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# THE GLORY OF BRAHMOTSAVAS OF LORD SRI VENKATESWARA

- Dr.T. Viswanatha Rao

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**Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams**  
**Tirupati**

**THE GLORY OF  
BRAHMOTSAVAS OF  
LORD SRI VENKATESWARA**

*Telugu Version*

**Dr. K.V. Raghavacharya**

*English Translator*

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**2013**

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## PREFACE

Lord Venkateswara is the God of Kaliyuga (the epoch of Kali). Leaving Vaikuntha, Srimannarayana incarnated himself on Venkatadri as Srinivasa to bless his devotees and do good to the worlds. He incarnated himself in Sravana nakshatra in the Kanya masa. To commemorate this auspicious day, Lord Brahma with the consent of Srinivasa commenced celebration of great festival to Srinivasa for nine days in Kanyamasa (September - October) starting from Dhvajarohana till Dhvajavarohana. From that day, the annual festival has come to be known as *Brahmotsava*. This is the biggest and longest hoary festival period among the hoard of gala worships done to the Hill God day in and day out.

The hill, on which Lord Srinivasa incarnated himself, is named Venkata. The Lord of that hill, Srinivasa, came to be known as Venkatesa which in popular parlance, became famous as Venkateswara.

This book, on the glory of Brahmotsavas, resourcefully wrought out in Telugu by Dr. K. V. Raghavacharya, Research officer of the project of Srivenkateswara Literature is now translated into English by Dr. T. Viswanatha Rao, professor in English from Kakinada.

I believe that readers and devotees of Sri Venkateswara would enjoy reading this and obtain the divine blessings of Srinivasa.

In the Service of the Lord



Executive Officer,

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams

Tirupati.

## Introduction

The Brahmotsava is prominent among the festivals being celebrated for Srivenkateswara. This is being celebrated as a nine day festival, fixing avabritha [Holy dip of the disc or Chakrasnana] in Star Sravana during the Kanya Masa. Brahma organized it as Mahimotsava. Hence it is called Brahmotsava. The word Brahma is symbolic of the number nine as per the Dictionary of Symbols in Sanskrit. This festival has come to be known finally as Brahmotsava as it is celebrated from the installation of the flag post to the lowering of the flag post, for nine days. In this essay, the history and car services with their speciality of the annual Brahmotsava in Tirumala have been pictorially illustrated and explained. The decoration with once- worn garlands, on the day of service of Garuda during these festivities and the speciality of traditions established by Srikrishnaraya, have been explained. The details of the celebrations of the Brahmotsavas as they are described by Tallapaka Annamacharya, Tarigonda Vengamamba, Sreshthaluri Venkatarya and others, are included. Tirumala Brahmotsavas as it has been described by a British officer in an essay published from Calcutta in Asiatic Journal in 1831, is also referred to, in this work. I hope that this work in literature on Venkateswara will prove to be a source of joy and knowledge to all the devotees and believers.

In the service of devotees

**K.V. Raghavacharya**  
Sri Venkateswara Sahityaparisodhaka

## Translator's Note with Acknowledgements

I have immense pleasure in being associated with the translation of a work on Brahmotsavas by Dr. K.V.Raghavacharya, a Researcher, associated with the study of literature on Sri Venkateswara. My sincere thanks to Sri M.G. Gopal, I.A.S., Executive Officer, T.T.D. and Dr.Ravva Srihari, the Editor - in - chief, T.T.D. I will be failing in my duty if I don't mention with reverence a scholar, friend and mentor, Dr.S. Lakshmana Murthy, a retired Professor of English, without whose inspiration and encouragement, I could not have taken up the work. Dr. Hari Padma Rani, Professor and Head, Department of English, Mahila University, Tirupathi, has helped me at the right juncture by taking the trouble of sending me a copy of Prof. Ravva Sri Hari's 'Annamayya Padakosam', a lexicon that came in handy just in time.

I thank my spouse Mrs. Rajya Lakshmi who gave me the right kind of moral support by gracefully condoning my absences from responsibilities of a domestic nature. My daughter Chy.Sow. Kalpana bore the brunt of my electronic illiteracy and helped me give a shape to the work.

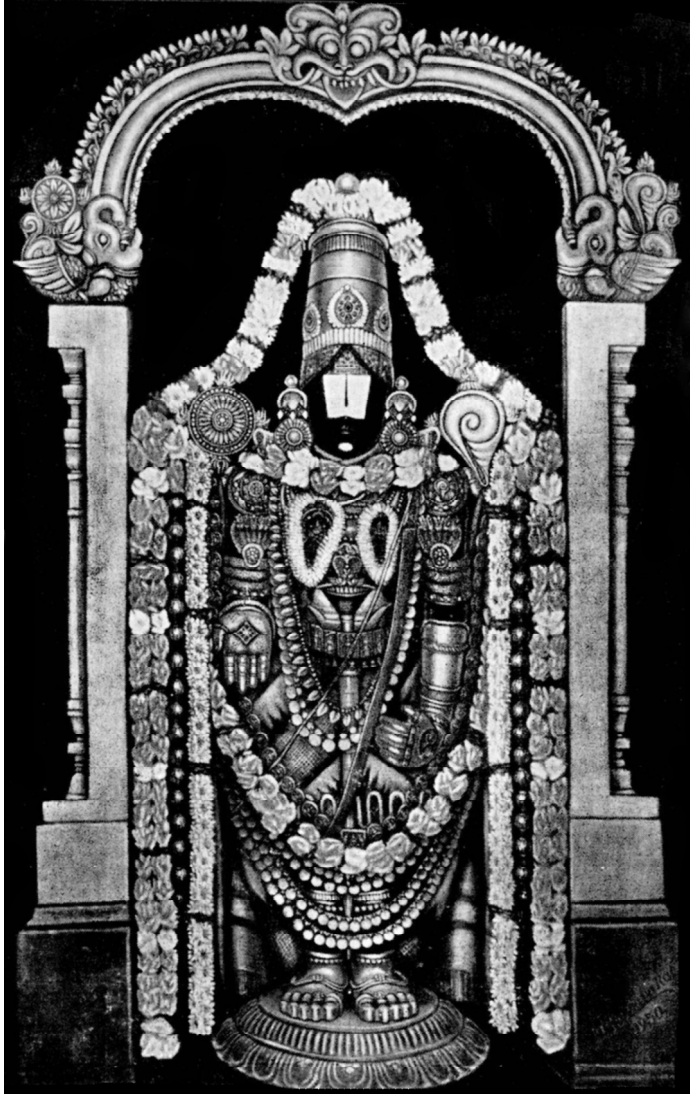
Two of my students, Dr.V.V. Hanumantha Rao and Sri P.S.S.Sastry have helped me with getting major fragments of the translation, typed. I also gratefully acknowledge the services of Sri Ghalib of the J.N.T.U. Kakinada who helped me by typing parts of my translation.

A word about the work. I confess I am by no means a Sanskrit learner, much less a scholar. My knowledge of Telugu, I am afraid, is no better. The honour is mine, but the risk rests with the readers.

I take leave with salutations to the feet of the Lord.

- T. Viswanatha Rao





*Sri Venkateswara Swami*



*Sri Padmavati Devi*

## **I. The Glory of Brahmotsavams of Lord Sri Venkateswara**

*Venkatesasamo devo na bhuto na bhavishyati*  
(In the past, there was no God equal to Lord  
Sri Venkateswara of Tirumala, and in future,  
there will be none).

*Adau Kaliyuge Jambudweepe Bharatha varshake*  
*Gangayah dakshine bhage yojananam satadwaye*  
*Panchayojana matre tu purvambhodhestu paschime*  
*Mase Bhadrapade Vishnutithau Vishnusamanvite.*  
*Siddhayoge somavare girau Narayanahvaye*  
*Swami Pushkarinitire paschime bhutyapaschime.*  
*Brundarakanam brundaistu Prarthito lokarakshakah*  
*Aavirbhava Bhagavan Srinivasah parah puman.*

- Padma Purana, 33-124-127

“Long ago, In Jambu island, in India, to the South of Ganges, at a distance of two hundred yojanas, five yojanas to the west of the shores of the Lord’s Pushkarini, in the month of Kanya Bhadrapada, in an auspicious moment on a Monday, in star Sravana, Siddha Yoga, having been requested by the congregation of Gods, the saviour of the worlds, the sacred Purusha, Srinivasa the God, incarnated himself “is how the Padma Purana describes it.

*Mayavi paramanandah tyaktwa Vaikunthamuttamam*  
*Swami pushkarinitire ramaya saha modate.*

- Seshadharma, Harivamsa, 48-15

“He, of deceptive forms, of ineffable bliss, Srimannarayana left Vaikuntha and began strolling on the shores of Pushkarini with his consort Goddess Lakshmi” is how the Seshadharma describes it in Harivamsa.

Brahma and the other Gods reached Venkatadri in search of the Lord who left Vaikuntha for the welfare of the worlds and made it his abode. They saw the God and felt happy. God Brahma saluted Vishnu who incarnated himself on Narayanagiri for the welfare of humanity and to relieve human devotees from earthly bonds:

O the consort of Sri! I want to celebrate a great festival in your honour, preceded by Dhvajarohana (the installation of the flagpost). Please grace the occasion with Goddess Lakshmi, Lakshminarayana accepted his request. Thus the Brahmotsava began with the approval of Lord Srinivasa.

### **The Definition of Brahmotsava**

Thus Brahma the creator, with the sun then transiting Virgo (Kanya), the month of Aswayuja as per the Chandramana (the Lunar Calender), fixing Avabhritha (Chakrasnana or the holy dip of the disc) in star sravana, the star of Srimannarayana's incarnation, having invited divine sages like Vaikhanasa, Bhrigu, and Maricha, as its priests (ritviks), on Suklapaksha vidiya in Hastha nakshathra, with a preceding Dhvajarohana, celebrated the great festival for nine days. That was the foundation of today's Brahmotsava.

To prove this and to remind us of the festive day and Sravana, the star of the nativity of the incarnation of Sri Venkateswara, the festival initiated by Brahma, is being celebrated even to date, fixing the Avabhritha on a day with star Sravana in the month of Kanya.

Tarigonda Vengamamba describes the details of Brahmotsava in her Venkatachala Mahatmyam, (2-120) thus:

When the Sun transits Virgo and the star is Chitta,  
Dhwajarohana;  
when the star is Uttarashadha, Rathotsava (the car festival);  
and  
when the star is Sravana, Chakrasnana must be performed.

As per the Vedic saying "ritagam satyam parabrahma, ekameva adwitiyam Brahma, Narayanam parabrahma" the parabrahman is no other than the one who is called Narayana. The Brahmotsava is the great festival performed for that parabrahman. As this festival is initiated by Brahma, it is called Brahmotsava. To show that even to date the Brahmotsavas of Lord Venkateswara are performed under the leadership of Brahma, the chariots either during the day or night, follow a small chariot, gorgeously decorated, the Brahmaratha. Brahma of no shape, no guna, ascends and conducts the festival. But on the day of Rathotsava, there will be no Brahmaratha in front as Sri Venkateswara is the adorable incarnation of parabrahman. So on the day of the car festival of the Lord, Brahma himself takes part as the charioteer and invisible to others, holds the reins and drives the chariot of Lord Venkateswara.

### **The Nine-day Festival**

*Navamam Navaratnamcha Brahma cha Kamalasanah  
NidhiGrahascha Khandamcha Randhro Bhavascha  
Labdhakah*

Navamam, Navaratnam, Brahma, Kamalasanah, Nidhih, Grahah, Khanda, Randhra, Bhava and Labdhakah-these ten are the names of number nine. In the Dictionary of symbols, the name Brahma indicates nine Brahmas and thereby, the number nine. The festival celebrated by Brahma in the name of Sri Venkateswara went on for nine days, from Dhvajarohana to Dhwajavarohana. So the name of Brahmotsava is appropriate for the grand festival that goes on for nine days.

Besides the annual Brahmotsava, there are three more Brahmotsavas that take a day each-Arsha on Rathasaptami, Rakshasa on Kaisika Dwadasi and Daivika on Mukkoti Ekadasi, all of which are celebrated in Tirumala.

