

Thirupathi
A pilgrim's Experience at Thirupathi
Written by Sri Varadan, Hyderabad

NAMO NARAYANAYA
SRIMAN NARAYANAYA CHARANAU SARANAM PRAPATHYEY
SRIMATHEY NARAYANAYA NAMAH
SRI RAMANUJAR THIRUVADIGALEY SARANAM
SRI MUDALIAANDAN SWAMY THIRUVADIGALEY SARANAM
SRI ALARMELMANGAI NAYIKA SAMETHA SRI SRINIVASA PARABRAHMANEY NAMAH

venkaTAdri samam sthAnam
brahmANDe nAsti kincana;
venkateSa samo devo
na bhUto na bhaviSyati!

There is no place in the entire universe that equals Venkatadri, the place where the Lord resides and there is no God, neither in the past nor in the future who equals Venkateswara.

akhila bhuvana janma sthema bhangAdi lile
vinata vividha bhuta vrAta rakshaika dikshe |
Sruti Sirasi vidIpte brahmaNi SrInivAse
bhavatu mama parasmin Semushi bhakti rUpA | |

May my intellect assume the form of Bhakti in Srinivasa, the highest Reality, revealed in the Vedanta as the Lord who creates, protects and destroys the whole universe with sportive ease and who has taken a vow to protect all creatures who seek him.

Prostrating at the feet of Padmavathi Thayar and Lord Thiruvengadamudayan, adiyen wishes to share our experience to TIRUMALA TIRUPATI. May Lord Hayagriva bestow me the knowledge to write about this divya desam. Adiyen prays to Acharyar Sri Ramanujar to guide me in this venture and enlighten me facts about this divya desam. Adiyen admits that I don't know where to start with and I admit my incompetence in trying to attempt to write about this holiest divya desam. Writing about this divya desam is like lighting a candle before Sun. I therefore humbly request the readers to go through the article and correct my short comings and guide me in the spiritual path. I pray to Sriyah pathi to bless me and guide me properly. I humbly admit that I have borrowed information from various books and great devotees of Lord and I am thankful to all the authors. Any flaw in the write up is purely mine and request the readers to correct me.

TIRUMALA

The most sacred of all the 108 Divya Desams needs no introduction. This is one of the seven Swayam Vyaktha Kshetrams (the image of the Lord was not carved by anyone. God out of His own will has appeared and continues to stay here) Added to this, this kshetram is Varaha Kshetram because Lord Varahaswamy after killing Hiranyaksha rescuing Bhoomi Devi decided to stay

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here. This divya desam is more popularly known as KALIYUGA VAIKUNTAM. The ageless sacred temple of Lord Venkateswara is located atop the Tirumala Hill at an elevation of 3,500 feet above the mean sea level. Reference to the holy hills is found in ancient literatures and scriptures.

Adiyen wishes to give the Topographical highlights, how to approach the Hills, the recent systems in vogue, accommodation and arjitha sevai details, a brief picture about having darsanam of Perumal .

With the blessings of my elders , especially my parents, Adiyen had the bhagyam to visit this divya desam many times.

My first yaatrai to this divya desam dates back to 1967 when I was a three year old boy. At that time, Adiyen had trekked to the holy hills as there was a praarthana to be fulfilled. The glimpse of the Lord in my dream when I was 15 years of age suffering from illness prompted me to resort to His Holy feet. I never looked back after Lord bestowed his grace on this sinner. As our Alwar sings Poginra Kaalangal... From Nammalvar's Tiruvaymozhi.

At all times past present and future You are my mother, my father
my very life itself Having gotten you, will I ever let you go? O lord of the three worlds O Supreme One! With your eternal fame, so far-reaching, With your sweet-smelling cool garland of tulasi leaves You grace the cool Venkata hill. I keep chanting this beautiful verse repeatedly which makes me more confident to handle the dangerous temptations in this material life .

TIRUMALA, the abode of Lord Srinivasar stands unique as an embodiment of man's eternal quest for the divine and His infinite grace. A pilgrimage to the sacred Hills is a soul-stirring experience cherished by every devotee. The puranas say that soon after Dwaparayugam ended and Kaliyugam started, Lord Krishna, decided to stay back to protect one and all and chose TIRUMALA. The appearance of the Lord would be mentioned in detail later.

Lord Thiruvengadamudaiyan is acknowledged as the most glorious and auspicious form of Lord Vishnu in this Kali Yuga. Even atheists and rationalists admit a sense of humility and the presence of the Lord can be felt by one and all as soon as one approaches the sanctum sanctorum.. May be , this made Kulasekhara Azhwar in his Perumal Thirumozhi to burst into the pasuram "PADIYAAYI KIDANDHU UNN PAVAZHA VAAI KANBENEY".

In his set of 10 pasurams on Thiruvengadamudaiyaan, Kulasekara Azhwar prays to Lord that he may be born as either fish, tree, stream or immovable stone. Finally, he prays to Perumal that he may be graced to be born as anything connected to the Hill and Perumal.

Great Azhwars like Nammazhwar, Kulasekara Azhwar, Tirumangai Azhwar have done Prapatti to this Perumal. Nammazhwar's "AGALAGILEN", Tirumangai Azhwar's "PATREL ONRUM ILEN", Kulasekara Azhwar's "SEDIYAYA VAL VINAIGAL" will definitely bring tears to the reciter . Out of 12
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Azhwars, 20 have sung in praise of this Lord. Poets like Annamacharyar, Thyagarajar, Purandaradasar have glorified this Lord. Even today, the songs rendered by Annamacharya are sung in front of the Lord during Ekantha seva, Unjal seva etc.

10 Alwars have sung in praise of this Lord. TIRUMALA alias Venkatachalam is "KALIYUGA VAIKUNTAM". With the sole intention of protecting us, Lord Narayana has manifested himself at TIRUMALA.

Sri Ramanujar played a vital role in reforming the temple activities and the principles laid down by him are followed even today. Adiyen admits that I am incompetent to even utter Lord's name and prays to all the bhagavathaas to correct my shortcomings and guide me properly.

TOPOGRAPHICAL HIGHLIGHTS :

There are 5 ways to reach to TIRUMALA-via Chandragiri, via Tirupati, via Maamandoor etc but the most popular route is to go from Tirupati. Hence, one has to alight at Tirupati to approach TIRUMALA, which is situated in Chittoor District in Andhra Pradesh, India. TIRUMALA is at an altitude of 1104 metres and is 21 kms away from Tirupati. Tirupati is a small town which is well developed due to its affinity to TIRUMALA. The River Swarnamukhi flows in Tirupati. The infrastructure is excellent here.

AIR ROUTE:

The nearest airport is at Renigunta and from there one can reach Tirupati by road. There are plenty of cabs, buses etc to Tirupati from Renigunta (an hour's journey). Daily flights ply to Tirupati from various important cities like Hyderabad, Chennai, Bangalore, Delhi etc. Please check the air timings with the airlines.

RAIL ROUTE:

There are around 24 trains to Tirupati from almost all the cities/ towns in India - from Delhi in the North to Kanyakumari in south, from Bombay in the west to Puri / Calcutta in the east. Apart from this, there are many trains (34 trains) which touch Renigunta and as mentioned before, Tirupati is easily accessible from Renigunta. For instance, there are daily 3 trains from Chennai, 4 from Hyderabad and 2 trains from Bangalore etc. There are bi-weekly trains from Puri, Mumbai etc. Please check up with the railway authorities for exact information regarding trains. Few special trains are arranged during summer and Brahmotsavam time.

