize the person who is being worshipped as miraculous person and who has the name of pushkarineejudu. They stood before him and started putting some searching questions. When everyone started praising him he forgot the parting words of Vengamamba. He allowed the cat to come out of the bag. No sooner than he revealed the whereabouts of Vengamamba his head broke into 1000 pieces and he died then and there. The words of pious people will always come true.

Now people came to know about Vengamamba and the place where she was staying. Once again people in large numbers came to her to have her darshan. They once again created ripples of disturbance in otherwise calm and serene ocean of peace i.e., her penance.

On that night when she came down to the temple after Ekantha seva once again appealed to Lord Venkateswara to allow her to become one with Him.

All merciful Lord said: "Vengamamba listen to me. Time has come. I don't find any justification in keeping you away from Me. You enter into deep trance. Become one yogini. From the state of deep trance, you come to Ananda Nilaya every night to serve with your brilliant form". In the ripe age of 83 years i.e., having seen 1000 full moons in her life, people once again saw her in Tirumala. She told everyone that it is time for her departure from this world as Lord Venkateswara has invited her to join Him, she informed everyone that she will enter into the state of trance before leaving this world. She breathed her last in the year 1817. She passed away in Eswar Nama Samvathsara's Sravana Shukla Navami day according to our Hindu calendar. As per her desire her Samadhi was filled with aromatic fragrant things and was closed. They erected one Tulasi Brindavan on the Samadhi. Even to this day pilgrims can find Vengamamba's Samadhi. It is near Sri Varah Narasimha Swamy's temple. The pilgrims can visit her samadhi i.e., tomb which is some 100 yards away from her house in the northern direction. On the Brindavana they have also installed an idol of Anjaneya Swamy. It is said when Vengamamba came to Tirumala for the first time in her life the Santhakaapu Mugali Penta 'Anjaneya Swamy' had protected her.

Natives of Tirumala, even to this day, go over to Vengamamba's Samadhi and offer their prayers. Every

Tuesday and every Friday devotees of Vengamamba go to her Samadhi and clean it up and put rangoli. People now call Vengamamba as Tariganamma. It is widely believed that even to this day she gives darshan to her devotees and fulfills all their desires.

From that day onwards i.e., the day on which Lord Venkateswara advised her to do deep penance and attain Jeeva Samadhi, Vengamamba by assuming glorious divine form started worshiping Lord Venkateswara during night times. Even two centuries after Vengamamba attained her Samadhi hood, every night, during Ekantha seva a Mangala Harati is performed. This harati is known as Muthyala (pearls) Harati. By this harati people are reminded of Vengamamba's devotion to Lord Venkateswara. When the harati is performed we will find a special glow on the face of Lord Venkateswara. It appears, as if Lord likes this particular Harati very much.

By the Grace of Lord Venkateswara if you get an opportunity to be there in the Sanctum Sanctorum at the time of Muthyala Harati do not forget to look at the face of the Lord. He will be in His most glorified form. During this harati singers do sing the Harati songs composed by Tarigonda Vengamamba.

Vengamamba in one of her songs describes the enchanting form of Lord Venkateswara thus: "Oh! What a beautifully attractive form You are possessing. You have white Lotus like beautiful eyes. You have beautiful smiling lips. The ankle ornaments and the anklets of

Your Feet are simply marvelous. The Nandaka sword tied to Your silk dhoti is alluring Your devotees. The Waist belt, the Girdle, the Lotus emerging from the navel, Assuring hand gesture, Hand on the Hip, Conch shell, Wheel, Kousthubha on Chest all these things are further glorifying Your form. The carcanet, the garlands, the jewellery, the White vertical line (Namam) on forehead, the Ear rings, the Crown are embellishing Your already beautiful form".

Lord Venkateswara after leaving His permanent Abode has selected this world to stay. He has selected Andhra Pradesh's Tirumala Kshethra to dwell. By simply chanting His name all the miseries of this world will be dispelled. By repeating His name all the desires of the devotees are fulfilled. The people of Andhra Pradesh are the fortunate lot. In their midst the all merciful Lord dwells. God has a feeling that the people of A.P are not getting the full benefits from Him. He wants to shower His choicest blessings on them. He is longing to go out of the way to help people of A.P. He thinks He has not revealed Himself well to the people of A.P. The general psychology is unless somebody blows Your trumpet people will not come to know about Your generosity or Your helping nature. One may not like this publicity. But without this publicity it is rather difficult to educate people. If no one is there to beat the drum You Yourself should try to beat Your own. About Lord's benevolent nature much has been said or written in Sanskrit:

*Sree Srinivasaha Paradaivatham Naha*  
*Sree Srinivasaha Paramanandhanam Naha*  
*Sree Srinivasaha Kula Daivatham Naha*  
*Sree Srinivasaha Parama Gatir Naha*  
*Vrisha Sailadhipa Eva Daivatham Naha*  
*Vrishbhadreswara Eva Daivatham Naha*  
*Phani Sailadhipa Eva Daivatham Naha*  
*Bhagvan Venkata Eva Daivatham Naha*

Though so much has been said about Lord Venkateswara's stay in Tirumala Kshethra of Andhra Pradesh, people of A.P, it seems have miserably failed to use His benevolence or His generosity. But how to solve this problem ? Who will tell the people of A.P. that they are sleeping like Kumbha Karna of Ramayana? Who will make these Rip van Winkles to get up from their sleep of ignorance. Lord Venkateswara thought for a while. He wanted to appoint a person who is dear to Him and at the same time known to the people at large for His devotion. He was searching for a person who can narrate the great qualities of Him i.e., Lord Venkateswara to the people in their own sweet musical language. Deeply absorbed in these thoughts Lord Venkateswara looked around. His eyes fell on His sword Nandaka. The sword could read the mind of Lord Venkateswara like a printed book. The sword after catching the signal from the Lord, from the navel area where it was adoring the Lord, the Nandaka sword left Tirumala Kshethra. It reached Tallapaka village of the present Kadapa (previously, this place had the spelling

of cudapah) district of A.P. the sword entered into the womb of Akkamamba the wife of Narayana Suri. The Nandaka sword of Lord Venkateswara took its birth from the womb of Akkamamba as Annamaiah, the 'Pada Kavitha Pithamaha' of Telugu literature. Telugus are blessed people. In fact they are twice blessed. Firstly Lord Venkateswara after leaving His Heavenly Abode Vykuntta has selected to stay in Tirumala hills of Andhra Pradesh. Secondly His own Nandaka Sword has appeared in Tallapakka in the form of Annamaiah. Annamaiah's one and only aim was to compose and sing songs in praise of Lord Venkateswara in the native language i.e., Telugu, the Italian of the east. Like Lord Sri Krishna of Bhagavad Gita who advised His disciple Arjuna to come and seek His shelter 'MAMEKAM SARANAM VRAJA' even Annamaiah told people: "You folks come to Tirumala. Behold this Tirumala is the dwelling place of Sri Hari i.e., Lord Venkateswara". Let us bow to this great Nandaka about whose greatness it has been said:

*Raksho Asuranam Kattinogra Kantta*  
*Chhedakshara Chhonita Digdha Dhaaram*  
*Tam Nandakam Nama Hareha Pradeeptham*  
*Khadgam! Sadaaham Saranam Prapadye*

Let us bow to the sword which is successfully chopping off the heads of Rakshasas and protecting the people from their evil deeds. Though the Nandaka sword has taken the form of Annamaiah it has not changed its nature. Sharpness of its tip has taken the



form of sweet touchingly appealing songs of Annamaiah.

Annamaiah's only aim was to narrate the greatness of Lord Venkateswara. Wherever he went he sang songs in praise of Lord Venkateswara as well as local deities. He propagated the philosophy that though names are different, God is only one. He said: "There is no other Lord, other than Lord Venkateswara Who can save and protect people: "VINA VENKATESAM NANAATHO NANATHAHA". He further said: "Lord Venkateswara is All Merciful Paramaatma. You cannot find such Kind Hearted God elsewhere". So he requested people to chant the holy name of Lord Venkateswara whole heartedly. He told people that by paying a negligible price you can get hugely large benefits from Lord Venkateswara. The hands that serve Lord Srinivasa are the hands, the eyes that behold the beauty of Lord Venkateswara are the eyes. The mouth which cannot utter words in praise of Lord should not be considered as mouth. The heart which cannot think about Lord Venkateswara is mere a lifeless bellows. The life which is not dedicated to the Lord is not at all a life. In one of his songs he says: "Lord Venkateswara being omnipresent will follow you everywhere. Being omnipotent He will always protect you. Being omniscience He knows every thing about you. To have salvation say Govinda. He is the only go for this humanity. No one can save you other than Lord Venkateswara. You will not find a Lord who is As Generous, As Kind, As Helpful as Lord Venkateswara

in this mundane world. Don't think that Tirumala is full of rocks and boulders. It is the Heaven on earth. It is the Vykuntta. Serve Him, you will be served with wealth. Praise Him, He will shower salvation on you. You ask Him, He will be your Cow of Plenty. He will become a Wish Yielding Tree for you. Seek shelter you will be owned by Him". Being a great selfless devotee of Lord Venkateswara Annamaiah has practiced what he had preached. "Manasa, vacha, karmana" he has served Lord Venkateswara. With great pomp and show He had arranged the marriage of Venkateswara with Padmavathi. He conducted Raft festival (TEPPOTSVAM = Float festival) and grand procession for Lord and helped people in conducting these things. Right from Suprabhata seva to Ekantha seva, He was in the habit of attending without fail. We have already come to know about Sevas that are conducted by Archakas in a traditionally impressive way without missing a single ritual. They include first darshan given to Sannidhi Golla to the last Harati that is performed in memory of Tarigonda Vengamamba during Ekantha seva.

### **MELUKOLUPU**

#### **(The wake up song)**

In the morning when the Suprabhatam is being recited, standing by the side of golden doors a dark complexioned person with a Tamboora (A one stringed musical instrument), sings the wake up song composed by Annamacharya. He sings: "Oh! Lord stop enacting



the drama and get up: Please get up you have to milk the cows. Your friends with whom You love to play are waiting for You. Your father Nanda is calling You by Your name. Oh! Bala Krishna please get up”. Annamaiah describes various incarnations of Lord and requests Him to get up. Even to this day this wake up song is sung by the descendants of Annamaiah.

### **A LULLABY**

Even in the night before closing the golden doors the descendant of Annamacharya will sing a lullaby during Ekantha seva. Each and every Telugu speaking mother whether she stays in Andhra or in America sings the famous lullaby “Jo Achyutananda Jo Jo Mukunda, Rave Paramananda Rama Govinda”. Surprisingly each and every child of Telugu speaking mother will go to bed only after hearing the aforesaid lullaby from his/her mother. Annamaiah is immortalised by this lullaby. He will continue to live, as the saying goes, till sun and moon shines and water continues to flow in the rivers Ganga and Yamuna.

### **TALLAPAKA**

Around seven hills there are number of holy places. Among them “Pottapinadu” is very famous. This particular place or area is towards North West direction of Venkatachala hill. People consider the Tallapaka village of ‘Pottapinadu’ as the canvas on which Lord Venkateswara has painted a beautiful painting with His own hands. It lures those who visit this place.

On one side of this village we can see green lustrous paddy fields and children playing in these fields. On the otherside we can see rows of palm, coconut trees. The shadow of these trees in the village tank mesmerises those who watch it. On the tankbund there is a temple. The structural condition of the temple tower and wells of the temple will tell you that it is an ancient temple. In the Sanctum Sanctorum there stands a life size idol of Sri Chennakesava Swamy on a high pedestal: In the dim light of the oil lamps the idol appeals to the devotees. The Lord Chennakesava is with His consort Lakshmi. The legend has it that this temple was constructed by the Janamejaya the son of Pareekshit and grand son of Abhimanyu. There lived a scholarly family. They were staunch devotees of Lord Chennakesava. In those days one Vittalaiah was leading his saintly mundane life. He was a priest cum peasant. Long time after his marriage Vittalaiah had a son. As per the family tradition he gave his father’s name Narayanaiah to the new born. Narayanaiah, was brought up with great love and care. As a pet child he was fondled too much. Because of this he did not evince any interest in his studies. He did not care to learn alphabets. As was the family tradition he was refusing to chant ‘Amara Kosam’. Day by day he became a stubborn child. Vittalaiah thought a good guru can set right every thing. He took him (Narayanaiah) to a Guru who was staying in a near by village by name Ootakur. This guru was known for his short temperament, his disciples could not dare to look at him directly. They

used to shiver in their pants as he was known for giving punishments to his disciples. This pet child of Vittalaiah could not cope up with this disciplinarian guru. He felt he is caught between the Devil and the deepsea. After weighing pros and cons he decided to commit suicide. But he did not know how to commit suicide or invite death.

At the outskirts of Ootakur there was a temple by name Chintalamma temple. In the vicinity of the temple there was a big ant hill. In those days people were of the opinion that there lives a terrible cobra. It was rumoured that some have seen it with their naked eyes. It was further believed that mere seeing it causes death. Narayanaiah at the dead of night went to that much feared ant hill. He closed his eyes and inserted his hand into the ant hill. He was expecting the bite from that cobra. The cobra did not emerge from ant hill. To his shock and surprise at that hour Narayanaiah saw a woman coming towards him. She was the village deity Chintalamma. Though Narayanaiah was only a small boy he was indulging in a dare devil act. Chintalamma asked that boy: “My son, who are you? May I know why you are inviting death by putting your hand in this ant hill”. Narayanaiah broke down. He started crying loudly. He narrated the punishment that his guru was giving to him. As he could not bear the treatment meted out to him by his guru he said, ‘I have decided to invite death by inserting my hand into this ant hill’. Chintalamma said: “Oh! Boy don’t worry about anything. Go to your village’s Chennakesava temple

and perform the circumambulation. You will acquire the whole knowledge”. She further told Narayanaiah that by the Grace of Lord Venkateswara you will have a grandson. He will become a great devotee of Lord Venkateswara and will bring laurels to your Vamsa ie., dynasty.

Soon after hearing the soothingly consoling words of Chintalamma, not minding the mid night, Narayanaiah went to his village Tallapaka. He worshipped Lord Chennakesava for some time and performed the circumambulation. By the Grace of Lord Chennakesava he acquired knowledge. When Narayanaiah attained the marriageable age he was married. His wife gave birth to a baby boy. He was christened as Narayanasuri. He was married to Lakkamamba. She was like an incarnation of goddess Lakshmi.

Narayanasuri and Lakkamamba remained issueless for a long time. To see that the progeny continues they visited Tirumala and worshipped Lord Venkateswara. With yellow coloured dress on, they started for Tirumala pilgrimage. They took bath in the holy tank of Tirumala. First they went to Sri Adivaraha Swamy temple and worshipped him. Then they entered into the Lord Venkateswara’s temple by prostrating at each and every step. They stepped into golden doors. They had the holy darshan of Venkateswara, from feet to head. Every part of Lord Venkateswara was beautifully attractive. To their hearts content they had the darshan. They silently

offered their prayers. They prayed Lord Venkateswara to bless them with a child. After performing the circumambulation they went up to Garuda Gambham. They lit lamps there and sincerely prayed for a child. When they were prostrating they slept for a while. They had a dream. In that dream Lord Venkateswara handed over his Nandaka sword which had small bells.

Immediately they opened their eyes. They were thrilled to know that Lord Venkateswara has heard their prayers. They were much excited. They profusely offered their prayers as if they are offering thanks giving prayers. They returned to their village Tallapaka. Very soon Lakkamamba became pregnant. After 9 months gestation period Lakkamamba gave birth to a baby boy on 09.05.1408. As per Hindu lunar calendar it was Vaisakha poornima day. He was born under visakha nakshtra i.e., star. On that day three planets were at their exalted position. It was a very very auspicious time.

### **TALLAPAKA ANNAMAIAH**

It is widely believed that Lakkamamba had delivered a baby boy by the Grace of Lord Venkateswara. Lord Venkateswara's Holy Sword 'Nandaka' took human form and came to this world as the son of Narayanasuri and Lakkamamba. They christened their son as Annamaiah. The boy whom they got, after their long married life, was apple of their eyes. They enjoyed their toddler's tumbling steps. Fondly they used to address their child as 'Annappa', 'Annaiah', 'Annamaiah' very affectionately they used to feed him.

When the child says enough, they say look take this morsel of food as Venkateswara's morsel or Alamelu Manga's morsel. After much cajoling he used to have food with a broad smile on his face. The child used to do everything only after hearing the holy name of Lord Venkateswara. When Annamaiah attained the age of five, his father arranged for his Upanayanam, a Brahminical Baptization. After his thread marriage i.e., Upanayanam he started learning things very fast. His mother used to narrate stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata. Sometimes he used to put those stories in poetic form and used to sing them in a rhythmic way. People used to surprisingly enjoy his tunes as well as his rhythmic steps. Each and every song he composed, began to allure every one in his village. Throughout the day he used to visit temples with some song or other on his lips. Narayanasuri got fed up with his sons slothful activities. Annamaiah's relatives also did not approve his life of lazyness. His sisters-in-law too were angry with him as he has become a good for nothing boy. Narayanasuri's family was a big family. As a Joint family many people were living under one roof. There were some differences particularly among the women folk. Daughters-in-law in the family began to shout at Annamaiah for no fault of him. They were using some sharp as well as intemperate words against him. Even his cousins were angry with him as he was doing nothing.

One day his sisters-in-law gave a sickle to eight year old Annamaiah and asked him to go and cut the

grass from nearby fields. He started cursing the world. He felt that without much effort he is able to compose songs and set tunes to them. He turned to God and said: “Look Oh! Venkata Ramana, my own people do not like my singing songs in praise of you. Instead of appreciating me for my talent they have given this bull work of cutting the grass”. Suddenly he remembered the order of his sisters-in-law. They wanted him to come home quickly with sufficient grass. He started cutting the grass. As he was humming some poem, accidentally his finger got cut. He threw that sickle aside as he experienced the pain. He thought these relationships are not real relationships. From the fields he started looking at his village. Having disgusted with his life as well as the treatment that is being meted out to him, he joined a group of people who were heading towards Tirupati. In the bhajans that were being sung he forgot his physical pain. The people in that troupe looked at Annamaiah. Annamaiah felt that they are telling him about the mortality of this mundane life and suggesting him to join them to know about the truth. Annamaiah decided then and there to follow them. He thought Lord Venkateswara is his father, mother, brother, sister-in-law etc., He, without second thoughts followed them.

The troupe reached the down town Tirupati. Along with others he had village deity Gangamma’s darshan. Some one in the troupe was enquiring about the down town Tirupati. One elderly person said: “Yes, this is down town Tirupati. It is also known as Sripada Puri. Look at that majestic tower. It is Sri Govinda Raja

Swamy’s tower. Some people call this town as Govindaraja Patnam i.e., Govinda Raja Town. Turn that side, you will now see Seven Hills. Lord Venkateswara is dwelling on this mountain range. As He stays on the Hills He is fondly addressed as Konda Meeda Rayudu, i.e., Lord on the Hill. He is the one who fulfills all the desires of His devotees. So let us proceed towards Tirumala to have darshan of Lord Srinivasa”. Annamaiah heard these words with great attention. With greater joy and enthusiasm he started climbing the Hills. The troupe reached Alipiri, the foot of the Hills. There he worshipped the Lotus Feet of the Lord. He had the darshan of nearby Narasimha Swamy.

On his way up he came across Talayeru Gundu – Chinna Ekkudu, Pedda Ekkudu, Gali Gopuram, Muggu Bavi, Karpooora Kaluva etc., While climbing he enjoyed the scenic beauty of Hills and Valleys. Out of joy and excitement he started singing songs. He was totally absorbed in the beauty of nature and innocent looking animals like rabbits, deers etc., and lovely singing birds. Thinking that the boy is following them they went ahead of him.

Annamaiah was dog tired. All alone he crossed Avvaachari Kona. He reached Mokalla Parvatham where knee high steps were there. There he noticed that his troupemates have gone ahead of him. He was feeling thirsty. He began to experience the pangs of hunger. He remembered his mother’s words. She had once told him about the Mokalla Parvatham and its knee high steps. This being his first visit he thought of

climbing the steps with briskness. He could not even guess the distance of the temple from that point. He was rather eager to join the troupe. He once loudly chanted the name of Lord: Yedu Kondala Vada (Lord of seven hills) Venkata Ramana Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!! With the name of the Lord on his lips, he climbed two steps. His head started reeling. He felt that somebody is pushing him down. He started saying please help! Some body help me. He fell unconscious. After some time he felt some body is calling him by his name. The Female Voice asked him to get up and sit down. He opened his eyes. He could not know where exactly he was. He did not know since how long he was there. He thought, 'I might have slept here. Whose voice did I hear ? Who is that person who called me by my name?' As he was trying to compose himself he heard: "Oh! My Son! Get up! Look here". He was once again hearing that sweet consoling voice of a mother. He was much relieved to hear that voice. He forgot his exhaustion. Freshness started flowing in his veins. He looked around. He could not find any one. Then with folded hands he said: "Oh! Mother who are you. You are speaking like my Lakkamamba. I am only hearing your voice. I am not able to see anything. Please kindly save me. Oh! Mother help me". Uttering these words he got up.

Annamaiah then heard the twittering sound. The unseen or invisible voice said: "Oh! My son Annamaiah I am Alamelu Manga. I dwell in the Heart of Lord Venkateswara. People call Me as Padmavathi. The place

where you are now is Sri Venkateswara's Hill. It is a sacred place. This place is full of Salagramams i.e., Ammonities. Not only this particular place the hill on which Sri Venkateswara's Chief Idol is there, is also made of Salagrama stone. Please understand this. You are climbing the Sacred Hill with chappals on. You are committing a big sin. Leave your chappals and you will understand everything for yourself. You will be in a position to see every thing".

Immediately he removed his chappals. To his ashtonishment he could see wonderful glow on that hill. He could also see Alamelu Manga the universal mother. She was inviting him with open arms. He was thrilled. He told her! 'Oh! Mother how fortunate and blessed person I am. I am able to have the darshan of Universal mother, Alamelu Manga'. Uttering these words he looked around. Now in the place of rocks and boulders he could see sacred Salagramams. He saw the heap of Narasimha Salagramams. On the other side he saw Vishnu Salagramams. One side it is Ram and on the other side it is Vishnu. The total hill is filled with Salagramams. Now he repented very much. Yes I have committed a big sin by wearing chappals. But the mistakes that you commit without knowing it as mistake is not at all a mistake. Saying 'Oh! My mother Alamelu Manga pardon me'. He prostrated before mother Alamelu Manga.

Blessing Annamaiah, Mother Alamelu Manga said! 'Oh my son! Get up! You are dog tired. I know you are

hungry. Please take this food. I have specially brought for you. This is pulihora (Tamarind Rice). Do not eat in hurry. There is one more item. This is known as Chakkara Pongali (A kind of sweet rice). You know your father Lord Venkateswara is very very fond of this item. What ever is left over I have specially brought it for you. Eat slowly. The third item is called Miriyapu Pongali i.e., pepper rice. It is prepared with lot of pure ghee. It will be very tasty. Arre! Don't feel shy. Have some quantity. And finally here is Dadhyodanam (curd rice). This rice with cream will be very good. Can I serve you some more quantity'. Like a affectionate mother who feeds her hungry son, Alamelu Manga began to feed Annamaiah. Though Annamaiah had enough food, Alamelu Manga made him to eat some more food. And then she pointed her finger towards Ananda Nilayam and asked him to go there.

Now he had stomach full of good tasty food. The tiresomeness disappeared. With renewed enthusiasm he spontaneously composed one hundred stanzas in praise of Alamelu manga. Alamelu Manga listened to those 100 stanzas and patted him on his back. She said 'Well done Annamaiah ! May Lord Venkateswara be with you always'. With these blessings Alamelu Manga holding Annamaiah's two hands helped him in getting up. Once again she pointed her finger to the Hill and said: "Look at that glittering Hill. Lord Venkateswara dwells in this Hill. Go and worship Him. Get liberated from the cycle of birth and death and help others also in their attempt to get liberated from this mundane

world". She disappeared after this. Contemplating on the all merciful nature of Lord Venkateswara, Annamaiah reached the holy land of Tirumala.

Lord Venkateswara the dear deity of Telugus had directed His sword Nandaka to take birth as Annamaiah in A.P. But look at the early life of Annamaiah. His family people considered him as mere a sickle to cut grass.

Destiny in the form of Bhajan troupe, who were in fact Sanakadi saints indirectly conveyed to Annamaiah's relatives that he is not born to cut grass but liberate humanity and to tell to Telugus that Lord Venkateswara is their own God and is willing to bestow very many boons and favours on them. It is the good fortune of Telugus that a person like Annamaiah is born in their midst and to open their eyes to the fact that Srinivasa is their God and He is ready to grant all boons to Telugus particularly, within no time.

Again it is the good fortune of Telugus that universal mother Alamelu manga appeared before him at the appropriate time and directed him to go to Ananda Nilaya.

With the blessings and proper guidance, Annamaiah reached Ananda Nilaya. Before entering into the main temple he went straight to Swamy Pushkarini. He took a holy dip in the tank and had darshan of Adivaraha Swamy. From there he came to the main entrance of the temple and offered his salutations to the tower of main entrance. After entering into the temple through

the main entrance one after the other he saw and worshipped the following: Tamarind tree of constant shadow, Garuda Gambham, Sampangi Pradakshanam etc.

While going round the Vimana he saw Sri Varada Raja Swamy, Alamelu Manga, Yagasala, traditional Vahanas of Lord Venkateswara. Then he prostrated before the idols of Bhashyakara Ramanuja, Yoga Narasimha Swamy, Vishwaksena and other deities. While looking at other devotees who were continuously chanting the holy name of Lord Venkateswara, Annamaiah entered into Sri Vari Mukha Mandapam. Standing near the golden doors he had the darshan of God who was in the Ananda Nilaya. He had the darshan of life size statue of Lord Venkateswara which was radiating with Amazing Life. In his inimitable way he described Lord Venkateswara. He described Lord from His Lotus Feet to His Gem Studded Crown. After this he visited other important as well as worth seeing places in and around Tirumala.

Daily without fail he used to go over to Ananda Nilaya to serve and worship Lord Venkateswara. On one particular day by the time he went to Ananda Nilaya it was closing time. The closed golden doors greeted him. He felt very much for coming late. The disappointed Annamaiah with heavy heart sat down there and started requesting Lord Venkateswara to give darshan to him. He began singing songs of appeal and request. Unbelievable thing happened. The locked doors

were opened. The Archaka's who were present there were tongue tied. Their lower jaw was dropped. They could come to know about Annamaiah's devotion towards Lord Srinivasa. They honoured the boy and personally took him to the deity's idol and gave him Theertham as well as Prasadam. During that time he spontaneously composed 100 stanzas in Telugu in praise of Lord Venkateswara. As to bless him and at the same time to appreciate him for his poetic talent a necklace which was adorning the neck of the idol fell on the feet. The Archakas could understand the meaning of that. They presented that necklace to Annamaiah.

There lived a great Yati i.e., saint by name Ghana Vishnu Yati in Tirumala. He was a great devotee of Lord Venkateswara. Lord Venkateswara, once appeared in this yati's dream and asked him to initiate Annamaiah into Vaishnavism. He gave a sketch of the boy who is wandering in the streets of Tirumala with songs on his lips. He left his insignia. The very next day morning Ghana Vishnu Yati went in search of Annamaiah about whom Lord Venkateswara had informed him. As per the sketch given by the Lord he could find boy Annamaiah in the precincts of the temple. Having ascertained the fact that about this boy only Lord has given information to him, Yati took him to his place and initiated him into Vaishnavism. Thus Smartha Annamaiah became Vaishnavite Annamacharya. He directed Telugus to the Lotus Feet of Lord. By his devotional songs he explained to Telugus how generous

and benevolent is Lord Venkateswara. He explained the intricacies of Vaishnavism in simple Telugu. People could know more and more about the qualities of Lord Venkateswara by listening to his compositions known as Keerthanas. People conferred the title of 'Pada Kavitha Pithamaha' i.e., the grand old man of Pada Kavitha.