All the gods were invited for the grand festival celebrated by Brahma for Lord Venkateswara. Indra and the other Lords of the Directions (dikpalas) visited Venkatadri on their chariots. All the royal devotees in India followed suit, with pious intentions. Devotees and the commoners from all parts of the country reached Venkatadri, repeatedly chanting the sacred name of Govinda. Lord Srinivasa whom even the best of yogis might not witness, manifested himself in person, out of love for all the living creation. Brahma invited Viswakarma, the doyen among sculptors and made him build in and around the hill, keeping in view, gods and human beings, guest houses, choultries, and shelters for cool water for all. He arranged all amenities for all the invitees, guests and devotees. All those who came to take part in the festival, said in praise of Brahma:

*Angeechakara vidhina nirmitancha mahotsavam  
Utsave darsanam punyam Srinivasasya Sarnginah*

“Srinivasa gave his consent for the celebration. Brahma is performing the same very well indeed. During the festive days it is a blessing to visit Srinivasa, holding a bow”. All the streets around the temple of Tirumala were beautifully decorated with flags, gem-studded festoons, flower garlands and plantain trees. The sages performed *homas* with Vedic chants in enclaves got up for the yajna. Brahma decorated Srinivasa with gorgeous ornaments offered by Kubera and offered special services. He offered six kinds of prasada made of rice treated with dal and mixed with ghee-gudanna, mudganna, madhuranna, dadhyanna, besides tilapupa, mashapupa, manohara and modaka along with fruits of several varieties and delicious ambrosia - like curries specially prepared for the occasion on a massive scale.

*Uchchaisravasam aswancha gajam airavatham tatha  
Anantham nagarajancha Garudancha trayeemayam  
Ekaikam samadhishtaya Venkatadrisikhamanah*

*Dine dine suran sarvanutsavartham samagatan  
Anujagraha rathyayam atan bhumya sriyanvithah*

God Srinivasa was the cynosure of every eye, strolling on the streets of Tirumala with Sridevi and Bhudevi. One day he would ride a horse, comparable to Uchchaisrava, on another on an elephant like Airavata, on yet another day Adishesha or Garuda, the personification of the Vedas. He showered his blessings on all the devotees, both human and divine, who went there to witness the great festival. The services of the cars (Vahanas) were preceded by a melodious rendition of songs by the Gandharvas to the accompaniment of stringed as well as percussion instruments. Apsaras danced to the tune of instruments. Vandi and Magadha sang in praise of Srinivasa. Rich devotees offered food and clothes to the pilgrims. To the learned and deserving, they gifted gold and houses. "Srinivasotsavadinam punyam papapranasanam" - "The day of Srinivasa's festival dispels sins and showers blessings on all" - so saying, the pilgrims praised Brahma who organized the festival. God Srinivasa said to Brahma who organized a grand festival with chariots twice a day and naivedya thrice a day, "Brahma, your wish is fulfilled. I am pleased. This festival will hereafter be known as Brahmotsava. All those who witness the Rathotsava organized by you will easily cross the insurmountable ocean of 'samsara' and will be blessed, liberated from the cycle of birth and death. I will protect them all with my mercy. As they believe, so shall they be blessed".

“Those who earnestly offer food, clothes, money, houses or utensils to the deserving and the devotees during the yajna called Brahmotsava (ut + sava = utsava) will be blessed and will prosper in life with riches and happiness”. So saying, Srinivasa asked Brahma to wish for a boon. Brahma saluted Srinivasa and prayed to him, "O God, please stay here on this Venkatachala so that all may witness you. Allow a festival like this, to be celebrated, annually. Protect everyone with your mercy, showering boons and blessings on all.

Grant me this, my wish". Srinivasa consented and granted him the boon. "Brahma, I will stay on Venkatadri as you wish, appear to the people and protect them all with my mercy, confer on them prosperity and happiness". True to his word, Srinivasa (Venkateswara), the boon - giver will stay till the epoch of Kali (Kaliyuga), till the end of the Sweta Varaha Kalpa on Venkatadri. In recognition of the great deed of Brahma in arranging for the festivities (for the bliss of the world) of Srimannarayana who incarnated himself for worship of people at the request of Brahma, the Venkateswara Ashtottaranama Stotra has a reference to Brahma, "Om Brahma kritotsavaya Sri Venkatesaya namah" (49) - "salutations to Sri Venkateswara who has accepted the celebrations arranged by Brahma". Brahma is a blessed soul. All the gods, saints and people who came to see the great celebrations in honour of Srinivasa, conducted by Brahma, felt happy that they could see to their eyes' content, Venkatachalapathi who has the power to fulfil all their wishes, washing away all their sins and conferring blessings on them all, thanks to the penance, good deeds or austerities performed in their past lives, may be. So saying, they bade farewell to Srinivasa and returned to their abodes with the Lord's permission.

### **The History of Brahmotsavas**

An inscription in Tamil that dates back to 10th Century A.D. makes the first ever mention of the Brahmotsavas of Tiruvengadanatha. The silver statue of Sri Venkateswara, the Bhoga Srinivasamurthy (Manavalapperumal) who is also known as Kautukamurthy, the representative of the Lord and one who receives daily services like abhisheka, ekanthaseva, sahasrakalasabhisheka among others, has been gifted by Samavai Perundevi, the wife of Saktivikatan, an officer of the Pallava kingdom. The statue was installed on Friday, Bahula Tadiya in star Sravana in the year named Akshaya, in the month of Jyestha on 8-6-966 A.D. in Tiruvilan koil

(Snapana Mandapa of today) - (see inscription-1-8,9, T.T.D. inscriptions, 1988). Samavai Perundevi, in whose name, we have the Perundevi garden in Tirumala, wished that the statue of Bhoga Srinivasa murti that she gifted in connection with the Brahmotsavas that start with the star Chitta during the Peratasi month (the month of Kanya Aswayuja) be made the festive idol. She has gifted many jewels to the Lord, including rubies, emeralds, pearls, a crown studded with many precious stones, earrings bearing the portrait of a crocodile's head, necklaces, shoulder knots or epaulets, bracelets, a golden girdle belt, a golden girdle lace, and a stomachband among others. In connection with the 'naivedyas' to be made for Brahmotsavas and the conduct of festivities during the month in which Peratasi Margali (Mukkoti Ekadasi) falls, she donated land measuring 4177 'kuli's. At the end of her gift deed, she prayed, "En Itten mam Irakshippar Sripadam en Talai Meladu. Sri Vaishnavargal irakshi" ("I will bow my head to the feet of those who may protect this charity. May the Srivaishnavas help in the same!") How noble! Is not her wish worthy of emulation? Her gift deeds of A.D.966 are inscribed on the Northern wall of the first compound (prakara) of the Tirumala Sri Venkateswara temple. From the Samavai dana sasana inscription, we learn that the Tirumala Brahmotsava was being celebrated for eleven days (the main festivities for nine days) during the 10th century A.D. However the officers and priests of the temple used to consider the statue of Bhoga Srinivasa murthy as Kautuka Murthy (the representative of the chief statue of Venkateswara) and Ugra Narasimha Murthy (Snapanaberaam) as the festive idol. From 1339 A.D. the idol of Malayappaswamy obtained from Malayappakona is being used as a festive idol. To him, with Sridevi and Bhudevi, daily wedding festivities, other festivities and Brahmotsavas are being celebrated.

Till the 14th Century A.D. (during the months of Peratasi and Margali) two Brahmotsavas were being celebrated. In 1300 A.D.

during the reign of Tiru Venkatanatha Yadavaraya Singana, the commander of the armed forces, celebrated the Adi (Ashadha) festivities in the name of Rachaya Dandanayaka. For this, he donated Pongaluru village in Illatturunadu with its land entirely free of rent (Inscription1- 99, T.T.D. inscriptions) on 13-1-1388 A.D. The Vijayanagara king Harihararaya - II donated Pongudu village for the celebration of Masi (Magha) festival. The inscription says that the responsibility of conducting the Brahmotsava from the revenue of the village is being entrusted to Mullai Thiru Venkata Jiyar- Inscription-1-185). On 5-12-1429, Devaraya - 2 donated three villages and 2200 coins towards the celebration of the festival and offerings (naivedyas) to God. This festival was celebrated in the month of Aswayuja (Alpisi) from the day the moon enters Punarvasu till it leaves Swati (i.e. for nine days). On the last day, there is Tirthavari or Chakrasnana (inscription - 192). In the 15th Century A.D. seven Brahmotsavas were being celebrated. They were Chitri, Adi, Aavani, Peratasi, Alpisi, Masi and Panguni in honour of Sri Venkateswara swamy. During the seven Brahmotsavas on the day of Tirthavari (chakrasnana), a devotee named Ananthasayana arranged daily naivedyas to the Lord (Inscription1-213dt.15-12-1445). The Srivaishnava cult spread from the land of the Dravidians to the land of Andhras. So in the Vaishnava temples of Tirumala, some festivals are celebrated according to the Dravidian traditions and also based on the Souramana (Solar almanac). However certain daily rituals and festivals like 'Kolu' are conducted as per the traditions of Andhras and in accordance with the lunar almanac (Chandra mana).

Tallapaka Pedatirumalacharya (son of Annamacharya) has gifted two thousand varahas to the Lord's exchequer and arranged for a thirteen-day Brahmotsava (main utsava being for eleven days) during the month of Aani, in his name (gift deed 4-129dt.7-3-1539). This Brahmotsava starts in Jyesthamasa (Ani month) in Sravana

nakshatra and concludes in Mrigasira Nakshatra (the star in which Tirumalacharya was born) with the Chakrasnana. During the reign of king Sadasiva of Vijayanagara, a devotee by name Venkatadri made arrangements for naivedyas to Lord Kolu Srinivasa murthy (Alagappairanaru), during the ten day Brahmotsavas, by way of a gift of Desur, Velanjinadu and Timmasamudram, which could raise an income of 700,200, and 130 gold coins, respectively, totalling to a sum of 1,030 gold coins from 21/2 villages. A gift deed to this effect was executed by way of an inscription on 8/7/1551 (5-129). In this context, he has mentioned the Brahmotsavas held, along with the names of the respective organizers. They are :

No.	Donor	Name of the Utsava
1	Tiruninra Urudaiyarlu (officers of Tirumala)	Avani Brahmotsava
2	Kadavan Perundevi, Queen of Sakti Vikatan (In the name of Brahmadeva)	Peratasi Brahmotsava
3	Devaraya Maharaya	Alpisi Brahmotsava
4	Bukkaraya Maharaya	Kartiki Brahmotsava
5	Krishnadeva Maharaya (in the name of his parents)	Tai Brahmotsava
6	Harihararaya Maharaya	Masi Brahmotsava
7	Veeranarasinga Yadavaraya	Panguni Brahmotsava
8	Meludayar (officer of the temple)	Chittiri Brahmotsava
9	Tallapaka Tirumalacharya	Ani Brahmotsava
10	Ramaraju Chinna Thimmaraju	Ani Brahmotsava

Thus, during the 16th century, Ten Brahmotsavas were being celebrated in nine months in honour of Sri Venkateswara swamy for 9, 11, or 13 days. All these depended on lands free of rent or temple lands. Tallapaka Peda Tirumalacharya however, arranged for the Aani Brahmotsavas by donating two thousand Varahas to the Lord's exchequer. All the donors expressed their desire that their charity must be protected and its continuation be assured and added at the end of the inscription.

*Danapalanayor madhye danat sreyonupalanam  
Danat swargamavapnoti palanadachyutam padam.  
Swadattat dwigunam punyam paradattanupalanam  
Paradattapaharena swadattam nishphalam bhavet.*

“Charity and administration of charity differ greatly. It is a more beneficial deed to protect the charity given by other donors than giving one's own donation. By one's own charity, one might obtain heaven (heavenly bliss). If one were to protect the charity of others, one can obtain salvation (liberation from the cycle of birth and death). By protecting the charity given by others, one gets twice the blessings obtained by one's own charity. By stealing from the charity of the others, one's own charity would become useless”, so would they write, but there was hardly a great soul who heeded their advice to protect the charity by the others.

By the 18th century A.D., all the villages and lands thus donated, came under the occupation and rule of foreigners of other religions. The loss of income and fixed assets resulted in the suspension of both charities and welfare measures. The Mahotsavas organized by them, came to an end. Not only that, all the devotees have made provisions for the Chakrasnana (the holy dip of the Disc) on a day with a star in which they were born, preceded by the nine day Brahmotsavas (see gift deed 1-192 dt 5/12/1429 and gift deed by

Tallapaka Peda Tirumalacharya 4 -129 dt 7/3/ 1539). It was but natural that after they breathed their last, all these sacred and charitable acts came to a halt. However, the Brahmotsavas organized by Brahma the Creator, for the welfare of the world with a Chakrasnana on the day of Kanya Sravana preceded by a nine day festival, are celebrated to date with pomp, heralding the glory of Sri Venkateswara, to all corners of the world. These are ten day festivities that start with Ankurarpana and Dhvajarohana and end in Chakrasnana and Dwajavarohana. The inscriptions mention them as Tirukkodi Tirunal, as they are known in Tamil.

Today, the annual Brahmotsavas in Tirumala are celebrated for nine days during the month of Kanya. But, whenever there is an extra month as per the Chandramana, two Brahmotsavas are being celebrated.