BUS ROUTE:

Many buses keep plying to Tirupati from Chennai, Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Bangalore etc.

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A NOTE ON TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS (TTD) : Before proceeding further, Adiyen wishes to inform that the temple and other related affairs are well managed by TIRUMALA Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) which is a mini-government of 14,000 and odd employees. Its budget is equal to the State budget of Sikkim. TTD takes special interest in the welfare of lakhs of devotees who throng to this holy shrine daily.

Everything is monitored by TTD and the pilgrim is supposed to follow an organized way for everything right from booking bus ticket to darshan. "Queue" system is followed everywhere. TTD has introduced many schemes which enable the devotees to go to the holy shrine without facing any difficulty which are as follows:

- 1) Introduction of Sudarsana Token to enable the devotees to have darsanam at the allotted time. These tokens are introduced for FREE DARSAN and PAID DARSHAN to minimize the waiting time. These tokens are available at various points like Tirupati I and II Choultries (opposite to railway station), Alipiri footpath, (these two are in Tirupati) . On the Hills, the tokens are issued at Rambagicha Guest House, Pilgrims amenity complex and few more are being introduced at various points.
- 2) Free bus services in Tirupati for visiting Sri Govindaraja Swamy Temple, Azhwar Theertham , Tiruchanur and various other places.
- 3) They charge a minimum fare of Rs.22/- to go to Hills by bus. For every 2 minutes, there is a bus to TIRUMALA. Bus journey is more safe than other modes of transport.
- 4) One can also book return bus fare ticket at the same counter thus avoiding the pains of standing in the queue for the second time.
- 5) Providing basic amenities free of cost like free meals, free lockers enabling devotees to keep their belongings free of cost, providing free accommodation etc.
- 6) The latest being Mobile Telephone darshan (thro Reliance Company which has offered this service to TTD as a vow to Lord costing 7 crores).
- 7) Meditation Centre has been opened recently located near Rambagicha Guest House wherein the devotees can meditate on the Lord
- 8) Free buses every twenty minutes to go around Tirumala covering important points like guest houses, temple , Rambagicha stop, Sri Varahaswamy guest house stop etc.

A NOTE:

Before planning TIRUMALAI yaatrai, one must be prepared to stay there for atleast two days because normally it takes more than 30 hours to have Perumal's darsanam. And during summer, Brahmotsavam time during Sep-Oct, during New Year and Pongal there will be heavy rush and it may take even two or more days to have darsanam. If you are a computer savy person well familiar with the Information technology you can opt for e booking thro internet just log on to www.tirumala.org. Even hundi offerings can be sent thro this TIRUMALAI.doc <http://srivaishnavam.com> Page 4 of 53

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service. The accommodation, Arjita seva ticket are also provided. Its really a unique service first of its kind. The Information revolution is perfectly being updated in this holy shrine.

ACCOMODATION :

As one has to stay in the hills for atleast two days, it is better if one reserves accommodation at TIRUMALA well in advance. This can be done through web www.tirumala.org , or one can book at any of the TTD branches located in various cities like Hyderabad, Chennai, Bangalore, Mumbai etc. or you can take a Demand Draft in favour of "THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER, T.T.D." payable at TIRUMALA. Rs.100/- per day.

The demand draft along with a covering letter mentioning the dates and other particulars must be posted to "THE CENTRAL RESERVATION OFFICE-RESERVATION II, TTD, TIRUMALA" The reservation for room accommodation has to be sent atleast 3 months in advance . If one is planning to book the tickets at the nearest TTD counter, one must ensure to book the rooms 60 days in advance. The prevailing rent is Rs.100/- per day(24 hours). You'll be given accommodation at either Ram Bagicha Guest Houses, Sri Varahaswamy guest houses situated near the temple. The rates of the guest houses range from 10/- per day to Rs.2,000/- per day.

If you are unable to reserve accommodation in advance, then you can directly go to CENTRAL RESERVATION OFFICE (CRO) at TIRUMALA and get your accommodation(current booking). This is subject to the availability and during peak seasons as mentioned above, it is just impossible to get current reservation. Depending on the availability, you can get a room either for Rs.15/- or for Rs.100/- or sometimes free rooms without furniture. Hence, it is always advisable to reserve in advance.

Recently, TTD has constructed a huge Pilgrims Amenities Complex (PAC) near CRO . This is a very big complex with many halls and each hall can easily accommodate 2,000 devotees. The devotees who stay in this PAC are provided with a locker for which they have to pay a deposit of Rs.200/- which is refundable. Even plastic mats for sleeping are provided for which the deposit amount is Rs.100/-. These halls are provided with number of ceiling and exhaust fans and are well maintained by TTD.

Getting special recommendation letter from dignitaries may help in getting accommodation but it is also time consuming because you have several influential people doing the same thing before you and hence its advisable to book the cottage in advance .

There are many Mutts like Parakala Mutt, Sri Ramanujar Mutt, Abhobila Mutt etc. where the devotees can stay . Elders prefer this mutts for a divine surrounding. Everything depends upon our flexibility . To the maximum possible extent, one must avoid taking private rooms because it will definitely pinch the pocket.

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If one is alone without any hurry one can very happily dump his luggage in a locker maintained by either TTD or any shop, go to Swami Pushkarni have a holy bath perform Angapradikshanam and have LORDS darshan and just pack off the same day .Many of my darshans were done like this during my bachelor days .However the present upgradation of que system for Angapradikshanam that is one day in advance is a bit confusing.

DARSHAN:

It is advisable to book for Arjitha sevas in advance by sending a Demand Draft in favour of “THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER, TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS “ payable at Tirumala. The DD must be posted along with a covering letter mentioning the full details of Ubhaydhars, the seva to be performed etc and must be posted to “The Executive Officer, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirumala,Andhra Pradesh 507 004.

The prevailing rates of Arjitha Sevas are given separately. Depending on one’s luck, one can go to Vijaya Bank counter at Tirumala and can book ticket subject to availability and luck. There are chances of getting seva tickets for Suprabhatham, Archana Anantara Seva, Prathyeka Kalyana Utsavam,Ekantha Seva.

Usually,for next day Suprabhatam/Archana Anantara seva, Kalyana utsavam etc., the devotees must go to Vijaya Bank counter 1 day in advance. Tickets for Ekantha Seva are issued after 11 P.M. subject to rush. If there is heavy rush, the temple doors would remain open till mid-night after which the Ekantha seva would be performed in Ekantham (not allowing ubhaydhars) .

If there is availability, one can get tickets for the above sevas but the devotee who wishes to participate in the seva must personally go to the counter . Previously, touts used to book tickets and sell the same to the devotees for a higher price. To avoid this,TTD has introduced a new system wherein the thumb impression of the Ubhaydhar is taken which acts as a proof. For Sarvadarsanam, one cannot book tickets in advance and one has to go to sudarshan seva counter for getting their turn..