His people at Tallapaka could not know the whereabouts of Annamaiah. They could not know that the boy who had gone to near by field to cut grass has gone to Tirumala. They waited for him. Days passed by. But the boy never returned. Mother Lakkamamba fell sick. They made enquiries about Annamaiah. They intensely searched for him. It never yielded any result. To appeal to God, they - Narayanasuri and Lakkamamba - went to Tirumala. They thought the God who has blessed them with a child will find their child. They saw Annamaiah in the temple. He was singing songs in praise of Lord Venkateswara. They, particularly mother Lakkamamba was very happy to see her son. They profusely thanked Lord Venkateswara for taking care of their child. They were eager to take him back to Tallapaka along with them. The boy Annamaiah refused to accompany them to Tallapaka. Lakkamamba once again appealed to Lord Venkateswara to help her. On that night Lord Venkateswara appeared in the dream of Annamaiah. He asked him not to give pain to his parents. It is said in the scriptures that parents are living Gods. You accompany your parents and obey their orders. Annamaiah's sleep was disturbed. He woke up. He

could recollect the orders of Lord Venkateswara. He agreed to accompany his parents. Thus he reached his native place Tallapaka. After some time Annamaiah's marriage was arranged. He married Tirumalamma as well as Akkamma. After marriage he went to famous Vaishnavite pilgrim centre Ahobilam and joined Guru Sattakopa Muni to study Vaishnavism. Sattakopa Muni could talk *tete-e-tete* with Nrusimha Swamy. He gave the sacred Nrusimha Mantra to Annamaiah. After taking leave from Sattakopa Muni, Annamaiah once again reached Tirumala.

Annamaiah wanted to settle down in Tirumala, once for all. But Lord Venkateswara told him. "Look Oh! Annamaiah I am not merely a Tribal God Obulesu. I am God to each and every one. Now onwards go around the country and enlighten people with My Ideology or Philosophy. Your effort should be to propagate My Grace".

As per the specific order of Lord Venkateswara he started to visit each and every village of Andhra Desa. Some villages and towns had Rama Temple, some had Krishna Temple, some were the worshippers of either Nrusimha or Vittala of Pandaripur. Who ever may be the deity of the village, he composed and sung songs, praising Him. Not only the temples of Andhra, he visited all the famous Vaishnavite temples of South India. He composed songs. To him there was not difference between Venkateswara and other deities like Rama, Krishna, Nrusimha, Vittala etc. To him all are one. He



said: God is one. About Govinda Raja Swamy of Tirupati he said, “Govinda Raja the husband of Bhodevi and Sridevi protects all those who seek shelter with Him. He has worshipped Rama who is dear to Seetha, Lakshmana and Hanuman. He visited Ahobilam and praised Nrusimha Swamy. He visited Kadapa’s Venkateswara Swamy temple and eulogized Him as Karpurapu Navvula Kadapa Rayudu, the Smiling God of Kadapa. He visited the following famous Vaishnavite pilgrim centres. Sri Veera Raghava temple of Onti Mitta (Kadapa District), Hanuman temple of Kalasapur and Vijaya Nagar (Hampi) Sri Rangam Temple, Kadiri (ATP Dist of A.P) Narasimha Swamy Temple, Panduranga Vittala temple, Chennakesava temple of Velugoti and Chukkalaru and Pela Kurati, Sri Rama Temple of Dasari Palle, Muddukrishna of Udayagiri etc. On one of his tours he visited Penugonda. The ruler Saluva Narasinga Rayulu was known to Annamaiah. The ruler accepted Annamaiah as his guru and requested him to stay in Penugonda. Annamaiah, thought the ruler is a great devotee of Sri Venkateswara. Once he began to describe the love play of Srinivasa and Alamelu Manga. Saluva Narasinga Rayulu very much appreciated Annamaiah’s description of Lord’s love play. He requested Annamaiah to compose one such romantic song keeping him in mind as hero. Annamaiah bluntly turned down the base request of Saluva Narasinga Rayalu. The king, got very angry. He ordered his people to arrest Annamaiah and put him into jail. He was chained. Distressed Annamaiah offered his prayers to Lord

Venkateswara. The reliever of distress of His distressed devotees heard Annamaiah’s prayer. His chains broke into pieces. King heard about broken chains. He could not believe it. He once again ordered his soldiers to put him in chains in his presence. Once again the chains were broken into pieces. The ruler realized his mistake. He begged Annamaiah’s pardon. Annamaiah advised the ruler not to insult the devotees of God. He pardoned the ruler and left that place. He thought he should not stay with kings. He went back to Tirumala.

After extensively propagating the noble qualities like relieving the distress of distressed and partiality shown towards His devotees by showering favours, Annamaiah the Brand Ambassador of Venkateswara’s generosity, reached Tirumala along with his two wives. He was very actively participating in all the temple rituals. He regularly used to sing the wake up song in the morning Suprabhatam as well as the lullaby (Ekantha seva) in the night. Lord Venkateswara was so enamoured by his lullaby. Lord Venkateswara one night during the Ekantha Seva addressed Annamaiah as Mama i.e., Father-in-law and said : “after hearing your lullaby only I get sleep. As such I don’t want to hear keerthanas composed and sung by others. Now onwards I permit only you to sing lullaby”. To this effect He gave His word of honour. This episode has been recorded by Annamacharaya’s grand son i.e., daughter’s son by name Revanoori Venkatarayudu. To respect and honour the word of Lord Venkateswara even to this day a

descendant of Annamacharya sings wake up song in the morning by standing near the golden gates and lullaby in the night. Each and every day temple Archakas honour the descendant of Annamacharya with Sandalwood paste and the traditional Thamboolam - a plate containing betel leaves, arecanuts, fruits and a coconut.

Annamacharya the incarnation of Lord's Nandaka Sword was a blessed person. Lord Venkateswara has preferred to address him as Father-in-law. In fact Lord Venkateswara is the son-in-law of Saintly Annamaiah.

### **NITYA KALYANOTSAVAM**

Marriages, normally are celebrated on auspicious days selected by the astrologers. On that day festoons will be tied everywhere. But in Tirumala being more sacred place than most of the sacred places, Lord's marriage with Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi is celebrated on each and every day. The festoons with fresh mango leaves enhance the beauty of marriage mandapam daily, throughout the year. In Telugu they call it Nitya kalyanam Pachcha (green) Thoranam (festoon). The tradition of arranging Lord's marriage on each and every day was started by Annamaiah. Prior to Annamaiah the Lord's marriage used to be celebrated on important festival days and during Brahmotsavam. Annamaiah introduced daily marriage ritual. There is one more speciality in Lord's marriage. Both Lord Venkateswara and Annamaiah belong to same Bharadwaja Gothram i.e., Linege. Generally, the marriage between bride and

bride groom of same gothram will not take place. In spite of this restriction every day marriage takes place. Every day Annamaiah the father of the bride offers his daughter in marriage to the groom Lord Venkateswara. Even now the descendants of Annamacharya only perform 'Kanyadan'. They are honoured by the T.T.D. Annamaiah has composed a special song for this occasion and the same song is repeated even to this day.

The firm foundation for Nitya Kalyanam was laid by Annamaiah in the 15th century A.D. This tradition is being continued even to this day. Lord's Kalyanotsavam is celebrated not only in the nook and corner of India but also throughout the world.

Annamaiah took keen interest in other festivals connected with temple like Vasantha Utsavam, Brahma Utsavam, Pushpa Yagam, Ugadi celebrations, Sri Rama Navami celebrations, Anivara Asthanam, Vykuntta Ekadasi, Deepavali etc. He used to personally participate in these festivities and used to compose special songs to suit the occasion. On every Friday special Abhishekam is performed to the Lord Venkateswara. He has composed a beautiful song describing how He i.e., Lord is being given oil bath by Alamelu Manga. He has minutely described Lord's sacred bath in the company of Alamelu Manga.

It is widely believed that during his life time Annamaiah has composed 32,000 pada kavitha's in praise of Lord Venkateswara. Every year on Ugadi day

a 40 day festival gets organized in Tirumala. During this festival, Lord's procession will pass through the main streets of Tirumala.

While moving in a palanquin Lord Venkateswara prefers to listen to devotional keerthanas composed by Annamaiah. Without being accompanied by any Orchestra the descendants of Annamaiah, with a tamboora in their hands will be singing, songs composed by Annamaiah in almost all the ceremonies that are observed. Vykanasa Agama traditions introduced by Bhagavad Ramanujacharya are strictly implemented by the Jeeyangars. In spite of their supervision, some traditions were introduced by Annamacharya who was not a born vaishnavite. It may look like a paradox. It is because Annamacharya happens to be the incarnation of Lord's Nandaka Sword.

Annamaiah through his composition made Lord Venkateswara as the family deity of Telugus. He encouraged people to visit and seek instant blessings from Lord Venkateswara. He is responsible for awakening and understanding the spiritual aspect of Lord Venkateswara's devotion among people in general and Telugus in particular. If Lord Venkateswara has become popular world wide, the credit must be given to Annamacharya. Annamacharya has achieved what Lord Venkateswara wanted Him to achieve. It was mission fulfilled or accomplished. For this achievement Annamaiah thanked whole heartedly his mentor Lord Venkateswara. He expresses his gratitude through the

following words: "You have put words into my mouth. You have only made me to compose songs in praise of You. You are a God with more than thousand names. You did every thing but I got the credit". Finally he dedicated his Keerthana's to Lord Venkateswara saying these are the flowers that I am offering to Your Lotus Feet. Please accept them: "By singing only one song I know you will be pleased and will bestow your choicest blessings. Rest of my poems are meant to be preserved in a library". Under his direction his poems were written on copper plates. He made people to preserve them safely so that the future generations can know about his poems in praise of Lord Venkateswara. Thanks to the efforts of late lamented Sri Veturi Prabhakara Sastrigaru. These plates were unearthed and well preserved in a store room known as Sankeerthana Bhandaram.

It is quite possible for one lineage to have poets continuously, generation after generation. Similarly in one family devotees of God may continuously take birth. But what is rare is generation after generation devotees of Lord Venkateswara are born in Tallapaka lineage and are continuously serving God with their poetic talent without any break even to this day. This is because Annamaiah happened to be the incarnation of Lord's Nandaka sword. After 94 long very useful years in the service of God, Annamaiah shed his mortal body in the year 1503 on phalguna Bahula Dwadashi of Dundubhi Nama Samvatsaram. The Nandaka sword on that day returned to its original place.

Through his Sankeerthanas, which are composed in simple lucid Telugu, Annamaiah could succeed in installing the idol of Lord Venkateswara, firmly in the hearts of Telugus. He could tell them that to please Lord Venkateswara, one need not chant Veda Mantras. Lord Venkateswara will shower His blessings on all those devotees who either sing or listen to the songs composed by Annamaiah. Sri Gowripeddi Rama Subba Sarma while paying his rich tributes to Annamaiah has composed this sloka in Sanskrit.

*Venkatesa Parabrahma Rasa Thundila Manasam  
Adhyathma Vidya Marmagnam Anna Maryam  
Namamyaham*

### ALWARS

The great Tamil Vaishnavites who are known as Alwars have worshipped the Lord of Seven hills, Sri Srinivasa. All the Alwars have composed songs in praise of Lord Venkateswara in their mother tongue i.e., Tamil.

Poigai Alwar, the very first Alwar has said: We have heard about Dasa Avatars of Supreme God. But we have not seen them. Even if one sincerely wishes to see those ten incarnations it is not possible. The wish cannot be fulfilled. But on Tirumala Hills the Lord Vishnu after directly descending from Vykunttam has become accessible to all devotees. The beauty and Grace of Lord Vishnu who has assumed the name of Lord Venkateswara is to be seen to believe it. The vocabulary that we have at our command is not sufficient to describe His greatness.

Bhoota Alwar has extensively described the scenic beauty of Tirumala Kshethra. To Peyalwar, Lord Venkateswara gave his darshan as Hari Hara Moorthy. He has praised this particular form of Lord Venkateswara.

Tirumalisai Alwar says Lord Vishnu has come down to earth in the form of Lord Venkateswara just to please and bless His devotees. The great Vaishnava Siromani Namma Alwar says: “You just offer your salutations to Lord Venkateswara He will readily fulfill all your wishes. He is so merciful that by chanting His name the devotees will be free from all sins they might have committed in their previous births as well as they may be committing in their coming births”. If people want any thing in this life they have to visit Tirumala without fail to achieve or to get it.

Kula Sekhara Alwar expresses his desire to take birth on the Holy Hill of Venkatadri as a tree or as an ant hill or a fish in the Lord’s tank or as crane. But he feels that as the forms he has mentioned above are not permanent he prays Lord Venkateswara to make him a stone near the Garbha Griha so that he can have a close look at him. May be because of this the stone threshold that is there opposite to the Chief Idol is christened as Kulasekhara Padi (step).

‘Vishnu Chittudu’, who is popularly known as ‘Periya Alwar’ considered Lord Venkateswara as no other God other than Lord Krishna. Tiruppaana Alwar prays to Lord Venkateswara to bless him with an opportunity to serve His devotees.

“I have committed number of sins. Only You Lord Venkateswara can relieve me from these sins” prayed Thirumangai Alwar. The one and only female Alwar Andal who is otherwise known as Goda Devi, standing before the Chief Idol of Lord Venkateswara, said, I dedicate myself to Lord Venkateswara who has glittering Sankhu and Chakra in His Hands.

In this way so many great saints and devotees have worshipped Lord of Seven Hills. When some body addresses Him as Oh! My Lord, He will respond with the words ‘yes My son’. Even people like us after enjoying everything in our life, when we seek shelter with Him, we can overcome all our mundane problems and can read the path of salvation by His Grace. We people are fortunate enough to visit Tirumala and have the darshan of Lord Venkateswara.

### **THE CHIEF IDOL OF SRI VENKATESWARA**

The Chief Idol of Lord Venkateswara has got an inexplicable magnetic power.

Every day early in the morning soon after Suprabhatam recitation, innumerable devotees and pilgrims will have the darshan of the same Chief Idol. Every day right from early morning upto night’s Ekantha seva people stand in serpentine ‘Q’ which starts from Vykunttam Complex and those devotees who buy special Archana Tickets also will join the ‘Q’ near the main entrance and proceed to have the darshan of the

same Chief Idol. As the legend has it this self emerged statue of the Lord is nothing but a salagrama vigraha. Not only human beings even the Celestial Beings like Brahma and others worship Lord Venkateswara. To facilitate Celestial Beings to worship God the Archakas keep some water in a golden vessel. The same is offered as theertham in the morning after Suprabhatam. Twice in a day i.e., in the morning as well as in the evening God will be decorated with flowers. This is known as Thomala Seva. Naivedyam is offered three times a day.

Every Tuesday morning at 6 O’ Clock as second Archana Ashtadasha Pada Padma Aradhana is performed. During this Archana, Lord will be worshipped with 108 golden lotus flowers.

Every Thursday, at the time of second Archana they remove the jewellery as well as the sacred Namam from the forehead of the Chief Idol. After removing this one ceremony known as Annakoototsavam, a offering called ‘Tiruppavada’ is performed. Tiruppavada means a special Naivedyam of ‘Pulihora’ a type of a tamarind masala (cooked) rice. A big heap of pulihora will be arranged outside golden doors. Along with pulihora even big size jelebis and Murukus (a deep fired gram item) are also offered. After completing this ‘Tiruppavada seva’ devotees will be allowed to have ‘Nethra Darshanam’ of Lord Srinivasa. On Thursday evening special flower decoration by name ‘Poolangi seva’ also takes place.

Every Friday after Suprabhatam God is given a Mangala Abhishekam consisting of fragrant items like

a perfume called civet, a paste like pomatum musk etc., is performed to the Chief Idol. Only during this Friday Abhishekam people can have 'Nijaroopa darshan' of the Lord. At that time no jewellery or garlands will be on the person of Lord Venkateswara.

### **FRAGRANT THINGS**

On every Friday, Abhishekam is performed to the Chief Idol. In that Abhishekam the following fragrant things are added: 80 Tolas (one tola is equal to the weight of one rupee of British days) crude camphor, 36 tolas of saffron, one tola of musk, 1 ½ tola of civet oil and 24 tolas of turmeric powder. They pour water containing aforesaid fragrant things on the head of the Chief Idol. The liquid that flows down is collected as Theertham. This is known as 'Pulikapu Theertham'. After Friday's Abhishekam this liquid is sprinkled on devotees who would have bought the tickets to witness this Abhishekam. This theertham is widely believed has some miraculous powers. Annamaiah, who is considered to be a manifestation of Lord's Nandaka sword, describes its miraculous powers thus: "This is a powerful medicine and has no expiry date. This dispels all our distractions and gives us salvation. It is a cool medicine and is priceless. All known or unknown diseases are cured with this medicine. It is capable of driving out all sins. It is the medicine which Celestial Beings like Brahma and others would love to take. This is a medicine which will shut the doors of hell. It dispels fears and will make a dullard an intelligent person. It is

a medicine with which you can win Lord Venkateswara to your side".

### **SACRED MARKS ON FOREHEAD**

Every Friday after Abhishekam sacred marks known as Namam (verticle lines) are put on the forehead of the Chief Idol. This is called Tirumani Kappu. To put this namam the following ingredients are used: 16 tolas of crude camphor and 1/2 tolas of musk. This they do only on Fridays. This will be there till the following Thursday. On Thursday the width of the namam is reduced to a thin line so that the devotees can have what they call 'Nethra Darshanam'. During Brahmothsavam days the quantity of fragrant things that they use, is doubled. The Friday that comes before the commencement of Brahmothsavam, the Friday that follows after Brahmothsavam and the Friday or Fridays that come during Brahmothsavam, for the preparation of Namam 32 tolas of crude camphor and 3 tolas of musk are used. That is why the three or four Fridays that occur during Brahmothsavam are known as 'Rettimpu (Twice) Fridays'. The application of crude camphor takes place according to Vykanasa tradition.

*Naasika moola maarabhya Rekha Dwitaya*

*Samyutam*

*Dhaarayeth Oordhwa Pundram Hareha Phalatale  
subhe*

i.e., it stands from the tip of the nose and extends upto forehead. After Abhishekam the Chief Idol gets a new

dhota of 24 cubits long and 4 cubits wide and an upper cloth of 2 cubits long and 2 cubits wide. The Chief Idol will be decorated with jewels worth some 'monds' weight. (25 pounds is one Manugu weight)

It is humanly impossible to list out the jewellery, precious stones, diamonds and others given or donated to God by innumerable devotees from time immemorial. Even donars names cannot be given. Now let us try to know the names of Divine jewellery that adores the Chief Idol.

#### **Jewellery / Ornaments of Lord Venkateswara**

1. Golden seat under the Lotus Feet (Padma Peetham)
2. Golden covers for the Lotus Feet
3. Golden Garment (Peethambaram)
4. Golden sword by name Surya Kattari
5. Golden cover that adores Vykuntta Hastham (Hand)
6. The long golden sheet that covers the Vykuntta Hastham
7. Golden right side Nagabharanam which will decorate Vykuntta Hastham
8. A bracelet under the Nagabharanam of Vykuntta Hastham
9. Ordinary golden sheet which adores the Hand placed on the Hip
10. The golden bracelet which adores the Hand on the Hip

11. Long golden cover which adores the Hand on the Hip
12. Golden cover for the golden Hand on the Hip
13. A gem studded bracelet like thing which adores the Hand on the Hip
14. Nagabharanam (gold) for the Left Hand
15. A golden Nagabharana belt around the Waist
16. Golden gem studded carcanet for Lakshmi dwelling near the chest of the Chief Idol.
17. Golden Salagrama garland with thousand names engraved on them
18. Golden Tulasi Garland
19. Golden Waist belt by name Kammara Patte
20. The Golden Sacred Thread of six strings
21. 108 names engraved garland of gold coins
22. A four stringed gold chain made of mohars i.e., gold coins
23. Two arm ornaments
24. Gem studded gold sheet for the Sankhu
25. Gem studded gold sheet for the Wheel the Chakram
26. Gem studded golden Left Ear ornament
27. Gem studded Golden Right Ear ornament
28. Gem studded gold ear rings for both ears
29. Crescent moon shaped gold collar ornament
30. Gold Necklace
31. Gold gridle with bells

32. A pair of gold ear ornament
33. Three stringed gold chain
34. Ordinary gold collar ornaments
35. Gold crown
36. Newly made to order gold sheets to cover Shankhu and Chakra
37. Five stringed Gold chain
38. Crocodile shaped (Makara Thoranam) gold festoon for the Lord
39. Sridevi's image near the chest of the Chief Idol.

The ornaments and jewellery valued at several crores of rupees will be in the custody of Archakas. Some of these ornaments and jewellery will adorn the Idol and rest are safeguarded in the temple itself. With all ornaments and jewellery on, the Lord happily and willingly gives darshan to His devotees. Let us chant the holy name

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

### **36. BHOGA SRINIVASA MOORTHY**

The life size salagrama idol of the Sanctum Sanctorum is the Main Idol. The second important idol is known as Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy. Only this idol according to Vykanasa Agama is known as "Kouthuka Moorthy" and "Purusha Beram". Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy is worshipped daily at the time of Ekantha Seva. He is also known as 'Manavala Perumal'. The word Manavalan means 'Bride groom' in Tamil. He is the one who becomes a bride groom almost everyday.

He is considered to be a ever green bridegroom. This being the reason He sleeps on a comfortable silk bed everyday and leads a very luxurious life. Because of this enjoyment He gets the name of Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy.

The silver replica of Chief Idol of the Sanctum Sanctorum has all the insignia of Lord Venkateswara. This silver replica's height is one and half feet. It is placed near the feet of the Chief Idol.

A Pallava queen by name Samavayi (Shyamavva or Shyamalamba) has presented this silver idol to the temple in the year 614 A.D. She is popularly called as 'Kadavan Perun Devi'. At that time it seems, the Ananda Nilayam was undergoing some repair work. To facilitate the worship without any disruption, she got Tiruvilan Koil (Bala Alayam or small temple) constructed and installed the silver idol of the Lord. Now this place is called as Snapana (Holy Ablutions) Mandapam. After installing this silver idol she made arrangements for Nitya Pooja and Nitya Abhishekam. She had passed a rule to take out the idol of Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy in procession in the Tamil month of Peratasi (Sep-October). She had liberally donated varieties of ornaments and jewellery to Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy. From that day onwards this silver idol known as Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy has occupied place of importance in all the rituals of the temple.

Every day morning after Suprabhatam and before Thomala Seva i.e., flower decoration, this silver idol is



given a holy bath with waters of Akasa Ganga theertham. In the place of the Chief Idol only Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy receives all Abhishekams everyday. Every Wednesday at 6 a.m. in the Maha Mandapam which is in front of golden door, Sahasra Kalasa Abhishekam is performed to this silver idol. Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy's idol will be kept before Garuda Alwar on a seat meant for taking bath. At that time both the idols i.e., Sri Venkateswara of Ananda Nilayam and Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy will be connected with either silk thread or thread made out of gold. This signifies that the Abhishekams are performed to the Chief Idol. During Sahasra Kalasa Abhishekam, to the right side of Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy on a seat meant for taking bath they place Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi sametha i.e., along with, Malayappaswamy. On the left side on another seat for bath, commander-in-chief Vishwaksena's idol will be placed. This will face south. Now this will be near Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy. Together Archakas will perform Sahasra Kalasa Abhishekam. After Abhishekam Milk rice, Appalu (pan cake like sweet) pongali etc., are offered as Naivedyams.

Every night during Ekantha Seva a particular service by name 'Pavvalimpu seva' (An act of reclining) is offered to Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy. But, for one month i.e., during Dhanurmasam (December, January) this pavvalimpu seva is offered to Sri Krishna whose idol can be seen in Ananda Nilaya.

The act of reclining will take place every night for Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy. This act of reclining takes place on a hanging cot. This cot will have a silk bed and four silver chains will be holding this cot. On this hanging cot Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy will recline with His Head facing south. Around the cot in the name of Tarigonda Vengamamba, on the floor they will have beautiful rangoli. Two feet long silver lamp stands will be placed in front of the cot. The Sannidhi Golla will light those lamps.

During Ekantha seva Lord Venkateswara will be offered sugar mixed luke warm cow's milk. Pancha Kajjayam consisting of poppy seeds sugar, cashew nuts, dry coconut, dry grapes, cardamom powder, meva made of cut fruits etc., is also offered. They make two balls of Sandalwood paste. One ball of Sandalwood paste will be placed near the feet of the Lord. Half of second Sandalwood ball will be placed on the chest of reclining Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy, ¼ of the paste will be placed on Sri Maha Lakshmi who dwells on Lord Venkateswara's Chest. The remaining quarter will be placed near the Feet of the Lord so that celestial beings like Brahma and other Gods can worship the Lord during their visit.

When the Pavvalimpu seva (the act of reclining) takes place, near the entry point to Ramulavari Meda, a descendant of Annamacharya with a Tamboora in his hand will be singing a lullaby. After the lullaby is completed Tarigonda Vengamamba's Muthyala Harati

is performed to Lord of Ananda Nilayam and then to the reclining Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy. In the light of Harati when we look at the glowing face of Lord Venkateswara we will be transformed to the world of supreme happiness. With this Muthyala Harati the daily pujas to Lord Venkateswara will come to an end.

After the Muthyala Harati the sugar mixed milk and the fruit salad is offered to devotees as Lord's prasadam.

Next day morning during Suprabhatam chanting, Archakas enter the bed room of Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy through the golden doors and gently wake him up in a traditional way. From this bed room the idol of Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy is taken into Ananda Nilaya and there it will be placed near the Feet of the Chief Idol.

Have the darshan of Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy and seek His blessings while chanting:

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

### **37. KOLUVU SRINIVASA MOORTHY**

Now let us proceed to have the darshan of Sri Koluvu Srinivasa Moorthy who is majestically sitting on a golden thrown. He is also known by the following names: Lekhana Srinivasa Moorthy, Darbar Srinivasa Moorthy, Alagippiranar, Bali Beram, Aniruddha Beram etc.

It is said to be a duplicate idol of the Chief Idol. The height of this panchaloha idol is only two feet. It is

believed to be an idol belonging to 826 A.D. Every day morning after Thomala seva, Sri Koluvu Srinivasa Moorthy's idol will be placed on a golden thrown kept in the Snapana Mandapam. People will hold golden umbrella and big fans. After offering Arghya, Padya, Achamanadi Services, Harati will be performed. The Harati will be followed by the Panchanga Sravanam i.e., the year, the ayana, the ritu, the month, the paksha, the thithi and the vara of the day will be announced. Then the treasury officer after offering his salutations to God will give details about the previous days collection in the hundi, the total amount received through the sale of Argitha Seva tickets. Amount received through the sales of prasadam etc., and finally says Oh! Lord please kindly take note of the details given. In this darbar or the court of the Lord, names of those donars who have donated money for Nityannadana Pathakam - the scheme of feeding the devotees daily - are announced. God listens to those names. After this procedure the Archaka's receive Matra Danam (16 kilos of rice) on behalf of Koluvu Srinivasa seated on a golden thrown. Expressing their gratitude the Archakas say: 'Nitya Aishvaryobhava' i.e., May your wealth increase daily by leaps and bounds. This will be followed by an offering which is made of roasted gingly powder mixed with jaggery to Koluvu Srinivasa Moorthy. At the end Harati is performed.

If it is before sunrise the court will sit within the Snapana Mandapam and if it is after sunrise it will sit in Ghanta Mandapam which is in front of Golden door.

Though this Koluvu Srinivasa Moorthy has the name of 'Bali Beram' (Image) when the 'Bali Annam' is placed on all the 8 directions of the temple after the Naivedyam in the Ananda Nilayam, this image is not taken out. He never comes out of Ghanta Mandapam. Every one can have the darshan of Sri Koluvu Srinivasa Moorthy.

Koluvu Srinivasa Moorthy's thrown made of gold symbolically represents Lord Venkateswara's Darbar or court. Let us eulogise him in the following words.

Akhilanda Koti Brahmaanda Naayaka

Adi Mandhyantha Rahitha!

Jagadeka Sarvabhowma!

Sri Mat Rajadhi Raja Parameswara

Nitya Kalyana Chakravarthee

Srimad Alamelu Manga Pathee

Hail! Hail!! Hail!!! Lord Venkateswara.

### **38. UGRA SRINIVASA MOORTHY**

Sri Ugra (ferocious) Srinivasa Moorthy with His two Consorts Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi, as per temple tradition is also known as Venkatattu Raivar, Snapana Beram, Snapana Moorthy and Achyuta Beram.