### **The Extra Month (Adhika Masa)**

It is an established tradition to hold the festival, having fixed the Avabritha on the day with Sravana nakshatra [the star in which Sri Vekateswara was incarnated]. Kanyamasa is related to Souramana. As per the Candramana (lunar almanac), Kanyamasa Sravana occurs generally in the month of Aswayuja. The Souramana (solar almanac) has a year with 365 days, with no extra months. A year in the lunar calendar has 354 days, allowing for extra months. As it has eleven days less, now and then there can be a month without Suryasankranthi (the transit of the Sun from one house to another in the Zodaic) in the Chandramana. Such is the extra month [a Chandramasa without Suryasankramana]. In general, such an extra month occurs once in three years. In a year with the extra month, Kanya Sravana falls in the month of Aswayuja of the Chandramana. In such instances, the Brahmotsavas are celebrated from Aswayajuja Vidiya up to Vijayadasami. In a year with the extra moth, Kanya Sravana falls in

the month of Bhadrapada as per the Chandramana. In such instances, the annual Brahmotsavas celebrated in the month of Bhadrapada are the prominent ones. During such a year, the Brahmotsavas are celebrated a second time even in Aswayuja. Such second Brahmotsavas are called Navarathri Brahmotsavas. Between these two annual Brahmotsavas, the ones in the month of Kanya Bhadrapada are more important. Hence these Brahmotsavas start with Dhvajarohana and end up with Dhvajavarohana. The Lords of the eight Directions and other gods are not invited for the festival. The car festivals are celebrated as in the first Brahmotsavas. In the Navaratri Brahmotsavas, there is neither Dhvajarohana nor Dhvajavarohana. The Lords of the eight Directions are not invited for these festivities. The car festivals are celebrated in order as in the first Brahmotsavas. In the first Brahmotsavas, a wooden chariot is used in the car festival and in the second, a silver chariot. Today, a golden chariot is being used in the place of the silver one. Where is the silver chariot, now? We don't know. Probably, it is safe in the Tirumala museum. In the first annual Brahmotsava, after the car festival at night an assembly is held every day for the festive idols in the golden Tirucchi [golden palanquin] in the Tirumalaraya Mandapa (Tirumalaraya pavilion). In the second Navarathri Brahmotsavas, after the car festival every day at night an assembly of the festive idols in golden Seshavahana is held in the Rangamandapa [Ranganayakulu Mandapa].

### **Koyil Alwar Tirumanjanam**

Before the commencement of the Brahmotsava celebrations, the temple of Sri Venkateswara is cleaned for the purpose. This is splendidly organized under the name of 'Koyil Alwar Tirumanjanam.' 'Koyil' means a temple. Alwar means a devotee. Just as God stays in a devotee's heart, God abides in the sanctum sanctorum. So, the

temple is respected like a devotee. The inseparability of the temple and the devotee is thus stated. The Tirumanjanam, the auspicious bath of the Koyil [the temple] as a devotee, is performed as a cleaning deed, on a Tuesday that falls just before the annual Brahmotsavas in the temple. This is done four times a year, not only before the Brahmotsavas, but also before Ugadi, Anivari Asthana and Vaikuntha Ekadasi.

Inside the sanctum sanctorum, all the four walls and the roof are cleaned with Sikakai in water after scrubbing the dust, cobwebs and the soot [born of the camphor used for Aarathi to the Lord.] Then they coat the walls and the roof with a paste made of aromatic spices. This is a cleaning deed. This is done in all parts of the temple. On the day of Koyil Tirumanjanam, services like Suprabhataseva, Tomalaseva, Koluvu, Archana, Naivedya at the first bell [ghanta] and sattumore are held as usual. Later, the chief statue of Srivenkateswara in Anandanilaya is covered with a cloth from head to foot to protect it from dust, soot and water. This cloth is called 'Malaigudaram.' Along with the chief statue, a silver idol of Bhoga Srinivasa Murthy is also kept in the Malaigudaram. The remaining festive idols and Salagramas are taken to the Ghanta Mandapa in front of the golden threshold and they are cleaned, there. The pots, the lampstands, the water pots etc. are all taken to the golden well, to be cleaned and washed. All the thresholds and the cars of the temple are also made clean. Thus the cleaning is extended to the temple of attending gods in the 'Vimanapradakshina' beside the Anandanilayam.

After cleaning the walls and ceiling of the temple, an aromatic paste called 'parimalam' made of spices is coated thickly on the ceiling. The ceiling of the sanctum sanctorum is then covered in a silken cloth 'Kuralam.' Later, the ground is washed clean with water.



After that, the festive idols and pots are restored to their original places. The curtains of the thresholds are replaced with new ones. Then the 'Malaigudaram' on the statue in the sanctum sanctorum is removed. Lighting the lamps and camphor, offering brief services to the idols, the curtain of Ananda Nilayam is drawn aside. Witnessing the Lord and taking part in the camphor offering [Arathi] all the devotees get a sense of fulfillment. Thus the Koyil Tirumanjana is completed. Sri Venkateswara, the festive idols, the festive cars, priests, employees and the devotees all and sundry get ready for the Brahmotsavas. The temple is then decorated with electric lamps, festoons of various coloured flowers, plantain pillars and of mango leaves, a sprightly scene and a feast to the eye. The next program is Ankurarpana.

A day before the Dhvajarohana, the commander-in-chief of Narayana's armies, goes in procession to the Vasanta Mandapa, to the northeast of the temple under a white canopy, accompanied by instrumental music, with the chant of Vedic Scholars, with priests who chanting Mantras, worship the land, gather earth from an anthill, and after circumambulation, enter the temple. Vishwaksena, going in a procession in the streets around the temple, supervises the arrangements for the festival. The scene is described by Tallapaka Annamacharya thus:

There he is, here he is, the commander of Atchyuta  
Sending the demons flying in all ten directions [2-79]

Vishwaksena's arrival according to the description spreads fear among the demons. That night, nine kinds of grain and mud are loaded in rimless earthen pots and to the chant of mantras Ankurarpana is performed in star Hasta.

The next day, in Chitta nakshatra, during the Kanyamasa and in accordance with the Vaikhanasa agama, the installation of the flag

of Garuda and the wearing of the bracelet take place in the precincts of the temple. Outside the temple, sacrifices are offered in all eight directions and the lords of all these directions are invited, while Malayappaswamy goes in procession, accompanied by his consorts and attendant gods. He enters the temple, after inviting the other gods to Brahmotsava. After that, in the premises of the lord who stays in Dhvajastambha Mandapa, the priests hoist, with the permission of the Lord, a new flag painted with Garuda's form, with Vedic chants in the background, appropriately attuned and with musical instruments playing, and reciting Garuda Gayathri, "Om Tatpurushaya Vidmahe, suvarnapakshaya dhimahi, tanno garudah prachodayat". This festival of Dhvajarohana is conducted with gaiety and splendor, a treat to the eye. In this context, Mudganna [a preparation made of rice and green gram] is offered to the Lord. People believe that if barren women take it, they would be blessed with children. After, that Malayappaswamy goes in a golden palanquin [golden Tirucchi] and in Tirumala Mandapa to the south of the flag post with Sridevi and Bhudevi, both bedecked in jewels of all kinds.

At present, the Dhvajarohana festival is being celebrated in the evenings. But earlier, it was being celebrated in the morning hours in an auspicious moment. Usually the flag is hoisted in the morning hours and is made to descend in the evening. This is the tradition. Only the Lord knows why and when [to suit someone's convenience], the Dhvajarohana in Tirumala was shifted to the evening. In other temples that follow the Vaikhanasa Agama, the Dhvajarohana festival is celebrated in the morning. In the temple of Padmavathi at Tiruchanur, the festival is celebrated only in the morning. The Bhavishyottarapurana describes the festival conducted by Brahma, thus:

*Ankurarpanamatenuh saharshapulakankurah  
Tathaparedyurushasi dhvajaroha mahotsavam*

*Arabhyavabrithanthancha pushpayaganthameva cha  
Utsavam srinivasasya chakara vidhivadvidhih – 14-43,44*

- Brahma and the other gods along with Viswakarma and the sages performed Ankurarpana with joy that knew no bounds, their bodies tingling with ecstasy. The next day early in the morning, from Dhvajarohana to Avabritha and to the end of Pushpayaga, Brahma took care to celebrate the festival as per time-honored conventions. In the festivities celebrated by Brahma, on the evening of the sixth day, the garden festival and the Pushpayaga festival [a day after the Chakrasnana] are not being celebrated now. The reason is not known. The festival of a stroll in the garden (udyanaviharotsava) as well as the Pushpayaga need to be celebrated as they are capable of dispelling evil and fulfilling one's desires. However Pushpayaga is celebrated one month after the Brahmotsavas.

Tarigonda Vengamamba described the beginning of Brahmotsavas in her Venkatachala Mahatmyam, thus:

Having performed the Ankurarpana in Hastha Nakshatra and having offered naivedya to the Lord, and on the next morning, having performed punyahavachana (a ceremonial purification), vastu homa, Garudapratistha, Garuda homa, beating drums (bheritalatadana), wearing the bracelet (kankanadharana), archana and giving gifts etc. (2-124).

During the time of Vengamamba [AD 1720-1819] and even at the outset of the 19th century AD., the Brahmotsavas would start with Dhvajarohana during the Chitta nakshatra preceded by ankurarpana in Hasta nakshatra "having performed dhvajavaroha in Chitta" is how Vengamamba described it in another place.

From the night after Dhvajarohana, everyday and every night festivals and processions follow with great splendour for nine days

on many cars, while Malayappaswamy is accompanied by Sridevi and Bhudevi. If some are prohibited for a while, darshan of the Lord in the temple precincts [for reasons like pollution or asaucha], they are allowed the darshan of the Lord, by way of serving the Lord through car services and festive idols as facilitated by agama texts. The devotees get a spiritual message from the car services. They obtain it along with happiness.

### Cars in Order

Day	Night
Bangaru Tiruchchi	Senadhipati Utsava
[Evening]	Ankurarpana
1. Dhvajarohana [evening]	Peddaseshavahana
2. Chinnaseshavahana	Hamsavahana
3. Sihmavahana	Pearl Bower [Muthyapu Pandiri] Vahana
4. Kalpavrikshavahana	Sarvabhupala vahana
5. Palanquin, Mohini Avatarotsava	Garuda Vahana [Garuda Seva]
6. Hanumadvahana	
[Evening] Vasantotsava	Gajavahana
Suvarnaratharangadolotsava	
7. Suryaprabhavahana	Chandraprabhavahana
8. Rathotsava	Aswavahana
9. Pallaki utsava	Bangaru Tirucchi
Tirthavari, Chakra Snana	Dhwajavarohana

During the car services of Brahmotsavas, Malayappa Swamy along with Sridevi and Bhudevi goes in procession in the streets around the temple Tirumala on 1. Pedda Seshavahana 2. Muthyala

Pandiri 3. Kalpavrikshavahana 4. Sarvabhupalavahana, 5. Suvarnavahana 6. Rathotsava and 7. Bangaru Tirucchi [palanquin].

Malayappaswamy alone goes in procession in the temple streets of Tirumala on 1. Chinna Seshavahana 2. Hamsavahana 3. Simhavahana 4. Mohiniincarnation palanquin 5. Garudavahana 6. Hanuman's vahana 7. Gajavahana 8. Suryaprabha 9. Chandraprabha 10. Aswavahana.

Tallapaka Annamacharya describes the glory of Sri Venkateswaraswamy's festival, vividly:

In the streets of Tirumala, glittered the God of gods  
With beauty, indescribably great,  
With bearers, on a palanquin, the first day  
In luxury on Sesha, the second day  
On the third day, sportively under a pearl bower  
Duly on the fourth, in a flowery temple  
Swiftly, on Garuda, on the fifth day  
On the sixth, mounting the elephant  
On the seventh, on Suryaprabha, immaculately  
On the eighth, a traditional horse carrier  
On the ninth, on a golden palanquin  
On the tenth, united on a wedding seat  
With Alamelmanga and on cars, amidst consorts.

- Annamayya's song 13-182.

Nowadays, the Kalyanotsavam described by Annamayya is not being celebrated on the tenth day. Venkateswara, it is believed, endeared himself to the devotees only because he rides on so many chariots.

Annamacharya, amazed at the competence of Venkateswara, praises him:

How did you learn to mount so many cars?  
We praise you so much Hari, only for this!