SUDARSHAN TOKEN CENTRE AT TIRUPATI :

As already mentioned,Sudharshan Tokens are issued at various points. To save time, one has to tie the same at the earliest. In one hour, nearly 2,200 devotees have darshan of the Lord. So based on the rush, the timings in the token are given. A devotee can have only one band which seems that he can have darshan only once. If one is willing to have darshan again, one has to tie

As soon as one alights at Tirupati, one can go to the Sudarshan token issue centers which is right opposite to bus stand. Here, they issue Sudarshan Tokens which enables one to have darsanam of Perumal at the allotted time.

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Sudarshan tokens which were introduced 3 years back is a boon for the devotees.

A bar coded computerized water-proof band would be tied to your right wrist which reads the time of darshan you are allotted and you are allowed at Vaikuntam complex 1 hour in advance. and you would be given a token. Devotees are advised to produce the tokens (if You have taken Rs 50 Special darshan ticket as You get 2 Laddus free) on demand while going to have darshan. One has to ensure that the band is not removed because without band no one is allowed to enter the temple and this is scanned at the entrance and minimum care must be taken not to tamper the band because if the scanner doesn't detect your bar code , you would be simply sent out. This facilitates the devotees to either relax in the guest house, or visit places of interest. It is suffice if one reports at vaikuntam Queue Complex at the allotted time. A variation of one hour is allowed. Sudarshan tokens are issued for free darsanam and paid darsanam. The differences between free darsanam and paid darsanam are as follows:

If you go in free darsanam, it may take about 26-30 hours whereas if you go in paid darsanam, you may be able to save 4-5 hours. This depends upon the rush and the festivities. Laddu tokens for Rs.10/- each can be taken while going to have darsanam in queue whereas if you go in paid darsanam, you can avoid this. Recently, they have introduced 3 slabs for "paid tokens"

For Rs.40/-, you get one laddu free of cost

For Rs.50/-, you get 2 laddus

For Rs.60/-, you get 3 laddus

After tying the Sudarsan token, one can either check in any of the decent hotels or go back to Railway station and get themselves refreshed in waiting rooms. There are separate waiting rooms for gents and ladies which are well maintained by the railway authorities. On production of rail ticket, one would be allowed into the waiting room.

Everything depends on how one plans the trip.

ACCOMODATION AT TIRUPATI:

Getting accommodation in Tirupati is not a big problem as there are many hotels although the rates are bit competitive . If one decides to stay at Tirupati for a day and then proceed to Tirumala, one can take a room in any of the decent hotels. But if one intends to leave for Tirumala immediately, Out of the innumerable temples in and around Tirupati , the important temples are Sri Padmavathy Thayar temple at Thiruchaanur, which is app. 5 kms away from Tirupati enroute to Renigunta; Sri Govindaraja Swamy temple which is very near to the railway station; Sri Kalyana Venkateswara Swamy temple which is enroute to Chandragiri, Sri Venugopaldaswamy temple etc. These places can be covered by auto or bus.

PACKAGE TOUR FROM TIRUPATI:

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TTD has arranged buses from TIRUMALA and Tirupati to enable pilgrims to go on a sight seeing and visit temples like Sri Kalyana Venkateswara Swamy temple, Kaanipaakam which is a famous shrine for Lord Vinayakar, Chandragiri Fort etc. TTD conducts daily package tours to these places which are very convenient to the Pilgrims. This can be booked at TIRUMALA or Tirupathi itself. The tour starts at 8.30 AM and ends by 18.00 Hrs.

One tour covers Chandragiri Fort, Kalyana Venkateswara Swamy Temple, Agastiya muni ashramam, Padmavathi Thayar temple at Tiruchanur. There is another package tour which takes you to Kanipaakam which is a famous shrine for Lord Ganesh. Here, Lord Ganesh is self-manifested and bestows good knowledge to children. There are also buses to Srikalahasti, a famous shrine for Lord Shiva.

TOUR FROM TIRUMALA:

TTD conducts tours from Tirumala to Akasa Ganga, Paapanasanam , Venugopala Swamy temple. Other places of interest in Tirumala are SRIPAADAM (Where Lord first appeared), SILA THORANAM etc.

In Tirumali yaatrai, one has to take the blessings of Thayar at Tiruchanur first, proceed to Sri Govindaraja Swamy's temple to have His darsanam and then Lord Varahaswamy's darsanam before going to the main temple. This is the general principle laid down by Lord Himself. Out of this, Tiruchanur and Govindaraja Swamy temples are in Tirupati itself and Lord Varahaswamy's temple is on the Hills.

TIRUCHANUR:

Tiruchanur is a small village situated app. 6 kms away from Tirupati station. This is the place where Goddess Padmavathi resides. There are buses to the temple for every 5 minutes and the bus fare is Rs.3/-. One can also engage an auto to go to Tiruchanur, Sri Govindaraja Swamy temple for Rs.40/-. One must be prepared to bargain with the auto drivers. Usually, autos ply in and around Tirupati and buses and jeeps to the Hills. On way to Tiruchanur, we can find a vigraham of Sri Ramanujar in the cross roads. This was installed as a mark of respect to our Acharyar who contributed to a very large extent for the development of the temple and other related activities.

In our Srivaishnava sampradayam, one has to take blessings of Thayar first because it is Thayar who forgives all our shortcomings and faults and intercedes with Perumal on our behalf. She plays the role of PURUSHAKARA thus ensuring that Perumal bestows His divine grace on us. It may be observed that in Prapatti/Sarangathi maargam, Nammazhwar, Tirumangai Azhwar, Andal ,Sri Ramanujar, Sri Desikar , Sri Prathivadi Bhayankaran, Annamacharyar have taken refuge at Thayar's feet and through Her alone , they attained Perumal's Lotus feet. The first slokam from Prapatti is given below wherein the devotee takes refuge at Thayar's feet.

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“ESAANAM JAGADOSYA VENKATAPATHIR VISHNO PARAAMPREYASEEM,
THATH VAKSHASTHALA NITHYA VAASA SIGAAM THAT SHANTHI
SAMVIRTHUNI,
PADMALINKRUTA PAANIPALAVA YUGAM PADMASANASTHAAM SRIYAM
VATSALYADHI GUNOJVALAM BHAGAVATHIM VANDE JAGANMAATHARAM”

Hence, we proceed to Tiruchanur to seek Thayar’s blessings. On the way to the temple, we find big pushkarini in front of the temple and enroute on either sides, there are many shops selling flowers, kumkum, coconuts and other pooja items, dolls etc. There is a temple for Lord Suryanarayana on the way to temple. Apart from Thayar’s sannidhi, there are sannidhis for Venugopala Swamy, Srinivasar within the temple premises.

Depending upon the time availability, one can either go in Free Darsanam which may take about an hour or so or in special darsanam for Rs.5/- which may take about 30 minutes or in Immediate darsanam for Rs.20/- where we can directly have Thayar’s darsanam very closely within 15 minutes.

As we were run short of time, it is better to go in “ IMMEDIATE DARSHAN” . One can have Thayar’s darsanam to heart’s content. Thayar’s divya mangala swaroopam is so eye captivating which will make us realize that these mortal eyes are not sufficient to capture her beauty . Thayar’s vaatsalya gunam can be experienced by one and all in this shrine. (This is our experience and with a strong urge to visit this shrine we leave the place.) Thayar is bedecked with various types of jewels, diamond studded makutam etc. Some purchases can be made from nearby ISKCON stall.