To Snapana Beram (Bath Image) daily Abhishekams are not offered. These idols - Srinivasa Moorthy, Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi - are made of Panchaloha. In olden days it is believed were taken in procession during festival days. Once when these idols

were taken in procession it is said some astonishing things, with unexpected consequences had happened. From that day (1330 A.D) onwards these idols are not taken in procession on festival days.

But on two days in a year i.e., on Dwadasa Tiruaradhana (Krishna Ashtami) and Kartheeka Dwadasi (Kaisika or Ksheerabdhi Dwadasi) darbar is arranged for Ugra Srinivasa Moorthy. Even on these two days in the small hours of the day i.e., some hours before sunrise around 2.30 or 3 a.m. the darbar is arranged. It is said that the idols become more ferocious when the sun's rays touch them. This continues even to this day.

On Dwadasa Aradhana night at about 10 O'clock, the idols of Ugra Srinivasa Moorthy along with His two Consorts Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi will be brought from the Sanctum Sanctorum and will be placed in Ghanta Mandapam. After placing them there they are given holy bath and offerings. After completing all these rituals the idols will be taken back to Ananda Nilayam.

On Kaisika Dwadasi Day (Karthika Dwadasi) after Suprabhatam and Thomala seva the Ugra Srinivasa Moorthy's idol along with the idols of Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi will have Abhishekam and will be adored with new set of silk robes, ornaments and garlands. Then Sri Ugra Srinivasa Moorthy will be taken in a procession befitting an emperor. This procession will be taken out on Maha Pradakshanam route. Archakas will take care to complete the procession and other connected rituals by 3 a.m. After the procession the

idols will be brought to Ranga Mandapam. Here Sri Ugra Srinivasa Moorthy arrives riding on Sarva Bhoopala Vahanam. After traditional poojas and Harati the idols will be taken back to Ananda Nilaya.

This duplicate image of Sri Ugra Srinivasa Moorthy is made of panchalohas. This 20 inches long idol stands on a lotus seat of 6 inches height. Similarly on the two sides of Sri Ugra Srinivasa Moorthy on a 5 inches high lotus seat 18 inches long Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi stand.

These idols are considered to be oldest idols among the idols that are taken out in procession.

### **39. SRI MALAYAPPA SWAMY**

With His two Consorts Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi the Utsava Srinivasa Moorthy participates in each and every festival and procession. People have given different names to these Utsava Srinivasa Moorthy. They call him as Malayakuniya Ninra Perumal i.e., God standing on the Hill Venkatadri, Utsava Beram i.e., Utsava Moorthy, Satya Beram and Malayappa Swamy. Though Utsava Srinivasa has so many names only Malayappa Swamy name is more popular and more liked by the devotees.

Sri Malayappa Swamy's utsava idol with His two Consorts is the fifth Utsava Moorthy that we have in the Ananda Nilayam. In Lord Venkateswara's temple to the right of the Chief Idol towards south we can see these idols on a peetham i.e, seat.

Name Malayappa appears in the inscription of 1339 A.D. prior to Utsava Srinivasa Moorthy, the Ugra

Srinivasa Moorthy played a dominant role in processions.

How Malayappa Swamy's Utsava Moorthy replaced the Ugra Srinivasa Moorthy? A popular story reveals this secret.

### **MALAYAPPA SWAMY IN HILL'S GORGE**

In 13th century A.D. on one particular day when the Utsava Ugra Srinivasa Moorthy's idol with His two Queens was taken out in procession in the streets of Tirumala, it seems all the houses were suddenly burnt down. So many fearful incidents it seems also took place. Shell shocked priests, devotees and the natives of Tirumala appealed to Lord Venkateswara to help and save them. Lord Venkateswara inspired one of his devotees and through him informed each and everyone not to take out Sri Ugra Srinivasa Moorthy's idol in procession henceforth. In place of Ugra Srinivasa Moorthy's idol you bring the idol of Malayappa Swamy from the Malayappa gorge and make it Utsava Moorthy for all temple festivals as well as processions.

As per the order given by the Lord Srinivasa the priests stopped the Brahmothsavam procession abruptly. For New Utsava Moorthy they went to Malayappa gorge and searched that area extensively. Finally after unearthing a particular place they could find the moorthies i.e., idols. In a traditional way i.e., with piped auspicious music amidst the chanting of Veda Mantras they brought those idols to the temple. As per Agama Shastras, samprokshanam was conducted. Thus they

got those three idols installed in the Ananda Nilaya. The Brahmothsavams which were stopped abruptly, Archakas once again started on the day which falls under Sravana Nakshatra. For procession they used new idols which they had installed after bringing them from Malayappa gorge. As they have found and brought them from Malayappa gorge they christened the Srinivasa idol as Malayappa Swamy. Because they have found these idols in the deep slopes of the valley they gave a Tamil name 'Malaya Kuniya Ninra Perumal' which means God found in the deep valley of Malayappa gorge.

There is one more importance of this Malayappa Moorthy. The Chief Idol of Lord Venkateswara which happens to be Eight Feet high Salagrama Moorthy which attracts devotee from all over the world. The Malayappa Swamy Utsava Moorthy which is taken out on each and every festival day as well as special occasions is as attractive as the Chief Idol. It is a 3 feet high Moorthy. One is Dhruva Moorthy i.e., permanently fixed to one place and is immovable where as the Malayappa Swamy Utsava Moorthy is mobile. To see Lord Venkateswara one has to go to the temple. Where as Malayappa Swamy comes out to give darshan. The Malayappa Swamy idol which is made of panchaloha stand on 9 inches seat is, of 27 inches height. On both sides of Malayappa Swamy His two Queens Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi stand on a seat of 4 inches and are of 24 inches in their height. From the day they were brought from the deep slopes of Malayappa gorge, they are used regularly in all processions as Utsava Moorthies. Thus

they have acquired a prominently important place in all the processions. They move around the streets of Tirumala to give darshans to all devotees that too from close quarters.

### **ABHISHEKAM**

Sravanam happens to be birth star of Sri Srinivasa. On Sravana Nakshtra day, every month, after Suprabhatam, but before Thomala seva special Abhishekam will be performed to Malayappa Swamy along with His Consorts. This Abhishekam will be performed in solitude.

In addition to this, almost every day, vasantha utsavam will be conducted as Arjita Seva (prepaid utsavam). Even on this occasion Abhishekam is performed. Of course on the fixed days like special pooja on Mondays, Sahasra Kalasa Abhishekam on Wednesdays. Yearly Vasantha Utsavam Day, Jyeshtha Abhishekam Day, Pavithra Utsavam Day, Brahma Utsavam Day, Pushpa Yagam Day etc., Abhishekam is performed to Sri Malayappa Swamy.

### **DIVYA KAVACHAM**

#### **(Divine Armour or cover)**

Like Lord Venkateswara even Sri Malayappa Swamy has many precious valuable jewellery, studded gold ornaments and different types of crowns. So many kings, rulers and other rich people have donated very costly gifts to Sri Malayappa Swamy during their visit to Tirumala. Only Malayappa Swamy has Diamond

cover, pearl cover, gold cover. No other idol of Ananda Nilayam has these things.

When Malayappa Swamy puts on Diamond cover, it is believed He will protect His devotees like the hard shell of a tortoise which is impregnable. When He wears pearl cover He showers riches very coolly on His devotees. Similarly when He comes out, with gold cover it glitters like Lord Venkateswara of Ananda Nilaya.

### **NAIVEDYAM (Offerings)**

When Malayappa Swamy comes to the Sanctum Sanctorum only then offerings are offered to both Dhruva Moorthy Lord Venkateswara and Chara (mobile) Moorthy Malayappa Swamy. For some reasons if Malayappa Swamy without entering into the Ananda Nilaya stirs out of gold door to participate in some procession, till His entry into Sanctum Sanctorum no offerings will be offered to Dhruva (immovable) Moorthy. Daily thrice offerings are offered to both Dhruva Moorthy and Chara Moorthy in Ananda Nilaya. When Chara Moorthy i.e., Malayappa Swamy comes out to take part in a procession then along with vadas, laddus, appams, dosas even Anna Prasada is offered to Him.

### **INNUMERABLE SEVAS AND UTSAVAMS**

Lord Venkateswara is one God who answers every sincere call of His devotees. He is one who fulfills all

desires of all refugees. To Him all the devotees are very dear. Not only this He relieves the sins of His devotees by receiving their mite. If He receives say one rupee, from a devotee He will bless Him with thousand rupees. Whenever devotees buy Arjitha Seva tickets He will make Himself available along with His Consorts and happily participates in all poojas, homas as well as Utsavams. That is why they say 'Kalou Venkatanayakaha'. He is universal God, known as Jagat Kalyana (welfare) Chakravarthy. Number of Utsavams are arranged and performed everyday. Each utsavam has got its own importance. In each and every utsavam He assumes a different majestic form. He will have different look in different utsavams. His grandeur gets magnified in each and every utsavam. All these Utsavams are like feast to the eyes and solace to the heart. These Utsavams take place through out the year. Some poojas are performed to Lord Srinivasa of Ananda Nilaya. But majority of poojas and utsavams are mainly performed only to Malayappa Swamy.

There are number of poojas and utsavams. It is not possible to count and explain them. Let us try to know about some very important poojas and Utsavams.

### **NITYA KALYANA UTSAVAM (Daily wedding ceremony)**

Devotees approach Lord Venkateswara with number of desires. Some come to Him with a prayer for settling the marriage of their daughter or sister. Some

come to him to get promotion in their job, or to seek prosperity in their business etc. Whenever their desires are fulfilled or wishes are favourably granted or prayers are heard or problems are solved or obstacles are removed, they come to Tirumala to offer Lord Venkateswara their thanks by buying Kalyanotsavam i.e., Lord's wedding tickets. To please them as well as to make them happy God readily agrees for the wedding ceremony. He is considered to be an evergreen groom. Hence He daily weds His Consorts. Malayappa Swamy is the ever green groom of Venkatachala Kshethra.

By witnessing Malayappa Swamy's grand wedding, devotees get immense peace of mind. It is a feast for eyes and pleasure for the heart. He drives away all the sins, committed in present birth as well as past births. He will rewrite the destiny of His devotees. Let us bow to this all powerful, all merciful and all benoalent God and chant His holy name:

***Hail Jagat Kalyana Chakravarthy  
Nitya Kalyana Chakravarthy  
Hail Lord Srinivasa.***

In olden days i.e., prior to Annamaiah, the Kalyanotsavam to Sri Malayappa Swamy was performed only on some auspicious days and during Brahmothsavam. Virtuos Annamaiah introduced the tradition of Nitya Kalyanotsavam i.e., daily wedding ceremony to Sri Malayappa Swamy in Tirumala temple. Not only this He even assumed the role of Kanya Data i.e., Bride's father. Lord Srinivasa was so happy that He addressed Annamaiah as father-in-law. The 15<sup>th</sup>

century tradition started by Annamaiah continues. Even today only the descendants of Annamaiah act as official Kanyadatas. Lord's daily wedding ceremony is the only ceremony where we find very large number of devotees. They participate with greater devotion. Cross section of the society i.e., very poor to very rich participates in this ceremony. There is ever growing demand for Kalyanotsavam. Per day more than 300 kalyanotsavams are conducted. As the number of participants is ever growing, the venue is changed from a smaller place to a bigger place.

Let us offer our salutations to Lord of Seven Hills who makes Himself available for daily marriage ceremony and who willingly blesses His devotees.

***Hail Jagat kalyana Chakravarthy  
Hail Nitya Kalyana Chakravarthy  
Glory to you Govinda***

All the festivals and holy processions meant for Lord Venkateswara's Utsava Moorthy commence from the Ugadi Day which happens to be the new year day according to lunar calendar. Ugadi is the new year day for Telugus and Lord Venkateswara who happens to be the family deity of Telugus. According to Telugu tradition, Ugadi is celebrated in the Ananda Nilaya.

## **UGADI ASTHANAM (Ugadi Darbar)**

A special court will be held for Lord Venkateswara's Utsava Moorthy. He arrives with His two Consorts in

Ghanta Mandapam. This mandapam is in front of Golden door. He will be riding on Sarva Bhoopala Vahanam i.e., a vehicle or carriage. He enters into Ghanta Mandapam facing east. There will be another seat for His commander-in-chief. He will face south. Then traditional offerings are offered to Sri Malayappa Swamy. Soon after this, the Lord will listen to Panchanga i.e., name of the Hindu year, name of the Ayanam i.e., Uttara Ayanam, name of the ritu i.e., season, the name of the month, the paksha, tithi, vara etc., The good and bad effects of the year, the income and expenditure in that particular year are read loudly. Lord Malayappa Swamy extends His patient ears to the Sravanam. After this, Akshatarohana and Harati are performed. This particular court is known as Ugadi Asthanam. Similar court will be held when Dakshinayana commences.

Ugadi court will be the very first court for the new year. It heralds the commencement of festivals and Utsavams for that Telugu year. Through out the year the functions, festivals and Utsavams will be held on daily basis. Apart from Nitya Kalyana Utsavam, riding on carriages, thousand lamps service, some weekly festivals, monthly festivals, special courts etc., are held for Sri Malayappa. All the festivals will be celebrated on a grand scale. But during Brahmothsavam every thing reaches its height. In other words the Brahmothsavam will be the grandest utsavam.

## **BRAHMOTHSAVAM**

Lord Vishnu now and then used to descend to Tirumala Kshethra of Bhooloka, as He likes this place. Celestial beings like Brahma and others requested Lord Vishnu to stay in Bhooloka for the sake of devotees. Lord Vishnu obliged them and appeared on the Hills of Venkatadri as Self Emerged or Formed Salagrama statue. As per the popular belief Lord Venkateswara appeared as Self Formed Image on Vijaya Dasami day under the Sravana star. As per solar calendar it is Kanya (virgo) month. (If there is adhika masa the Sravana Nakshatra of Kanya month comes in the Bhadrapada month). As He appeared in kanya month under Sravana, priests in the temple start Brahmothsavams ten days before the sravana star and celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> day Brahmothsavam exactly under Sravana star. The first appearance day of the Lord Srinivasa was celebrated under the supervision and guidance of Brahma. From that day onwards, Appearance Day is celebrated as the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Brahmothsavam. These ten days are celebrated on a very very grand scale.

On all these ten days Sri Malayappa comes out of Ananda Nilaya riding on different carriages and is taken in procession around the fixed route.

On the very first day of Brahmothsavam the priest will hoist Garuda Dhvajam i.e., Garuda flag on golden Dhvajasthambham. All the rulers of all the eight directions will be invited under the auspices of Malayappa Swamy. On that day, accompanying His two



Consorts, Malayappa comes out in procession. He will be riding on Big (pedda) shesha vahana. From next day onwards He will be riding on Small (chinna) Sesha vahana, Hamsa, Simha, Muthyapu pandiri (pearl porch) Sarva Bhoopala, Mohini, Golden Garuda, Hanuman, Elephant, Sun, Horse vahanas respectively. Seeing the grandeur devotees will refuse to withdraw their eyes from Malayappa Swamy.

### **GARUDOTSAVAM**

Brahmothsavam is known as Garudotsavam. Words cannot describe the beauty of this utsavam. The Lakshmi Haaramu (chain) Makara Kanti (crocodile carcanet) Sahasra Nama Haram (garland) etc., which actually adore the Chief Idol in the Ananda Nilayam will adore Malayappa on this Garuda Utsavam day. From Chennai, new Umbrellas will arrive on that day. Malayappa Swamy will put on new silk robes presented by the A.P. Government. At the same time garlands worn by Goda Devi of Tamil Nadu's Sri Villiputtur will also arrive. Even this garland Malayappa happily wears. In this fashion Malayappa Swamy comes out in procession which is worth watching. One has to witness this to believe its grandeur.

### **RATHOTSAVAM**

#### **(Chariot Festival)**

On 9<sup>th</sup> day of Brahmothsavam another important utsavam takes place. It is known as Ratha Utsavam.

This is an unique and one and only utsavam of its kind in the annals of Tirumala. In a giant size wooden chariot along with His two Queens He rides. Devotees while loudly chanting the name 'Govinda' pull this chariot. With an intoxicating smile on His lips Malayappa gives darshan to His devotees. It is said that those who have the darshan of Lord Malayappa riding on the chariot will be liberated by Malayappa from the cycle of life and death, once for all.

*Rathastham Kesavam Dhrushtya Punarjanma  
Na Vidyathe*

### **CHAKRASNAMAM**

'Chakrasnamam' is observed on the 10th day of Brahmothsavam. To have the sacred bath under Sravana Nakshatra which happens to be the Birth Star of Lord Venkateswara, Malayappa Swamy reaches Varaha Swamy temple premises with His two Consorts. Along with Malayappa Swamy even Lord Sri Sudarshan arrives there in a separate palanquin. Sri Sudarshan Chakrathalvar will take his seat next to Malayappa Swamy. Then to these idols i.e., Malayappa Swamy, Sri Devi, Bhoo Devi and Chakrathalvar, Abhishekam is performed. After Abhishekam only, Sudarsana Chakrathalvar will be taken to the tank and will be given a sacred bath. At that time along with Chakrathalvar even the devotees will have their holy dip in the Pushkarini. The Chakrasnamam is a kind of purification ceremony that indicates the termination of

Brahmothsavam ceremony. On that night from the Dhvajasthambham the hoisted Garuda Dhvajam will be brought down. With this the Brahmothsavams come to an end. Malayappa Swamy participates in each and every ceremony that takes place outside the Ananda Nilaya. In a way Malayappa Swamy has become a synonym for festive processions.

### **THE OTHER IDOLS**

Apart from the aforesaid five idols there are few more idols in the Ananda Nilaya. They are Sri Sudarsana Chakrathalvar, Seetha Rama Lakshmana, Rukmini, Sri Krishna and Salagramas.

#### **40. SRI SUDARSANA CHAKRATHALWAR**

In the Sanctum Sanctorum of Lord Venkateswara, Lord Sri Sudarsan is present in a wheel shaped Panchaloha Moorthy. He is seated on a quadrangular seat of 6" height. The height of Sri Sudarsan Chakrathalwar's wheel shaped Moorthy is approximately 2 feet. He is given holy bath four times in a Hindu calendar year. The occasions are: (1) Every Brahmothsavam (ii) Ratha Saptami (iii) Anantha Padmanabha Chaturdasi and Vyakuntha Ekadasi. Let us now try to know more about Sri Sudarsan Bhagwan. He is seen adoring the right hand of the Chief Idol. He is also seen as illuminated flame form as well as a Utsava Moorthy. He is being worshipped by the devotees and is protecting His devotees.

Lord Venkateswara of Ananda Nilaya has this Sudarsana on His right hand. About the importance of this Chakra there is this popular sloka:

*Spurat Sahasrara Sikhathi Teevram  
Sudarsanam Bhaskara Koti Thulyam  
Suradwishaam Praana Vinasi Vishnoh  
Chakram, Sadaaham Saranam Prapadye*

This Sudarsana Chakra has the glow of one crore Suryas. Even Tallapaka Annamaiah has also eulogized this Chakra. He too compares this Chakra to one crore Surya's and thousands of Kala Rudras. We have already mentioned that Lord Venkateswara had once rescued His intimate devotee Thondaman Chakravarthy by giving this. Armed with Sankhu and Chakra Lord Venkateswara is ever ready to rescue His devotees. He is the one who will protect His devotee irrespective of time and place. He is always willing to save and protect His devotees. Once Lord Venkateswara contemplates, Sudarsana will receive strong signal from Lord Venkateswara. Then Sudarsana will protect and safe guard His devotees by giving them protection right from the time they leave their place till they reach back their home with contentment. When prayers are offered to Lord Venkateswara to remove all obstacles that are obstructing them, Lord Venkateswara sends His Sudarsana. Sudarsana not minding the time and distance will see that all the obstacles are removed from devotee's path as well as his life. Some times as in the case of 'Gajendra Moksham' God will rush to help His

devotees even without giving information to His consort about his whereabouts. At times even Lakshmi, His consort may fail to read His mind, but Sudarsana can read His mind. This proves that there is no difference between Lord Venkateswara and Lord Sudarsana. Daily in the morning the priests offer Sahasra Nama Archana with Tulasi. In that Archana they say:

*Om Durvaso Drishti Gocharaya Namaha*

*Om Ambareesha Vrata Preetaya Namaha*

*Om Maha Kritti Vibhanjanaya Namaha*

*Om Maha Abhicharaka Vidhdwhamsine Namaha*

*Om Kala Sarpa Bhayantakaya Namaha*

*Om Sudarsanaya Namaha*

As there is no difference between Lord Venkateswara and Lord Sudarsana, on the last day of Brahmothsavam when Malayappa Swamy arrives with His two Queens, even Sudarsana Chakrathalwar is invited. He is seated next to Malayappa Swamy and Abhishekam is performed to Him along with others. Not only this, only He is given holy bath i.e., dip in Swamy Pushkarini.

#### **41. CHAKRASNANAM**

Like Kamadhenu, the Cow of Plenty and the Kalpavriksha, the wish yielding tree, Lord Venkateswara fulfills all wishes and desires of His devotees. Pilgrims in large numbers from the nook and corner of the world visit Tirumala daily. Their safety is entrusted to Sudarsana Chakrathalwar. He is further

given the job of looking after the pilgrims who visit Tirumala during Brahmothsavam time.

During these days Malayappa Swamy goes round the streets of Tirumala in procession. On each and every day He will be riding on a new vahanam. On the first day He rides on Pedda (big) Sesha Vahanam. He will, from second day onwards, ride on the under mentioned ones : Chinna Sesha Vahanam, Kalpavriksham, Muthyala Pandiri, Garudotsavam, Ratha Utsavam etc. With His majestic looks and paraphernalia He mesmerises His devotees. Before Malayappa Swamy comes out with His two Consorts to give darshan to devotees Sri Sudarsan Chakrathalwar comes out of Ananda Nilayam in a palanquin. Like a pilot He goes round the streets and announces the arrival of Malayappa Swamy. He warns them to behave well. After inspecting the streets from the security point of view He goes back to Ananda Nilaya and reports to Malayappa Swamy that every thing is OK. This happens daily both in the morning as well as in the evening.

On 10<sup>th</sup> day of Brahmothsavam which happens to be the Star Birth Day of the Lord in Kanya Masam of solar year, Chakrathalwar arrives, reaches Swamy Pushkarini along with Malayappa and His two Queens. He will travel in a separate palanquin. In Varaha Swamy Temple, Malayappa offers a seat next to Himself to Sri Sudarsana Chakrathalwar. It appears as if Malayappa is appreciating the services rendered by Sri Sudarsan Chakrathalwar by offering a seat next to Him.

There are others who are very important like Brahma who has conducted Brahmotsavam, Rudra who is the Kshethra Palaka of Tirumala, Lord's Vahanas like Adi Sesha, Garuda, Hanuman etc. But only Sri Sudarsana Chakrathalwar has been singled out for special honours. This undoubtedly proves that in fact there is no difference between Lord Venkateswara and Sri Sudarsana Chakrathalwar. After Abhishekams are conducted at Varaha Swamy temple to Malayappa, His two Consorts and Sri Sudarsana Chakrathalwar, only Sudarsana Chakrathalwar will be given a holy bath i.e., dip in Swamy Pushkarini. When Sri Chakrathalwar is being given holy bath in the Pushkarini all the celestial beings who are in charge of eight directions, Yaksha, Kinnara, Gandharvas etc., worship Sri Chakrathalwar as no other God than Lord Venkateswara Himself. They praise Him in the following words:

***Danuja Visthara Karthana***

***Janithamisra Vikarthana***

***Amaradhrushta Swavikrama***

***Samara Jushta Bhraavikrama***

***Jaya Jaya Sri Sudarsana***

***Jaya Jaya Sri Sudarsana***

All the assembled devotees also take holy dip in the Pushkarini along with Sri Sudarsana Chakrathalwar.

This Chakrasnanam which takes place on the 10th day of Brahmotsavam coincides with Swamy Malayappa's Birth Star Sravanam. It gives one divine message to the devotees.

The first deity to appear in Tirumala Kshethra is Sri Varaha Swamy. He is an embodiment of knowledge. Hence He is called as Gnanappiran in old Tamil scriptures as well as inscriptions.

Sri Venkateswara is full of Bliss. He bestows happiness on His devotees. Sudarsan means one who makes all arrangements to have a good look at the Lord. In other words those who have good darshan of the Lord, to them Lord gives divine knowledge. One who has divine knowledge will enter into the realms of happiness. In a nutshell first we have to enter into Gnanamaya kosa and should have darshan of Sri Varaha Swamy. Only after this the Lord will grant us permanent Anandamaya Kosa. That is how the tradition of having the darshan of Sri Varaha Swamy first came into vogue. Only after having darshan of Sri Varaha Swamy we should proceed to Ananda Nilaya to have the darshan of Sri Venkateswara.

North Indian devotees consider Sri Varahaswamy as the 'Guru' of Balaji. Even this concept is very close to the aforesaid divine message. The great Dasa, Purandar Das has said: "Unless you become a slave (i.e., gulam) you cannot attain Mukthi i.e., liberation". Kabir also expresses similar sentiments. He says, "If Guru and Govind stand before me, I will bow to Guru first. Because without his help I would not have come to know about Govind". Even on other festive days like Rathasapthami, Vykuntta Ekadasi, Vykuntta Dwadasi and Anantha Padma Nabha Chaturdasi also

Chakrathalwar will be given holy bath in Swamy Pushkarini. But Malayappa swamy accompanies Him upto Sri Varaha Swamy temple along with Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi, only on the 10th day of Brahmotsavam. On all other occasions mentioned above only Chakrathalwar will have the holy dip . Let us bow to Sri Sudarsana Chakrathalwar who is being given holy bath in Swamy Pushkarini

*Hail the holy wheel*

*The destroyer of Demons*

*Lord's weapon of conquest*

*That which outshines sun and moon*

*That which is being worshipped by celestials*

*That which adores Lord's right hand.*

*Bestow your blessings on us.*

*Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!*

## **42. SRI SEETHA RAMA LAKSHMANA**

Please reverentially bow to splendidly bright statues of Seetha Rama and Lakshmana. They are placed on a peetham which is on Chief Idol's left side. The idols are made of panchalohas. The legend has it that during Aranyavasa, after the abduction of Seetha, Rama and Lakshmana came to Venkatadri in search of her. To mark their visit it is believed that their idols are installed in Ananda Nilaya. Here Rama and Lakshmana are seen in the robes of hermits with matted locks.

Sri Ramanujacharya was studying all the secrets and intricate things connected with Ramayana from His

guru Tirumala Nambi. He was learning these things at Alipiri, the foot of the Venkatadri. People say that at that time a learned Brahmin gave these idols to Ramanujacharya. Afterwards they were kept in Ananda Nilaya. Whatever be the reason for the presence of these idols in the Ananda Nilaya, there is specific mention about them in the year 1476 A.D. Not only this, in the inscriptions of 1504 A.D. also there is a mention about these idols. The height of Rama's idol is 40 inches. Lakshman stands 37 inches tall. Seetha is of 36 inches height. Though daily special poojas are not performed to these idols, when the poojas are performed in the Ananda Nilaya to the Chief Idol, they are extended to these idols along with other idols. On some special occasions poojas and processions are organized for these idols. In the temple tradition of Tirumala these three idols have their own place of importance. Every year on Chaitra Suddha Navami day the special court is organized before golden door for these idols. After performing poojas and offerings, the idols are taken out in processions in the Mada streets of Tirumala. On 10th day of Chaitra Masa i.e., a day after Sri Rama Navami, Rama's coronation takes place in a grand way. On these two days people of Rama Parivar i.e., Anjaneya, Sugreeva, Angada etc., too participate. We have already come to know about Rama Parivar in Ramulavari Meda chapter. Once upon a time it is said all the idols of Rama's parivar were in Ramulavari Meda. For security reasons the idols of Seetha Rama and Lakshmana were shifted to Ananda Nilaya.

Again on Chaitra Pournami i.e., full moon day, in vasantha mandapam (it is in the south-west direction of Ananda Nilaya) Vasantha Utsavam is celebrated for Seetha Rama and Lakshmana. In the annual Vasantha Utsavam which is specially celebrated for Lord Venkateswara along with Malayappa Swamy (with His two Consorts) the idols of Rukmini, Sri Krishna, Seetha Rama and Lakshmana also participate.