As regards the devotees who throng Tirumala, Annamacharya describes them thus:

Rain or thunder, people  
Gather there from all directions  
Wives, sons, kith and kin  
Helped by friends, all  
People from a hundred thousand yojanas  
Surge forward, bound to austerities  
With avowed offerings, money bags, with bundles on heads  
Unbounded wealth and consorts galore  
With precious stones in abundance, elephants, horses  
They make haste and come quickly  
Crowned kings, the lords of mandalas  
Dexterous lords of empires,  
To have a darshan of the Lord  
They flock, with all their wealth and charms.

(Annamayya Songs -11- 134)

From the sentence, "they go there even in rains", we gather that the Brahmotsava that falls in a year with the extra month was being celebrated in the monsoon season, during the month of Bhadrapada [Peratasi]. The cars described by Annamacharya Tirudandelu, Puvvugovila, Kanakaputandalamu, are now respectively called Manushyandolika, kalpavriksha and Pallaki.

### 1. Pedda Seshavahana

Every car that Sri Venkateswara Swamy mounts during the Brahmotsava has a history of its own, a legend of its own. Not only that. The Lord gives diverse messages to the devotees, depending

on the car used for his procession. On the night after Dhvajarohana, a festival is held with Malayappaswamy on the big seven - hooded golden seshavahana. “The lord of the serpents, Adishesha, who with a fearsome form, bears to eternity the massive weight of the globe with its forests galore, the trees, the oceans, the hills, lakes full of water, rivers, with his thousand hoods, who dispels sins and who acts as a bed for Lord Vishnu who sleeps on the milky ocean, acts as a car [vahana] on the first night of Brahmotsavas. According to the Visishtadwaita tradition, God is seshi [the saviour] and the others are the ones who are saved. The Lord preaches this concept of Sesha-seshi, riding in procession on the Seshavahana [Adishesha as Car].

## 2. Chinna Seshavahana

Venkateswaraswamy who has Seshadri as his abode, goes in procession on the second day’s festival, alone on the five-hooded Chinna Seshavahana [Sesha as Car]. Sesha is born of a spark of Narayana. He is another body of Narayana.

*Nivasa Sayyasana padukamsuko -  
padhana varshatapa varanadibhih  
Sarira bhedaistava seshatangataih  
Yathochitam sesha itheeryate janaih*

Adishesha is the abode, the bed, the seat, the sandals, the upper garment, the pillow, the canopy that protects him from heat and rain, the forest, the servant and having a different body, has come under the blessings and protection of God Vishnu, and has come to be praised by people as ‘Sesha.’

Adishesha took the form of a hill as a proper habitation for God Vishnu who wanted to incarnate himself on earth. Such is the affinity

between the two. It is because of this that he became a carrier of Vishnu in the Brahmotsava, a second time. It is on this car that the Lord makes a feast to the eye of the devotees as a flute player. While describing the Brahmotsavas, Tarigonda Vengamamba says that on the night of dhvajarohana “Peddaseshavahana and the next day the Chinna Seshavahanaotsava” are in use as a mark of Seshavahana’s diversity, [2-128]. An English traveller who witnessed Tirumala Brahmotsava in 1830 AD, described the Chinnaseshavahana as Balaseshavahana. The article appeared in the Asiatic Journal, May-August 1813 issue from Calcutta. (Vide:P:J4).

Tallapaka Annamacharya has praised the splendor of Seshavahana, thus:

Is this not Sesha, Sri Venkatadri Sesha  
Paired with Garuda in sport?  
Sesha, born with a thousand hoods  
A diamond Sesha, his body, of sparkling sheen,  
On hoods ever fresh, the gemhooded Sesha,  
Everywhere he follows Hari like a shadow.  
The crown car, golden Sesha  
Sesha, fold upon fold, the glistening Sesha,  
The firmly poised Sesha of tongues twice thousand,  
Sesha, good at praising even the enemy,  
Sesha who waits to serve the Lord,  
Sesha, worshipped by all the gods

There he is, any day the bed of Sri Venkatapati and Alamelmanga.

## 3. Hamsavahana [The Swan Car]

Alone on the second night, Sri Venkateswara Swamy goes in procession in the temple streets of Tirumala, delighting the devotees

in the form of the goddess of learning, Saraswati holding her veena. The swan whose great reputation is born of the skill of clearly distinguishing the milk from water, is symbolic of the ability to distinguish good from bad, the individual soul free from human bondage. It is only proper that Srivenkateswara Swamy, the Paramahansa, should go riding on such a swan as his vahana [car]. It is a delight to the host of devotees. The swan spans the Manasasarovara. God spans the lakes of the devotees' minds. Only the one who can distinguish the soul from the rest of things can visualize the universal soul. It is this trait that Annamayya praises when he says, "Life has become like milk and water in the hands of a swan." This is the spiritual massage of the swan as car [Hamsa vahana]. The Parabrahman gave Vedas to Brahma, only in the shape of a swan. Sri Venkateswara mounting the Hamsavahana, preaches the features and characteristics of the soul, to devotees in the form of Saraswati, the goddess of speech.

#### **4. Simhavahana [The Lion Car]**

On the third day Malayappaswamy goes in procession, alone on the Simhavahana. The lion is the king of beasts. 'Mriganancha mrigendroham' is how Lord Krishna described the uniqueness of the lion. The name 'lion' occurs in Vishnusahasranama. With the face of lion, Vishnu killed the cruel Hiranyakasipa. He saved Prahlada, his devotee. In Yogic parlance, Simha stands for the ability to carry and move. Bhima and other warriors are described as being strong like the lion. In the abode of the Lord, in Ananda Nilayam, there are statues of lions on all four sides, symbols of the Lord's power to protect. The procession of Lord Venkateswara on the lion car, stands for the end of the evil one, and protection of the devotees.

#### **5. Mutyalapandirivahana [The Pearl Bower Car]**

On the third day, Malayappa Swamy goes in procession in the streets around the temple of Tirumala, accompanied by his Sridevi and Bhudevi. The pearls emanate coolness. In the Swathi Karthe, a drop of rain water enters an oyster shell in the ocean's shell and becomes a pearl. Sri Krishna is described as wearing a fresh pearl at the tip of his nose -- 'nasagre navamouktikam'. Venkateswara is praised everywhere as 'Mouktika Sragvi' [one who wears a garland of pearls.] Srimannarayana is one who stays under Adishesha's thousand hoods that look like an umbrella made of pearls, an air conditioned temple, with it as vahana. Malayappaswamy goes here and there, enticing the sight of the devotees.

During the nine festive nights of Aswayuja, the car with the pearl bower glittering amidst electric lamps that excel shining stars, goes in procession, a bliss to look at. The appearance of Sri Venkateswara who is treated for cool delight, dispels the trials and tribulations of the devotees. Lord Venkateswara preaches, "a drop of water on a lotus leaf looks like a pearl. The same drop in an oyster shell shines, having become a pearl. So, my devotees, unlike a drop of water, you should take shelter for true bliss, like a drop of water that becomes a true pearl rather than taking shelter under other gods, obtaining ephemeral bliss. . In the annual Brahmotsavas, Venkateswara appears in the pearl bower car in the guise of Sri Krishna, who shears Bakasura's beak and punishes the evil one.

#### **6. Kalpavrikshavahana**

On the fourth day, Lord Venkateswara with his consorts Sridevi and Bhudevi goes in procession on the Kalpavrikshavahana, delighting the devotees. When gods and the demons were churning the ocean for Amritha, the Kalpavriksha that could fulfil the wishes

of all, and which is ever green, irrespective of the season, was born from the milky ocean. Kalpavriksha showers only worldly blisses. Venkateswara who has Kalpavriksha as his chariot or vahana confers both worldly and spiritual bliss. The Lord is a Kalpavriksha for all those who seek his shelter. The Lord brought the Parijata tree from heaven to earth and installed it at the request of Satyabhama. Now, in the epoch of Kali, he goes in procession on the Kalpavriksha Vahana, to fulfil the desires of his devotees. On the same vahana, Lord Venkateswara delights the sight of his devotees, in the guise of a cowherd.

Govinda who saves the cattle, protects the devotees as well. Kalpavriksha is an emperor among trees born of earth. Its fame for charity is venerated in all the three worlds. It is in heaven. In this epoch of Kali, the Lord who is the devotee's Kalpavriksha, goes in procession in front of the devotees on Kalpavriksha vahana and fulfils the wishes of his devotees. Venkateswara is a Kalpavriksha [wishbearing tree] for all his devotees.

### 7. Sarvabhupalavahana

On the fourth night of the Brahmotsavas, Malayappa Swamy goes in procession, along with Sridevi and Bhudevi. This is a golden Mandapa. At night, amidst the glitter of electric lamps, the Lord appears to the devotees with both his consorts. Venkateswara has at his footrest, the glitter of the precious stones of the crowns of all the kings and emperors. As he is the Lord of all these, the rulers from the East to the West and Rameswara to Himalayas take part in the festival as carriers or vahanas. The lords of the directions are also included:

*Sevaparah Siva suresa Krisanu dharma  
Rakshombunatha pavamana dhanadhinathah*

*Baddhanjali pravilasannija sirshadesah  
Sri Venktachalapate tava suprabhatam*

----- the lords of the eight directions – Siva, Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirruthi, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera – all of these serve Venkachalapathi at dawn and salute him.

The kings are the saviours and rulers of people. Sri Venkateswara Swamy is the saviour of people and the rulers as well. He is the Lord of all the rulers. So, today all the rulers serve the Lord in the form of vahana. "O devotees! Make your hearts the Lord's Car, serve him and attain Salvation," they preach to the devotees. On the Sarvabhupala Vahana, Venkateswara appears as Krishna punishing the evil one, crushing Kaliya serpent.

### 8. The Mohini incarnation

On the fifth day, he appears to the devotees as Mohini incarnation in a golden palanquin enticing the demons, with his blushes and charms. Sri Krishna follows him in an ivory palanquin. The episode of Mohini incarnation has been fascinatingly narrated in Bhagavatha. The gods and demons churn the ocean for ambrosia. At the end, it is obtained from the milky ocean. The gods and the demons fight for it. In that context, god Vishnu, the director of the worldly drama, takes on the guise of Jaganmohini, entices the demons and distributes ambrosia among the gods. Thus the Mohini incarnation turns out to be the reason for gods who take shelter of the Lord, obtaining ambrosia and the demons, unable to obtain the same as they are vain in the belief that they are mighty.

The bedecked Malayappa Swamy appears in a sitting posture, not in a standing posture. The Lord is adorned with all the ornaments befitting a woman. He is dressed in a silk sari with a gem- studded Suryachandrasaveri on his crown. His nose is decorated with a

nosestud and a nosering, 'bulaki.' His raised hands are adorned with two blooming lotuses in the place of the conch and disc. The right hand of the Lord in a boon - giving posture becomes a hand betokening safety in his get up as Mohini. The Lord pleases the eyes of the devotees in this, his charming form. During the Brahmotsavas, the processions of all the cars start from the vahanamandapa. However the Mohini incarnation starts out on a palanquin from Lord Venkateswar's temple and then the procession begins. In the Mohini incarnation, the Lord preaches that the strong but arrogant ones can not obtain their desire, while those who take refuge in the Lord in humility, will obtain theirs. As in the Mohini incarnation, all the car services in Brahmotsavas are based on epics and other traditional narratives. All these reveal God Vishnu's omnipresence and his ability to protect people. "Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat" ("The whole world is filled with the form of Vishnu") is their message.

### 9. The Service of Garuda

*Kapilaksham Garutmantam suvarna sadrusa prabham  
Dirghabahum brihatskandham vande naganga  
bhushanam*

The festival of Garuda that is celebrated on the night of the fifth day takes a prime place in the nine day Brahmotsavas of Tirumala. He is the soul of Vedas, as evidenced by the aphorism, "Vedatma vihageswarah." Garuda has limbs that are symbolic of Sama and other Vedas. The blend of Vishnu and Garuda manifests itself as the form and head of Vedas. The Vedas come under a quintuple division, the Rigveda, the Krishna yajurveda, the Sukla Yajurveda, the Samaveda and the Atharvaveda. Hence, during the nine - day Brahmotsavas, the service of Garuda is being celebrated

on the fifth day. In the Garuda Panchakshari Mantra [Om pakshi Swaha] there are only five letters. So the festival of Garuda, which is hailed as 'Panchavarna Rahasya' is being performed on the fifth day. Though the "Kanchi Garuda seva" is well known, the specialty and performance of 'Garudaseva' in Tirumala are a matter of experience. It is a known fact that on the night of service to Garuda, Tirumala is crowded with lakhs of devotees, like particles of sand on a beach, from all the nooks and corners of the country.

Garudadri is one among the renowned names of the seven hills. The hill bears the shape of Garuda, "Sriseshasaila, Garudachala, Venkatadri, Narayanadri, Vrishabhadri, Vrushadrimukhyam". The Vishnu Purana [24-106] says that during the Tretayuga, the names Garudadri was prominent, for this hill.