(Sometimes, we directly go to Tirumala and on our return, we directly go to Tiruchanur from Tirumala (every 20 minutes, there is a direct bus to Tiruchanur) and board our train. Though this is against the normal practice, we convince ourselves that as Thayar is ever residing on Perumal’s heart and will be bestow Her kataksham .)

Just like in TIRUMALA, many utsavams are performed for Thayar here. Every morning, Kalyana Utsavam is performed for Thayar and Perumal and the ticket is Rs.500/- approximately. In the evening, Unjal sevai is performed for Goddess . There are also many Arjitha (paid) sevas like performing Thirumanjanam etc. Due to heavy rush, no archana is performed to Thayar during darshan timings. One can easily book tickets for Thirumanjanam/Kalyana Utsavam for Thayar one day in advance by directly paying cash in the counter. Now, TTD has introduced “KUMKUMARCHANAI “ for Rs.200/- and 2 persons are allowed to participate in this.

GOVINDARAJA SWAMY TEMPLE:

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From Thayar's sannidhi, one is supposed to go to Lord Sri Govindaraja Swamy's Temple which is situated near the railway station. The temple premises is very large. At the entrance, there is a shrine for Mudalazhwars , Udayavar and various other deities. Opposite to this there is a shrine for Lord Krishna. Some bhajans are constantly sung here. From there, we proceed to the main temple of Sri Govindaraja Swamy who is seen in Sayana Thirukolam . This Perumal is the replica of Chidambaram divya desa Perumal. Thayar is Andal. Brahmotsavam is performed for 10 days in a year which doesn't clash with Brahmotsavam performed for other deities.

At this moment, I wish to brief the sthala varalaru about this temple. When South India was invaded by Muslims, the presiding Perumal of Chidambaram, Sri Govindaraja Swamy was brought and kept safely in Tirupati. After the situation at Chidambaram returned to normalcy, the vigraham of Lord Govindaraja Swamy was taken back from Tirupati.

One day, Sri Ramanujar in his dream had a vision of Lord Govindaraja Swamy. He was advised by Perumal to make arrangements for Him to reside in tirupati. Sri Ramanujar who was already aware about Sri Govindaraja Swamy's stay in Tirupati during Muslim invasion took the help of the king and went to the place which he saw in his dream.. To everyone's astonishment, they found the vigraham. Sri Ramanujar advised the king to construct a temple for Perumal and construct houses for the people doing kainkaryam in the temple. Later, Udayavar installed Godha Devi and made arrangements for daily Thiruvaaradhanai. Till date, the pooja vidhanams laid down by Udayavar are strictly followed in TIRUMALA and other temples associated with it. Hence, this locality came to be known as Ramanuja puram. There are many shops selling mud images ('golu bommaigal'in Tamil)

From here, one can proceed to Azhwar Theertham also known as Kapila Theertham. If one plans to trek the Hills, one can engage an auto for Rs.30/- from Govindaraja Swamy Temple/ station to Alipiri (the foot of the sacred Hills from where one is supposed to start trekking) and enroute , one can visit Kapila Theertham)

KAPILA THEERTHAM/AZHVAR THEERTHAM:

It may be mentioned here that TIRUMALAI is Kaliyuga Vaikuntam and Sri Vaikuntanathan has manifested Himself as Lord Srinivasar. The sacred TIRUMALA Hills consisting of seven peaks is considered to be seven-hooded Adishesha . Before going to have darsanam of Perumal, one is supposed to shed his/ her ill-qualities like anger, desire, lust and one has to approach Perumal with sattva gunam. Hence, it is recommended to go to Azhwar Theertham before trekking the Hills. Out of 1008 theerthams in TIRUMALAI, Kapila Theertham also known as Azhwar Theertham is the only divya / holy theertham which is at the foot of the Hill. The water springs up from Perumal's right toe in one of the cliffs and hence is considered to be very sacred.

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Since Shiva and Parvathi blessed Kapila rishi who was doing penance on the banks of this theertham, this came to be known as Kapila Theertham . It is also known as Azhwar Theertham because there is a sannidhi for Nammazhwar here. It is said that none of the Azhwars climbed the Hills and they did mangalasaasanam from this place only. The image of Sri Krishnar in Azhwar Theertham is eye captivating.

By having a purificatory bath in Azhwar Theertham, one gets rid of all sins committed . This is similar to our journey to Vaikuntam. It is mentioned in Archaradhi gadhi, that enroute the soul has a purificatory dip in Viraja Nadhi . By doing so, the soul sheds the Rajas gunam and proceeds to Paramapadam with Sattva gunam. Also, this theertham is supposed to have curative properties . Keeping all this in view , onc can have either a holy dip at Kapila Theertham or sprinkle some water on the head, and have darsanam of Venugopala Swamy and other deities and proceed to Alipiri, the foot of the Hills.

REACHING TIRUMALA BY BUS OR CABS

BY ROAD:

TIRUMALA Hills can either be approached by road by engaging a jeep/car/ TTD bus or one can walk up the hill. It takes about 40 minutes to go up the hill by vehicle and the bus fare is Rs.22/- per head. The jeep drivers charge around 25 to Rs.30/- But, walking up the hill is considered to be very sacred. It may be recalled that great Azhwars like Nammazhwar in his Thiruvaimozhi and Acharyars like Desikar in Dayasatakam have offered worship to the hills saying that it is as sacred as Perumal and equal to the Lord.

BY WALK:

TTD has made arrangements to carry luggages of pilgrims who are trekking. There is a free transport facility from the foot of the Hills . One has to ensure that the luggages are properly secured and after taking proper receipt from the TTD officials, one can start on his journey. One can also book return journey bus ticket from here. Please ensure to keep the coupon safe because only on production of the token , you would be given your luggages. One need not carry any refreshment because lots of stalls have sprung up all through the way .

SIGNIFICANCE OF TREKKING THE HOLY HILLS

According to Thaithraya Upanishad, the Jeevatma passes through five stages in its spiritual evolution , namely, Annamayya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vignanamaya and Anandamaya kosams. The pilgrim to TIRUMALA approaches with Annamaya kosa. After a bath in Azhwar Theertham which is presumed to issue from Perumals' right toe and with faith in teachings of Nammazhwar whose shrine is near that theertham, the pilgrim enters upon Pranamaya stage on his ascent to the Hill. When he reaches the Mokaala

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Parvatham, the knee breaking ascent , the pilgrim changes into Manaomaya kosam, a period of serious searchings of the heart and the mind . Sri Ramanujar whose shrine is very much here is supposed to help him with meta physics of the real relationship between prakruti, jeevatma and Paramatma. After reaching the hill top, and bathing in Swami Pushkarini which is supposed to possess the virtues of all the sacred rivers he gets inspiration from Gnana Piran(SriBhoovaraha Swami) and true knowledge or the Vignanamaya kosa. The final stage is reached when he worships Lord Thiruvengadamudayan in His Aananda nilaya vimanam. So, worship of Sri Varahaswamy (Vignanamaya stage) should precede the worship of Thiruvengadamudayan in Anandamaya kosa. When Anandam takes possession of the soul, there is no further need for vignanam as such. TIRUMALA is called Varaha kshetram.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HOLY HILLS

A view of the hill from the beginning of the footpath at Alipiri is seen to be believed. As the summit opens into a spacious, charming valley, the range of tis splendour breaks through several outlets like fantastical shaped rocks in the form of serpentine roads. The flora and fauna at the Holy Hill provide an example of a perfect ecological balance by Nature. The exquisitely carved and spiritually elevated Hindu shrine with the self manifested deity of the Lord is seen to be believed. The imposing chain of seven hills extending in curves with its intermediate ranges and ridges resembles the divine serpent, Adishesha.