Apart from these, every year in the month of Phalguna of Lunar calendar for five days Teppa Utsavam i.e., a float festival is conducted in the Swamy Pushkarini. This festival concludes on Phalguna Pournami. On the first day i.e., Phalguna Suddha Ekadasi Day the float festival will be arranged for Seetha Rama and Lakshmana on a grand scale.

Every month on the day of Rama's birth star Punarvasu, to the three idols of Seetha, Rama and Lakshmana, Abhishekam will be offered in the morning in solitude. Afterwards Rama's court will be organized in front of golden door. On the same day evening in the Koluvu Mandapam i.e., court room which is outside the temple, Uyyala Seva i.e., swing service, by name Sahasra Deepalankara Seva i.e., lighting one thousand lamps will be organized. After this Uyyala Seva the procession will take place on the Mahapradakshana path. Finally the procession will reach Sri Bedi Anjaneya Swamy temple of Sannidhi Veedhi (street). When the idols reach Sri Bedi Anjaneya Swamy Temple, Anjaneya will be offered a garland worn by Rama. Rama will be

offered naivedyam and Harati. Rama's prasadam and Harati will now be offered to Anjaneya. Afterwards the idols of Seetha, Rama and Lakshmana will be taken back to Ananda Nilaya.

On the 6th day morning of Brahmotsavam Malayappa Swamy rides on Hanuman as Venkatadri Rama. Malayappa dressed as Rama will go in procession in the important streets of Tirumala. People are of the opinion that Rama of Thretha Yuga, is infact Lord Venkateswara of Kaliyuga and Vedavathy is Kaliyuga's Padmavathi. The great intimate devotee of Lord Venkateswara, Annamaiah who is considered to be the personification of Lord's Nandaka Sword, says that Rama and Venkateswara are not different, they are one. He says:

*Venkateswara is Raghuveer Ramachandra  
He is the one who fulfills all our desires  
He is infact the person who gave salvation to  
Ahalya.*

*He is Viswamytra's Kalpa Vriksha  
He is Seetha's Chinthamani  
He is the bosom friend of Sugreeva  
He is the ruler of Hanuman's heart  
He is the one who gave shelter to Vibhishana  
He is the son-in-law of Janaka  
He is the one who liberated Sabari  
He is the one who accepted Guha as his brother  
He appears before all believers  
He is our Lord of Seven Hills.*

Even to this day while chanting Suprabhatam the priests address Him as “Kousalya Supraja Rama”. Let us praise Lord Venkateswara in the following way

*Sri Rama Dasa digvyaptham*

*Dasendriyam Niyaamakam*

*Dasaasyagham Daasarathim*

*Srinivasam Bhaje Anisam*

*-Venkatachala Mahatmyam*

### 43. RUKMINI AND SRI KRISHNA

Puranas have been proclaiming that Sri Venkateswara is no other than Sri Krishna of Dwapara Yuga. Then Krishna was addressed as Govinda. Now devotees chant the name of Govinda. They excitedly repeat at least thrice once they chant the name. During Suprabhatam they ask him to get up by saying ‘Uttishtothishta Govinda’ as it was the habit of Krishna of Dwapara Yuga. Even in this kaliyuga Lord Venkateswara too loves to have butter. He drinks cow’s milk. To those who participate in Suprabhata Seva, Archakas serve butter and milk as Lord’s prasadam.

To prove that Sri Krishna and Sri Venkateswara are one and are not different, we find the idols of Sri Rukmini and Sri Krishna in the Ananda Nilaya. These idols are made of silver. Holding a ball of butter in His right hand Balakrishna is standing on one leg. This is a pose of Navaneetha Krishna which attracts the attention of devotees.

The idols of Sri Rukmini and Sri Krishna are roughly of 2 feet tall. Special poojas are not offered daily to these idols. When poojas are performed to Sri Venkateswara even to these idols poojas are performed. On some specific days only special poojas are exclusively offered to Sri Rukmini and Sri Krishna. Every month when Sri Krishna’s birth star Rohini comes, solitary Abhishekam is performed to these idols in the Ananda Nilaya. On that day evening Sri Krishna reaches the Uyyala Mandapam, the swing room and is offered Sahasra Deepa Alankar Seva. After this Uyyala seva the idols will be taken in procession in the streets of Tirumala. Soon after the procession, the idols will be taken back to its original place in the Ananda Nilaya. Every year in the month of Chaithra, Annual Vasanthotsavam will be celebrated on Pournami day. On that day along with Malayappa Swamy (with His two Queens) Seetha, Rama and Lakshmana, even Sri Rukmini and Sri Krishna also participate in Vasantha Utsavam i.e., spring festival.

In the month of Sravana on Krishna Ashtami day night Thomala (flower) seva will be conducted in the temple. Soon after Thomala seva, accompanied by His Consorts Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi, Ugra Srinivasa Moorthy will be invited and seated in Tirumamani Mandapam i.e., Ghanta Mandapam. They also invite and offer seat to Sri Rukmini and Sri Krishna by the side of Sri Ugra Srinivasa Moorthy. The Abhishekam is offered in solitude to Sri Rukmini and Sri Krishna.

They will be facing East. Only priests and Acharyas hold curtains and then they perform Abhishekam. Once upon a time it is said that Abhishekam was performed by chanting Dwadasakshara Mantra. Because of this the aradhana that is performed on Krishna Ashtami day is known as Dwadasa Tiru Aradhana. Even though the Abhishekam is now performed only once, the old name continues.

After Abhishekam, Sri Ugra Srinivasa Moorthy's idol will be taken back to Ananda Nilaya. Then in the mandapam which is near golden door Sri Krishna will be adorned as if He is sleeping. At that time Jeeyangars will recite Divya Prabandham. Once the offerings are completed He is worshipped with Turmeric mixed raw rice. The scholars then will recite the third chapter of Sri Madbhagavatam which narrates the birth of Lord Krishna. After the distribution of Prasadam Krishna's idol will be taken back to Ananda Nilaya.

On that day morning i.e., Krishna Ashtami day after Suprabhatam and Thomala Seva, Sri Krishna will be given oil bath near golden door. This is called as "Thailakapu Samarpana". Just born Sri Krishna will be taken in procession along the Maha Pradakshna path of Tirumala. Left over gingly oil is distributed to the devotees. Applying that oil devotees will take oil bath. When Lord reaches the temple all traditional poojas are performed and offerings will be offered.

On that day's afternoon, after Archana and second time Nivedanas (offering) both Malayappa Swamy and

Sri Krishna fully adorned with ornaments and jewellery reach "Yamunottarai Mirasi", on separate palanquins. The court will sit there and offerings will be offered. And then they Gracefully participate in 'Utlā Utsavam' i.e, a festival of breaking hanging pot containing butter, arranged in the streets of Tirumala.

Every year on Sankranthi day as well as the following day Lord Venkateswara and Sri Krishna participate in the festival of hunting. They arrive in separate palanquins. Even then Sri Krishna goes to the street where Yadava's live. He accepts milk, butter, fruits etc., offered by Yadavas. These Yadavas offer their services to Lord Srinivasa and are known as Sannidhi Gollas. Srinivasa becomes nostalgic. He recollects those happy moments that he had spent with His companions in Dwapara Yuga. He enjoys those memories. Seeing Him enjoying His visit to Yadava homes people become happy.

Once in every three years (solar year consists of 365 days and lunar year 355 days. Because of this, once in three years we get one 'adhika' masa i.e., extra month as per lunar calendar), Brahmothsavam comes twice. A day after Dasara Sri Krishna along with Lord Venkateswara participates in the 'Hunting Festival' (Paruveta) and enjoys. On the fifth day of Brahmothsavam, Lord Malayappa appears in the form of Mohini and mesmerises His devotees. In another palanquin Sri Krishna follows Mohini's palanquin. Both Mohini and Mohan steal the hearts of the devotees.



**DURING OF DHANUR MASAM**

Every year in the month of Dhanur Masa i.e., roughly between Dec 15 - Jan 15 it is Sri Krishna and not Bhoga Srinivasa who will listen to the lullaby sung by the descendant of Annamaiah. During this one month period Suprabhatam will not be rendered. Sri Krishna lying on a golden bed will open His eyes after listening to the devotional songs composed by Andal i.e., Goda Devi – Thiruppavai – in Tamil. With lukewarm water Sri Krishna will be given bath in solitude. He will be offered milk, butter and pongal.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

**SALAGRAMAS**

There are four big and some small Salagramas in the Ananda Nilaya. As other idols – Chief Idol and utsava moorthies have significance, even these salagramas too have their own importance. To these Salagramas poojas are offered daily. These are kept in a silver vessel and this vessel will be kept near the Lotus Feet of Virat Moorthy i.e., the Chief Idol.

Every day along with Bhoga Srinivasa's Moorthy even to these Salagramas Abhishekams are performed. After the Abhishekams along with other Moorthies, offerings are offered to these Salagramas. Not only these above mentioned Salagramas, the Virat Moorthy has big garlands resting on the two shoulders. They touch the feet of the Lord. They are quite attractive to look

at. Apart from these two salagrama garlands, covered with gold Lord Venkateswara has one more salagrama garland. It is said this garland was presented to the Chief Idol of Lord Venkateswara by the head of Madhwa Peetham, Sri Vyasa Theertha. Sri Vyasatheertha was the guru of Vijayanagara emperors like Veera Narasimha Deva Raya, Sri Krishna Deva Raya, Achyuta Raya etc.

It is said Sri Krishna Deva Raya had a fatal symptom of illness known as 'kuhu kala sarpa Dosham'. To nullify or to cancel that Dosham Guru Vyasa theertha ascended the thrown for few Ghadiyas (a Ghadiya means 24 minutes and is equal to sixteenth part of the day) and saved Krishna Deva Raya from that fatal illness. As he had ascended the thrown for few Ghadiyas Vyasa theertha gets the name of Vyasa Raya.

At the same time it seems, the priests in the Ananda Nilaya were confronted with some obstacles. To remove those obstacles Sri Vyasa theertha stayed in Tirumal for 12 long years. It is said he himself was performing Archanas in the Ananda Nilaya. After every thing was set right, he, it appears, handed over Archana rights to the priests so that they can continue the vykhanasa tradition of Archana or worship procedure. It is only during his presence the Vimana Venkateswara has acquired unparalleled importance. Long time back pilgrims after having the darshan of Vimana Venkateswara, used to proceed to Ananda Nilaya to have the darshan of Lord Venkateswara. Even if there is some delay in having the darshan of Lord Venkateswara of Ananda Nilaya due to prolonged

poojas or offerings (from the time of Vyasa theertha), people started believing that Vimana Venkateswara darshan is enough. It is as good as having the darshan of Lord Venkateswara in Ananda Nilaya.

Like Bhagavad Ramanuja, Sri Vyasa theertha too considered the Chief Idol as a Salagrama Moorthy. Not only this he thought the entire Venkatadri is a Salagrama Hill and the Hill Itself is Lord Venkateswara. As he considered the hill as manifestation of Lord Venkateswara he too like Bhagavad Ramanuja climbed the hill with his knees.

When Annamaiah was climbing the Venkatadri with his shoes on, he fell unconscious as he was dog tired. The Chief Queen of Lord Venkateswara Alamelu Manga told him : “Look my dear son, this is not a Hill of stones. It is a Hill of salagrama. It is a sin to climb with shoes on. Leave your shoes and look at the magnificent Hill. You will be thrilled”. Annamaiah at the behest of Alamelu Manga left his shoes. To his surprise and happiness he found the Hill in the form of Narayana. Not only Narayana, he could see Sri Rama, Krishna, Lakshmi Narasimha all put in one. He could then realize that it is a Salagrama Hill. With the help and Grace of Alamelu Manga, Annamaiah, it is said could reach Tirumala easily. Even to this day in the Mantra that the priests chant they say: ‘Om Salagrama Nivasaya Namaha’. We are blessed and fortunate people. We are, with the Grace and Kindness of Lord of Seven Hills,

able to visit Tirumala and have the darshan of Lord Venkateswara.

Hail Lord of Seven Hills

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

### **PUNAR DARSHANA PRAPTHIRASTHU**

**(May you have the Darshan once again)**

In detail we have come to know about the Greatness of Lord Venkateswara’s devotees like Emperor Thondaman, Kummara (pot maker) Nambi, Tirumala Nambi, Ananthavar, Tallapaka Annamacharyulu, Tarigonda Vengamamba, Mahanthu Hathee Ram Bavaji etc., We have even understood the Divine Leelas of Lord Venkateswara. We have come to know about the Chief Idol which is considered to be a Dhruva (permanent) Moorthy and other Utsava Moorthies like Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy, Sri Koluvu (court) Srinivasa Moorthy, Sri Ugra Srinivasa Moorthy, Utsava Srinivasa Moorthy, Sri Malayappa Swamy. There are other important moorthies like Sri Sudarsan Chakrathalwar, Sri Seetha Rama Lakshmana, Sri Rukmini Sri Krishna, Salagramas. Their importance and the poojas that are offered on specific days etc., are also known to us now. About Generous, Kind Hearted and Benevolent Lord’s likings and things that exactly are dear to Him, the undermentioned sloka explains:

***Sri Venkatesasya Katha Amrutham Twidam  
Maahaatmasya Saaram Suthapasvi Gamyam  
Sri Venkatesasya Mahaa Priya Priyam  
Lokotharam Deva Rishi Priyam Cha***

The story of Lord Venkateswara will liberate devotees from the cycle of birth and death. All the Leela's of Sri Venkateswara have their own pervasiness as well as grandeur. All may not be blessed to come to know about the Majesty of Lord Venkateswara. Only fortunate enough people will come to know about Him. Lord Srinivasa likes those people who listen to His Leelas and those who propagate them and think of Him day in and day out. He likes such people more than those who chant mantras and perform poojas. Those who become devotees will get salvation easily. When we have darshan, all our sins will be washed out by His Grace. Punya will get accumulated. Our devotion to His Lotus Feet will increase by leaps and bounds.

***Samastha Papowgha Vinaasa Kaaranam  
Samastha Punyaowgha Samruddhi Kaaranam  
Sri Venkatesasya Padaravinda yoha  
Sadbhakthi vridhdhava Samaana Karanam***

When we listen to the story of Lord Venkateswara, He will drive away all our sins. Further He will credit lot of 'punya' to our life's account. In a nutshell salvation is assured to those who sincerely worship Lord Venkateswara.

Let us therefore repeat here the stories pertaining to Leelas of Sri Venkateswara. Let us pray to Him to give us many more opportunities to know more and more about Him.

Oh! Lord by having Your Holy Darshan, toe to top, we have become blessed beings. Our eyes refuse to

withdraw when we stand before your ever attractive idol. Each and every limb of Your Idol has a wonderful magnetic power. Please make us to come back to you to have Your Darshan once again and again and again. Please grant us this boon. Please bless us by saying "Punar Darshana Prapthirasthu".

Behold! When the Archakas perform Harati, Lord Venkateswara gives us a golden opportunity to have His darshan to the best contentment of eyes. Let us chant:

***Nityaya Niravadyaya, Satyananda Chidathmane  
Sarvaantharathmane Srimad Venkatesaya  
Mangalam***

After having darshan when we come out, we once again, will be walking on the pradakshana path. From this path we can have a look at the main kitchen hall of the temple.

#### **44. POTU**

##### **(Main Kitchen Hall)**

When we come out of golden door, after having the darshan of 'Pratyaksha Daivam' i.e., God visible to naked eye, we will be entering the premises of Vimana Pradakshana path. Right opposite to us we will find the main kitchen hall where all the offerings meant for God are prepared. Now let us try to know about Vakula Mata who supervises all the preparations.

Exactly towards South East direction of Sanctum Sanctorium on the Vimana circumambulation path on

the three feet high platform, there is pillared structure. It is a 61 x 30 feet structure. It is here right from time immemorial all the offerings meant for Lord Venkateswara are being prepared. This is the only kitchen the temple had. Taking into consideration the ever growing number of devotees, they have very recently converted existing Mandapam which are towards north of Sampangi pradakshana path as new kitchen hall. The old kitchen hall is now being used as store room cum distribution hall for Lord's prasadam. Now all sweets and savouries are prepared in New kitchen hall. About padipotu (kitchen) we have already read.

'Potu' according to temple traditions gives the meaning of kitchen hall or room. Here tasty delicious sweets are prepared.

Two things are attracting the pilgrims to Tirumala temple. People are enamoured when they see costly and precious jewels and ornaments which are adorning the Lord. The second best thing is the offerings that are offered to Lord Venkateswara. No where in the world one can see such glittering costly jewellery, ornaments and such delicious offerings. These things are as they say in Sanskrit 'Na Bhooto Na Bhavishyathi', never before and never never in future. This ultimately proves that Lord Venkateswara loves to be adorned by jewellery and loves to have delicious variety of eatables as Naivedyam. He will be more happy when devotees eat offerings to God as prasadam. The great

Annamacharya in one of his keerthanas has praised Lord's love for Naivedyams. Similarly an unknown poet has praised Lord's love for eating. Tenali Rama Krishna who is known for his ready wit and humour calls him 'A good eater'.

There is one more speciality of Lord Venkateswara. Every day He uses new plates. That is why they say 'Thomani Pallalu' (No washing of plates, i.e., use and throw plates). The offerings are offered to Him in broken clay cullets. He loves to eat in those broken clay cullets only. He accepts the offerings and returns them to His devotees so that they can heartily relish them.

So many emperors, kings, zamindars and rich as well as poor people have donated their mite. Yet He prefers to eat in clay cullets. In olden days cooks, by name 'Gamaykarlu' used to cook the offerings in clay pots by using fire wood. Slowly they have introduced brass vessels. Now in the place of fire wood to prepare the Naivedyams, they have started using Gas cylinders. The cooks in a very very piously hygienic way prepare the offerings. These cooks are blessed beings. Even mother kousalya and Devaki would not have offered food to Rama and Krishna after themselves preparing them.

Lord Venkateswara is relishing cooked food. How lucky and fortunate all beings are.

Daily thrice offerings are offered to Lord Venkateswara. Before they are offered to Lord Venkateswara they are first offered to Sri Varaha

Swamy. The preparations prepared in kitchen are taken to Sri Varaha Swamy in a traditional way i.e., with umbrellas, fans, and piped music. After offering the preparations to Varaha Swamy, they are offered to Lord Venkateswara and to the other Utsav Moorthies. After that they are offered to deities of Vimana Pradakshana path like Dwara Palakas, Garuda Alwar, Varada Raja Swamy, Vakula Matha, Yoga Narasimha Swamy, Vishwakshena, Bhashyakaras etc., Then the 'Bali' is offered to the presiding deities of all the eight directions. With this, Naivedyam programme comes to an end. Nivedana Ananthara Nivedana is offered to Sri Bedi Anjaneya Swamy. He dwells in a Temple which is in the Sannidhi street, right opposite to the main temple.

## **NIVEDANAS**

### **(Offerings)**

Everyday morning during Suprabhatam time priests offer Butter, milk and sugar to Lord Venkateswara. In Dwapara Yuga it is said mother Yashoda used to give butter balls to her son Krishna. May be that tradition is being continued even in this Kaliyuga.

After Suprabhatam Lord Venkateswara's court will be organized with great pomp and show. Lord Venkateswara arrives in the court in a majestic way. He will be received with all honours. Then the Panchanga Sravanam will take place i.e., Thithi, Vara, Nakshatra etc., are recited. Then the audit report will be presented to Him, giving full details about income

as well as expenditure. After this Lord will be given roasted gingly powder mixed with Jaggery. This particular item is very dear to Lord Sani. To please him Lord Venkateswara will have it every day. Who ever worships Lord Venkateswara particularly on Saturdays will be free from ill effects of Lord Sani, the Saturn.

After the court, the priests will chant Lord's 1000 names, which is known as Sahasra Nama Archana. Soon after completing the chanting of 1000 names, Offerings like pulihora i.e., Masala Tamarind Rice, Pongali, Curd Rice, Sweet Pongal, Laddus, Vada's, Appams etc., are offered. But these things are not taken very near to Him. They will be kept outside Kula Sekhara Padi. Meanwhile the chief cook will carry only curd rice known as 'Matra' that too in a clay cullet and offers it to Lord Venkateswara. Except the curd rice with thick cream nothing is directly offered to Lord Venkateswara. The rest of the things mentioned above are offered from the otherside of Threshold. Even this, i.e., Lord Venkateswara relishing only curd rice, dates back to Dwapara Yuga Tradition. This will once again remind us of the fact that there is no difference between Lord Krishna of Dwapara Yuga and Lord Venkateswara of Kaliyuga.

In the afternoon, after Ashtothara Satanam Archana i.e., chanting 108 sacred names of Lord Venkateswara, the offerings meant for afternoon i.e., second hour offerings will be kept ready in the kitchen. In addition to the dishes or items mentioned above the

items like Suddaannam, Seera i.e., sweet upma and savoury upma, kheer, kesari bath, milk rice, kadambam i.e., mixure etc., are also offered to Him. He relishes these things very much.

After second hour offerings Sri Malayappa Swamy with Bhoo Devi and Sri Devi gets ready for Nitya (daily) Kalyana Utsavam (marriage ceremony). Soon after kalyana Utsavam items like laddus, vadas, appams, dosas, sweet pongal, pulihora, savoury pongal, curd rice etc., are offered.

Immediately after Kalyana Utsavam to please those devotees who would have bought Vasanta Utsavam tickets, Lord will participate in the Vasantha Utsavam. During Vasantha Utsavam Lord Malayappa will be offered Dosas. From there Lord Malayappa i.e., Utsava Moorthy of Lord Venkateswara will proceed to Mandapam of Mirrors to participate in Dolotsavam i.e., swing cot ceremony. There he is offered pancha kajjayam i.e., powder of sugar, poppy seeds sugar candy, dry grapes, chashew nuts, almond, dry coconut etc., same thing is offered to Lord even after Sahasra Deepa Alankara Seva. The aforesaid powder will also be prepared only by the kitchen staff.

In the evening in solitude Thomala Seva (worship with flowers) is offered to the Chief Idol. Soon after Thomala Seva big sized Ghee Dosas known as Thomala Dosa Padi, Molahaara, kadambam etc., are offered. After Ashtottara Satanama Archana the third hour offerings are offered in the night. Even at the items

mentioned above are offered. Finally during 'Tiruveesam' hour to Lord Venkateswara sweet pongal is specially offered.

At the time of Ekantha Seva i.e., bed time service He is offered lukewarm milk with added sugar, fruits and pancha kajjayam along with meva, as a kind of sweet liquid.

Along with the first hour, second hour, third hour and tiruveesam hour, on every Monday they perform a special pooja to Malayappa Swamy. At that time big sized vadas, laddus and other preparations are offered. On every Wednesday Sahasra Kalasa Abhishekam is offered near the golden door. At that time along with usual routine items even milk rice (ksheeraannam) is also offered. On every Thursday a worship by name 'Tiruppavada' takes place. On that occasion they prepare 420 kilos of pulihora i.e., masala tamarind rice. The heap of this rice will face the Chief Idol near the golden door. From this point itself the heap is offered to Lord Venkateswara. They also offer gaint size Jelebis and Tengulam (a deep fried savory). On Fridays God is offered Polees (a sweet chapathi) and Sukhiyas (sweet). On every Sunday the Sunday prasadam by name 'Chalipindi' is offered to Him. This is also known as 'Amruta Kalasam'. The same will be offered to Garuda Alwar after offering that to Lord Venkateswara.

On festive days like Vykuntta Ekadasi day Swamy Varu i.e., Lord Venkateswara relishes Dosas and boiled chana i.e., Bengal Gram. In addition to this to Lord

Venkateswara soaked Green gram, Panakam (Jaggery mixed water) is also offered. In Dhanur masam (Dec-Jan) Dosas prepared with Jaggery are specially offered.

On some special festive days, Lord Venkateswara likes to have Kheer, Kesari Bath, Saakari bath, Bakalabath etc. Special offerings will be offered on Ugadi day, Deepavali day, during Brahmotsavam, processions, Paruveta etc.

Different varieties of prasadam are prepared in the temple kitchen hall. The cooks know the exact items to be prepared to suit the worship. They know the timings so well that at the appointed time, at the appointed place, appointed items are prepared and offered to the Lord. When these preparations are being prepared Vakula Matha sitting on a platform supervises the preparations. Vakula Matha is considered to be Lord Venkateswara's mother.

No where in the world offerings are prepared in such a large quantity. All the preparations are made out of pure ghee. One days Ghee residue it is said will be quite sufficient for one year to prepare prasadam in other temples.

Annamaiah has praised the preparations prepared in the temple. Lord Venkateswara is known as 'Tindi Mendaiah' (who eats varieties of dishes) Naivedya priya and Thomani pallavadu i.e., everyday new vessels will be used.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **45. VAKULA DEVI**

We have been mentioning the name of Vakula Devi in connection with Swamy vari kitchen. We have also read that she supervises the dishes prepared in the kitchen. Let us try to know more about Vakula Devi.

In the north east direction of the kitchen, there is a small temple. There is a four feet square platform. On that platform facing east we will find the idol of Vakula devi or Vakula Matha. She is also known as Vakula Malika. In our ancient scriptures she is address as Lakshmi. Afterwards people began to address her as Vakula Devi. Well, who is this Vakula Devi?

As we all know mother Yoshoda brought up Krishna right from His childhood days. Like eyelids which protect the eyes she brought Him up. Though child Krishna killed many demons and rakshasas, Yoshoda could not know that her child is no other than Lord Vishnu. She was very much worried about His safety. She took extra care, not minding the inconveniences she came across, in bringing Him up. But after killing His maternal uncle Kamsa, Krishna joined His biological parents Devaki and Vasudeva. Only under their care and direction most of important things like His marriage etc., have taken place. Yashoda who brought Him up right from baby in arms stage, could not have the opportunity to perform His marriage. Performing the marriage of their children gives immense, inexplicable happiness and satisfaction to the parents. Yashoda was deprived of this happiness and

satisfaction. Omni science Krishna could read the mind of His foster mother Yashoda. He once consoled her saying: “Oh! Mother Yashoda, don’t worry, Krishna is Krishna only because of you and not inspite of you. I will give you an opportunity so that you can arrange and perform My marriage with your hands and initiative. Though not in this Dwapara Yuga, it will certainly happen in Kaliyuga. When I come down to Tirumala, to be known as Srinivasa, you will be there as Yogini. I will come to you and stay with you as your son. I once again appear as Krishna in Kaliyuga and stay in Tirumala which will be known as Venkatadri. Then you will arrange and perform My marriage”. As per the boon granted by Krishna of Dwapara Yuga to Yashoda, she took the form of Vakula Devi in Kaliyuga.

Lord Vishnu after reaching Venkatadri got the patronage of Varahaswamy. This made Him to settle down permanently on Venkatadri. Vakula Devi was there and was serving Varahaswamy. Sri Varahaswamy told her to look after Srinivasa, henceforth as a mother. As per the wish expressed by Varahaswamy Vakula Matha began to take care of Lord Srinivasa with sincerity and devotion. By preparing food from a dark green grain ‘Shyamaka’ which was abundantly available on Tirumala Hills, she began to feed Lord Srinivasa. To add taste to the food she used to mix honey to it. It seems Lord Srinivasa used to relish honey mixed food very much. In Ashtothara Shata Namavali (108 holy names) even to this day the priests address Him at “Om Priyangu priya Bhakshya Namaha”. Even to this day

the people of Rayalaseema, Telangana and parts of Karnataka use this millet. In Telugu they say ‘Korralu’ and in Kannada Shyamalu.

Akasa Raju of that area had a daughter by name Padmavathi. Vakula Matha took initiative and arranged for Srinivasa’s marriage with Padmavathi. She spent her whole life in serving Lord Srinivasa. As she happens to be a mother even to this day under her active and careful supervision dishes meant for Lord Srinivasa’s Naivedyam are prepared in the temple kitchen. Lord Krishna even after appearing as Lord Srinivasa could not give up the habit of eating butter balls and curds with thick cream. In Dwapara yuga Yashoda fed Him where as in Kaliyuga it is Vakula Matha who fed Him with the items he likes very much.

Daily during Suprabhata Seva Lord Srinivasa takes cow’s fresh milk and butter. Afterwards He eats curd rice by name ‘Matra’ served in a clay cullet. Lord Srinivasa enjoys repeating His childhood pranks and makes us to recall all those pranks of Dwapara Yuga.