*Krite vrishadrim vakshyanti tretayam  
Garudachalam  
Dwapare seshasailam cha venkatadrim kalau yuge.*

Garuda brought 'Venkata' a sporting hill in Vaikuntha to the earth as ordered by God Varaha Vishnu, and installed it to the north of Suvarnamukhi. The Markandeya Purana describes it, thus:

*Vaikunth lokath Garudena Vishnoh  
Kreedachalo venkatanamadehyah  
Aniyachaswarnamukhi sameepe  
Samsthapito vishnunivasahethoh.*

The sages have described Garudadri Venkateswara as an embodiment of the Vedas.

*Ariyikane vikate girim gaccheti tam viduh  
Evam vedamayah sakshat Girindrah pannagachalah*

The Rigveda [10-155-1] preaches, "Lover of earthly desires! Go to Venkatachala, the abode of Srinivasa, for the fulfillment of

your desires”. Thus Seshachala is the embodiment of the Vedas. Garudachala is the other name for Seshachala. Garuda is the personification of the Vedas

*Daso mitram talavrintam vitanam  
Peetham vasovahanam cha dhvajasha  
Evam bhutvanekadha sarvatha sah  
Srisam sriman sevate vainateyah*

-- as a servant, as a friend, as a fan, as a canopy, as a seat, as a habitation, as a flag, in many ways vinatha's son, serves Srinivasa.

Garuda is the car of God Vishnu. He is also his flag. So the Brahmotsavas start with the hoisting of the flag. They come to an end with the descent of the flag. Garuda, standing on the flag post, invites all the three crore gods to the Lord's Brahmotsavas.

In the Garuda festival on the fifth night of the ninth day Brahmotsavas of Lord Venkateswara, Malayappaswamy is bedecked with special ornaments like Makarakanti (an ornament that is made to adorn the back of a woman with the head of a crocodile imprinted on it), Lakshmihamam and Venkateswara Sahasranamamala among others which are normally worn by the prime statue of Venkateswara. Hence, it is traditionally held that there is no difference between the Chief idol of Srivenkateswara and the festive idol of Malayappaswamy. So, witnessing the festive idol during this time is capable of conferring bliss and salvation. Malayappaswamy is decorated with garlands with which Godadevi was decorated earlier and brought from Srivilliputtur of Tamilnadu to Tirumala. Krishnadevaraya composed Amukta Malyada, a prabandha which has the story of Godadevi who used to offer to God, the garland worn by her first and he dedicated it to Tirumala Tiruvengadanatha, his favourite deity, another incarnation of Andhra

Vishnudeva, having been commanded by the latter to compose the work. The tradition of decorating the Lord on the day of Garudotsava, with garlands removed after decoration to Andal Tayar [Godadevi] from her birth place Srivilliputtur temple, was in vogue from the time of Krishnadevaraya. Lord Andhra Vishnu's wish was fulfilled. Sri Krishnadevaraya's life was full. Amuktamalyada the prabandha, serves as a witness to this. On the same day, the Lord is decorated with silk clothes offered by the Chief Minister on behalf of the state Governor. Not only that, riding alone on the golden Garuda, decorated with new umbrellas offered by the landlords of Chennai, Malayappaswamy goes on the holy streets of Tirumala and blesses devotees galore with his boon - giving hands:

*Godasamarpita suvasitapushpamalam  
Lakshmi haramanibhushita sahasra namnam  
Malam vidharya Garudopari sannivishtah  
SriVenkatadrinilayo jayathi prasannah*

-- The Lord of Venkatadri thrives in joy, riding Garuda and wearing the garland worn by Godadevi and Lakshmihamam and Sahasranamamala.

Every year, on the day of the festival, of Garuda, "Tirupati umbrella charities" in Chennai [now Hindu Dharmarthasamiti] devoutly offer nine umbrellas to the Lord – Six big ones and three smaller ones – prepared afresh, worshipped and brought from Chennai in a procession on foot. Along with these umbrellas, the landlords, offer in a bamboo tray, "Srivari pulangi kapai", dhoti, Lakshmihamam's 'pavada's (the pieces of cloth used to cover the girdle), the large umbrellas for Padmavatidevi of Tiruchanoor, 'kapali', turmeric, kunkum, sandal etc. as gifts ('Sare') to the lord.

They start in procession from the streets of Chennai and reach Tirumala on the day of the festival of Garuda, on foot. The officials



of the endowment receive the umbrellas and the boxes with gifts from landlords, after duly honouring them. Thus the festival of Garuda in honour of Lord Venkateswara is celebrated with special and costly ornaments, new silk garments and new umbrellas with splendour and pomp, a delight to the eye. Tallapaka Annamacharya praises the glory of Lord Venkateswara in more ways than one. The splendor of the festival of Garuda is described by him, thus:

.... As you get ready to ride Garuda in joy  
As you go about in the streets, on golden Garuda  
Sri Venkateswara, Lakshmi in all forms, stays near  
Alamelmanga exults in your company  
The divine drums in frenzy, beating to their full

- Annamayya Songs, 11-70

Annamayya describes the pomp and the bustle of the festival in more ways than one and the marvellous power of the Lord:

As you ride Garuda, in thunderous sound  
The directions are torn apart. 2-92

In this Garudotsava, the Lord's consorts do not take part.

In this festival, Malayappaswamy sits alone in dignity with his feet like red lotuses, resting his feet in the hands of Garuda that look like packs of nascent leaves. This shows that the feet of the Lord are the sole refuge of the devotees. This is the quintessence of the 'dwaya' mantra. Thus service to Garuda is symbolic of the meaning of dwaya mantra.

Witnessing Lord Vishnu on Garuda as his car, an exultant Periyalvar [Vishnuchitta] performs the Mangalasaana (ceremonial blessing) with "Pallandu Pallandu ". "O Lord, come and rule me with your mercy, riding on Garuda" is how Ramadasa praises the Lord.

O devotees galore, you are near and dear to the Lord  
Why don't you make us better and more renowned?  
So Garuda! Why don't you also do like that!  
Whatever we want, whatever we beg for

Is how Annamacharya pleads with Garuda so that he may appeal to the Lord on his behalf and on behalf of all of us. This is the glory of the service of Garuda in honour of the Lord.

"O devotees, I will be ready at all instances to protect you riding on Garuda and armed with conch, disc and other weapons. Take shelter in my feet, submit yourself to me. Leave to me, the responsibility of protecting you. I will certainly protect you" is how Lord Venkateswara admonishes us. So the festival of Garuda for the Lord dispels all sin and showers all kinds of wealth and bliss on all bhaktas.

### 10. The Car of Hanuman (Hanumadvahana)

On the sixth day of Brahmotsavas, making Hanuman his Car, Lord Venkateswara alone goes in procession and reveals himself to his devotees as though to make a point that he is no other than Srirama of Thretayuga.

*Kritetu Narasimhobhut Tretayam Raghunandanah  
Dwapare Vasudevascha Kalau Venkatanayakah*

Narasimha Swamy in Krita Yuga, Srirama in Tretayuga, Srikrishna in Dwapara and Venkateswara in Kaliyuga are one and the same. All are incarnations of lord Vishnu. That's why he makes people wake him up everyday with songs in the name of Sri Rama as part of the service to him at dawn.

*Kausalya supraja Rama purva sandhya pravartate  
Uttistha narasardula kartavyam daivamahnika*

“I have incarnated myself as Srirama in Tretayuga, Venkateswara in Kaliyuga only for doing good to the world. Today I appear to you as Rama of Venkatadri only to remind you of this, riding on Hunuman, my unrivalled devotee. Hanuman is a symbol of the devotee as a servant. He presents an ideal. So, my dear devotee, you fulfill your desires, serving Lord Venkateswra, like Hunuman by becoming exceptional devotees. Fulfil your wishes” is the message of the Lord.

In the battle of Rama and Ravana Sri Rama mounts the shoulder of Hanuma and fights with Ravana who rides a chariot. Hanuman has proved that the devotee is mightier than God. He has confirmed that the name of God is a greater support than God himself. There are more devotees of Hanuman than of Srirama in our country. Anjanadevi, the wife of Kesari, performed penance near the sacred place of Akasa Ganga in Venkatadri and Hanuman was born to her as a fulfilment of her penance. So the shore of Akasa Ganga is the birth place of Hanuman. The hill there came to be known as Anjanachala. The son of Anjana became the vahana or car of the lord of Anjanadri, Sri Venkateswara.

Tallapaka Annamacharya praises Hanuman's glory thus .....

He is no other than He, the Lord and the Servant, too;  
The illimitable Rama and the incomparable Hanuman  
A vengeful Rama crossed the ocean, bridging it  
But casually did Hanuman cross it  
In anger, Rama crushed Ravana's pride  
While Hanuman punished Myravana.

In the Srivaishnava tradition, the service of Garuda is honoured as Periya Tiruvadi and the service of Hanuman as Siriya Tiruvadi. The reason is that Garuda has been the carrier and servant of Lord

Vishnu in all epochs. Hanuman however, served Srirama in Tretayuga alone and was blessed.

In the afternoon of the sixth day, a festival of spring [Vasanthotsav] is celebrated to Malayappa Swamy with Sridevi and Bhudevi. This festival is celebrated in the Raganayaka Mandapa of the temple. This is being celebrated from 1993 A.D. In the evening of the same day, Malayappa swamy mounts the golden chariot with Sridevi and Bhudevi. Lord Venkateswara with his consorts, parading the holy streets of Tirumala in a golden chariot, presents a feast to the eyes of his devotees, emitting a splendid sheen while the sun scatters his crimson rays at dusk. On the day of Hanuman as the Car, the daily utsava (uyyalaseva) in the evening will not be held. The festival of the golden chariot celebrated after the spring festival is known as 'Svarna Ratha Ranga Dolotsava.' During this festival, people in the society of the kalyana katta decorate the golden umbrella on the chariot.

### 11. The Elephant Car (The Gajavahana)

Mounted on the king elephant on the sixth night, Lord Venkateswara alone goes in procession reminding us of the salvation of the king elephant in Bhagavata. “O dear devotees, the elephant king is proud of his might. Because of that he is caught by a crocodile and having fought with it for a long time he prays for protection from the lord at last.

O God, all my strength is gone, my courage diminished, my vital powers languishing, I swoon. My physique faces reduction. I feel tired. No longer can I fight with this crocodile. Help this poor soul.

I know only yourself and none else. Come and save me, a destitute the Iswara here means a Lord, not God Shiva. So Vishnu,

the Lord of the world, heeds the cry of the king elephant and goes to save him. Though Lord Vishnu who pervades the universe, stays in Vaikuntha and sports with Goddess Lakshmi by his side in Vaikuntha in a corner mansion in whose interior there is a hibiscus garden and a remote lake with a seat of lotus in marble near by, blesses the distressed, descends from Vaikuntha to the earth, kills the crocodile and saves the king elephant. So Venkateswara mounted on the elephant car teaches his devotees not to stand on their feet, not to depend too much on their might and to shift the responsibility of protection to Him.

The world is a lake. The crocodile is the sum of our deeds. The king elephant is the human soul. Lord Vishnu is the one who saves us from the bonds of the world and our deeds. Every devotee is a king Elephant. Lord Venkateswara is the one who redeems us from the worldly bonds and shackles of our deeds.

Earlier there was a Gajendra Mokshana well in the place of the present Vaikuntha queue complex one. With the passage of time, it has been completely covered. Elephants were a force among the four kinds of forces and kingly splendour. Even now, mounting the elephant and going in a procession is great honour. It is a special felicitation. Gajendra Mokshana is an epic story detailing the uses of surrender to God.

Venkateswara goes alone on the elephant during the Brahmothsavas. Tallapaka Annamacharya describes the sprightly sport with Alamelumanga on the elephant.

With tresses coiled and wearing a dress with sprightly  
borders

With consorts serving him

His darling pressing her back and breasts on him  
In joy, the god mounts his elephant,  
Holding it firmly with his hands.  
He goes about in street after street.

13-58

## 12. Suryaprabha Vahana

*Bhaskaraya vidmahe*

*Mahadyuthikaraya dheemahi*

*Tanno Aditya prachodayat*

Is the Surya Gayatri. On the seventh day the lord of the Seven Hills Venkateswara alone mounted on the Surya Prabha Vahana of seven horses, wearing a diamond gauntlet goes in procession in the city streets of Tirumala while the rays of the sun spread in the morning announcing that he is Narayana in the midst of Sun's sphere [Suryamandala], "jyotisham Raviramsuman". It is the God's word that He is the Sun among the forms of light. He is the embodiment of light. Light is another form of the lord. This is very pronounced in God Suryanarayana", dhyayetsada Savitru mandala madhyavartee Narayana". The Veda says that Sriman Narayana in the midst of Surya Mandala is fit to be meditated upon. So, all the Indians offer prayers and also salutations to the sun. [Surya Namaskaras] They worship lord Surya Narayana with the chant of Gayatri mantra. He is the repository of light. He is the giver of consciousness to nature. Rains, the farms and their produce, the moon and the medicinal herbs all attain increase under the rays of the sun.