It is mentioned in Sri Venkatesa Suprabhatam, the range of 7 hills are known as Seshalam, Garudachalam, Venkatadri, Narayanadri, Vrishabhadi, Anjanadri, Neeladri. and represents the great serpent bed , Adishesha. According to Puranas, the Venkatachalam was a part of the Meru mountain in Vaikuntam. It was brought to the earth as a result of a contest between Vayu and Adishesha. Vayu was asked to blow off the Meru mountain which was being protected by Adishesha. When Sesa raised one of his hoods for a moment, Vayu blew off one of the peaks and it landed on earth on the banks of Swarnamukhi. Vem means sin . and Lord Venkateswara manifested Himself here, knowing that people in Kaliyugam will not have the necessary faith and capacity to engage themselves in severe penance and out of His immeasurable mercy, agreed to remain here to redeem them by His Darsan itself . It was Brahma who first started worshipping the Lord when he took "Archavatara" in Kaliyuga.

The range of hills were known by various names in various yugas as follows:

VRISHACHALAM" in Krita Yuga-as Vrishabhasura did penance
ANJANADRI IN Treta YUGAM- as Anjana did penance for begetting Hanuman
SESHACHALAM IN DWAPARA YUGAM- as Adishesha did penance
VENKATACHALAM IN KALIYUGAM. -as all sins get destroyed

According to puranas, Srisailem which is one of the holy shrines dedicated to Lord Siva is Adishesha's tail, Ahobilam, the famous Narasimha kshetram is

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Adishesan's middle body, Thiruvengadam is Adishesan's hood and Srikalahasti (another Siva kshetram) is Adishesan's mouth. It is believed that Lord Siva along with his consort, stays at Srikalahasti and offers prayers to Thiruvengadamudaiyan.

As Nammazhwar says, when we are old and sick, we may not be able to think of Perumal. Azhwar says that when we are hale and healthy, we have to fall at His Holy feet and take refuge in Him. Hence, when we are physically fit, we must trek the Holy hills and all our sins will get vanished. In another pasuram, the Azhwar says that atleast once in one's life time, one should go to Tirumala and receive the blessings of the Lord.

A PILGRIMS EXPERIENCE

TIRUMALA Hills are a range of seven hills namely Vrushabadri, Garudadri, Anjanadri, Simhadri, Neeladri, Venkatadri and Seshadri. It is strongly believed that even today rishis do penance here and meditate upon the Lord. Every tree is considered to be very sacred like that in Naimisaaranyam. The hill consists of lots of medicinal plants and while trekking one can get multifold benefits like punya, paapanaasanam, good health and enjoy the scenic beauty. After having darsanam of Garudazhwar at the foot of the hill, we proceeded to a small temple at the foot of the hills known as Sri Paadam where Perumal's Thiruvadi are imbibed on a stone. It is a strong belief that if one does pradakshinam around the sannadhi carrying a pair of Perumal's sandals (made of copper) on his head, trekking up the hill would be easy without suffering from body pains. On payment of Rs.5/-, we are allowed to do pradakshinam and are offered theertha prasadam.

By Perumal's abundant grace, we usually trek the Hills and my daughter first trekked the Hills when she was 2 and a half years old. In fact, my children always insist on trekking to the Hills. After doing pradakshinam with the holy sandals on our heads, we prayed to Perumal to give us enough physical and spiritual strength to recite Perumal's Holy names all through the way and to think of nothing but Perumal's Thiruvadi enroute.

We Exchange few rupees for 25 /50 paisa coins so that we could give the coins to physically handicapped humans en route. Exchanging notes for coins is a prevailing business here. You get only 80 % in exchange.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVEN HILLS

Prostrating at Lord's feet, we commenced our trekking. While trekking, we find sign boards mentioning the names of the hills. Some say that the Seven Hills are known as Venkatadri, Seshadri, Anjanadri, Garudadri, Neeladri, Vrishabhadri, simhadri. Some say that each hill is known by the above individual names. As per the sign board, the first hill is known as Vrushabadri

There was a demon by name Vrushabasura who was a devotee of the Lord. As he was an asura, he had the inborn demonic quality in him and he used to

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daily cut his head and offer the same to Lord. By Lord's grace, he would immediately get back his head. When Perumal graced him and asked him to choose any boon, he said that he wanted to have a fight with Perumal. Perumal granted his wish and the fight between the devotee and the Lord continued for many days. When Perumal decided to let loose His Sudarsana Chakram, the asura fell at Lord's feet and prayed that the hill should be known by his name and asked Perumal to grant him moksham. Accordingly, Lord conferred moksham on the asura and thereafter the hill came to be known as Vrushabadri.

Next, we come across Hanumar's vigraham engraved on a boulder on our right. This is self manifested and it is a belief that Anjaneyar gives us enough strength and it is believed that if one touches the boulder, he will not suffer from body pains.

On either sides, we can find Lord's Sahasra naamams written on the pillars in Telugu. It is our practice to recite Prapathi, Vishnu Sahasranaamam and mangalasaasanams done to Thiruvengadamudayan by Azhwars while trekking.

There are more than 3,500 foot steps apart from roads / country side paths etc. It may take about 3 to 4 hours to cover the 9 km path by foot. Climbing the first hill alone is a bit difficult. The first hill is at an altitude of 3,200 feet from the sea level and due to this, the climbing may be a bit strenuous and you may end up gasping for breath. We find some devotees fulfilling their vow by applying turmeric paste and kumkum on each step. Despite old age, we could find some devotees climbing up the hills calling aloud "GOVINDA GOVINDA" which acts as an inspiration to people who gasp for breath. Keeping the body light and chanting Hari naamam would make climbing easier. It takes about 45 minutes to 1 hour to climb this part of the hill.

The scenic beauty of the hills remind us of Azhwar's pasurams on Vengadam Hills and God's presence can be felt. It may be noted that while doing magalsaasanam to Thiruvengadamudayan, almost all the Azhwars have invariably described the Vengadam Hills. As wild animals roam about in the night, it is advisable to start trekking before 4 P.M. In fact, TTD takes special interest in preserving the forests and wild animals. In fact, they have introduced schemes like "VANA ABHIVRUDHI" wherein the donor can plant any tree and his name will be written on it. Also, the donor gets the opportunity of having Perumal's darsanam and would be provided accommodation at the Hills and would be honoured with Angavastram.