Vakula Matha of this temple kitchen has number of names: They call her as Madapalli (Mattappalli) Nachiyar, Madapuli Nachiyar, Pachana Lakshmi and Paachaka Lakshmi. Considering the kitchen supervision as the main activity of a house wife some even think that she is the queen of Venkateswara i.e., Sri Maha Lakshmi Herself. The personification of Lord’s Nandaka Sword Sri Tallapaka Annamaiah thinks that Alamelu Manga is Sri Maha Lakshmi. Like Sri Maha



Lakshmi even Alamelu Manga too has four hands. In her two raised hands she has two lotus flowers. In lower right hand the Abhaya Mudra is exhibited and lower left hand shows 'Varada Mudra'.

Let us bow to Alamelu Manga the mother of mothers.

***Vande Jagan Maataram ! Vande Jaganmaataram!!  
Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

Offering are offered daily three times to Vakula Matha. She is offered sweet pongal. At the time of offering the Archakas take out the garland from the Lotus Feet of the Chief Idol and decorate the Vakula mata idol with that garland. After this Alamelu Manga's Kheer is offered to Vakula Matha. This offering will be followed by Camphor harati. Every Friday they perform Abhishekam and offer poojas. Similarly in Sravana masam during Vara Lakshmi Vratam and on Makara Sankranti day as well as the day that follows Makara Sankranti known as 'Kanuma' festival, Vakula Matha gets Panchaamruta Abhishekam that too on a very grand scale.

Vakula Matha dedicated her life in the service of Lord Srinivasa. Every day she supervises the naivedyam items prepared in temple kitchen and serves them to Lord Srinivasa. The left overs, she will see that it is distributed to the devotees as Maha prasadam. She is making Lord Srinivasa happy and also all the devotees of Srinivasa happy. Considering Her as Maha Lakshmi let us pray Her thus:

***Nitya Mukthaa! Dosha Doora!  
Twadoo Naadhika Sadguna!  
Twatpaada Poojane Nityam  
Baddha Kankana Bhooshitha!  
Padmalankrutha Pani Pallava Yugam  
Padmasanastham Sriyam  
Vatsalyadi Gunojjwalam Bhagavatheem  
Vande Jagan Mataram  
Hail Lord of Seven Hills  
Hail Venkata Ramana Sankata Harana  
Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

#### **46. BANGARU BAAVI (Golden Well)**

There is a well by the side of Lord's chief kitchen. This well is known as Bangaru Baavi (Bangaru means gold in Telugu. Baavi means well).

When devotees come out through Golden door after having the darshan, there is a path leading to the chief kitchen opposite to the Golden door. Adjacent to the steps leading to the kitchen you will find a well. This well has circular ring of stones from the ground level. This stone construction has Gold plating. Because of this gold plating people call it as Bangaru Baavi i.e., Golden well. It has two other names: 'Sri Theertham' and 'Sundara Swamy Baavi' (well). This well has got its own history.

Along with His two Consorts, Lord Vishnu assuming the human form descended to the earth from Sri Vykunttam. He preferred to stay in Venkatachala Kshethra which is known as Vykunttam on earth. When they were wandering in Venkatachala Kshethra for cooking food Sri Maha Lakshmi created a well. This well got the name of Sri Theertham. Some even call it as 'Lakshmi Theertham'. Similarly even Bhoo Devi created a well which got the name of Bhootheertham. Over a period of time these two wells disappeared. After a long period of time to assist Gopinath who used to perform poojas according to Vykanasa Agama Shastras, Ranga Dasu came down to Tirumala. To meet the flower needs of Lord Venkateswara he thought of having a flower garden. To water the plants he dug two wells. The spot where digging was going on, the two wells which had disappeared, appeared once again. After the demise of Ranga Dasu these two wells once again got decayed.

The legend has it that Ranga Dasu who served God with beautiful flower garlands was reborn as Thondaman Chakravarthy. He once again started offering his services to the Lord. Lord Venkateswara was immensely pleased with selfless services offered by Thondaman Chakravarthy. Lord briefed Thondaman Chakravarthy about his previous birth as Ranga Dasu. Lord ordered Thondaman Chakravarthy to get Him a place of dwelling i.e., temple with gold plated vimana. He further ordered him to reactivate decayed wells Sri theertham and Bhootheertham. Thondaman

Chakravarthy was pleasantly surprised when Lord Venkateswara told him about his previous birth and services rendered to Lord in that birth. He got Sri theertham well reactivated. He constructed a ring like stone structure from ground level to stop the caving of earth and covered the stone walls with gold plates. From that day onwards, the well got the name Bangaru Baavi. Similarly for Bhootheertham which was much below the ground level he constructed steps to stepdown. This well is known as 'Poola Baavi' i.e., Flower well. We have earlier discussed about this 'Poola Bavi'. Over the years Sri theertham acquired greater importance as its water is religiously used for the preparation of Prasadam and other Archanas of Lord Venkateswara.

To the Chief Idol of Lord Venkateswara every Friday Abhishekam i.e., Holy Bath is performed. For this Abhishekam Tirumala Nambi of 11th century used to bring water from Papavinasanam. This Tirumala Nambi happened to be the 'Guru' of Bhagavad Ramanujacharya. In addition to being a Guru he was also a maternal uncle of Sri Ramanujacharya. This Tirumala Nambi has another name. He was also known as Tirumala Thathacharya. Once during the days Tirumala Nambi was serving Lord Venkateswara, his Guru Yamunacharya visited Tirumala to have the darshan of Lord Venkateswara. As it was continuously raining heavily Tirumala Nambi could not fetch water for Lord's Abhishekam. Then Yamunacharya who wanted Un-interrupted supply water through out the year whether it rains or shines appealed to Sri Maha

Lakshmi. He told her: “Oh! Mother! The water from Sri theertham, the well which you created is more sacred than any other water. Therefore please bless this water so that it can be used for Lords Abhishekam”. Further he named that well as “Sundara Swamy Koopam” (well) as it happens to be one of the forms of Lord Venkateswara. Tamilians call this well as Alagappinaar Kinar (Sri Sundara’s Kinaru i.e., well).

Ramanujacharya visited Tirumala. He came to know about Sri Yamunacharyas incident. He was immensely happy to know about Yamunacharyas appeal to Sri Mahal Lakshmi. On the spot he took a decision. He directed his disciples to use water, for Fridays Abhishekam as well as daily Abhishekam of Bhoga Srinivasa, from one of the three sources i.e., water from Papanasanam Theertham or water from Akasa Ganga Theertham or Sri Theertham only. From that day onwards water drawn from “Bangaru Baavi” is being used for the preparations of prasadams and to the Abhishekams.

In olden days water drawn from Bangaru Baavi used to directly reach the chief kitchen through a canal which was there on a 15 feet high wall from ground level. This system researchers say was in vogue in Hampi during Vijayanagara rulers. Till recently the kitchen staff used to draw water through pots and empty those pots in the canal. Considering the ever growing demand for various types of preparation they have some 20 years back installed electrical pump to draw water from the well.

This Bangaru Baavi has a sacred history. It is associated with great people like Thondaman Chakravarthy who was Ranga Dasu in his previous birth, Tirumala Nambi who was addressed as ‘Thatha’ (Grand father) by Lord Venkateswara Himself. Yamunacharya who requested Sri Maha Lakshmi to sanctify the water of Sri Theertham, Sri Ramunaja charya who gave orders for the use of water drawn only from three sources. Let us bow before Bangaru Baavi i.e., Sri Theertham or Sundaraswamy Baavi.

#### **47. ANKURARPANA MANDAPAM**

Opposite to the chief kitchen and towards south of Bangaru Baavi there is a mandapam. This is known as Ankurarpana Mandapam.

Every year the Dasara Brahmothsavam is celebrated for ten days to Lord Venkateswara. The initiation of this Brahmothsavam starts from this Mandapam. Ankuram as we all known is sprout. Arpanam is offering. Here in this mandapam, Nava Dhanyam (nine varieties of grains) sprouts are grown. For every auspicious occasion the sprouting marks the beginning. The sprouting process takes place a day before hoisting of a flag on Golden Dhvajasthambham. On that day under the supervision of the chief commander of Lord Venkateswara, Vishwaksena, the Ankurarpanam takes place. Firstly the idols of Vishwaksena, Garuda, Anantha will be brought from Ramulavari Meda to this Mandapam. Then under the direction of Vishwaksena fine ant hill soil is collected.

Then Sri Vishwaksena, Sri Sudarsana, Anantha and Garuda reach Vasantha Mandapam which is situated in the south west direction of Lord's temple. With all temple honours like piped music, beating of drums, chanting of Veda Mantras they proceed to Vasantha Mandapam in a procession. The soil collection, particularly the soil from ant hills, takes place in Vasantha Mandapam. Before collecting the soil from ant hills, the instruments to be used and even ant hills are worshipped as per vedic rituals. Then with that soil Vishwakasena, in a procession enters into the main temple through Maha pradakshana path. Then onwards Sri Vishwaksena, Garuda etc., stay back in Ankurarpana Mandapam till the completion of Brahmothsavam.

Not only during Brahmothsavams, even on occasions like Jyeshthabishekam (an annual function which is celebrated for three days from pournami) Sravana Nakshthram day (this comes in the month of Karthik on this day pushpa yaga utsavam is performed to Lord Venkateswara) the aforesaid procedure of Ankurarpanam will be performed a day before under the supervision of Vishwaksena who happens to be the commander-in-chief. Because the Ankurarpanam takes place, this mandapam gets the name of Ankur Arpana Mandapam.

This mandapam has one more speciality. The idols of Anantha, Vishwaksena, Garuda, Sugreeva, Angada, Anjaneya which will be in Ramulavari Meda, are shifted to Ankurarpana Mandapam. This shifting helps the

pilgrims who visit Tirumala to have the darshan of idols mentioned. We have already come to know about these idols and their own importance. Let us bow before these idols.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

#### **48. YAGASALA**

Adjacent to Ankurarpana Mandapam towards west there is a room. This room is known as Yagasala. Yagams are conducted here. All Yagas connected with the daily Vedic activities of the temple are conducted here. Of late Yagas are conducted in this mandapam only during Brahmothsavams. The homams, yagas connected with all the other activities like Jyeshthabishekam, Pavitra Utsavam, Pushpayagam, and the special pooja that are being conducted on every Monday, daily Kalyana Utsavam are now being held in, sampangi mandapam. Every Wednesday, Sahasra Kalasa Abhishekam is performed to the Chief Idol in the morning. During this particular pooja yagam is conducted on a stage near Golden door:

***Yagno yagna patiryajwa***

***Yagnango yagna vaahanaha***

***Yagna Bhrudyagna kridagnee***

***Yagna Bhugyagna Saadhanaha***

***Yagnanthakrid yagna Guhya***

***Mana Mannada Eva Cha***

***-Vishnu Sahasra Namam***

Because of the yagna performed by sage Bhrigu, Lord Vishnu took human form and started dwelling in Tirumala which is being praised as Vykunttam on earth. Lord Vishnu's Consort Sri Maha Lakshmi as Alamelu Manga, too was born in Narayanavanam which is considered to be edge of Venkatachala mountain. She was born in Yagna bhoomi of Akasaraju. From the house of Akasa Raju She walked into the Abode of Lord Venkateswara which is known as Ananda Nilaya. From that day Alamelu Manga became His Consort. Lord Venkateswara assumed the name of Srinivasa. Srinivasa is fulfilling all the desires of His devotees.

Lord Vishnu Himself is Yagna, Yagna purusha, stuff of Yagna, Rutvik i.e., a priest who performs the yagna. Considering this in Suprabhatam Lord is praised in these terms:

***Om Yagnaya Nahama***

***Om Yagna Vibhavanaaya Namaha***

***Om Yagna Yorvee Samuddharthre Namaha***

The Yagasala is within precincts of the temple. The Yagasala is the place where the marriage between Srinivasa and Alamelu Manga was solemnized. Since time immemorial yagnas are being conducted keeping in mind the general welfare of the people. Lord Venkateswara Himself is every thing. He is Kartha, Karma as well as Kriya. Let us bow our head before Lord Venkateswara who readily answers all sincere prayers of His devotees.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **49. NANELA PARAKAMAMI**

**(Coin Counting Centre)**

**or**

**( Kalyana Mandapam)**

There is a large Kalyana Mandapam adjoining the yagasala. It unites the inside portion of second prakara.

On an elevated platform of 3 feet high 80 feet long 36 feet wide kalyana mandapam has been constructed. It was built in the year 1586 during the reign of Vijayanagara kings. It is said an officer by name Chennappa who was a representative of Vijayanagara kings started building it step by step. There are 29 black stone pillars with fine carvings. The sculpture and construction speak volumes about Vijayanagara style of construction.

Today it stands as a towering testimony for the deep devotion and sacrifice of Vijayanagara kings. The beautifully carved sculptures of Ugra Narasimha, Haya-greeva, Sahasra Bahu Sudarsan Chakra Swamy etc., on the pillars remind us of the sculptures that are there in Tirumala Raya Mandapam which is in Sampangi Pradakshana Path.

There is one beautiful quadrangular platform called 'Kalyana Vedika'. Next to it there is one 9 feet quadrangular temple.

Till 50 years back the Nitya Kalyanotsavams for the Lord Srinivasa were performed here only. As the crowd and devotees offering Kalyanotsavams increased

enormously for some years they – Kalyanotsavams - were performed in Ranganayaka Mandapam. Even there the crowd became quite unmanageable. Finally they have shifted the venue to a specially constructed huge Sri Venkataramana Swamy Kalyana Mandam in Sampangi Pradakshanam.

In olden days during Brahmotsavams i.e., for ten days Sri Malayappa Swamy along with His two Consorts used to come and stay in this Kalyana Mandam. He used to stay there till Deepavali. There is a small temple in this Kalyana Mandapam. Malayappa Swamy used to reside here. Similarly during Dhanur Masam's Adhyana Utsavam Malayappa Swamy used to reside here for 25 days. Even the court used to be held here. During that period the Utsava Moorthies were kept in that small temple for safe custody.

Now coins are counted in this Kalyana Mandam, everyday right from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. This is called 'Nanala Parakamani'. Devotees offer so many coins including gold and silver to Lord by dropping them in the "Swamy Vari" Hundi. These coins are segregated and counted. This is known as Nanela Parakamani. There is a mesh work around that place. Devotees can watch from behind the mesh work. These coins are nothing but one more form of goddess Maha Lakshmi. Such huge coin collection one can see only here, and no where else. No one, may be except the person who has dropped and the person for whom it is intended, knows the amount dropped. The amount includes

interest also. That is why in telugu they address Lord Venkateswara as Vaddi (Interest) Kasula (of coins) Vaada (person) i.e., the person who collects interest. When you offer something to Lord Venkateswara, He will fulfil all your wants and desires. So let us bow to Him.

Every Friday early morning at about 4 a.m. for the Abhishekam of the Chief Idol, temple authorities, Jeeyangars, Ekangulu, Devotees carry silk clothes, bowls containing camphor and civet with them. To the accompaniment of piped music and drums procession starts from this Kalyana Mandapam. They perform Vimana Pradakshana and reach Dhvajast hambham. After performing circumambulation of Dhvajasthambham they will come back to Sri Vari Sannidhi i.e., Abode.

Let us bow to Lord Srinivasa here and chant the holy name of Lord!

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **50. NOTLA PARAKAMANI**

**(Paper Currency Counting Centre)**

Just behind Vimana Nilaya there is one 153 feet long Mandapam. Here in this Mandapam the paper currency is counted and bundled.

This particular structure was put to use for several purposes till fifty years back. The Vahanams like ivory palanquin, Gaja Vahanam, Garuda and Sesha Vahanams were kept here. Even the civet oil which is smeared to

the Chief Idol, they were preparing here in one room. In another room the prasadam were kept for distributions. Since ages, this Mandapam which is situated on the western side of Vimana Pradakshana path, was used for multipurpose activities. Even the biography of Annamacharya stands testimony for this. Annamayya in one of his keerthanas has described this place. He says he has seen the Vahanas and also the way the civet oil was prepared here. To meet the demands of ever growing number of devotees and to give more facilities to devotees so many changes have occurred over the years. So many things have undergone changes. Now this place is used for counting and bundling currency notes of different denominations.

The coins, Gold, and silver, jewellery, currency notes of different denominations and other precious valuable things offered by the devotees who come from length and breadth of the world are collected and segregated. After that they estimate the value of gold, silver and diamonds and hand over to the authorities for the safe custody. Every thing will be properly accounted. The place where the segregation takes place is known as parakamani.

The segregation, counting etc., are done in a transparent way. Big mirrors are arranged for those who want to witness the process of separating coins and currency notes of different value or denominations.

One employee of the temple will collect gold and gold jewellery. The ornaments have number of

Mangalasutras, ear studs, gold rings, bangles, necklaces, ornaments of nose and waist etc.

One person will collect all silver vessels, silver swings, silver figures of Gods and Goddesses, silver eyes, silver legs, silver hands, silver bricks etc., One person will collect all coins. You will see heaps of silver, gold, precious stones, coins and currencies. Segregated coins are sent to the hall where they are counted. All the currency notes of different countries in the world are separated and bundled as per their value. People offer every thing that they have to Lord Venkateswara. Some may offer beauty aids, sarees, soaps, perfumes, grains etc. People from different parts of the world, different states of India speaking different languages offer different things which they think are precious. Lord Venkateswara receives everything and any thing that is offered to him by the devotees and fulfills their desires. Some pray for some thing and offer their offering. Some come from distant places and offer promised things as part of their thanks giving to god for helping them when they were very badly in need of help.

Temple staff in two or three shifts come to counting centres to count and account hundi collections. Those to whom the counting is assigned will come there without wearing any ornament or even wrist watch. They come with empty hands and go with empty hands. When the counting is going on other superior officers will keep their vigilant eye on them. Even C.C.T.V. cameras will be in operation when the counting is going

on. Every day the authorities will select two devotees as witnesses for counting. The authorities randomly pick up two devotees from among those who might have had darshan in the morning and will be on their way out just before commencement of counting. Thus in each and every batch of employees there will be two visitors to witness the counting. They will at the end certify that the counting was done as per the norms. They will affix their signatures also. After the counting session is over these two devotees will have special darshan of Lord Venkateswara and will be served with prasadam. At the end of the each session proper accounting is also done. When the prayers of devotees are heard they come forward and offer different things. When a woman feels that because of the Grace of God her husband has survived she will offer her mangalyam. Some women may offer each and every ornament they have on their person. Some parents will offer everything they have collected when their daughters get very good alliance. Lord Venkateswara they say when you call him Oh! Lord, He will answer: 'yes my devotee'. Let us bow to the heaps of gold, silver, precious stones, coins, currencies by thanking the Lord who readily answers the prayers of His sincere devotees.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **51. SANDALWOOD ROOM**

To the north of Notla Parakamani i.e., currency counting centre, in the north west corner there is a room

with a grilled door. This is known as 'Chandanapu Ara' i.e., 'sandalwood room'.

Sandalwood paste that is required for the daily use of the temple is prepared in this room. Here you will see big white stones placed on a raised platform. On these white stone, sandalwood paste is prepared. The people who prepare sandalwood paste are called 'Chandana pani'. Along with sandal wood paste, even soft turmeric balls are prepared here in this room. The sandalwood paste and soft turmeric balls prepared here are used for Malayappa Swamy's daily ablutions. Malayappa Swamy will be with His two Consorts Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi.

Apart from these daily ablutions which take place in Ranganayaka Mandapam, the sandalwood paste is used every day night for swamy's Ekantha Seva. One ball of Sandalwood paste will be kept near the Lotus Feet of Lord Venkateswara's Chief Idol. Half portion of another ball will be kept on the Chest portion of Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy's Utsava Vighraha which will be resting on a golden swing in His bed room. ¼ of it will be placed on the Chest portion of Chief Idol where Sri Maha Lakshmi dwells. The remaining ¼ portion of ball will be kept in a golden vessel. It is believed that Brahma and other celestial beings will come down to earth during night time to offer worship. For the sake of those celestial beings the paste is kept in a golden bowl. Along with the sandalwood paste they also keep a golden vessel full of water. Next day morning after



Suprabhatam these two things are distributed among devotees as Theertham and Prasadam.

Every Friday to the Chief Idol Abhishekam is performed in the early morning. Even then for this Abhishekam sandalwood paste is used. To this paste they add Raw camphor and saffron and prepare scented paste. This scented paste is used for rubbing the Chief Idol from top to toe. This is known as 'Udvarthanam'. The smearing of sandalwood scented paste is also known as "Puli Kapu". The sandalwood paste and soft turmeric balls prepared in this room are used for Utsava Moorthies also. This is used during special pooja that is performed every Monday morning to Malayappa Swamy along with His two Consorts. Similarly it is used every Wednesday when they perform pooja to Bhoga Srinivasa Moorthy. It is further used when they perform Sahasra Kalasa Abhishekam to Sri Devi, Bhoo Devi sametha Malayappa Swamy and to Sri Vishwakshena.

Apart from the days mentioned above the paste is extensively used during Vasantha Utsavam that is arranged in the month of Chaithra Masam the first month of the Hindu calendar. The sandal wood paste and turmeric balls are used to perform poojas to Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi sametha Malayappa Swamy, Sri Seetha Rama Lakshmana Utsava Moorthies, Sri Rukmini Sri Krishna idols.

The paste is used in Jyeshtha Abhishekam that is formed during Jyeshtha pournami for three days, during

Sravana pournami, during and after Brahmothsavams during Lord's Pushpa Yagam which is performed on Sravana Nakshathra day of Karthika masam. In a nut shell on daily basis the paste and balls (turmeric) are prepared throughout the year for some pooja or other either in the morning or in the evening. Let us bow to this sandalwood room by remembering the holy name of Lord Venkateswara. Chandana charchitha Govinda, Neela varna Govinda! Peetha vasana Govinda.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **52. VIMANA OF ANANDA NILAYAM**

Watch that shining golden upper chamber of Lord Venkateswara Who is addressed as Akhilanda Koti Brahmanda Nayaka i.e., Universal God. This tower catches every body's eye and pleases everybody's heart. People will be longing to see the enchanting beauty of this tower again and again.

When we come out after having a good darshan of Lord Venkateswara we will be stepping on Vimana pradakshana path. When we turn to North from west we will come across a board which says "Vimana Venkateswara Darshanam". There is a platform like thing with steps to climb. When we look above the Red Arrow we will see gold plated carved figure of Lord Venkateswara.

It is widely believed that those for some reasons fail to have the darshan of Lord Venkateswara of Garbha

Griha, can have the darshan of Vimana Venkateswara and get complete satisfaction. More over there is no restriction here. One can observe this without being pushed or pulled. They will have same amount of 'Punyam' as those who have darshan in Garbha Griha.

After descending from Vykunttam, Lord Vishnu preferred to stay on the Hills of Venkatachala with His Consort Sri Maha Lakshmi. With Self Emerged Form Lord Vishnu assumed the name of Lord Venkateswara. As He has Sri Maha Lakshmi near His chest He became Srinivasa. The place where He is standing has become a Kaliyuga Vykuntta i.e., Heaven on Earth as far as this Kaliyuga is concerned. As it happens to be a place of Eternal Happiness and Bliss, people began to call this as 'Ananda Nilaya'. The tower constructed over the Garbha Griha is called Vimana. The shining of the gold Vimana overtakes the shining of one crore suns. This tower gets the name of Vimanam. 'Mana' means measure 'Vimanam' means like any other Airship cars which flies from one place to other, even this 'viman' it appears takes off from Tirumala to Vykuntta and comes back to land here on the Hills of Venkatachala.

Only blessed people take a decision to visit Tirumala. The decision itself gives immense happiness. Not minding money, time and some inexplicable difficulties people come down to Tirumala from the nook and corner of India as well as the world. The moment they have darshan they forget the strain. Their batteries are charged afresh. They become more

enthusiastic. They enjoy a never heard before Spiritual Happiness both internally as well as externally. He is the one God who fulfills all your desires. You ask for something it will be given to you instantly without any delay. The Vimana of Ananda Nilayam is a divergant point from where spiritual feelings spread like fragrance of flowers. The great devotee of Lord Venkateswara Annamaiah who is considered to be the incarnation of Lord's Nandaka Khadga praises the Vimana of Ananda Nilaya. He says even the glimps of Vimana will dispel all sorrows and gives Heavenly Happiness. He says: 'Oh! Lord Venkateswara You sanction boons to Your devotees as per their desire'. He further says 'this is not a mere tower. But it is one form of Brahma'. Seeing the tower means experiencing Brahman in your heart. It is believed that at the behest of Lord Vishnu, Garuda brought this Vimana from Vykunttam and placed it here:

***Vimanam Karayaamaasa Ratna chithram  
Mahonnatham  
Chaturmoorthy samopetam vainatheye  
Vibhooshitham***

Tarigonda Vengamamba, another great devotee who was very dear to Lord Venkateswara says the Vimanam that was brought by Garuda will not be visible to the naked eye of ordinary people. It can be seen only by Rishis, great Upasakas of Lord and of course Celestial beings. Ordinary people offer poojas externally but holy people offer their poojas internally from the bottom of their hearts. But Lord Venkateswara blesses all whether ordinary or elevated, equally without any bias.

The Holy sacred pilgrim centre of Tirumala has this Ananda Nilayam. This Nilayam is on the edge of Lord's Pushkarini. Since time immemorial the place has been constantly visited by great Saints Yogis as well as the Celestial beings. In 'Venkatachala Mahaatmyam' the place has been described in the following glowing terms:

*Dadrusurvimalam Divyam Vimanam*  
*Bhaskaropamam*  
*Swamy Pushkarinee Theere Dakshine Loka*  
*Visrute*  
*Narayanaasritam Divyam Nityam cha*  
*Mahadbhutam*  
*Paanduraabharghana Prakhyam Naanaa*  
*Srungair Alankrutam*  
*Aneka Ratna sam Chhannam Muktha Daam*  
*Vibhooshitam*  
*Bhasayaththe jasma parva diso dasa Naraadhipa*  
*Muneedraasthe Tu Tad Dhrushtya Vimanam*  
*Parama Adhbhutam*  
*Adhrushta Poorva Manyasmin Kaale*  
*Naravaratmaja*  
*Vimanam Adhbhutakaram Tamchapi*  
*Purushoththamam*  
*Dhrushtva Tat Prorochu Aashcharyam Te Harshot*  
*pulla lochanaah*  
*Vimanam Punyam Aashcharyam Jwalad*  
*Bhaskara Sannibham*  
*Asya Eva Subhe Teere Pushkarinyah*  
*Sthithairapiha*

*Asmabhi Sahitaiha Sarvaiha Sadbharitvaiva*  
*Chaadarat*  
*Harina Dhruva Metatsyat Anenaiva Swamaayayaa*  
*Antarhitam Krutam Divyam Vimanam Siddha*  
*Sevitham*  
*Evam Vidhani Vakyani Munayasthe Parasparam*  
*Prochur Devadhi Devasya Sannidhou Tasya*  
*Sarangauaaha*

The heavenly Vimana of Lord Venkateswara situated on the southern edge of holy Pushkarini has been visited by holy saints. This appears like a crystal clear white cloud. This shining is decorated with a number of golden tips. This has been a permanent Abode of Lord Srimannarayana.

This sacred Vimanam is studded with precious stones. It is further beautified with pearl garlands. People will be made to look at this Vimanam again and again. The thirst to see the beauty of this Vimanam can never be quenched. The saints and sages who have been wandering on the table land of Sri Venkatachala mountain it seems had not seen this Vimana or this Vimana was not visible to them earlier. Having seen the beauty of Vimana and after having the darshan of the Purushottama, they all felt that they have become blessed people. They further thought how come we have not seen this Vimana which outshines the sun and puts to shame the brilliance of fire. Yet the All Merciful God by appearing here and by selecting Tirumala Kshethram as His Abode on earth, has blessed us. How lucky and

fortunate we are to have the darshan of Ananda Nilaya's Vimanam. This and more we will come to know when we go through Venkatachala Mahaatmyam portion of Varaha puranam.

People like us can only see the present golden structure. But this is the place where the Vimana, which brought Lord Vishnu from Vykunttam is also there. According to Vamana Purana this is visible to the eyes of great saints, sages and holy people. As we have already come to know that the present structure is constructed by Thondaman Chakravarthy at the behest of Lord Venkateswara.