Lord Venkateswara blesses the devotees by showering on them health and wealth and allowing them to witness him on the Suryaprabha Vahana announcing that he it is who as the sun God, lights the world. Tallapaka Annamacharya describes Venkateswara's journey as

When your darling's face that rises like the moon  
Will glow like the sun, with you on the car (Suryaprabha)  
30-197

In another place Annamacharya confirms and praises Venkateswara as no other than the Sun God in the midst of the Sun's sphere:

All of you see, see and salute  
The parabrahman radiating near the lake  
The sheen of the sun in his sphere  
The glitter of the moon in heaven  
The glow born from fire on earth  
The manifold forms of universal immanence. 2-498

### 13. Chandraprabha Vahana

On the seventh night Venkateswara parades in cool weather through the temple streets of Tirumala mounted on the Chandraprabha Vahana. For the Lord, Venkatadri Vishnu, the sun and the moon are the two eyes. Lord Vishnu of Venkatadri who goes in procession in the morning on Suryaprabha, goes on Chandraprabha Vahana during the night, as the moon can emit its rays only during the night. Lord Krishna says he is the moon among the stars, "nakshatranam aham sasee". The Purushasukta explains that the moon is born from the Lord's mind, "chandrama manasojatah". The sun emits rays during day, the moon during the night. The moon shines with the help of the sun's rays. Hence the Chandraprabha Vahana is taken out at night only after the Suryaprabha Vahana is taken out in the morning. The moon has ambrosial rays. God therefore teaches the devotees the secret of immortality appearing with a bowl of ambrosia distributing ambrosia in the incarnation of Mohini. The moon causes joy, "yatha prahladanat chandrah". Similarly the appearance of Lord Venkatesa

on the Chandraprabha Vahana gives joy and wish fulfillment to the devotees. Through the Suryaprabhavahana and the Chandraprabhavahana, Lord Venkatesa shows that the Sun's heat and the moon's coolness are both his manifestations. The sun and the moon are the god's eyes. The humans obtain light from the sun and mind from the moon.

### 14. Rathotsava

Among the Brahmotsavas of Lord Venkateswara, the most splendid one that attracts the attention of the devotees is the car festival, Rathotsava, on the eighth day, under the rays of the morning sun, while Lord Venkateswara sits in a chariot, as big as mount Meru with his consorts Sridevi and Bhudevi on either side and while the devotees chant his name holding the reins of the chariot, the car festival gets under way in the city streets of Tirumala. The specialty of this festival is that in this the devotees themselves drag the chariot holding its reins. This is the reason for the car festival to be celebrated with pomp and glory. In the belief that witnessing Lord Vishnu in the chariot liberates them from the cycle of birth and death, "rathotsavam Kesavam drishtwa punarjanma na vidyate", all the devotees participate in it personally. Tallapaka Annamacharya has a splendid description of the car festival:

Look, the God of gods mounted the divine car  
For the likes of us, it is a chariot of wish fulfillment.  
5-225

The way it looks the sky and earth meet is great  
The manner of Lakshmi's consort, a feast to the eye  
6-227

For all those who witness, it is a treat to the eye  
Here he goes in the streets, the lord

Mounting the car, feared by the demons  
 God of gods, with gods exulting  
 The wheels of the chariot moved  
 With a thundering sound  
 From street to street, scattering light. 10-178

While the car travels through the temple streets of Tirumala showering gifts, the devotees offer incense to the Lord wherever the car stops. Annamayya describes this holy scene and the glory of Rathotsava giving clarity, alerting the devotees.

Don't you offer incense and gifts?  
 Here comes Lakshmi's husband  
 The car with Garuda on the flag, the golden car,  
 The gods and the sages bring it out with skill.  
 Enriched by Vedas in a row  
 Steadily comes goddess Lakshmi's consort  
 Here is the lord going through the street  
 Let people salute him in joy  
 There is the flag of Garuda, there is the golden chariot  
 There is the Lord on the Chariot  
 With Lakshmi and Bhudevi on either side  
 Don't you devotees hold the reins? 10-286

Tarigonda Vengamamba praises the glory of the Car festival in her poetic work "Venkatachala Mahatmya", thus:

While staunch devotees sing  
 And dance in joy, while courtesans in front  
 Dance in pairs, their heads in artistic pose  
 While Vandi and Magadha and the charioteers in chorus

Hail the paragon of men and his fame  
 While some devotees keep pots on their heads  
 Others hailing Govinda, calling upon his name  
 In frenzy divine, women throwing rice  
 On the cars, with devotion and love  
 From up the stairs, of mansions. 2-131

Inscription 4 - 11 dated 6.6.1531 reveals that Achyutadevaraya, the brother of Krishnadevaraya, the emperor of Vijayanagara has appointed an expert dancer Muddukuppai, the daughter of Ranjakam Kuppasani, for the service of Lord Venkateswara in Tirumala. In those days, courtesans in divine service were respected as 'enberumanadiyar'. Vengamamba describes the dance performed before the procession by 'devadasis'. Today, in their place, housewives and women dance, sing bhajans and perform 'kolata', to the delight of the devotees. Some devotees raise their voice in a frenzy of devotion and cry 'Govinda' and 'Govinda'. Some women devotees happily throw rice (Sesalu = Akshatalu) from the upstairs of buildings in the city streets (now-a-days devotees throw salt, pepper and coins on the God).

There are many inscriptions on the walls of the temple in Tirumala. Tallapaka Peda Tirumalacharya's Dharmasasana 4 - 129 dated 17.3.1539 reveals that in the Aani Brahmotsava and Peratasi Brahmotsava, three chariots of Brahma, Vishwakshena and Lord Venkateswara used to participate. In a giftdeed (6-5) dt.25-9-1583, Etturu Kumara Tatacharya has offered a donation of a 'rekhaiponnu' and two 'panas specifically for the decoration of three chariots in Alpisi Brahmotsava.

The car festival teaches a unique philosophy. The Kathopanishad has beautifully described the affinity of the body and the soul, comparing it with the car festival.

*Atmanam rathinam viddhi sareeram rathameva cha  
Buddhincha sarathim viddhi manah pragrahameva cha  
Indriyani hayanahur vishayansteshu gocharan*

3-34

- The body is the chariot, discrimination is the charioteer, the senses are the horses, the senses and their tendencies are the paths that they trod. The soul, the spark of divinity within us, is the traveller in the chariot. Lord Venkateswara teaches us to control our senses with mind as the rein, to drive the chariot like body with the help of the charioteer called Buddhi or discrimination, on a proper path, recognizing Him as the one who inhabits the chariot, serve him and attain salvation is how the Lord admonishes us all.

### 15. The Horse Chariot (Aswavahana)

On the eighth night of the Brahmotsavas, Lord Venkateswara alone goes in procession looking like a warrior with a helmet on his head and a sword in his hand. The horse is a symbol of speed. The horse has been a carrier from times immemorial. Not only were the horses used for personal journeys but they were tied to drive the chariot. The cavalry was the most important among four categories of forces in war. When the gods and the demons churned the milky ocean for ambrosia, a king among horses by name Uchchaisrava was born from it.

There are ten famous incarnations of Lord Vishnu. The last among these is the incarnation of Kalki. The epics say in his praise that at the end of the epoch of Kali, Lord Vishnu will establish Dharma in the form of Kalki who with a sword in hand and mounted on a horse kills the evil ones to save the pious people.

*Kalkinam turagarudham Kalikalmashanasanam  
Kalyanadam Kalighnancha Srinivasam bhajenisam*

Deva Sarma praises Kalki as one mounted on the horse, the dispeller of Kali's effects on the devotees, the giver of bliss, the destroyer of the evil one, Kali; Srinivasa who incarnates himself as God Kalki, with a desire to serve him for ever. In the Sukla Yajussamhitha [9-14] the horse has been described as a symbol of the state.

Tallapaka Annamacharya has described the manner in which the Lord goes in procession in the car streets around the temple of Tirumala, thus:

Attention while holding the stirrup  
The horse's reach is beyond control.  
A glittering horse touching the sky  
To all sides, it jumps as in a war dance  
Attention Garuda and the weapons five  
The horse is invisible, racing fast  
Galloping amain the horse trods  
Paths hitherto unknown  
Attention! The horse touches the stars!  
So well is it driven. Attention, o Lord!  
O God who saves those in pain  
Take heed of your lotus feet, while the reins are held  
O Venkatesa, as you go sporting along streets  
Around the temple with your consort, Goddess Lakshmi,  
Tarry not, in joining her. 11-2-30

In another hymn, he says

The supreme lord praised by gods  
Manifests himself in many forms  
Mounted on a horse and promenading  
The streets, rotating his spear

In his charming form, full of joy  
 Is found going in all directions  
 As the horse, rolling his eyes and with his ears shaking  
 Jumps in joy, raises all its four legs  
 Sports everywhere, the Lord touched the reins.  
 The horse going round and round  
 Threw its tail around, stood for a while  
 And started showing its skills.  
 Lord Venkatesa went many a time to Ahobala. 2-93

At the end of the epoch of Kali, Lord Venkateswara descends in the form of Kalki, punishes the wicked, saves the pious and protects the dharma. The objective of the horse chariot is no other than to announce this. When Padmavati and Srinivasa exchanged amorous looks, the Lord was mounted on a horse. Even in the Paruveta festival, Lord Venkateswara goes a-hunting, mounted on a horse chariot. Another incarnation of Lord Vishnu is Hayagriva, the horse faced. The Kathopanishat describes the senses as horses. So Venkateswara who rides a horse, is a controller of the senses. He teaches us through the horse chariot that we should also carry on with our lives by keeping our senses that are like horses, under control.

### **The holy dip of the disc (Chakrasnana)**

A palanquin festival is held in connection with the culmination of Brahmotsavas on the ninth day. Later in auspicious moments, the splendid festival of the Chakrasnana is celebrated.

The lord in the palanquin, I serve him to my heart's content  
 Let the saints and gods also serve him as they please  
 Look, the lord and his consort going in the streets

Blissfully looking at the other's face  
 Seated opposite to each other 15-189

Is how Annamacharya picturesquely describes the charming scene of Lord Venkateswara and the goddess Alamelu Manga, one in front of the other.

The last episode in the Brahmotsavas is the Avabhritha, the holy dip of the disc. This is no other than the holy dip performed at the end of the Yajna. Giving a holy dip at the end of the yajna is traditional and is also supported by the sastras. The Brahmotsava is celebrated for nine days like a yajna with a sense of devotion, splendidly and on a massive scale. On the morning of the ninth day, in star Sravana, the star of the lord's incarnation is born, the holy dip is administered. 'Sava' means a yajna. Ut + Sava = Utsava means a great and excellent Yajna. So the chakrasnana is administered as the last of the services during the Brahmotsavas. Tarigonda Vengamamba describes the glory of the festival of the holy dip thus:

“Brahma and others had a holy dip after having brought the Chakrattalvar, the lord, his consorts Lakshmi, Bhoomi and Neela (now- a -days we don't see Neela in the festival. We can see only goddess Lakshmi and Bhudevi on either side of the lord) after bringing them in the palanquin, after circumambulating the Vimana of the Lord and having kept them in front of the precincts of Lord Varaha, giving a Panchamrutha dip or bath with milk, curds, honey, coconut water and turmeric and offering naivedya.  
 (Venkatachala Mahatmya 2-132)

Lord Malayappa, the festive idol of Lord Venkateswara reaches the temple premises along with Sridevi and Bhudevi. Along with them goes Chakrathalvar [Sudarsana Chakra] in another palanquin.

Later the idols and the chakra are given a holy dip. At first the Lord and his consorts are given a dip and are dressed. Later they are given a dip again along with arghya, padya and aachamana. Then they are treated with cow milk and water, lamps are lighted and incense and camphor, offered. After that, they are treated with curds, honey, coconut water and turmeric. Every time such a treatment is given, they are treated with pure water once again. Later the idols are offered light, incense and arati. At the end the idols are coated with sandal, adorned with a tilakam and a garland made of basil leaves. After achamana, among other things light, incense, the usual arathi followed by Kumbha arati and nakshatra arati are offered.