En route, we come across knee breaking steps. Here is a small shrine for Sri Ramaujar. There is an interesting story connected with this. Our Acharyar was instructed to learn the inner meanings of Ramayanam from his maternal uncle and guru Sri TIRUMALA Nambi who was doing pushpa kankaryam and neer kankaryam to Tiruvengadamudayan on Tiruvengadam hills. Our Acharyar was hesitant to climb the hills because he considered it to be Perumal's Thirumeni and as none of the Azhwars ascended the hill, he preferred to stay back in Tirupati. It was agreed that TIRUMALA Nambi and Sri Ramanujar would meet at a point daily and the former would impart Ramayanam to Sri TIRUMALAI.doc

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Ramanujar. When TIRUMALA Nambi was regretting that he could not perform Midday pooja to Perumal because of his new assignmen, there was a sugandha parimalam nearby and found Perumal's Thiruvadi on a rock. An asareeri said that those were the Thiruvadi of Perumal and Tirumali Nambi could perform midday pooja to this Thiruvadi daily. Hearing this, Sri TIRUMALA Nambi and Sri Ramanujar offered their pooja to the Thiruvadigal daily. This can be found near the sannidhi of Sri Ramanujar . Yet in another instance, a group of devotees gave the idols of Sita,Lakshmana , Hanumath sametha Sri Rama vigraham to them and asked them to preserve the same as they were facing some religious disturbances. Acharyar took the vighrams to TIRUMALAI Hills and offered worship to Perumal daily. These vighrams are presently with Jeeyar who presides the temple's day to day activities. The role of Jeeyar would be mentioned later.

Once you reach the top of the first hill which is more popularly known as "Gali Gopuram", you will be spell bound with the scenic beauty around you. From here, we can have a bird's eye view of Tirupati along with gopurams of Sri Govindaraja Swamy temple, Tiruchanur temple and river Swarnamukhi. This marks the end of trekking the first hill. We are told that one of the chieftains of Chittor hung a huge bell and this would be rung after hearing the bell sound from TIRUMALA when mid-day neivedyam was offered to Thiruvengadamudaiyan. Only after hearing the bell, the chiftain would have his lunch. But now there is no bell. This gopura vaasal was renovated some 3 years back.

Here, there is a sannadhi for Lord Ramar along with his consort and Lakshmana . Opposite to this shrine you can find Anjaneyar's shrine. A north Indian pujari gave us theetha prasadam and we proceeded our journey to 2nd hill.

The second hill is known as Garudadri as Garuda had done penance here . The route is quiet straight and one can just walk with ease enjoying the spiritual company of thousands of devotees reverbrating Lords names .

On the way to the third hill known as Anjanadri , we came across cages where peacocks are kept. The serene atmosphere with greenish surroundings, cuckoos whispering , dancing of peacocks makes one feel escastic.. We can find a very big statue of Lord Anjaneyar in Anjali form. The height of the vighram may be easily around 35 to 40 feet. As Anjaneyar's mother did severe penance for begetting a brave child, this place came to be known as Anjanadri. Some say that this is Anjanadri whereas others are of the opinion that the hill near Akasa Ganga is Anjanadri. This also sounds authentic as there is a sannadhi for Hanumar's mother near Akasa Ganga.

On the way to the fourth hill which is a curvature needs to trek a bit namely, Simhadri, we can find deer park to our left. There are plenty of deers and we could find vendors selling carrots, cucumbers etc for feeding the deers. We also come across a beautiful image of Krishna dancing on Kalingan, the snake. At the end of Simhadri, we come across a temple dedicated to Lord Yoga TIRUMALAI.doc

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Narasimhar. There are 2 shrines for the Lord here. The archakar is ever ready to offer you cool panakam with blessings for the sincerity in trekking . We did pradakshinam, sang some bhajans in front of Perumal's sannadhi, had theertha prasadam and resumed our yaatra. Near this temple, there is a lovely image of Sage Vasishtar. Now, a temple for Lord Hanumar is being constructed.

The next hill is a long stretch of motor road and one has to take care while walking as there would be heavy traffic coming from the opposite direction. We come across water falls and plenty of monkeys, chimps etc looking at us . There is a small shrine for one of the local deities (Amman). Piligrims usually worship her . After walking around 1 km, we reached the next hill known as Seshachalam. This part of the hill is a bit difficult and is more popularly known as Mokaala Parvatham in Telugu and Muzhankaal Mootu / Mudichu in Tamil. The gopuram was renovated in 2000 A.D. There are 2 reasons for this name. One is the steps are knee breaking and the other and most important reason is our Acharyar, Sri Ramnujar dared to walk on this holy hill as this is considered to be Perumal's Thirumeni and hence he walked on his knee . Knowing this, TIRUMALA Nambi came rushing to the spot and convinced Ramanujar that all of us were His children and the mother doesn't feel bad when Her child walks on her. He also said that Perumal felt bad seeing the plight of Ramanujar and directed him to convince Ramanujar. At the place where Udayavar and his acharyar, sri TIRUMALA Nambi met, there is a shrine dedicated to Sri Ramanujar. Presently, renovation work is going on here. Here, the image of our Acaryar is in Veetruihundha Thirukolam and may be around 3 feet . We prostrated at the feet of our Acharyar and resumed our journey. This vigraham is comparatively bigger than the one near Gali Gopuram. After this , the trekking is fairly easy and within half an hour's time, we reached our destination.

We Reach Free Luggage room where our luggages which were brought from Alipiri were kept. On production of the token, our luggages are given. From there, we went to Central Reservation Office (CRO) to get our accommodation. As we had booked our cottage well in advance, there was no need to wait in the long queue. We were allotted a room in Sri Varahaswamy guest house which is nearer to the temple. Hired an auto for Rs.15/- to go to the guest house.

Gave Rs.100/- as security deposit at the office and checked in. Refreshed ourselves. After relaxing for an hour or so, we went to Bedi Hanumar Temple which is right opposite to Mahadwaaram. The darshan of Bedi Hanumar marks the end of our paada yaatrai. There is an interesting story connected with this temple.

BEDI HANUMAR STORY

It is told that Hanumar wanted to leave the hills in search of a camel and to stop Hanumar from doing so, his mother , Anjana Devi tied both his hands

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with a “bedi”(cluffs) and ordered him to stay right at the place till she returned. Lord Anjaneyar conceded to this and even to this day, he is seen standing in front of Mahadwaaram. Anjana Devi stayed back near Akasa Ganga and never returned to this place. It may also be noted that everytime after neivedyam is offered to Lord Srinivasar and Lord Varahaswamy, the neivedyam is brought to this temple. Only after the neivedyam ritual is over, Saatrumarai takes place in the main temple.

After having darsanam of Hanumar, we went towards Mahadwaaram. In front of the Mahadwaaram, there is an Akanda jyothi known as “AKHILANDAM” and pilgrims after climbing the hills come to this place, break a coconut and light a camphor. There is also a hundi here and if anyone forgets to put his offering in the hundi inside the temple, the same offering can be deposited here. Opposite to Mahadwaaram is the laddu counter. Here, donations for Vanabhivrudhi , Nitya Annadaanam etc are accepted .

After reaching TIRUMALA Hills and prostrating before Mahadwaram, we checked in one of the cottages and waited for our turn of darshan.

DARSHAN:

Before having darshan, one must have holy bath in Swami Pushkarini, obtain Lord varahaswamy’s darshan who bestows knowledge in us and then go to the main temple via Vaikuntam Q Complex. The queue for having darshan starts from Vaikuntam Q Complex which is opposite to Vijaya Bank arjitha Seva counter.