Lord Srinivasa after getting Himself married to Sri Padmavathi stayed for some time in Srinivasa Mangapuram which was then known as 'Agasthya Ashramam'. At that time only Akasa Raju breathed his last. To have reins of kingdom Vasudas, the son of Akasa raju and Thondaman, the brother of Akasaraju fought with each other. As requested by His consort Padmavathi Lord Srinivasa supported Vasudas. But Lord gave His Sankhu and Chakra to His staunch devotee Thondaman. In that pitched battle Lord Srinivasa fell unconscious. Seeing unconscious Srinivas immediately the battle was stopped. As per under standing among the two parties, the kingdom was divided into two equal parts and then same was handed over to them. Seeing the battle between Vasudas and Thondaman - the nephew and the uncle - Lord Srinivasa for a moment entrained the idea of going back to

Vykunttam. All the celestial beings hurriedly came down to Tirumala kshethram and appealed to Lord Srinivasa not to leave Tirumala. They said the mortal human beings of Kaliyuga are weak minded. They cannot come to Vykunttam to have your darshan. They are mean and unfortunate people. Therefore for the sake of these weak minded base and mean people, please stay back. Please be here to prove "Kalou Venkata Nayakaha". Please take care of these people, please be kind to them. Please protect them. Lord Srinivasa agreed to stay back in this mundane world. But He laid down a condition, He said from now onwards I will not be seen by anyone. I will not talk to anyone. But I will happily accept the offerings offered by one and all. I will fulfil the desires of all My devotees. Having said this Lord Srinivasa turned towards His devotee Thondaman and said, "Oh! King Thondaman, you are My great devotee. Not only in this birth even in your previous births, you were here and you have been serving Me with selfless sincere devotion. Now you build one temple for Me as per Agama sastras. Over the Sanctum Sanctorum, construct one tower shining with golden tips.

***Tat Ananda Nilaye Thondaman Nrupa Nirmithe  
Vimana greya Srinivasa Raraja Bhagavan Harihi***

As ordered by Lord Srinivasa, Thondaman, the Emperor succeeded in building a lofty, precious stones studded Vimana shining with golden kalasas. The Vimana houses four moorthies as well as the Moorthy of Vynateya. He built three prakaras around Vimana.

All the prakaras having three circumambulating paths. He renovated the golden well, mandapams, kitchens etc. Not only this, he even got installed the Moorthy of Lord Srinivasa on the Vimana which is presently known as 'Vimana Venkateswara Swamy'.

On a very auspicious day in the company of His beloved Consort Padmavathi, Srinivasa entered into the Abode of Ananda Nilaya which is a golden palace, in the midst of chanting of Veda Mantras. He had the company of Brahma, Siva and other Celestial beings. The kingly honours were bestowed on Him. Enchanting piped music was offering feast to the ears. On a Lotus Peetham made of Gold, Lord stood with "Kativarada hasthas" (hands). The special standing posture indicates that He is here to bless one and all. He expressed His mind thus to Brahma and other Celestial beings:

***Anand Janakath Thath Vaththam Anand Nilayam  
Vidhuhu  
Vara Padmasaane Susthaam Vidhaya  
Kamalalayam***

Being the dwelling place of the visible God Lord Venkateswara, this place got the name of Ananda Nilaya. His Consort Padmavathi seated on a Lotus, is occupying the Vakshasthala of Lord Venkateswara. Mere darshan of Lord Venkateswara who is with Padmavathi, gives immense happiness to both body and soul.

When Lord Srinivasa entered into Ananda Nilaya, Brahma appealed to Him thus: "Oh! Lord Srinivasa,

you continue to dwell in this Ananda Nilaya till the end of Kaliyuga. Please be kind enough to bless all those who seek your shelter. Fulfil all desires of Your devotees. Please live upto Your name by dispensing wealth and happiness and by dispelling sorrows and difficulties". After this appeal Brahma, the creater had lit two lamps in the Ananda Nilaya. These two lamps will continue to dispel darkness till the end of Kaliyuga. Once the Kaliyuga comes to an end Lord Venkateswara will go back to Vykunttam. He requested Him to be the one and only God of Kaliyuga. Lord Srinivasa after hearing the benevolent request of Brahma said "Thathasthu". After getting the assurance from Lord Srinivasa, Brahma conducted Brahmothsavam for ten continuous days. The Utsavam started by Brahma have become the present days Brahmothsavams.

From that day onwards, Lord Srinivasa as a dweller of Ananda Nilaya has been protecting this world and making people happy.

***Om Mayagooda vimanaya namaha  
Om Vykunttagatha saddema vimana Antargataya  
namaha***

***Om Sahasrark Chhata  
Bhaswa dwimanantha sthithaya Namaha***

Let us praise Lord Srinivasa loudly before proceeding further

Ananda Nilaya Vasa! Govinda!  
Bangaru Gopuralavada! Govinda! Govinda!  
(Lord of Golden Towers)

*Vimanam Sarva Papaghnam sarva Lokeshu**Vishrutam**Apraakruta Manadhyantham Vykuntta dagatham**Mahat*

This Vimana is a beginning, middle and endless one. This is not an ordinary Vimanam. This has been specially brought from Vykunttam universally known. This Vimanam dispels all sins the moment one sees it. Since that time innumerable great personalities, emperors, kings have visited this Ananda Nilayam to have darshan of Vimanam. Many have renovated this Gopuram. Many have successfully completed gold plating of this gopuram by providing gold sheets. Here are details about all those who have renovated this gopuram. As per available records here is the list.

### **ALL THOSE WHO HAVE RENOVATED THE VIMANA**

In 839 A.D. Pallava king Vijayadanti Vikrama Varma had donated gold plates to cover Vimanam. Again in the year 1262 Jatavarma Sundara Pandya Dev too donated gold plates to cover Vimanam. On 6<sup>th</sup> July 1359 Saluva Mangi Deva Maha Raja removed the old Kalasams and replaced them with new golden Kalasams.

Chandragiri Mallanna, a minister in the court of Vijayanagara Kings had taken up construction of number of Mandapams in the Tirumala temple in the year 1417. By August 25<sup>th</sup> he had completed the

construction of Maha Mani Mandapam right opposite to Golden door. At that time he had even renovated Vimana of Ananda Nilaya.

The famous Vijayanagara king Sri Krishna Deva Raya who is known as 'Saahitee Samarangana Sarvabhowma' had served the Lord of Seven Hills in ways more than one. He has offered number of ornaments and vessels of Gold to the Lord Venkateswara. He had organized number of Utsavams during his reign. To the Chief Idol as well as Utsava Moorthies of Sri Devi, Bhoo Devi and Malayappa Swamy, he has offered jewellery and gold coins. During his period of reign he has visited Tirumala temple for seven (between 1513-1521) times, to offer his worship and prayers. His first visit took place in the year 1513. Second time he visited the temple on 02.01.1517. During his visit, as if he is an ordinary devotee of Lord Venkateswara, got his life size statue with folded hands along with his two queens Tirumala Devi and Chinna Devi in the vicinity of the temple. On 09.09.1518 which happens to be Bhadrapada pournami Thursday of Hindu year Bahu Dhanya, donated 30 thousand gold coins for the gold plating of Vimana.

After him the Vijayanagara king by name Veera Narasing Deva Raya had offered gold equal to his weight. With this donation he ordered gold plating of Vimana as well as Golden doors.

In the year 1630 a native of Kanchi (who had performed one crore kanyadanam i.e., helped one crore

girls by financing their marriage) by name Thathacharya had donated money for the gold plating of Vimana.

During the administrative period of Mahants, in the year 1908 on September 30<sup>th</sup>, (which coincided with keelaka nama Samvatsaras Aswayuja pournami the brotherly desciple of Prayag Das by name Rama Lakshmana Das has installed Golden Kalasam on the Vimana of Ananda Nilaya.

### **VIMANA MAHA SAMPROKSHANAM OF ANANDA NILAYAM**

Under the auspices of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam in the year 1958 for ten days i.e., from 18.08.1958 to 27.08.1958 renovation and gold plating of Ananda Nilaya took place in a ceremonious way. This ceremony was conduted on a very grand scale. People say that during past seven hundred years such celebrations were not organized as far as providing gold covering to Ananda Nilaya Vimana and its renovation concerned. People have recorded that it is infact 'Na Bhooto Na Bhavishyathi' means never such function was organized, never will such function will be organized.

For gold plating of Vimana they have used, it seems, 10 tonnes of copper, 12000 tolas of pure gold. As per the records, for this gold plating T.T.D. has spent Rs. 18 lakhs which is considered to be a mercurial figure as far as the then rupee value was concerned. Prior to taking up of gold plating work from the old plates they

had recovered gold worth Rs.8 lakhs. In addition to this recovered gold, gold freshly offered by devotees only was used.

The careful work carried out meticulously by the workers, is attracting the attention of the pilgrims who visit Ananda Nilaya, even to this day. The work of plate making to this Vimana continued for 5 years. It took nearly three years to cover the Vimana with coppersheets. For two more years, the gold plating work continued. In the year 1952 the trustees of T.T.D. had passed a resolution to conduct Maha Samprokshanam for entire Ananda Nilaya Vimana. The work for Maha Samprokshanam was started in the year 1953. For six continuous days i.e., from 16.06.1953 to 21.06.1953, both days inclusive, they conducted Balalaya Prathishthapanam. The old sheets covering the Vimana were carefully removed. From different angles the measurement photos were taken. They had even taken photos of Gopuram from different angles. As per the measurements taken a replica of Ananda Nilaya's Vimanam was created in the precincts of Tirupati's Govinda Raja Temple. The figures that are found on four corners of original Ananda Nilayam were also created with the help of measurements that were taken before and after removing sheets from the Vimana. New copper sheets were made with exact measurements. After this the gold plating work was carried out in an artistic manner for roughly five years. After making every thing, to initiate fixing work, once again Balalaya Prathishthapanam was conducted for one week from

25.10.1957 to 01.11.1957. For this purpose a wooden 5 feet tall replica (made of fig tree) of Lord Venkateswara was made and installed in the Kalyana Mandapam which is in the path of Vimana Pradakshanam. Firstly from the Chief Idol of Sri Venkateswara Swamy the potency was invoked into a golden vessel and then it was transferred to the wooden idol. This procedure was observed as per Vykhanasa Agama Shastra, in a religious way.

From November 1957 to August 27<sup>th</sup> 1958 i.e., roughly for Ten months all the poojas that were hither to be performed in the Sanctum Sanctorum in the Ananda Nilayam were performed to the wooden replica of Lord Venkateswara installed in the Kalyana Mandapam. During the afore mentioned period the renovation work of Ananda Nilayam was carried out. After the renovation even the gold plates fixing work on the Vimana too was carried out. Hundreds of workers had participated with greater devotion in removing old gold plated sheets, in the preparation of new gold plated sheets, installing or fixing those sheets, renovation of Ananda Nilayam etc. The work on the project, taken up by the T.T.D., was completed by 10<sup>th</sup> August 1958. Now the renovated Ananda Nilayam and the newly gold plated Vimanam was ready for Maha Samprokshanam. Along with renovation and other related works the gold plating of Golden door, Golden Sikharam and Garuda Alwar, covering the golden well outer walls with gold plated sheets, polishing of Lord Venkateswara's golden Makara Thoranam etc., were also taken up and were

completed. After completing every thing Maha Samprokshanam was taken up on 18.08.1958. It continued upto 27.08.1958. The celebrations were arranged on a grand scale. The potency that was invoked and transferred to the wooden idol of Lord Venkateswara was once again invoked from this idol and transferred to the Chief Idol again, as per Vykhanasa Agama Shastra. All the rituals were conducted in a dignified way that too with religious fervour. Thousands of devotees drawn from nook and corner of India participated in the Mahasamprokshanam.

In never before way the Maha Samprokshanam took place in the year 1957-58. Great personalities participated in these activities. It is our bounded duty to recognize their selfless services and thank them for timely help and valuable suggestions.

Sri C. Nagaraju Pillai the sculptor who was a native of Madurai, town of Tamil Nadu, not only made the replica of Ananda Nilaya's Vimana but also carried out the renovation work of Vimana in a wonderful way.

Sri Ramanath Sindhe of Maharashtra's Pune city successfully separated gold from old gold plated sheets that were covering Vimana. The gold that was offered to Lord Venkateswara in Lord's Hundi too was collected by him. Through a chemical process he purified the old gold and the new gold collected from hundi.

Sthapathi Sri M. Chokkalingam of Madurai made copper sheets required for gold plating. The gold plating work was taken up and completed by Sri R. Raja Gopala



Swamy Raju the proprietor of Raja Industrials, Tiruchurapalli.

Lord Venkateswara gave golden opportunity to His devotees to serve Him in an ordained way. Let us bow to Lord of Seven Hills:

***Bhaktha Priya Govinda! Govinda!!  
Ananda Nilaya Vasa Govinda! Govinda!!***

### **TECTONIC SPECIALITY OF VIMANA**

Tirumala is an universally known pilgrim centre. The Ananda Nilaya's gold plated Vimanam is a sight to watch. It is a three storied tower i.e., Trithala Gopuram. Bottom two stories are in rectangular shape. The third story is circular in shape. The Sikharam (top) of this golden tower is carved out a monolithic rock. The height of the gopuram including the 'Kalasam' is 37 feet and 8 inches. The height of prakara constructed under this tower is 27 feet 4 inches. The height from the ground level to the tip of the kalasam is 65 feet 2 inches.

The height of the rectangular shaped first story is 10 feet and 6 inches. You will not see any carving figures of Gods and Goddesses. It contains the carvings of creeper festoons and small sikharas only. The height of the second rectangular story of this gopuram is 10 feet and 9 inches. It has 40 carvings. Along with festoons, we can see the carved figures of Sri Varahaswamy, Narasimha Swamy, Anantha, Vykuntta Nath etc. These four figures beautify the four directions in a quadrangular form. Along with them around the

gopuram we will find different forms of Vishnu, Jaya Vijaya, Garuda, Anantha, Vishwakshena, Anjaneya, Saints etc. In this second story in north west direction we will find the carved figure of Lord Venkateswara facing north. This north facing Venkateswara is known by the name Vimana Venkateswara. Now let us have a look at the third story which is in a circular shape. 16 feet 3 inches is its recorded height. In this area along with Mahapadmam there are 20 figures. On four corners of this circular shaped third story there are figures of 8 lions. In each corner encompassing a small lotus two figures of lion are there. Totally there are 8 lions in four corners adjacent to golden kalasam. In the lower portion on Mahapadma we can see the beautiful figures of parrots, creepers, swans etc. These figures attract the attention of viewers.

The circumambulation path around the Ananda Nilaya Vimana is popularly known as 'Vimana Pradakshanam'. After having the darshan of the Chief Idol, the devotees come out and go around the Ananda Nilaya in clockwise direction. Not only devotees even Malayappa Swamy when He comes out from the temple, to go out, He will also take the same path. The pooja saamagri (material) that Archakas bring for Lord's seva, is also taken into the temple after circumambulating Ananda Nilaya Vimana.

Whenever Lord comes out to participate in any utsava at the four corners of Vimana Pradakshana path He will receive Harati.

This Ananda Nilaya Vimana which is infact a golden mansion is situated on the table land of Venkatachala Hill. From within the temple Lord Venkateswara is showering His blessings. As Lord Srinivasa has made this Ananda Nilaya as His permanent Abode on earth, they say there is no other sacred place on earth than this Tirumala Kshethra and there is no other benevolent God on earth than Lord Srinivasa who instantly grants all desires of His devotees. No devotee can return from this temple without getting the boon he wants, from Him. That is why this place is called 'Bhooloka Vykunttam' and Lord Venkateswara as the Kaliyuga Daivam.

Ananda Nilaya Vimanam because of its sacredness is recognized as no flying zone. No aeroplane or any flying machine can overfly Ananda Nilaya Vimana. Whoever may be the dignitary, he has to reach Tirumala only by car. The aviation department has arranged signals on Tirumala hills. The signals warn pilots not to over fly.

We have been trying to narrate greatness of Ananda Nilaya Vimana. There are not enough words in all known languages of this world which can describe the greatness as well as its sacredness.

Let us pray to Bhaktha Vatsala Srinivasa who dwells not only in Ananda Nilaya but also in the heart of each and every devotee to bless us so that we can have many more opportunities to visit Tirumala and have darshan of Lord of Seven Hills.

*Ananda Nilaye Srimadvimane Swarna  
Bhooshithe  
Sarva Mangala Mangalye Deevyathe Nitya  
Mangalam*

*Lord of Golden towers! Govinda  
Ananda Nilaya vasa! Govinda! Govinda!!*

### **53. VIMANA VENKATESWARA SWAMY**

We have come to know more and more about Ananda Nilaya Vimana. Now let us know about Vimana Venkateswara Swamy Who is the centre of attraction.

When you are in Vimana Pradakshana path after having the darshan of Lord Venkateswara you will see a board which says Vimana Venkateswara Swamy. You stand on the steps and look above the Red Arrow Mark. There you find a framed niche with festoons. Observe this carefully, you will find the exact replica of Lord Venkateswara of Ananda Nilayam in a miniature form. On both sides to Lord Venkateswara, Garuda, dancing Bala Krishna and Hanuman are there. They are serving Lord Venkateswara. As He is there on the Vimana He gets the name of Vimana Venkateswara. As staunch devotee of Lord Venkateswara Thondaman Chakravarthy is responsible for the installation of this Vimana Venkateswara on Vimana.

*Tat Ananda Nilaye Thondamannrupa Nirmithe  
Vimanagrye Srinivasaso Raraja Bhagavan  
Harihi*

*- Venkata Chala Mahatmyam*

To have darshan of Vimana Venkateswara means having the darshan of the Chief Idol. Devotees get liberated from all sorts of sins. In case one fails to have darshan of Lord Venkateswara of Ananda Nilaya, He need not worry Himself. Darshan of Vimana Venkateswara means having darshan of the Chief Idol. Such a devotee will have same benefit like those who would have had the darshan of the 'Moola Virat' i.e., the Chief Idol.

In olden days, pilgrims used to have the darshan of Vimana Venkateswara before entering into Ananda Nilaya to have the darshan of Lord Venkateswara. As more and more people have started visiting, Tirumala temple authorities have modified the age old system. Now the devotees proceed to have the darshan of Vimana Venkateswara after having the darshan of Main Deity Lord Venkateswara.

***Vimanam Sarvapapagnam vishnuna Adhishtitam***

***Saha***

***Psyatham Sarva Bhootanam Ahlada Jankan***

***Subham***

Those who have the darshanam of Vimana Venkateswara along with Vimana, all their sins will be washed away. It will give not only immense happiness but also blesses them. All devotees gather here and look up in the direction of 'Red Arrow'. By having darshan they become blessed people. Some sit down in the mandapam and chant holy mantras.

The Vimana Venkateswara acquired greater importance during the period of Madhva saint cum peethadhipati Sri Vyasatheertha.

During the time of Sri Krishna Deva Raya of Vijayanagara Kingdom Sri Vyasatheertha founded a new school of philosophy by name Dwaita Peetha sampradayam. To nullify the effect of 'kuhoo kala sarpa dosham' which Sri Krishna Deva Raya was having, it is said Sri Vyasatheertha ascended the throne of Vijayanagara kingdom. As he had ascended the throne he got the title of 'Rayalu' and assumed the name of 'Vyasa Raya'. It is further said that Vyasa Raya had conducted poojas in the Ananda Nilayam for a period of twelve long years. During this time only, the practice of chanting mantras Paraayana and having darshan of Vimana Venkateswara gained momentum.

Because of this particular tradition, people began to have the darshan of Vimana Venkateswara after having the darshan of 'Moola Virat' Sri Venkateswara. Not only devotees even Sri Malayappa Swamy along with His two Consorts Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi, before stirring out of temple during Utsavas goes along the pradakshanam path and stop for a while near Vimana Venkateswara to receive Harati. During annual utsavam known as Pavithra Utsavam, which goes on for three days, holy garlands are offered to Vimana Venkateswara. Thrice every day when naivedyam is offered to Moola Virat even to Vimana Venkateswara Naivadyam is offered from inside the temple. Let us chant the name of Lord Venkateswara.

*Sri Venkatesa! Matswamyn jnanananda Dayanidhe  
Saranagatha santhraana varadabheeshta varshana  
Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!*

#### **54. RECORDS ROOM (CELL)**

As we proceed further in one of the Prakara Mandapas we will come across a board records room. This room contains all records pertaining to gold and silver vessels of Lord Venkateswara. Not only this, it contains records giving details about ornaments and jewellery that adores 'Moola Virat' from tip to toe. The weight of each and every ornament and jewellery is also perfectly maintained.

#### **55. VEDA PARAYANAM (Chanting of Vedas)**

When you proceed from records cell there is one mandapam on the north praakara. You find Vedic scholars chanting Vedas in a melodious way. All the available Vedas Rig, Krishna Yajur, Shukla Yajur, Saama and Adharvana Vedas are recited by the scholars in Rhythmic way with proper intonation.

Lord Venkateswara is the Veda Rakshaka. The scholars are praising the greatness of Lord Venkateswara by chanting the Vedas. We are indebted to Lord Venkateswara as well as the vedic scholars who are religiously preserving the holy tradition of chanting Vedas.

*Nigama Nigamantha varnitha manohara sri  
mannarayana  
Nigama Agama Rakshaka Sri Mannarayana*

#### **56. SABHERA (The Sabha cell)**

In Pradakshana path on the Northern direction, in one of cells of Prakara Mandapam there is a cell by name 'Sabhera Room'. Sabha means Court, Darbar. The word Sabha indicated vahana's used on different days for different deities during different Utsavams. The court that is organized at different times is also indicated in this court room.

The different chathra, chamaras, silver torches, Harati plates, silk robes etc., that are used are taken from this room befitting the utsavam. Apart from aforesaid things even things that are used during Ekantha Seva like silk mattress, golden large taped cot etc., are stored here in this room. Other things that are used during Ekantha Seva like Sandalwood paste and scents and perfumes are preserved here. As per the time and utsavam these things are used.

*Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!*

#### **57. SANKEERTHANA BHANDAGARAM**

Adjacent to Sabhera room a south facing room is there. This room has big pillars with beautiful carvings on them. This is known as Sankeerthana Bhandaram. Some call this room by name Tallapaka Ara i.e., room.

There is a board which says that this is Annamacharya Bhandagaram.

This Bhandagaram (treasury) room has wooden doors. On both sides of this entrance you will find two statues pointing to this room. The statues have guitars (a stringed musical instrument) on their shoulders. The statue on right side is that of Annamacharya and the statue on left side is that of Peda Tirumalacharya. The statues and names are identified by the great scholar Late Sri Veturi Prabhakara Shastri garu.

Three poets of Tallapaka dynasty Annamacharya, his son Peda Tirumalacharyulu and his grandson China Tirumalacharyulu have composed songs in praise of Lord Venkateswara. They have also written Dandakas (prose hailing the deity) and shatakas (108 padyam's i.e., Quatrains in praise of their family deity) in Telugu. Tallapaka poets took care to see that their Keerthanas are engraved on copper plates. These plates were safely preserved in the Sankeerthana Bhandagaras. Because the copper plates were preserved here, people began to call this as Ragi Rekula Ara (Room containing copper plates) Sankeerthana Ara (room). As it had Sankeerthanas of Tallapaka poets some named it as Tallapaka Ara (room).

Now so many cassettes are available in the market. So many singers have sung and have been singing the compositions of Tallapaka poets. Almost every day live stage performances are given for all these things - audio and video. The main source for this is Bhandagaram

i.e., treasury. This particular room has been playing an important role right from the day one when administration of the temple was taken over by T.T.D. This room is serving as the hub of all Spiritual Activities of T.T.D. Because of these copper plates, Lord Venkateswara has become an Universal God. His temples are there in almost each and every important city of the world. Annamaiah loudly challenges Lord Venkateswara in the following Keerthana.

***Ne Nokkada Lekundithe Neekripaku Bathra Medi  
Pooni Na Vallane Keerthi Pondevu Neevu***

If I were not to be there people would not have come to know about Your Grace or Kindness. You owe Your name and fame to me.

Annamacharya was a born 'Advaiti' i.e., a smartha. But he has worshipped the Vaishnavite God who is being worshipped by staunch Vaishnavite Acharyas. He participated religiously in all utsavas that are celebrated in Tirumala. He even got one room in the precincts of the temple. His statue is carved on the stone wall near the door of the room. A Smartha becoming a Vaishnavite is a wonder. The wonder of wonders is he has participated in Vaishnavite rituals of the temple and having a statue engraved on the wall should be considered as the most wonderful thing. Lord Venkateswara has addressed Annamaiah as Mama i.e., father-in-law. Even today during Kalyanotsavams that are performed Annamaiah happens to be Kanya Daata. According to popular belief Annamaiah is the

incarnation of Lord Venkateswara's Nandaka Khadga. He has composed nearly 32 thousand keerthanas dealing with Yoga, Sringeri, Vairagya etc. No body has sung and composed songs on the Greatness, His Generosity, Kindness, Benevolence, Bhaktha vatsalata, Saranagatha Vatsalya etc., of Lord of Seven Hills Sri Srinivasa, like Annamaiah. Even puranas it seems have failed to explain His greatness. Where every body has failed there Annamaiah has succeeded. Annamaiah has this to say about his keerthanas :

“Please consider and preserve them as flowers offered to Your Lotus Feet. These are the flowers of Your Fame. Even if one sings only one sankeerthana that is sufficient for protecting him and blessing him. The other keerthanas please have them in your treasury.” He i.e., Annamaiah has spent his entire life in the service of Lord Venkateswara. He ordered his son Peda Tirumalacharya to compose atleast one song per day in praise of Lord Venkateswara. Gracefully aged Annamaiah, on phalguna dwadashi day, in the year 1503 became one with his beloved God Lord Venkateswara.

In one of his sankeerthanas he has emphasized that You i.e., Lord will protect us by listening to one song or keerthana. When such is the case please have the other songs or sankeerthanas composed by me in Your treasury. This being the case he would have stored all his songs after getting a room constructed to store them. Originally all his songs were written on dry palm leaves. To preserve them Annamaiah made arrangements for getting them engraved on copper plates. It is believed

that the construction, of this temple room would have been completed between the years 1523-30. After completion of the construction, people would have preserved engraved copper plates of Annamaiah's songs along with those of Peda Tirumalacharya, Annamaiah's son and China Tirumalacharya Annamaiah's grand son. It seems Vijayanagara emperor Achyuta Rayalu extended his helping hand to Annamaiah's son Peda Tirumalacharyulu, in getting the sankeerthanas engraved on copper plates. The mention about this room is found in the inscription of 1541. The inscription clearly says that the arrangements were made for proper lighting of the room i.e., 24x7 lighting and distribution of 'ATIRASALU' a kind of sweet pan cakes to the devotees after naivedyam. On a very grand scale even music performances were arranged in the name of 'Sankeerthana Aralppadu'.

Around 1545, it seems, during summer they used to celebrate “Kodai Tirunallu” (temple festival) for 20 days continuously. During this festival near this room offerings were offered to the Lord. The available records reveal all these things. Even to this day during Nitya Utsavam which starts on Ugadi and goes on for 40 days, near this room every day Tallapaka Harati is performed to Malayappa Swamy. The copper plates that are preserved in this room are not of even size. As per their measurements they are divided into four groups.

**Ordinary plates or sheets** (saadhaarana rekulu: Abbreviation: Sa.Re) : So far 2531 ordinary copper

plates have been found. These plates belong to all the Tallapaka poets. They are approximately 15.5 inches long and 7 inches wide in their size. They used to keep them almost permanently in temples.

#### **Big plates or sheets (pedda rekulu Abb.pe.re)**

Only 36 sheets or plates have been secured so far. People call them as Ragi Bandalu i.e., copper stones or Banda Rekulu i.e., stone sheets. They are 28 inches long and 16 inches wide in size. 5 or 6 sheets are hooked together with a metal ring. They used to put a rod through metal rings and used to carry them as if it is a palanquin to different places to propagate and popularize those keerthanas.

Great renowned research scholar Sri Veturi Prabhakar Shastri went to Ahobila Kshethra and found them after some search.