At the end with al golden plate they perform a Sahasradhar-abhisheka [a dip with a thousand drops] while Sridevi, Bhudevi and Chakrattalwar are being given a holy dip. Vedic Scholars chant Srisukta, Purusha Sukta and Bhusukta. A chant of the Vedas is synchronous with the abhisheka. Later, Dravidian scholars recite Niratta. The priests sprinkle the water used for Abhisheka first on themselves and later on all the devotees. Then they dress the idols and give them offerings. Then they give the Sudarsana Chakrattalwar alone a dip in the holy lake of the lord [Swami Pushkarini]. The festival is celebrated in the name of Venkateswara the lord and the holy dip is given to Chakravattalwar [the servant]. “Ahohi Vaishnavo dharmah chitro Venkata bhudhare”. All this is the sport of Lord Vishnu. “On Vekatachala, the Vaishnava religion is strange and amazing!” But the Bhavishyottara Purana, describing the Brahmotsavas, observes that Lord Srinivasa himself had an avabritha in Swami Pushkarini:

*Japadbhirvaidikan mantran sahitascha dvijottamaih  
Chakaravabrithasnanam Bhagavan adipurushah*

*Swami Pushkarini tirtha sarvalokaikapavane  
Avataradine tasmin nakshatre Sravane prage*

*14-63, 64*

At the same time, the priests and all the devotees take a holy dip in the holy lake Pushkarini and purify themselves. Then the Lord, his consorts and Chakrattalwar go in a procession and enter the temple.

After the holy dip Lord Srinivasa tells the devotees, “those who on the day with Sravana nakshatra, lift their arms and take a dip in the holy lake Pushkarini along with the Sudarsana Chakra, cast off the bonds of their former birth, become prosperous and live happily in both this world and the other world as well”. (Venkatachala Mahatmyam, 2-133). “Believe me, this word of mine is true,” he says to the devotees.

### **The Flag descends (Dhwajavarohana)**

On the ninth night of the Brahmotsavas, the festival of Dhwajavarohana takes place in the temple. In the presence of Lord Malayappa accompanied by Sridevi and Bhudevi, while Vedic Scholars chant the scriptures, with instruments playing, with drums beating, bidding farewell to Brahma and other gods as well as the lords of the directions, the flag of Garuda is made to descend from the flag post. Thus the Brahmotsavas that start with the hoisting of the flag of Garuda inviting Brahma and other gods besides the Lords of Directions, concludes with the descent of the same flag and bidding farewell.

Tallapaka Annamacharya describes the endearing farewell by Lord Srinivasa to Brahma and other gods as well as the lords of the directions in the most natural vein.



Adieu, Lords—go and come back  
 Quickly again for the next festivities  
 Hara and Brahma, go and come back  
 Again for the festival next  
 You also gods, saints and Brahmins, go  
 And come back  
 You are tired all these days  
 Yama, go and come back, go with the moon  
 Come happily again with gods,  
 Go, you lords of directions  
 You, who are tired with a labour of love  
 Narada, Sanaka and Sanandana, you also  
 Go happily, but do not go too far  
 Come again. Serve me on these seven hills.

Having thus bid farewell to all the gods he addressed his devotees thus:

*Varshe varshe tu masesmin Kanyarasim gathe Ravau  
 Ye kechidatra kurvanthi Brahmakritotsavam mama  
 Te yanthi Brahmano lokam bhumau kamanavapyacha  
 Varaha Purana-51-26*

- Whoever performs Brahmotsava or helps others perform it every year during the Kanya Masa when the sun transits Kanya, they will enjoy all the luxuries in this world and attain salvation at the end.

*Annadanam prasastam syat visheshena mahotsave.*

During these great festive days, donating food is very worthy. Those who offer food will enjoy all luxuries while on earth and attain salvation, after their death. Whoever, said the lord, gives sixteen

kinds of charity prescribed by the Sastras, enjoys worldly pleasures and attains salvation at the end. Thus the lord announces the fruits of charity on Venkatadri.

After the descent of the flag, the festive idols are given naivedya, nirajana and other services. After that the priests and religious teachers are honoured. Then Lord Malayappa reaches Ranganayaka's temple premises along with Sridevi and Bhudevi. These festive idols stay back in the temple premises of Ranganayaka from the beginning of Brahmotsavas till Diwali, leaving Ananda Nilaya and the Prime idol of the Lord.

Sresthaluri Venkatarya in his work in couplets, "Srinivasa Vilasa Sevadhi" describes the glory and proceedings of the Brahmotsavas, with "the strange skills of archery and the beauty of the Lord's procession in the streets".

At one time, there were fireworks during the Brahmotsavas. Now-a-days, we don't have this. Etturu Tirumala Kumara Tatacharya, one of the religious teachers associated with the temple, has donated to the Lord's exchequer four villages with an annual revenue of 720 gold coins, for celebrating the Brahmotsavas and Kaisiki Dwadasi festival. Of this, 420 coins were allocated to Alpsi Brahmotsavas. From this, 20 Gold Coins were allotted for fireworks [see gift deed No. 5: Vol. 6, TTD inscriptions 25-9-1583]. This deed (sasanam) is inscribed on the southern wall of the third compound of Tirumala temple.

At 6.00 O' clock in the evening, during the Brahmotsavas before the night festivities, amidst the lighting of a thousand lamps, the Swing Festival [Uyyala Seva] of Lord Malayappa accompanied by Sridevi and Bhudevi is celebrated outside the Tirumala temple in the courtyard of the Lord in the South East. The lord manifests himself to the devotees, delighting their sight.

Sreshthaluri Venkatarya [17th century A.D.] describing the Brahmotsavas with the objectives and the fruits of diverse car services in the festival in his poetic work in couplets, “Srinivasa Vilasa Sevadhi”, says:

Adoring Srinivasa, charmingly  
 Mounting him on Sesha,  
 Taking him out on temple streets  
 With sheen of jewels, in joy  
 Hari shines to let devotees know  
 His being couched on Sesha.  
 The next day, he takes a yogic posture  
 To show that he teaches Brahma, philosophy;  
 On the day next, to show his severity  
 In finishing the evil one,  
 In great force, emerges from an iron pillar in a  
 Lion’s shape; he shows  
 How he mounts the Pushpaka with Sita;  
 Quickly coming from under a flower bower, then showing  
 how he  
 Mounted Garuda and killed the crocodile  
 That fought the king elephant; the next day he shows  
 He sat on (the shoulders of) Hanuman  
 To show he killed Ravana, the cruel one  
 Then mounting the elephant Satrunjaya  
 To prove that he was the one born as  
 Srirama in Ayodhya and on the seventh day  
 With grace occupying the solar sphere  
 ...                      ...                      ...  
 With inward immanence as his wont  
 Announcing all in miraculous sport

Showing on the eighth day  
 That he drove Arjuna’s chariot  
 The next day mounting the horse  
 As Kalki to block the Mlecchas  
 Wandering in the holy streets  
 To show that he is a globe-trotter  
 On the Ninth day as Mukunda  
 Going near the ancient Varaha  
 Having a holy dip, all this to show  
 To protect the faithful and the gods  
 He is bound all the while.

- Srinivasa vilasasevadhi, 6-1101-1140 (lines).

### *Pushpayaga*

The Pushpayaga was being celebrated on the tenth day as an act of penitence for any faults that might have been committed knowingly or unknowingly during the Brahmotsavas:

*Dhwajarahana tirthanta prayaschittantu yadbhavet  
 Tasya doshavighatartham pushpayagam cha karayet*

During the festival from the time of Dhwajarahana or installing flag to the time of the holy dip, there may be flaws or faults in the celebrations. The “Kapijala Samhita” explains the necessity of the Pushpayaga as atonement for such flaws. May be the endowment now celebrates the festival, flawlessly! They are not now celebrating the Pushpayaga, meant to atone the flaws in the festival, the day after Chakrasnana. In place of this they are celebrating the Pavitrotsavas for four days from Sravana Suddha Dasami and Pushpayaga on Kartika Sravana.

For probable flaws in that event  
 Special services do Vaikhanasas offer

From knees, thighs, girdle, navel to shoulders,  
 Throat, face, head and hair  
 Conduct ten kinds of worship  
 Keeping in view all four directions  
 Performing Pushpayaga as laid by the sastras  
 The trees in heaven showering flowers like rain.

- Srinivasa Vilasa Sevadhi, 6-1145-1150 Lines.

Thus did Sresthaluri Venkatarya describe the festival of Pushpayaga.

Tallapaka Annamacharya described in great detail, the glory of Pushpayaga, thus:

The Lord of all the worlds who befriends all  
 With floral variation, Vedic chants, recitation of  
 Divya prabhandhas, women dancing,  
 Vandī in praise, with charming worship and services  
 With rites to dispel evil eye, with incense and sandal paste  
 With cakes ('apupa's) and other delicacies,  
 Was propitiated with Puhpayaga.

Besides a wide variety of flowers, Vedic chant, recitation of Tiruvaymudi, dance by courtesans, hymns being sung by vocalists, the Lord was being worshipped with several kinds of naivedyas.

The first mention of the Pushpayaga is inscription 1-220. Koil Kalvi Embermannaru Jiyyar has provided for a Tiruvollakam and made a deed to this effect on 17-2-1446. Tallapaka Peda Tirumalacharya has made a deed 5-47 on 7-7-1545 for allocating eight gold coins for Pushpayaga festival of the Aani Brahmotsavam, organized by him. In the deeds of the later day, we do not see any mention of the festival of Pushpayaga. Along with many Brahmotsavas, the festival of Pushpayaga also might have been suspended at the end of Sixteenth Century A.D. After four centuries,

the TTD restored the Pushpayaga and started celebrating it with pomp and glory, every year from 14-11-80, not exactly after the Brahmotsavam, but on the day in Kartika masa in Star Sravana (the star model which Lord Venkateswara incarnated himself). The credit of restoring and celebrating the forgotten Pushpayaga again, goes back to 1980, to the official at the time, Sri P.V.R.K. Prasad.

Every year, on the day of Karthika Sravana, after the performance of daily services, worship for a second time and offerings, the festive idol of Lord Malayappa, accompanied by Sridevi and Bhudevi, starts from Anandanilaya and reaches the place of yaga in the Kalyanamandapa in the 'Sampangi pradakshina'. After the completion of the yaga there, the festive idols are given Snapana Tirumanjanam. Later the idols are decorated and mounted on the Peddaseshavahana. Then, the Pushpayaga begins amidst the chanting of Vedas, the praises of Vandī and Magadha, the chants of mantras by ritviks (priests, specially meant for 'yagas'), the festive idols are worshipped with flowers of various colours. This worship with flowers goes on till the idols are covered, nay, submerged in flowers from their feet upto their chests. Then having offered lights (lamps), incense and aarathi, they adjust the flowers upto the feet and start worshipping them with flowers, once again. In this way, the offering of flowers goes on for twenty times. Then, incense along with naivedya, is offered to Lord Malayappa with both his consorts, who mounts the golden Palanquin, goes over in a procession to Ananda Nilayam and enters it. With this, the grand festival of Pushpayaga comes to a close.

Kakamani Murti kavi, a poet of the 16th century A.D, describes the Brahmotsava of Lord Venkateswara, in his Prabandha, Rajavahana Vijayamu.

O Lord, haven't you disproved the talk  
 That dark or light, all are one for the blind

Conferring eye sight on the blind  
 Haven't you refuted the query," do the barren  
 Sense pains of labour", blessing the barren,  
 With babes? Haven't you made him jump  
 Who hit by a bull, became lame?  
 Haven't you made them hear who  
 From deafness suffered? So do people  
 Praise the Lord of Venkata hill, the lotus-eyed  
 He whose heart is pure and sacred with Lakshmi within  
 People who visit the festival by Brahma  
 Fulfilling their wants, people from places  
 In and around Cuttack, Kalyan, Delhi among others.

- People who throng from all the corners of the country for the  
 Brahmotsava, in particular, from cities like Delhi, Cuttack and  
 Kalyan, praise the glory and miracles of Lord Venkateswara, saying  
 "You have given sight to the blind, children to barren women, walking  
 ability to the lame, and hearing to one hard of hearing".  
 Ganapavarapu Venkatakavi, who lived during the 17th century,  
 described in his prabandha, "Prabandha Raja Venkateswara Vijaya  
 Vilasamu", the facilities and courtesies extended to pilgrims, visiting  
 Tirumala for Brahmotsavas by the rich inhabitants of Tirumala and  
 devotees who acted as patrons:

For the tired, there is green gram in sugar,  
 Sugar'd water, bananas aplenty  
 Tender coconut water, canned water in abundance,  
 Not to speak of fresh water, buttermilk and curds  
 Camphor, sandal, white water lilies, rolls of betel, good  
 civet,  
 Canopied seats, umbrellas and handfans

Elaichi, dry ginger, cloves, pieces of jack fruits,  
 Sugarcane, date palms as many as the pilgrims desire,  
 The devotees of the Lord do serve to all the pilgrims.