SWAMI PUSHKARINI :

It has been mentioned in mangalasaasanam in Venkatesa Suprabhatham as follows:

SRIVAIKUNTA VIRAKTHAYA SWAMI PUSHKARINI THADE
RAMAYA RAMAMANAYA VENKATESAYA MANGALAM.

Freely translated it would mean:

For Venkatesa who is fed up with Vaikunta and has come to be near the bank of Swami Pushkarini, and is sporting with His consort, May it always be glorious.

Hence, before going to Vaikuntam Q Complex , one must go to Swami Pushkarini, have purificatory bath or either sprinkle some water. This pushkarini is known as Swami Pushkarini because it is the best of all the pushkarinis. It may be mentioned here that Saraswathi river did severe penance to the Lord with a wish that she should be treated on par with Ganges. Lord fulfilled her wish by blessing her that she could stay in TIRUMALA , and could wipe off the sins of all the devotees who come to

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TIRUMALA. It is believed that once in a year, all the rivers including Ganges come to Swami Pushkarini and cleanse their sins. She would be purified once in a year during Brahmotsavam when Perumal along with Ubhaya Naachiyars would assemble on Thirthavari day and Chakra Snanam would take place. Apart from Brahmotsavam, Teppotsavam (Boat Festival of the Lord takes place here for 3 days in a year,)

It has been mentioned that in Puranas that trekking the Hills, having bath in Swami Pushkarini and getting Perumal's prasadam all during a trip is very difficult("dhurlabham"). Only the blessed will get all the three opportunities in one yatrai.

Unlike other pushkarinis in various divya desams and despite the heavy crowd, this pushkarini is very well maintained by TTD. There are separate bathing ghats for men and women. As the waters are very holy, soaps must be avoided.

After having snaanam in Swami Pushkarini, devotees come to Hanumar sannidhi which is enroute. From there, we have to proceed to Sri Varahaswamy temple. It is a rule laid out by Perumal Himself, that Sri Varahaswamy should be worshipped first before having His darsanam.

SRI BHOO VARAHASWAMY:

Lord Bhoo Varahaswamy is Swayambhoo. After the Lord rescued the earth by killing Hiranyaksha, at the request of Bhooma Devi, Perumal stayed back here. Puranas mention that Lord ordered Garuda to get kreedaparvatham(where Lord used to sport with His consorts in Vaikuntam and which is very dear to Thayar) from Vaikuntam as He decided to stay back here. This was done accordingly. Puranas mention that this hill was full of precious stones and glittered like gold. Since, Varahaswamy stayed here, this kshetram is known as Varaha Kshetram.

Later on, Lord Srinivasa in the course of wandering , came to this place and stayed here for which He had to obtain permission from Lord Varahaswamy, the owner of the Hills. Hence, even to this day, Lord Varahaswamy gets priority in everything. Lord Srinivasar had promised Lord Varahaswamy that all his devotees would have Varahaswamy's darsanam prior to His darsanam. Even to this day, for neivedyam , one part of the food is taken to Varahaswamy's temple and another part is taken to Srinivasar's temple. Neivedyam for both the Lords is done simultaneously.

As Brahmotsavams cannot be performed for 2 presiding deities at the same time, Sri Ramanujar has ordered that the Brahmotsavam performed for Varahaswamy doesn't clash with Srinivasar's Brahmotsavam.

It may take about 10 minutes to have Lord Varahaswamy's darsanam and one can perform Archanai here. From here, one has to proceed to Vaikuntam Q complex.

DARSHAN OF LORD VENKATESWARA:

It may be noted that there are two separate queues for Free darshan and paid darshan. Devotees who go for paid darshan must go to Vaikuntam Q Complex. Hence, after having darsan of Varahaswamy, we go back to Vaikuntam Q Complex and join the crowd. TTD has provided basic amenities like drinking water etc enroute.

The Sudarshan bands on our wrists were checked and then we were let in. As there was some rush, we sat in one of the closed cabins and watched recently held Brahmotsavam on closed circuit TV.

In the closed cabins, Brahmotsavam/ Ramayanam /Mahabharatham would be displayed. After half an hour or so, the doors were open and the serpentine crowd continued its journey to the temple. Due to rush, the queue moved slowly. Its divine experience reciting Vishnu Sahasranam on the way. We could hear some devotional songs being broadcasted by TTD. When we were going towards Mahadwaaram, we saw an image of Lord playing dice with one of His devotees and narrated the story to our children. The Sarvadarshanam (Free darshan) queue joined with paid darshan queues. We have to pass through a detector. Our bags were thoroughly checked by later sophisticated machines and the hundi which we were carrying was broken and checked. There are separate male and female constables/ guards to check our person.

The whole place was reverberating with chanting of “EDUKONDALA WAADA VENKATARAMANA GOVINDA GOVINDA” Piligrims were continously chanting , Lords name GOVINDA ..regularly to get the spiritual flavour of this holiest shrine.

Then we entered the Mukha dwaram the main gate way of the temple which is around 11 to 12 feet wide. This is a masterpiece of Dravidian architecture with its gopuram or the main tower facing the east. We are told that the Gopuram was built probably in 13 th century. This Mahadwaram would be illuminated with electric bulbs during festive season which is a feast to the eyes.

At the entrance on either side there are two images of Sankha nidhi on the southern and Padma nidhi on the Northern side. These are the two guardian devotees who face the worshippers on entry. On entering to the Mukhadwaram to left we saw three statues. One is a copper statue of King Venkatapathiraya and the next two images are of stone representing the Emperor and Queen. Achutarayamaharaya and Varadarajiamman.

MAHADWAARAM:

At the instance of Sri Ramanujar, the then king undertook the construction of Mahadwaaram what we see today. They had planned to construct a very big

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mahadwaaram bigger than that at Srirangam. The construction came to a halt because Sri Ramanujar had a peculiar dream. In the dream, one of the Naagabharanam of Perumal complained to Sri Ramanujar of pain. The next morning, Sri Ramanujar shared the dream with the king and interpreted that as Adishesha had taken the form of the hill, he could not bear the weight of Mahadwaaram and hence requested the king to stop further construction. Usually, opposite to Mahadwaaram, devotees gather to have Utsavar's darsanam and also to witness Deepam on the eve of New Year.

SEMPANGI PRADAKSHINAM:

The outer pradakshinam for the temple (pradakshinam which lies in between the outer and inner gopuram) is known as Sempangi Pradakshinam.. As this area was full of Sempangi trees, this came to be known as Sempangi Pradakshinam. While doing this pradakshinam, we come across Ranganayakula mandapam, Tirumalaraya mandapam and Thulabaaram.

RANGANAYAKULA MANDAPAM:

While doing Sempangi Pradakshinam, the devotees who go in Sarva darsanam come across a big mantapam known as RANGANAYUKALA MANDAPAM which is south of Krishnadevaraya mantapam standing on a high basement. There is a small shrine about 12 sq. feet which is kept closed. When South India especially Trichy, Srirangam were frequently invaded by Muslims during 14th century, the utsavar Sri Ahzhagiya Manavalan of Sri rangam was brought to TIRUMALA Hills and kept here for more than 40 years. The shrine which housed Sri Ranganathar is now closed and Perumal's various vaahanms like Gaja Vaahanam, Garuda Vaahanam, Hanumantha Vaahanam, Sesha Vaahanam etc are kept inside. Adjoining this mantapam is Tirumalaraya mantapam where we find 3 statues of kings in Anjali mudra. Enroute, there is a big mantapam where Kalyanautsavams are performed daily in a large scale. A detailed description of the Kalyanautsavam is mentioned separately under Arjitha Sevas. The devotees who go in Special darsanam have to go straight via Dwajasthambam and they miss to see all the above. But if there is heavy crowd, the devotees would be allowed to go via the route described above. There is no hard and fast rule regarding the queue and it depends on TTD's decision.