#### **Inscription sheets (Saasanapu Rekulu Abb.sa.re)**

Total number of sheets procured is ten. Each sheet is 11 inches long and 8 inches wide in size. Even these plates are hooked (4 or 5 sheets in an iron ring) to iron rings.

**Long sheets (Nidu Rekulu Abb.Ni.Re)** These sheets are like palm leafs in their size. They have found 119 sheets. Apart from these some incomplete pieces are also found. These sheets are 33 inches long and 2.5 inches wide in their size.

Out of these sheets some have been lost over a period of time. We have already given the number of

copper sheets found after search. Even among these available sheets only ordinary sheets are arranged according to names of poets. Here are the details: Details of available sheets author wise and the no. of sheets.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Available No. of sheets</b>
Annamacharyulu	2289
Peda Tirumalacharyulu	205
Chinna Tirumalacharyulu	37

#### **Ordinary sheets of Annamacharyulu No. of Sheets**

Manjari Dwipadas from a work by name	
Sringara Manjari	5
Spiritual Sankeerthanas	363
Sringara Sankeerthanas	1921
	<hr/> 2289 <hr/>

#### **Ordinary sheets of Peda Tirumalacharyulu**

Peda Tirumalacharyulu is son of Annamaiah

	<b>No. of Sheets</b>
Seesa Padya (seesam is a Telugu Metre)	
Satakam	100
Chakravala Manjari	2
Sudarsana Ragada	
(Ragada is a Telugu metre)	1
Sringara Dandakam	3
Refha 'Ra'karamulu	4
Sri Venkateswara Udaharanamu	3
Vritta Padya Satakam	7

Vairagya Vachanamalika Geethamulu	10
Philosophical Sankeerthanas	76
Sringara Sankeerthanalu	89
	<hr/>
	205

### **Ordinary sheets that of Chinna Tirumalacharyulu**

Chinna Tirumalacharyulu is grandson of Annamaiah.

Ashta Bhasha Dandakamu	3
Sankeerthana Lakshanamulu	4
Philosophical Sankeerthanas	10
Sringara Sankeerthanas	20

### **CRITICAL EDITORS OF THESE COPPER SHEETS**

T.T.D. has been publishing the available Sankeerthanas of Tallapaka Annamaiah after getting them critically edited by Annamaiah scholars, right from 1922-23 onwards.

During the period 1919 and December 1946 Sri Sadhu Subrahmanya Shastri served T.T.D. as Amalthadaru, Parupathyadaru, Peshkar as well as Archeological Reasercher. He took interest in the copper plates available in the Sankeerthana Bhandagaram. Because of his interest only, the Annamaiah literature began to see the light of the day. Those 30 years of his service can be aptly recognized as 30 years history of Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanams. He studied the inscriptions that are inscribed on the walls of Prakara as a researcher. At the same time as Peshkar of T.T.D.

he streamlined the poojas, Utsavams, pilgrim's facilities, construction of choultries etc., tirelessly. After critically editing he made arrangements for their publications in six volumes. He successfully dug out the copper plates belonging to Annamaiah and other Tallapaka poets. There was one Telugu Asthana (court) scholar by name Sri Kalabarigi Venkata Ramana Shastri. He made arrangements to copy them down. After copying them down he further made arrangements to edit them. This programme of editing the work of Tallapaka poets continued till 1930. Thus Sri Sadhu Subrahmanya Shastri is considered as the first discoverer and editor of Tallapaka poets. The credit of logically fixing the date of Annamaiah's birthday as Vaisakha Pournami of 1408 too goes to Shastri. Later the date mentioned by Sadhu Subrahmanyam Shastri was confirmed by the other scholars and historians. Even to this day Vysakha Pournami is celebrated as the birthday of Annamacharya by the T.T.D.

In the year 1931 the queen of Gadwal had made up her mind to offer a diamond crown to Malayappa Swamy, the Utsava Moorthy of Lord Venkateswara. To supervise this work Sri Sadhu Subrahmanya Shastri was transferred to Madras. He stayed there for two years. During these two years all the critically edited literature of Annamacharyulu got destroyed to the large extent. Whatever was left out, Sri Vijaya Raghvacharyulu the epigraphist of T.T.D. collected them and published the first volume with the title "The



minor works of Tallapaka poets” in 1935. He further published Annamaiah’s philosophical sankeerthanas, as second volume in 1936. The third volume with the title Annamaiah’s Sringara Sankeerthanalu was published in the year 1937. Sri Vijaya Raghavacharyulu had critically edited the aforesaid three volumes. All the three volumes were written in ancient script known as Valapala gilaka (i.e., the letter ‘r’ which is always written on the right side of the syllable before which it is pronounced. For example the word cherchu or Kurnool will be written in Telugu as ‘Chechur’ and Kanoorlu. People say that it is the effect of Kharoshtri script on Nagari lipi. Even today as an economy of effort we write ‘Brahma’ and pronounce as Bramha) and sakata refha. These volumes do not contain the names of Tallapaka poets like Annamaiah, Peda Tirumalacharya or China Tirumalacharya.

In 1945 late lamented Telugu research scholar Sri Veturi Prabhakar Shastri was appointed as H.O.D of Telugu in the oriental college of Tirumala Tirupati. The works of Tallapaka poets remained untouched for 15 long years i.e., from 1930 to 1945. Sri Veturi Prabhakar Shastri garu unearthed and brought them out. The Tallapaka literature which was confined to Sankeerthana Bhandagaram came out of the portals of Tirumala Tirupati. People of Andhra Pradesh and devotees of Annamaiah living all over India and world could come to know about Annamacharya, particularly his Sankeertanas and lullaby: ‘Jo Achyutananda Jo Jo

Mukunda, Lali Paramananda Rama Govinda’. For this the credit must go to Sri Veturi Prabhakar Shastri.

Thanks to Sri Veturi Prabhakara Shastri garu, Annamacharya’s name has become a household name of Telugus living not only in Andhra Pradesh, but throughout the world.

Sri Veturi Prabhakara Shastri is considered to be an authority on Annamaiah as well as other Tallapaka poets. He could successfully distinguish the copper plates as copper plates of Annamaiah, copper plates of Peda Tirumalacharya, copper plates of China Tirumalacharya and copper plates of others. He critically edited the works of Annamacharya and published them in two volumes. Along with this he wrote and published the book “Annamacharya Charithra Peethika” (preface). In this he has included history of Annamacharya written by Chinnanna, the grandson of Annamacharya. This work of Chinnanna is in ‘Dwipada’ (couplet) metre. He has logically given life history of Annamacharya in his peethika i.e., preface. There is nothing left as far as Annamacharya’s life is concerned that has not been explored or explained by Sri Veturi Pradhakar Shastri.

Now number of research scholars have worked or working or will work on Annamacharya. These Scholars have developed or taken inspiration from the points briefly touched or explained by Sri Veturi Prabhakar Shastri. This proves the authenticity of Sri Veturi Prabhakar Shastri’s book on Annamaiah.

Apart from ‘Annamacharya Charithra Peethika’ he has also published the ‘Vachanas’ (prose as distinguished from metre) of Peda Tirumalacharya (son of Annamaiah) with the title “Vairagya Vachana Maalikalu” after properly editing them.

After Sri Veturi Prabhakar Shastri, other noted Annamaiah scholars like M/s A.V. Srinivasacharyulu, Rallapalli Anantha Krishna Sarma, P.T. Jagannatha Rao, and Gowri Peddi Rama Subba Sarma have edited the ordinary copper plates and have published ‘Pada Kavitha Sahityam’ of Annamacharya.

Sri Veturi Prabhakar Shastri laid proper foundation for editing the copper plates and has published books. On Annamaiah, the book did not stop there. The book was picked up by Sri Gowri Peddi Rama Subba Sarma. He once again edited four hundred copper plates and published four volumes containing 100 copper plates each. He has added very valuable preface to all these four volumes. The volumes were published by the T.T.D. For the purpose of critically editing the work of Annamacharya a special chair was established by the T.T.D. in the year 1979. They christened the chair as Annamacharya Vangmaya Project. Sri Gowri Peddi Rama Subba Sarma was appointed as the special officer of the project. Sri Joolakanti Balasubrahmanyam (author of Telugu Hari Koluvu) was then appointed as his assistant. The other copper plates like Pedda Rekulu (big sheets) Nidu Rekulu (long sheets) Saasanapu Rekulu (epigraphical sheets) are yet to be studied and yet to be edited.

Apart from above mentioned sheets or plates some Banda Rekulu (big sheets or plates) were in the custody of temple authorities of Sri Rangam Temple of Tamil Nadu. Some of these big sheets were brought to Tirupati for study. It is said that Sri P.T. Narasimhacharyulu studied them and after carefully editing them has published a volume with the title ‘Peda Tirumala charyulu Aadhyatmika Keerthanalu’ (the philosophical keerthanas of Peda Tirumalacharyulu). Similarly it seems Sri Rallapalli Anantha Krishna Sarma has studied and edited some songs from Nidu Rekulu i.e., long sized palm leaf sheets. This we have come to know about from the book Annamacharyula Adhyatmika Sankeerthanalu (11th volume) published in the year 1955 by Sri Rallapalli Anantha Krishna Sarma. He has further published in 1956 two volumes of Annamaiah Sankeerthanalu. In each volume there are 54 sankeerthanas set to different ragas i.e., tunes. Based on these volumes, containing sankeerthanas of Annamacharya many research scholars have taken up research work on the literature and music part of Annamaiahs sankeerthanas. Many will take up research work in days and years to come.

The Tallapaka room which is on the Vimana Pradakshana path has its own importance. Even in future also it will have its own importance. Even to this day standing near the golden door the descendants of Annamacharya are singing wakeup songs for Lord Venkateswara. Similarly every night during Ekantha seva i.e., bed time service to the Lord, the descendants

of Annamacharya are singing lullaby for Lord Venkateswara. They continue to play the role of Kanyadaata during the Kalyanotsavams that take place daily. Not only these daily functions even during Vasantha Utsavams, Abhisheka Utsavams etc., they are playing their own important role.

Lord Venkateswara has preferred and selected Venkatachala Hills as His Abode in Bhooloka i.e., our mother earth. Not only this He moulded His Nandaka Khadga i.e., sword into Annamaiah to compose, sing and propogate His greatness and bless the people of not only A.P. but all people of Bharatvarsh i.e., India. Let us sing songs composed by Annamaiah in our own way and get the choicest blessings of Lord Venkateswara. Let us chant the name Govinda loudly.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **58. SANNIDHI BHASHYAKAAR**

**(Bhashyakaar referes to Sri Ramanujacharya)**

*Visadordhva Pundra Vilasan Mukhaabujam  
Lalithopaveetha kalithoru vaksham  
karapadma vajrakalitha tridandakam  
kalaye yatheendra mahaneeya vigraham.*

The words ‘Yateendra and Mahaneeya Vigraham’ refer to Bhagavad Ramanujacharya. There is a Sannidhi for Bhagavad Ramanujacharya. It is adjacent to Sankeerthana Bhandaram. It is on eastern side facing towards south. It is a small hut like thing within the

precincts of Sri Vari Alayam. This hut like thing, is in the path of Vimana pradakshanam. This small Sannidhi is known as Bhashya Kaarula Sannidhi. The idol of Ramanuja is facing south. As he is in a sitting posture people have named it as Bhashya Kaarula Sannidhi. This is divided into two portions. One portion is called ‘Mukha Mandapam’ and another portion is known as ‘Garbha Mandapam’. The Garbha Mandapam is 16 feet long and 12 feet wide. In the centre on a platform a statue of Ramanuja is installed. The height of the statue is 2 feet. It is in a Vyakhyana Mudra. It faces south. Not only this idol there is one Utsava Moorthy also. Its height is 1 ½ feet. There is one Ekasila (monolith rock) Gopuram constructed on a platform whose height is 4 feet.

There is a Mukha Mandapam for this Sannidhi. It is a 19 feet long and 12 feet wide construction. There are sculptured stone pillars in two rows.

When you probe details like when and why the idol of Ramanuja is established in this Vimana Pradakshanam path some astonishing facts came to life.

Bhagavad Ramanuja has performed two memorable things. He made vaishnavism as an easily acceptable sect of Hinduism. It was accepted by rich as well as poor alike. He opened the doors of Vaishnavism to each and every one irrespective of their caste, creed and even faith. Bhagavad Ramanuja firmly believed that temples are necessary for protecting our ‘Sanatana Dharma’ and Hindu culture. By covering each and every corner of

India he renovated and constructed many temples. Not only that, in these temples he introduced uniform way of worship by streamlining every thing according to Agama Shastras. Bringing uniformity in performing poojas is his second great contribution to our culture. The first and also the foremost temple where he streamlined the methods of worship is Tirumala Venkateswara Swamy Temple. He is solely responsible for making Tirumala Temple as the great pilgrim centre. Thus there is one deep rooted relationship between Ananda Nilaya as well as Sri Bhagavad Ramanujacharya. During his life time (it is said he lived for 120 years) Bhagavad Ramanuja had visited Tirumala thrice.

Bagavad Ramanuja honestly considered Tiruvenkatachala Kshethra of Seven Hill as Lord Srinivasa. He has actively propogated this concept to the world at large by praising Tirumala Hills in so many ways and words. He is the first and foremost Acharya to recognize the Holiness of this Kshethra. He advocated to the devotees that one should not climb the Hills by stepping on the Hill. Through his Guru Tirumala Nambi's (Tirumala Thathacharyulu's) disciple Ananthavar, he came to know that poojas are not properly conducted in the Ananda Nilaya. He was pained to know about this. To set right every thing he decided to climb the Hills. As he was climbing or stepping on the Hills for noble cause he thought that it is not a sin to climb. But he did not step on the Hills. He climbed the Hills with his knees. With greater devotion he made pucca arrangements for different Sevas as well as poojas of the temple. He took personal

care in streamlining every thing. The Tirumala Kshethra owes its development to Bhagavad Ramanuja. While climbing the Hills with his knees for the first time, it is said he rested for a while near a place called Mokalla (knees) Mitta (a small hill or an elevated ground). After some time in memory of Bhagavad Ramanuja people have constructed a temple. Those who climb the Hills can see the temple which is situated in the midst of Mokalla Mitta. People call this as Dova (path) Bhashyakarulu. Every day poojas are performed by the priests and offerings come directly from the main temple.

After reaching Tirumala as per Kshethra Sampradaya (tradition) Ramanujacharya had the darshan of Sri Bhoo sametha Adivaraha Swamy. He revived the old tradition of first pooja, first naivedyam (offering) and first Darshan. After having the darshan of Sri Bhoo sametha Adivaraha Swamy he entered into Ananda Nilaya to have the darshan of Lord Srinivasa. He had darshan of Kouthuka (glee) of Sri Varu, Snapana (holy ablutions) Bali (sacrifice) Utsava, Dhruva Beralu (fixed images or idols) etc., also. It seems he had the darshan of Lord who had ornaments, jewellery, necklaces studded with gems, diamonds and other precious stones, diamond studded crown etc., from tip to toe. It seems he was transformed into a different world of spiritual ecstasy. He had a feeling that Lord Ranganatha of Sri Rangan is giving darshan to him as Alamelu Manga Sahitha Srinivasa.

Lord Venkateswara of Tirumala Kshethra has been eulogized in the following terms:

***Padmavatheem vishalaksheem Bhagavaanaatma  
vakshasee***

***Arisankha Viheeno Asau Katinyastha  
Karothishamaha***

***Darsyan Paaninaikena Dakshinena  
Vrushaakapihi***

***Pada Padmam Suraa rajyam Gatim cha Paramam  
Nrunam***

***Katinyastha Karenaapi Nida Paadbhija Kaaminam  
Nrunam Bhavapayoraasim Kati Daghnam  
Pradarshayan***

***Virajathe Venkatesaha Sampratyapi Ramapathi***

He has, All Merciful, Kind hearted Sri Maha Lakshmi who is known for Her milk of divine kindness, in His Heart. He has discarded the much dreaded weapons like Sankhu and Chakra and has assumed very very pleasantly pleasing peaceful form. With His raised Blessing Hand He is assuring people that He will solve their difficult problems. From time immemorial people have been worshipping Lord Venkateswara who is no other than Srimannarayana Himself. Seeing the God without Sankhu and Chakra some say He is Lord Siva, Goddess Shakthi, Karthikeya, Veerabhadra etc. Some have worshipped Him, thinking that the idol is that of their family deity. Some have argued that He belongs only to them. There were clashes over the name. When heated arguments were going on and when the peace

of the area was disturbed over the name, Ramanujacharya arrived at Tirumala to set right the dispute. He proved that the idol is that of Srimannarayana only. Using his power of penance he even gave Sankhu Chakra to the idol. Not only this he could even create Maha Lakshmi near the Heart of the Idol. Thus he emphatically proved that the idol is that of Sri Maha Vishnu only. He is solely responsible for the idol occupying an important place in the temple. Though Bhagavad Ramanuja belonged to Pancha Ratra Agama sect of Vaishnavism he saw to it that the present form of Vykhanasa pooja is continued in the temple. He appointed a bachelor by name Vishwaksena Ekangi (Sena pathi Jeeyar) and made him to participate in Sevas, poojas and araadhanas of Lord Venkateswara with unquestionable devotion and sincerity. This bachelor after some period of time took to sanyasa as Venkata Satta Kopayati and became Jeeyar. From that day onwards the tradition of Jeeyars of Vaishnava sampradaya is continuing even to this day. Sri Ramanuja is considered and referred as periyar (elder) Jeeyar.

Even to this day when Suprabhatam is being chanted, Sannidhi Golla the temple shepherd unlocks the golden door and steps into the Sanctum Sanctorum with Diviti, a torch in his hand. Immediately after that the Archakas start chanting: “Kousalya Supraja Rama Poorva Sandhya Pravarthathe, Uththishta Narasaardoola Karthavyam Daiva Mahanikam”. Then the representative of Bhagavad Ramanuja ‘Ekangi’ enters into the temple.

After Ekangi's entry the golden doors are shut. Standing before golden door the pandits will continue to chant Suprabhatam.

The Sannidhi Golla (shepherd) will take all up to Kulasekhara Padi with the torch in his hand. The Golla at that points stays back. Archakas and Ekangi enter in after crossing Kulasekhara padi. Ekangi picks the torch from the hands of Sannidhi Golla and lights lamps in Sri Vari Sannidhi. With this lighting, every day's Ramanuja seva starts. Not only this in all the Sevas including the last and final Ekantha Seva, in each and every Utsava and procession there will be contribution from the side of Ramanuja. His Ekangi, the representative of Bhagavad Ramanuja will be and should be there. There are some note worthy things. All the poojas, Sevas in the temple are performed as per vaikhanaasa agama. Even then you take any seva or any aradhana or any utsava or Harati, Archakas do not do it directly. All the items they receive first from the hands of Jeeyar or Ekangi who is the representative of Ramanuja and only then they perform the seva or pooja. This unbroken tradition continues even today. In otherwords with the help and supervision of Ramanuja's representative all the Sevas and poojas are perfectly performed as per Vykhanaasa Agama Tradition.

*Ananthaha prathamam roopam, lakshmanasthu  
tathaha paramam*

*Bala Bhadraha Truteeyassyath, Kalou  
Ramanujaha smruthaha*

Adishesha has taken birth as Anantha of Kruthayuga, Lakshmana of Trethayuga, Balarama of Dwapara yuga. The same Adishesha has taken his birth in this Kaliyuga as Bhagavad Ramanuja and has offered his Sevas to Lord Srinivasa of Tirumala Kshethra.

Ramanuja apart from offering Sankhu Chakras, has offered one Nagabharana to Lord Srinivasa. A king by name Veera Narasimha Raju too has offered a Nagabharana to Sri Swamyvaru. People felt that Nagabharana will further beautify the idol. Hence he i.e., Ramanuja offered second Nagabharana to Lord Srinivasa. Thus Nagabharanas on both hands have enriched already rich looks of Lord Srinivasa. By contributing the second Nagabharana he i.e., Ramanaja has proved his 'Seshatatwa'.

Bhagavad Ramanuja in his attempt to streamline the poojas and Sevas had offered a golden image of Alamelu Manga as an ornament to the Chief Idol of Lord Srinivasa. This is considered to be an eventful thing both in the history of Ananda Nilaya as well as history of Bhagavad Ramanuja's 'Kainkarya' to Lord Srinivasa:

*Dwibhuja vyoohalakshmee syath  
Baddha Padmasana Priyaa  
Srinivasanga madhyasthaa  
Sutaram kesava priyaa*

In the Vakshasthala (chest) of Divya Mangala Viraat Moorthy of Lord Venkateswara, Dwibhuja Lakshmi

who is known as “Vyoooha Lakshmi” is seated. She holds two lotus flowers in both hands. She is seated in a lotus posture which is known as ‘Padmasana’. It is protruded near the Chest portion of the Chief Idol. As He has ‘Sri’ i.e, Goddess Lakshmi in Vakshasthala He has become Srinivasa to His devotees.

It is believed that Sri Maha Lakshmi listens to the prayers of devotees even before Lord Venkateswara listens to them. She will recommend to Lord Srinivasa each and every case so that He can bless and fulfil their desires. She will see to it that everyone gets the blessings of Lord Venkateswara. Because of Sri Maha Lakshmi’s presence, He i.e., Venkateswara is recognized as Direct Incarnation of Lord Maha Vishnu:

***Matarnamami! Kamale! Kamalaaya thakshi  
Sri Vishnu Hruthkamala vasini! Viswamathaha!  
Ksheerodaje! Kamala komala garbha Gowri!  
Lakshmi! Praseeda sathatham Namatham  
saranye.***

Devotees cannot have darshan of Maha Lakshmi adoring the Vakshasthala of Lord Srinivasa on all days. Only during Friday’s Abhishekam time devotees can have darshan. On all other days and other timings She will be covered with Swamy’s silk robes, ornaments, jewellery and garlands. To see that all devotees can have darshan on all days and all times. Bhagavad Ramanuja made arrangements for a golden Alamelu Manga’s image and got it installed on the right side of the Chief Idol. He had offered this golden Alamelu Manga’s image to the Lord on a Friday i.e., on

Suklapaksha Dwadasi day under the star Uttara Phalguni. From that day onwards the Friday Abhishekam gained importance in Lord’s seva.

After some time another Golden Image to represent Bhoo Devi was also offered to Lord Venkateswara. It is adoring the neck portion of Lord Venkateswara. Now we find two images of gold adoring the Vakshasthala of Lord Venkateswara. Annamaiah in one of his keerthanas has praised Lord as Alamelu Manga Thali (mangalasoothra) meda (neck) vadu (person).

No one exactly knows the number of names God has. But Bhagavad Ramanuja loves to address Him as Srinivasa.

Ramanujacharya came to know through one of the pasuram of Nammalwar (holy song sung in praise of Lord Srinivasa in Tamil) that the place where Lord dwells is the pushpa mandapam and He loves flowers. Ramanuja deputed his disciple Ananthavar to prepare and supervise flower garlands for Lord Venkateswara. During one of his visits he appreciated his disciple Ananthavar for his dedicated devotion in preparing garlands and offering them to Lord Venkateswara. Ananthavar raised a garden and named it as Sri Ramanuja Nandanavanam.

Ramanuja came to know about the test Lord Venkateswara conducted to know about the devotion of Ananthavar. He could know the day on which Lord conducted the test. According to Hindu calendar Ramanuja fixed a particular date according to our

calender and made arrangements for Lord's visit to Ananthavar's garden in an anticlockwise direction. This has become an annual feature. From that day onwards (details of Lord's test are given in earlier pages under the heading Ananthavar).

Ramanuja said that the flowers available in Tirumala Kshethra are meant only for Lord Venkateswara. As such no one can wear or have flowers including flowers offered to Lord. All the used flowers should be dropped in pool (flowers) baavi (well) and they are meant for Bhoo devi. This rule laid down by Ramanuja is strictly implemented even today. No one wears or carries flowers in Tirumala kshethra. Only on Tiruchanur Panchami day Lord's garlands along with pasupu (turmeric) and kumkuma are sent to Sri Padmavathi of Tiruchanur. Ramanuja passed this order. He heard about another incident connected with his Guru cum maternal uncle Tirumala Nambi. Tirumala Nambi used to fetch water for Swamy's Abhishekam from a distant place. One day when he was bringing water, Lord Srinivasa in the guise of a hunter addressed him i.e., Tirumala Nambi as grandpa (thatha) and drank water that was meant for Lord's Abhishekam. Ramanuja was very pleased to hear about this incident. He wanted to immortalize this particular incident which is connected with his Guru cum maternal uncle. He wanted that particular day to be remembered by the future generations to come. He made arrangements to celebrate that day as Thanneer Amudu Utsavam (Akasa Ganga

Amruta Utsavam). This particular utsavam takes place on the last day of Adhyayanotsavam, every year.

To see that the devotees of Lord Venkateswara like Jeeyangar, Tallapaka Annamaiah's descendants, game karlu (chefs) or cooks, Bhajanthreelu (musicians) etc., who participate in daily Sevas of the Lord, to serve exclusively, he organized a 40 days festival starting from the first day of Ugadi. After the daily utsavam for 40 days, Lord's Darbar i.e., court will be held in Ramanuja's Sannidhi.

He is responsible for the installation of Sri Yoga Narasimha Swamy in the temple. Daily poojas and Naivedyams are offered to Sri Yoga Narasimha. Ramanuja made pucca arrangements for this.

A day after Sankranti, the day is called as 'Kanuma' in Telugu. Garlands worn by Sri Goda Devi (this temple is in the precincts of Tirupati's Govinda Raja Swamy temple) will be taken to Tirumala and Lord Venkateswara will wear them. After this wearing ceremony they celebrate 'Godaakalyanam'. In Dhanu Masam (Dec-January) instead of Suprabhatam Tiruppavai will be recited. During Thomala Seva, Divya Prabandham will be recited. During all Utsavams Goshti, (discourse) Saaththu mora etc., are arranged. For introducing all these things mentioned above Sri Bhagavad Ramanuja is solely responsible.

In Bhasyakarula Sannidhi we find a statue of Bhagavad Ramanuja. The statue is in Vyakhyaana Mudra



(as if he is giving commentary). Ramanuja it is said embraced this statue and gave it to his desciple Ananthavar. The same statue was installed in the courtyard of the temple. In this statue Ramanuja is depicted as a young man. Here in this temple we also find the sandals of Ramanuja on a dish cover shaped like a cup and on this cup there will be two marks resembling shoes (sattari). As a mark of respect to his Guru Ramanuja, Ananthavar named that sattari as Ananthavar.

Though Ramanujacharya belonged to a different tradition of Vaishnavism as far as worship is concerned, he did not disrupt the Vykanasa Agama Sampradayam. But allowed the temple Archakas to continue that tradition. He supervised them for some time and then stream lined them.

Every month even to this day they celebrate 'Ardhra Nakshtra day'. On that day, along with Tirumala swamy, Ramanuja (he will be facing Tirumala swamy) also will be taken in procession in Vysakha month ( the second month of Hindu calendar) Sri Ramanuja Jayanthi is celebrated for 10 days continuously. During the Utsavams and after the utsavam, in Bhashyakaar Sannidhi special court will be held and Araadhanas will be celebrated. Sri Ramanuja will be offered Sri Swamy's sesha Harati, theertham, chandanam and sattari.

Every day, Lord Venkateswara will be offered naivedyam thrice. After offering the naivedyam the same things - curd rice, sudhaannam, dosa's etc., are offered to Ramanuja also.

Brahmothsavams were not celebrated in Tirumala before the arrival of Ramanuja. After Dhawajaarohana on first day, they used to shift venue to Tiruchanur. Bhagavad Ramanuja wanted them to be celebrated in Tirumala. To celebrate rest of Brahmothsavam in Tirumala he converted narrow roads of Tirumala into wide roads. He gave instructions to the Archakas to celebrate Brahmothsavam in Tirumala itself.

The credit of setting right every thing and stream lining Vykanasa Agama Sampradayam, introducing two Utsavams in memory of his Guru cum maternal uncle Tirumala Nambi, entrusting the work of raising a garden and preparing garlands for Lord's daily seva, installing Sri Maha Lakshmi in the Vakshasthala of Lord Srinivasa, shifting Brahmothsavams from Tiruchanur to Tirumala etc., should rightly go to Bhagavad Ramanuja. Annamaiah has eulozised Ramanuja's services in one of his keerthanas in glowing terms. Annamaiah calls him as a Talking God.