- The people of Tirumala, the devotees of Lord Venkateswara,  
 used to serve the pilgrims of the Brahmotsavas, out of devotion for  
 the Lord, by providing them with free cabins for cool drinking water  
 and butter milk. This was the courtesy extended to guests in 17th  
 century. This is the 21st century. Now, it is not the people of Tirumala,  
 but the TTD that extends services to the pilgrims, to the best of their  
 ability. They provide free board, lodging and milk etc., to the pilgrims.  
 May the TTD be in a position to extend to even more people,  
 services, services to all of them! Devotees who used to witness the  
 Brahmotsava and who used to feel their lives fulfilled, used to  
 proclaim the glory of the Lord, thus:

There is no god like Venkateswara  
 Indeed nowhere, nowhere  
 Lord Siva himself is a direct witness.

They used to salute the Lord, Bhaktavatsala as the wish-bearing  
 tree of temple who seeks his help, thus:

Salutations to the one named Vrishabhachala  
 The one splendidly dressed  
 The one who dwells on the summit of a "Karunachala"  
 Salutations to the shining Lord of the golden palace  
 Named as the merciful diamond of a hill  
 Salutations to the peer among householders  
 On mount Seshachala  
 Prayer to the Lord of the golden mansion  
 On the hill famed as Sri Venkata.

Offering flowers to one renowned on Anjanadri  
 Surrender to the one who loves to sport in Swamy  
 Pushkarini  
 Prayer with folded hands to the seed of Trinity  
 Obeisance to Gajendra's protector.

Salutations to the One who inhabits Vrishabhachala; to the master of the golden mansion inside the hill named Karunadri; to the householder who lives in Seshachala; the One who lives in a golden mansion in Venkatadri, in Ananda Nilaya; the wish-bearing banker of Anjanadri; the One who loves sporting in Swamy pushkarini, the holy lake; the One who is the originator of the trinity; the savior of the King Elephant. So saying, announcing their gotra and name, touching his feet in reverence, taking leave of the Lord of Tirumala, and their hearts full of joy, they would return to their places.

*Asthi Kalpadrumah kopi Jatharupalatavritah  
 Venkatadri sikharudhah Smartham Paramarthadah*

### Extract

From an article relating to the Tirumala Temple published in the 'Asiatic' Journal (quarterly), Calcutta May - August issue, 1831 A.D.

"There remains now to describe vahanam or processions of the idol. They are twelve in number and each has a reference to different parts of the Hindu mythology as connected with the adoration of Vishnu. (The idol exhibited on these occasions is a guilded of representation made of metal, of the stone fellow in the temple who is too lazy to turn out himself).

Kalpa Vriksha vahanam is a procession of the idol placed under a gilt wooden tree. Andolika vahanam is a procession attending his excellency in a palanquin; Sesha Vahanam is the God carried forth

on a gilt serpent Sesha. Sarva Bhoopala Vahanam signifies the carrying the idol on a gilt throne. Surya Prabha Vahanam is a procession of the idol attended by a gilt Sun. Addala ara (Mandapamu) is a trip of the gentleman to a room surrounded by looking glasses adjusted to reflect him several times. Andolika Vahanam is another kind of palanquin procession. For all the above the votary who gives the idol the trouble of coming out is forty rupees less rich than he was before. Garuda Vahanam is a procession in which the idol is mounted on a gift parrot; Chandra Prabha is a procession of the idol accompanied by a gilt moon; Hanuman Vahanam is a procession of the idol mounted upon a gilt figure like an elephant. Sometime in representation of Hanuman, the Indian Pan. Simha Vahanam is the last procession in which the idol rides on a gilt lion. Bala Sesha Vahanam is the last procession of the idol sitting upon a gilt serpent."

- Anonymous author was an officer in East India Company. He worked in Chandragiri. He wrote this article from Chandragiri.

Venkatadri samam sthanam brahmande nasti kinchana  
 Venkatesasamo devo na bhuto na bhavishyati.

- There is no holy place in the entire world that can equal Venkatadri. There was no God equal to Venkateswara in the past, none at present, nor can there be anyone in the times to come.

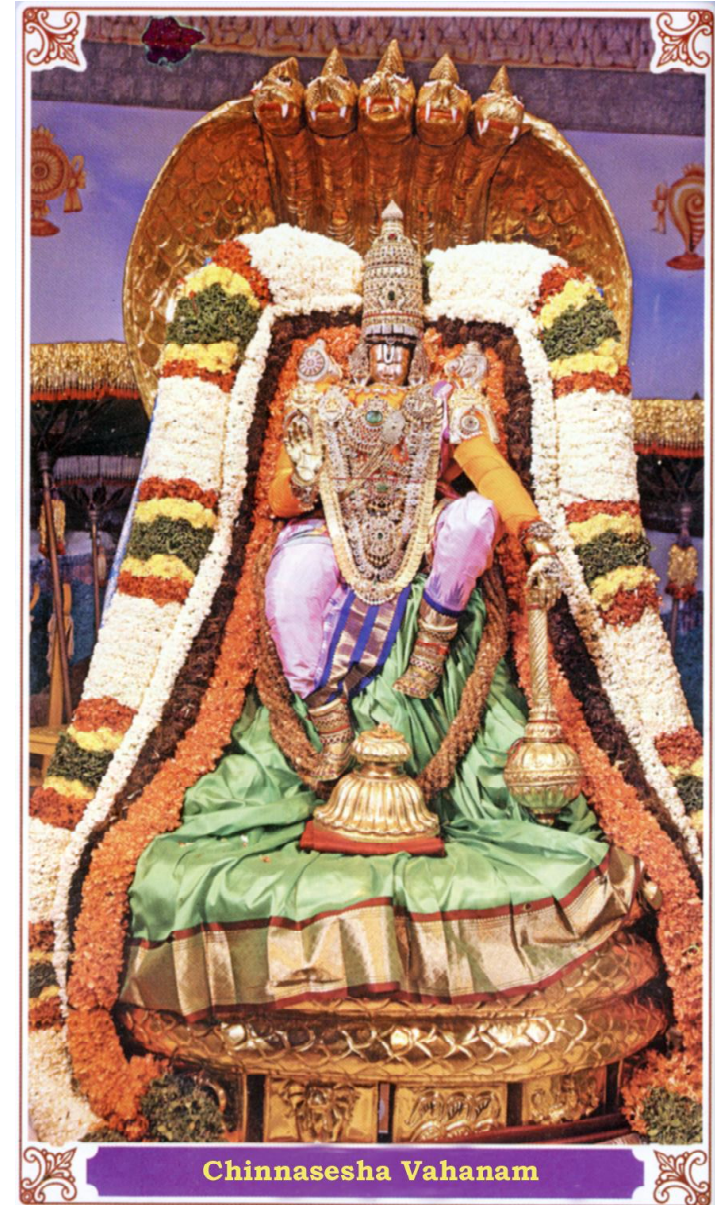
\* \* \*







**Peddasesha Vahanam**



**Chinnasesha Vahanam**





Hamsa Vahanam



Simha Vahanam





Muthyapu Pandiri Vahanam



Kalpavruksha Vahanam





Sarvabhupala Vahanam

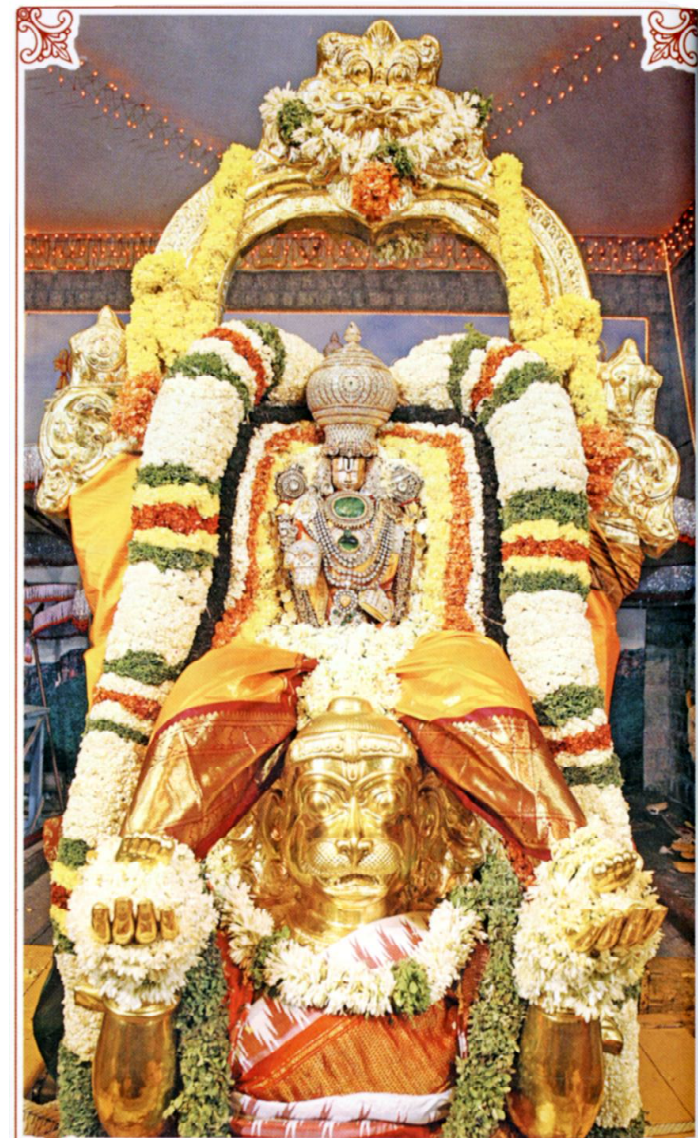


Venkateswara in Mohini Avatara





Lord Venkateswara in Garuda Vahana

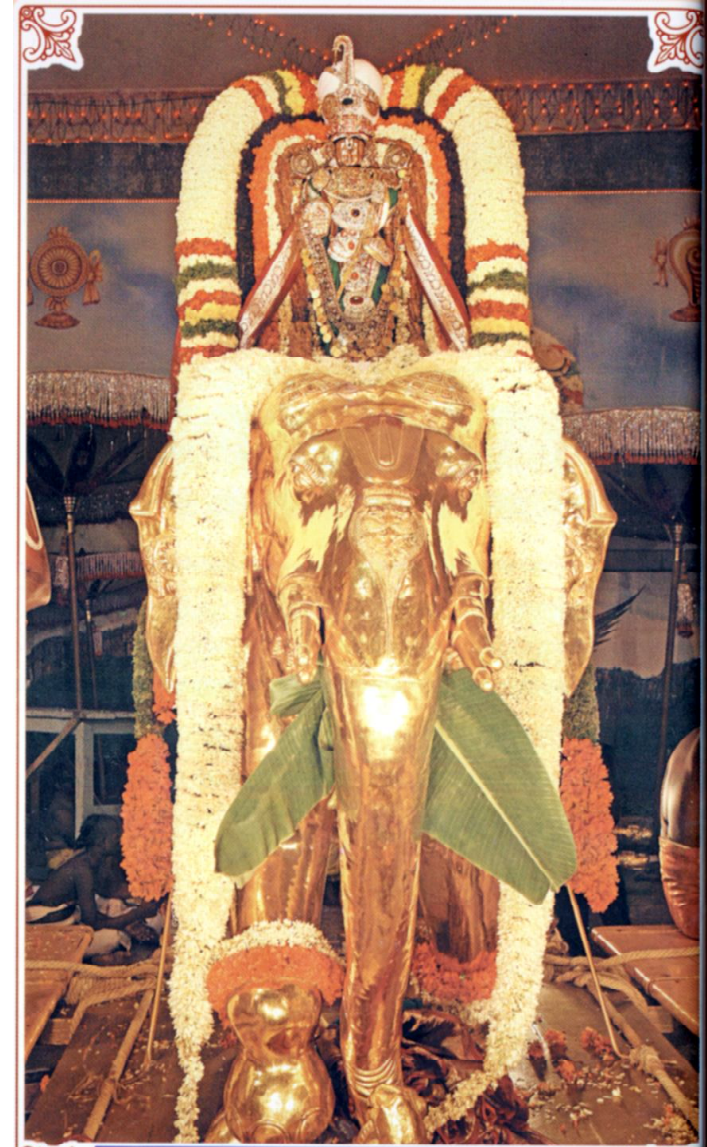


Hanumantha Vahanam





**Swarna Rathotsavam**



**Gaja Vahanam**





Suryaprabha Vahanam



Chandraprabha Vahanam









Sridevi - Malayappaswami - Bhudevi - Sudarsana Chakram



Snapana Thirumanjanam





**Avabhruthamu - Chakrasnanam**



**Unjal Seva Mantapam**