## **59. SRI VARI DOLLARLU**

### **(Lord's Dollars)**

Adjoining the Bhashyakarula Sannidhi towards East there is a small mandapam or a room. (The word dollar is of German origin and it denotes silver coins). This room contains Lord's gold and silver coins. These coins are for sale. As per the prevailing rates in the market their price will be fixed. In other words the price varies as the silver and gold market fluctuates. Gold and silver

coins of 10 grams and 5 grams with the figures of Sri Venkateswara, Ananda Nilaya, Venkateswara and Padmavathi are sold in T.T.D.'s sales counter i.e., in this room. These coins are available only here. No where else these coins will be available for sale. Pilgrims can buy these coins after having Lord's darshan.

### **60. SRI YOGA NARASIMHA SWAMY SANNIDHI**

On Vimana Pradakshana path, in north east direction there is a west facing Yoga Narasimha Swamy temple. It has Mukha Mandapam (pillared entrance) Antharalamu (middle space) and Garbha Alayam (Sanctum Sanctorum).

In the Sanctum Sanctorum there is a three feet high platform. On that platform west facing idol of Yoga Narasimha is installed. A small room in front of Sanctum Sanctorum is the Antharala of this temple. Through Mukha Mandapam we have to enter into Antharalam first and then have darshan from threshold of Sanctum Sanctorum. There is provision for circumambulation also.

Researchers are of the opinion that this temple would have come into existence somewhere between 1330 and 1360 A.D. Prior to the construction of this temple the idol of Yoga Narasimha was in a God forsaken place without any pooja. Ramanuja brought this idol from that God forsaken place. After installing it in the temple he even made provision for circumambulation.

In Kandadai Ramanuja Iyyangar's inscription of 1469 A.D. there is a mention about this temple. Yoga Narasimha Swamy has been mentioned as Alagiya Singar (beautiful lion) and as Venkataththurai (Lion of Venkatachala mountain).

Though daily pooja is not offered to this Yoga Narasimha, Naivedyams are offered daily.

Every Saturday Abhishekam is performed to Yoga Narasimha. This will be followed by pooja and Naivedyam.

Every year in the month Vaisakha (second month in Hindu calendar) on a grand scale poojas are performed on Nrusimha Jayanthi day. On that day evening after Aradhana, Thomala seva and Archana 'Thomala Dosapadi' naivedyam is offered to Lord Venkateswara. After this, the Archaka's of Lord Venkateswara with Swamy "Sattari" come in clockwise direction with all temple Paraphernalia like piped music, Chathra (umbrella) Chamara (fans) etc., to the Yoga Narasimha's temple. They will perform Purusha Sooktha Abhishekam. After Abhishekam new robes will be given to Him. He will have Pushpa Alankarana (adorning). At that time Jeeyangars and others will chant 'Tirupallandu' from Divya Prabandham (Tamil). Afterwards Prasadam vadapappu (green gram soaked in water) panakam (sweet jaggery water) chakkara pongali (sweet cooked rice) will be distributed. After this there will be Asthanam (court) Harati and discourse. This will be followed by the distribution of prasadam.

Annamacharya the great devotee of Lord Venkateswara has composed so many keerthanas in praise of Yoga Narasimha. As far as Annamaiah is concerned there is no difference between Lord Venkateswara and Yoga Narasimha. One will be thrilled to have Vimana Darshan from Yoga Narasimha's Mukha Mandapam.

Let us reverentially bow to Sri Venkata Narasimha:

***Sri Matpayonidhi Niketana Chakra paane!  
Bhogeendra Bhoga Mani Raajitha! Punya Moorthi!  
Yogeesa Saaswatha Saranya! Bhavabdhi potha!  
Lakshmi Nrusimha! Mamadehi Karavalambam!!***

Bhaktha Prahlada Varda

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **61. SANKU STHAPANA STHAMBHAM**

**(Foundation laying pillar)**

Towards north east corner of Yoga Narasimha Swamy Temple, at the centre, you can see a pillar. At the behest of Lord Venkateswara, Thondaman Chakravarthy (emperor), it is said, had laid foundation at this particular spot for the construction of Ananda Nilaya's tower and prakaras (rampant). This may not be true. Perhaps it may be a pillar erected for the foundation laying ceremony of Yoga Narasimha Swamy temple. On the four sides of this pillar you can find carved figure of Anjaneya.

It is firmly believed that who ever circumambulates this pillar with sincere devotion may succeed in having

a house of his own. Let us circumambulate this pillar with the holy name of Lord Venkateswara on our lips!

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **62. PARIMALAM ARA**

**(A store room for perfumes)**

Towards south of Yoga Narasimha Swamy temple there is room called as the store room for perfumes.

Every Thursday in the afternoon they prepare crude camphor powder to be used for 'Sri Vari Namam'. Next day morning i.e., Friday morning after Abhishekam and adorning the Lord with traditional jewellery ornaments and garlands they use 16 tolas (1 tola = weight of a old rupee coin) of crude camphor powder for putting the Vertical Namam. During Brahmothsavam and on following three or four Fridays Archakas use 32 tolas of crude camphor powder for Sri Vari Namam.

Here in this room every Thursday they prepare a mixture of crude camphor, musk civet etc., and put them in silver cups for Friday's Abhishekam. They hand over these cups to devotees who would have bought tickets to participate in Friday morning Abhishekam.

Before the Friday's Abhishekam in the morning Jeeyangar carries silver vessel having the crude camphor meant for Lord Venkateswara's namam, on His Forehead. Temple authorities accompanied by devotees carry other vessels obtaining perfumes from the perfume store room and enter into Sanctum Sanctorum to the

accompaniment of piped music, via Golden door, Dhvajasthambham, and circumambulation path of Vimana. After that they will participate in Abhishekam.

The room where the perfumes, for Lord's Urdhwa Pundram (the upright mark) and for Abhishekam, are prepared has its own significant place in Sevas of the temple.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

### **63. LORD'S HUNDI**

After getting down from the store room of perfumes we have to walk up to Lord's Hundi. Hundi is a large bag where devotees put their offerings to God. It is on the northern side of golden door. In between four pillared mandapam one will find this Hundi. Varieties of things like jewels, silver and gold utensils, money promised by vow to God, particularly to Lord Venkateswara known as Mudupu in Telugu, coins, currency notes, clothes, camphor, rice, sugar candy etc., are offered by devotees to Lord. Some even put everything they have on their person known as 'Niluvu Dopidi'. Women offer every thing including their mangalasuthra after putting turmeric stem tied to yellow thread in their neck. All the offerings are put into a big hung canvas bag. They usually put a big copper vessel in that hung canvas bag. The outer canvas of the bag will have religious markings of vaishnavism like Sankhu, Chakra and upright markings (Namam).

The offerings offered by devotees directly fall into that big copper vessel. The canvas containing the copper vessel is known as KOPPERA (a metal cauldron). Before fixing the canvas they put seven seals on behalf of temple and six seals on behalf of Jeeyangars. While fixing and also while removing the canvas parakamani (a temple officer) verifies the seals. Two pilgrims will also witness this.

The Hundi canvas is replaced twice in a day. During the Naivedyam time i.e., 12 noon the Hundi is removed and new one takes that place. After Ekantha Seva in the night it is removed for the second time and a new one will be hung. When there is more rush or crowd Hundi is removed and new one will be hung may be thrice or four times in a day.

It is said that Sri Adi Sankaracharya had installed Sri Chakra here and because of this only the Hundi overflows. Pandit Sri Ramanatha Ghanaapaati, T.T.D.'s vedic scholar has confirmed the presence of Sri Chakra under the Hundi to the author of this book in 1992. He said that when I was pursuing my vedic studies in Devasthanam's Veda Paathasala, once the ground under the hundi was dug to raise the level of the ground, they have clearly seen the Sri Chakra there.

May be because of the presence of Sri Chakra the temple authorities have not contemplated of shifting Hundi from its present place. They have changed the venue of utsavas but not the hundi from the present place.

Lord Venkateswara has given a place for Sri Maha Lakshmi near His Heart. People are of the firm belief that because of the presence of Sri Maha Lakshmi near Lord's Heart the place is overflowing with wealth continuously.

The Hundi for all practical purposes is the incarnation of Goddess Maha Lakshmi. Let us bow our heads to Goddess Lakshmi and chant the name of Lord:

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

#### **64. GOLDEN LAKSHMI**

After offering their offerings to Lord Venkateswara devotees come out. When they look to their left on the prakara they will find a life size carved statue of Goddess Lakshmi. She is showering not only wealth but also Her choicest blessings on Her devotees. It is believed that Goddess Lakshmi bestows more wealth on Her devotees than Lord Venkateswara to whom devotees offer their offerings.

#### **65. KATAAHA THEERTHAM**

**(A water trough)**

Opposite to Annamaiah Bhandagaram there is a trough. Through this trough the water used for Lord's Abhishekam flows out from Lord's Feet. Devotees consider this as holy water. In Telugu they call it 'Kataha (Sanskrit for a large vessel) or thottica (A tub or a trough) theertham'. There are three important things to be observed. To have a bath in Swamy Pushkarini,

to have a darshan of Lord Srinivasa and to have theertham from the trough. These three things it is said, only blessed people can achieve. Once you step out from Hundi, on left side you can see this trough. When you take water i.e., theertham in your hand before sipping you have to utter Ashtakshari (Om Narayanaya Namaha) or names of Kesava (one of the names when we perform Sandhya Vandanam) or Om Namō Venkatesaya. There is a story which proves the Holiness of this Theertham.

Long long ago on the banks of Thunga Bhadra there lived a Brahmin by name Padmanabha. He had a son by name Kesava. Kesava became a womeniser. The greed for money made him to kill a Brahmin. He was haunted by the sin of killing a Brahmin. Scared of this sin he took to his heels. Being restless he returned to his father. He appealed to his father to save him from the sin of killing a Brahmin. At that time Rishi Bhardwaj came there. Having heard the story from Kesav's father, Rishi Bhardwaj advised him to visit Tirumala and sip theertham from Kataaha Theertham. Kesava Sharma along with his father visited Tirumala. First he had a dip in Swamy Pushkarini and then had the darshan of Varaha Swamy. From there he proceeded to Ananda Nilaya and had darshan of "All providing" Lord Venkateswara. Then he went straight to Kataaha Theertham and had a sip of the holy water that comes out from the Lotus Feet of Lord Venkateswara. Because of the holy effect of this Kataaha Theertham he was relieved from the haunting sin.

People say that, all without any restrictions can have a sip at any time. Those who have a sip will find relief from Chronic incurable diseases. Skanda puranam says this. It is said that even Lord Siva may not know about the miraculous effects of this holy water:

*Kataahatheertha Mahatmyam Ko Vetti  
Bhuvanatraye  
Maha Devo Vijaanaathi Tasya Theerthasya  
Vaibhavam*

*Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!*

## 66. SRI VISHWAKSENA

After offering money or kind promised by vow to Lord Venkateswara in His Hundi, we come out of that premises. On to your left you will find Vykuntta Pradakshana Dwaram. Next to that there is a small temple. When you step into this small temple you will see two feet long statue of Vishwakseena. This statue faces south.

Statue of Viswakseena has four hands. Two upper hands hold Sankhu and chakra respectively. Vishwakseena is in a sitting posture with Abhaya Mudra. He has upright mark i.e., Namam. He is the Chief Commander of Lord Venkateswara. He is known as “Sainyanath” or “Senadhipathi” or “Sri Sena Mudaliyar”. His Pancha Loha Vighraha is kept in Ankurarpana Mandapam where theertham is given to devotees. In all important utsavams, annual celebrations

like Ugadi, Deepavali, Brahmothsavam etc., he has an important role to play.

Let us offer our obeisance to Lord Venkateswara’s commander-in-chief.

*Yasya Dwirada Vakthraadyaaha  
Paarishadyaaha Parassatham  
Vighnam Nighnanthi Satatam  
Vishwaksenam! Tamaasraye*

*Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!*

## 67. MUKKOTI PRADAKSHANAM

*(Vykuntta Pradakshanam)*

Near Vishwakseena’s temple there is one more circumambulation path. This is known as ‘Mukkoti Pradakshana path’. Adjacent to Sanctum Sanctorum’s prakara on southern side there is dwaram i.e., door. Through this door we have to enter into Mukkoti Pradakshana Margam i.e., path. We have to come out through the path that is next to Hundi.

This path is situated in between Sanctum Sanctorum’s prakara and inner prakara of Vimana Pradakshana path. Only on Vykuntta Ekadasi Day this door will be opened. To be more precise, this door will be kept opened from the mid night of Dasami to the mid night of Dwadasi. On other days they keep this door closed. This circumambulation path is very close to the Chief Idol of Lord Venkateswara. The

measurements of this path are not even. Southern path is 69.6" long x 8.3" wide. In this path there are six pillars in a row from east to west. Western path is 6.6" long x 8.5" wide. Here there are 4 pillars. On northern side it is 77" long x 18.4" wide. Here there are 12 pillars (6+6 in two rows). As there is very spacious area on northern side, it is said that in olden days they used to arrange court for all Utsava Moorthies.

They have now closed, eastern path. As there is a narrow entry into a new construction called "Ramula Vari Meda", they say it has been closed.

On Vykuntta Ekadasi day the place will be lighted and decorated with colourful festoons and flowers. Blessed is he/she who gets an opportunity to enter in Mukkoti Pradakshana Path.

*Sri Vykuntta Virakthaaya Swamy Pushkarinee  
thate !  
Ramayaa Ramamanaaya Venkatesaaya Mangalam*

## **68. SAASHTANGA NAMASKARAM**

### **(Prostration)**

Near silver door there is Sri Ranganatha Swamy temple. Let us prostrate before Sri Ranganatha Swamy. Let us pray that he will give us one more or more and more opportunities to visit Tirumala and have the darshan of Lord Venkateswara who is All Providing God and who Generously fulfils all our desires.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

## **69. SRI VARI PRASADAM**

### **(Lord's prasadam)**

After prostrating before Sri Ranganatha swamy, pilgrims have to come out through silver door. Towards north of silver door you will see Archakas (priests) and paricharakas (temple employees) distributing Lord's Prasadam to the devotees. (After offering naivedyam whatever is left over will be distributed as prasadam to devotees). Devotees in a disciplined way stand in a 'Q' and receive prasadam reverentially. Varieties of tasty prasadams like sweet pongal, pulihora (tamarind masala rice) pongal, curd rice etc., are distributed to devotees. They are the divine medicines. They are gifts from Goddess Lakshmi. With spiritual feelings let us receive Prasadams.

There are many worth seeing places in and around the temple. Let us try to visit and try to know one by one.

## **70. SRI BEDI ANJANEYA SWAMY**

Like a link between the pilgrims who come from Tirupati and the Lord of Seven Hills Sri Srinivasa there stands Sri Bedi Anjaneya Swamy, a Supreme Devotee of Sri Rama.

With folded hands and fettered legs, Sri Bedi Anjaneya Swamy stands facing the main entrance of the temple. Fed up with the pranks of Bala Hanuman mother Anjana chained him and asked him to stand

before the Lord of Seven Hills Sri Venkata Ramana. Because of hand cuffs and fetters he is known as Bedi (fetters) Anjaneya Swamy. In 1841 A.D. when Mahants were in charge of temple administration they introduced the Poori Jagannath tradition of hand cuffed and fettered (legs) Anjaneya Swamy to Tirumala temple.

Sri Bedi Anjaneya Swamy Temple has two portions. The first one is Mukha Mandapam and the second one is Sanctum Sanctorum. In the Garbha Griha almost abutting the wall there stands in the centre a life size statue (6 feet tall). The temple has monolith tower. Like Ananda Nilaya temple of Lord Venkateswara, on four corners of the temple we can see four lions. Very recently they have even constructed a circumambulation path.

Thrice a day, after naivedyams are offered to Lord Venkateswara, Naivedyams are offered daily to Sri Bedi Anjaneya Swamy. These naivedyams come from Lord Venkateswara's temple. Every Sunday Panchamrutha Abhishekam is offered to Sri Bedi Anjaneya Swamy.

Every month under punarvasu star Sri Seetha Ram and Lakshmana come in procession to the temple. The sesha harati i.e., after giving Harati to Seetha Rama and Lakshmana Harati is performed to Anjaneya Swamy. After that they take out the garland from the neck of Sri Rama and offer it to Anjaneya.

During Brahmotsavams, on Garuda Utsava Day the officials of A.P. Government walk in procession from

this temple to main temple to offer silk robes to God. Standing in front of Sri Bedi Anjaneya Swamy temple facing the main entrance let us chant Govinda Namam i.e.,

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

### **71. KALYANA KATTA (Tonsorial Hall)**

To have darshan of Karuna Sindhu and Bhaktha Parijatam Lord Venkateswara people come not only from different parts of India, but also from different parts of the world. They prefer to offer things that are very dear to Him.

Before devotees have the darshan of Lord Venkateswara they offer their tonsure to God. Offering tonsure to God will be the first and foremost promised vow to God. No one can exactly say when this practice of offering tonsure to God was started or who has initiated this and why? According to Hindu tradition offering tonsures is considered to be an inauspicious thing. This being the firm belief they offer their tonsure only after completing a particular ritual. In certain religious, auspicious, or inauspicious ceremonies only those who participate in them will have clean shaven head. Even in these ceremonies unmarried girls and married women will not offer their tonsure because it is strictly prohibited.

But in Tirumala Kshethra irrespective of sex and age all happily offer their tonsure to Lord Venkateswara.



Devotees whose desires have been fulfilled and those who want their prayers to be heard, follow certain rules and regulations like having food only once in a day, sleep on the floor, observe celibacy, stop shaving etc., for a fixed period of time before visiting Tirumala. After the fixed period they go to Tirumala on pilgrimage. After reaching Tirumala they reach tonsorial hall to have their heads clean shaven. After offering their tonsure they will have bath and then proceed to the temple to have darshan of All Providing Lord Venkateswara. Whatever offerings they would have promised to give to Lord, they put them in Sri Vari Hundi after darshan.

In Tirumala Kshethra offering tonsure to God is considered as the most auspicious thing. This being the belief, people call this act of offering tonsure as “Tirukshavaram” or “Kalyanapradamaina Kshavaram” i.e., ‘Auspicious shaving’. The place where they offer tonsure to God is known as ‘Kalyana Ghattam’. Now people call it as Kalyanakatta i.e., tonsorial hall or place.

Many people celebrate the first tonsorial ceremony here for their children. Some go without shaving and hair cutting for some months and come here to offer their hair to Lord. Some women may prefer to have clean shaven head and some women and even men will offer their tonsure symbolically i.e., they allow the Kshuraka (barber) to use scissors only thrice. Every devotee considers that offering tonsure to God is an auspicious thing and will be beneficial to him/her. They expect some good to happen to them.

*Theerthopa Vaasaha Karthavyaha siraso  
mundanam thatha  
Sirogathaani papaani yaanthi mundanam  
thoyathaha  
-- Padmapurana*

Some people have this philosophical explanation. They think that by offering tonsure to God all the accumulated sins get washed out. In other words the sins committed knowingly or unknowingly get washed out. Not only this, the feeling of ego will be driven out from the mind and heart.

In olden days people used to offer their tonsure under a banyan tree. They first constructed a hall by the side of this banyan tree. But as the rush began to increase day by day the temple authorities have now constructed a four storied building by spending 30 lakh rupees. This building has all the modern facilities. At a time for every 30 minutes approximately 500 can offer their tonsure. This building has cloak room, room for safe guarding shoes and other footwear, bathrooms etc. Apart from this building even in cottages where pilgrims stay T.T.D. has made arrangements for offering tonsure.

On ordinary day an average of 5 thousand people will offer their tonsure to God. On important or special days the number goes upto 20 thousands per day.

Let us praise the Lord who accepts devotees' tonsure and offers them, health, wealth and above all peace of mind.

*Bhavaabdhithaaram kativarthi hastham  
Swarnaambaram Ratnakireeta kundalam*

*Aalambisoothroththama maalya bhooshitam  
Namamyaham Venkatasaila Nayakam.*

## **72. SRI SWAMY PUSHKARINI**

**(Sri Swamy's tank)**

*Swaami Pushkarnee Snanam Sadgurohaa  
paada sevanam  
Ekadasi Vratam chaapi traya Matyantha  
Durlabham  
Durlabham Maanusham Janma Durlabham  
Tatra Jeevanam  
SwaamiPushkarinee Snanam tatra matyantha  
Durlabham*

Three things are very difficult to achieve or perform. Taking bath in Swamy Pushkarini (tank), serving the Lotus Feet of a 'Sath (good) Guru' and observing Ekadasi Vratam. Similarly taking birth, that too to lead the life as a human being, and getting an opportunity to go over to Tirumala and to have a dip in Swamy Pushkarini are equally difficult to get or to achieve.

**-- Varaha Purana**

There is a Koneru (A stone faced tank with steps) near Adivaraha Swamy Temple in Tirumala Kshethra. This is known as Sri Swamy Pushkarini. Being a supreme 'Koneru' among the 'konerus' of the world it is called as 'Sri Swamy Pushkarini'.

After coming down to Tirumala Kshethra from His Eternal Abode Vykunttam, Varahaswamy (Lord Vishnu)

ordered His Vahana Garuda to get a holy tank from Vykunttam. As per the orders, Garuda brought this Pushkarini Kreedadri mountain with (Kreedadri Sarovaram) from Vykunttam and firmly installed it in Tirumala. This Pushkarini is holier than the holiest Pushkarinis of this world. One dip is enough to liberate human beings from the sin or sins. People might have committed some sins either knowingly or unknowingly. They all get washed away. It washes all our misdeeds. It gives happiness in this world as well as in the world above.

*Saasthraanam Paramo Vedahaa Devaanam Paramo  
Harihi*

*Theerthaanam Paramam Theertham Swaami  
Pushkarinee Nrupa*

In by gone days a king by name Sankhana lost his kingdom to his enemies. After loosing his kingdom he came to Tirumala and had a dip in this Pushkarini. It is said he got back his kingdom. It is said issueless Dasaratha the king of Ayodhya came to Tirumala and had a dip in Sri Swamy's Pushkarini. After having dip in the Pushkarini he appealed to Lord Srinivasa to bless him with progeny. Lord heard his prayers and blessed him. Because of His blessings only Lord Vishnu took the form of Rama and became his son.

Once a poor Brahmin by name Atmaram visited Tirumala. A rishi by name Sanat kumar directed him to have dip in this Pushkarini and then have the darshan of Vakshasthala Lakshmi sahitha Lord Srinivasa. He

followed the direction of Rishi Sanat Kumar and got every thing he wanted from Lord Venkateswara.

As per our puranas Kumara swamy the blessed son of Shiva and Parvathi killed Tarakasura the Rakshasa. But Tarakasura was a Brahmin by birth. To get rid of the sin i.e., Brahma Hatya Patakam, Kumara Swamy had a dip in this Swamy Pushkarini. He was once for all releaved from that sin of killing a Brahmin. A King by name Dharma Guptha got rid of his insanity by taking bath in this Pushkarini. Annamaiah has eulozised the greatness of this Pushkarini in glorious terms. He addressed the tank as Loka Paavani. He says the steps that lead to the tank are the four Purusharthas i.e., Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. The four banks are four Vedas. The water of the tank is as pure as the water of seven seas. The waves of the tank are that of waves of Ganga. The Lords of the world are the aquatic beings. The buildings on your banks are like beautiful palaces of heaven. The trees on the banks are sacred saints. Your shape is like the gate of Vykunttam. Considering your proximity to Lord Venkateswara we are taking a dip. Please bless us.

It is said on Dwadasi day after Vykuntta Ekadasi, at the time of dawn all the holy waters from all the holy rivers join the waters of Pushkarini. That is why it becomes “Sri Swamy Pushkarinee Theertham Mukkoti”.

*Dhanurmaase sithe pakshe Dwaadasyaam*

*arunodaye*

*Aayanthi Sarva theerthaani Swamy Pushkarinee jale*

*Tatra Snanam Prakurvanti ye Naraha preetha*

*maanasaaha*

*The sarva papaurmyuchyanthe Sagothra Gnathi*

*Baandhavaha*

Those who take a dip on that day will be liberated from all their sins. On the last day of Brahmothsavam, on Rathasapthami day, Sri Sudarsana Chakrat Alwar will be given a holy bath in this pushkarini. At that time even devotees take a dip in Pushkarini.

Every year for five days in the month of Phalguna, Theppa utsavam i.e., a float festival will be organized. It gets concluded on Pournami day. The idols of God are placed on a float and rowed over the Pushkarini. This float festival will be organized for Seetha Rama Lakshmanas, Sri Rukmini Sri Krishna, Sri Bhoodevi and Sri Devi Sametha Venkateswara Swamy.

The Koneru is spread overs an area of 1.50 acres. In the year 1468 Saluva Narasimha Rayalu constructed ‘Neeraali Mandapam’ at the mid point of Koneru. Not only this he made arrangements for offerings and court sitting on important days like a day after Sankranti, Brahmothsavams and other functions. In 15th century Tallapaka family people renovated the Neeraali Mandapam and also constructed steps to approach tank’s water.

Thousands of people take dip in the tank every day. Because of this the water gets polluted. Considering this aspect in 1972 T.T.D. has fixed water filters to purify the water. Once in a year they flush out old water and

fill the tank with fresh water. T.T.D. has now the facility to induct oxygen into tank water.

Let us bow before this holy tank which purifies each and every devotee who takes a dip and chant the holy name of Lord Srinivasa.

Srinivasa! Venkataramana!!

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

### **TO ALL PROVIDING MOTHER ALAMELU MANGA**

Knowingly or unknowingly we might have committed some sin or other either during our pilgrimage to Tirumala or while in the precincts of Ananda Nilaya. Alamelu Manga the Chief Consort of Lord Srinivasa will see to it that Lord overlooks them and bless us. She occupies Vakshasthala of Lord Venkateswara as 'Vyootha Lakshmi'. In Tiruchanur She dwells in Shanthi Nilaya as the Presiding Deity Padmavathi. I humbly offer this book of mine "Hari Koluvu" in Telugu to Her. While praying Her to accept this flower of mine, I reverentially borrow the meaningful words of Lord Venkateswara's 'Param Bhakth' Tallapakka Annamacharya.

Oh! Mother you are the Chief Consort of Lord Venkateswara. You are the Mother of Brahma the creator, Cupid the God of love, and all celestial beings. You are the Adi Lakshmi and Maha Lakshmi. We appeal to you to recommend our case to Your beloved husband

Lord Venkateswara for His kind consideration and favourable disposition. Cow of Plenty i.e., Kamadhenu and Wish Yielding Tree i.e., Kalpavriksha are your sisters. Moon is your brother. You have shared your enormous wealth with Your Consort Lord Srinivasa. You know the art of liberality. You are the daughter of ocean of milk and the Better Half of Lord Venkateswara. You fulfil all the desires of Your devotees. Please bless us.

***Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!***

### **SAMARPANAM**

Finally one more word. You can read this as a Holy Book as it contains the divine story of Lord Venkateswara. This book contains great and memorable incidents and experiences of great devotees who have sacrificed everything that they had in their possession to Lord Venkateswara, without expecting any thing in return. Lord Venkateswara is an Embodiment of Mercy and Kindness. He cares for each and every one, irrespective of the fact whether person is rich or poor, man or woman, young or old, of higher caste or lower caste, whether scholar or illiterate. Please read this as a Holy Book and encourage people to read. He will bestow health, wealth and happiness on those who read and share the book with others. He is the only refuge of all refugees. No one who comes to Ananda Nilaya will go back with empty hands. He knows the mind and heart of each and everyone. He is the God of Kaliyuga.

Come to Him and get what ever you want from Him. If asked, it will be given to you. You offer your prayers to Him. He will answer your prayers even before you complete your prayers. This Kind Hearted, Magnificent is Universally known for His Bountiful nature. Let us bow to this All Providing Lord of Seven Hills known as the Sankata Harana Venkataramana

*Sriyah Kanthaya kalyana nidhaye  
nidhayerthinaam  
Sri Venkata nivasaya Srinivasaya Mangalam.*

*Govinda! Govinda!! Govinda!!!*

*Om Tat Sat  
Sarve Janah Sukhino Bhavanthu*

\* \* \*