THULABAARAM

_It is a regular practice of devotees praying to Perumal to fulfill their desire and promise to give equal amount of jaggery or ornaments which equals the weight of the person sitting on the balance. This is called "THULABAARAM" which signifies our bhakti. For example, someone may pray to Perumal that if he/she begets a child, they would offer jaggery equal to the weight of the child. Accordingly, they do so. Few devotees fulfill their vows by exchanging with Rupee coins. Few fulfill their vows by Niluvudopidi i.e, they simply remove whatever the ornaments they wear and drop the same in the Hundi. Behind

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Thulabaaram, we find Central Control Room where all the closed circuit TVs are constantly monitored in a single place.

DWAJASTHAMBAM:

After completing Sempangi Pradakshinam, we find a Dwajasthamba mantapam wherein we find a huge golden dwajasthambam and bali peetam. It may be mentioned that Dwaja Arachonam (i.e. flag hoisting which is done a day prior to Brahmotsavam takes place here.) As in other temples, the Dwajasthambam faces the inner gopuram. After crossing this mantapam, we enter the temple premises through silver plated dwaaram .

Here, we can see two interesting pictures on the side walls of this inner gopura vaasal. One of this shows one of Lord's devotees Hathiram playing dice with Perumal who is seen seated with 4 arms , the upper two arms holding Sanghu and Chakram. We can also find this incident decently picturised near Kannadi Arai (near Laddu counter) This can be seen while we are in the queue . Another picture shows Sri Rama holding a court with his consort and brothers.

VIMANA PRADAKSHINAM:

After crossing the silver dwaaram, we enter the inner prakaram and this inner pradakshinam is known as Vimana pradakshinam. Here we come across a shrine for Sri Varadaraja Swamy. When Kanchipuram was invaded by Muslims, Lord Varadarajar was brought and kept safe in TIRUMALA. To commemorate this event, there is a shrine for the Lord here. Here, we come to a conclusion that Perumals of important divya desams like Sri rangam, Kanchipuram have assembled here and hence when we visit this divya desam, we are getting the phalitham of visiting Srirangam and Kanchipuram. Apart from this, we are also having darsanam of Sri Govindaraja Swamy of Thiruchitrakootam and Sri Varahaswamy .

A VIEW OF ANANDA NILAYA VIMANAM

Once we enter Vimana Pradakshina corridor, we we can have a clear view of Ananda Nilaya Vimanam which is fully gold plated . It is known as Ananda Nilayam because it bestows Anandam or bliss to everyone. The Puranas state that Perumal appeared here in this vimanam which is invisible to mortal eyes. It also states that a vimanam similar to this would be constructed. Accordingly, this was first constructed by Thondaman Chakravarthy, one of the great devotees of the Lord. This vimanam has been gold plated many times by several kings and TTD also. It was guilded last in 1958. The dazzling beauty of this vimanam cannot be described in words and one has to see to believe it.

THIRUMAMANI MANDAPAM:

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Now the queue enters THIRUMAMANI MANDAPAM. We come across 2 huge bells on the south-east which are used when neivedyam is offered to Perumal in the inner sanctum. The bell rings with a loud resounding note and many believe that the music of the sound is synonymous to the name "GOVINDA". Thus, even the bells in TIRUMALA utter only Perumal's Holy name. Here, there is a shrine for Garudazhwar on the eastern side facing Perumal. The height of the vigraham may be around 5 feet and the image is seen in Hasta pose and is gigantic. There are several ornaments on the Garudazhwar. There is a small vimanam on top of this shrine. During THIRUPPAVADA SEVA, Bhoga Srinivasar is brought to this mandapam.

BANGARU VAAKILI :

_Next, we come across Bangaru Vaakili(the doorway made of gold). Here, Perumal's five forms namely Para, Vyuha, Vibhava, Antaryami and Archa are beautifully carved.

On either sides of Mahadwaaram, we can find images of Jaya and Vijaya, the guardians of Sri Vaikuntam. We can hear all the devotees chanting loudly "GOVINDA GOVINDA"

SNAPANA MANDAPAM:

The next room is called "Snapana Mandapam". Here, there are two small platforms on either sides which figures, Sugrivar, Hanumar and Angadhan and on the opposite side, beautiful panchaloka images of Ananta, Garuda and Viswakshenar are kept. Though these cannot be seen during Sarvadarsanam due to heavy rush, the same can be seen during Arjitha sevas like Archana Seva and during Saatrumarai.

SAYANA MANDAPAM:

The next room beyond Snapana Mandapam is Sayana Mandapam. Here, Utsava murthi Sri Bhoga Srinivasar is put to rest during Ekantha Seva (Pavalimpu seva). Beyond Sayana mantapam is the Garbagriham, the sanctum sanctorum which houses Perumal. There is a stone step between Sayana mantapam and Garbagriham known as Kulasekarapadi named after Kulasekara Azhwar who in his Perumal Thirumozhi expressed his desire to have eternal TIRUMALA sambandham.

Due to heavy rush one invariably misses to see all the above. We must have Perumal's darsanam right from Garudazhwar's sannidhi because you would be allowed to have darsanam only for only one minute. The moment one has the vision of the Lord's divya mangala swaroopam, one forgets everything. There will be number of TTD employees and scouts literally pushing you "JERUGU JERUGU" which means 'keep on moving". You would not be allowed to stand in front of Perumal even for 2 minutes. According to the statistics of TTD, at any

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point of time, in one minute, nearly 150 to 200 devotees have darsanam. One can very well imagine the crowd . The divya mangala swaroopam of Perumal will make us burst into pasurams LIKE SEDIYAYA VALVINAIGAL THEERKUM THIRUMAAL; AGALAGILEN IRAIYEMENDRU... . THAAYE THANDHAIENDRUM...; PATREL ONRDUM ILEN... One doesn't mind undergoing any type of hardship for having Perumal's darsanam because if you look at Him for fraction of a second, you are blessed and are redeemed from the cycle of birth and death.

Lord Thiruvengadamudaiyan fulfills all the desires of His devotees-both material and spiritual . His intention is to save us from this dreadful Kaliyuga and grant us moksham. Even if we utter His holy name "GOVINDA" once and even if we have His darshan for fraction of a second, we are blessed. Perumal is so compassionate that He first grants the wishes of the devotees who seek material pleasure and then gradually turn them towards His feet and elavate them spiritually and finally grant moksham. Naturally, the wishes of devotees who pray for spiritual elavation are immediately satisfied .

In our Vaishnava Sampradayam, it is said that we must always look at Perumal's Thiruvadi first as a mere look at it would grant us moksham . But in TIRUMALA, due to heavy rush , one invariably misses to see Lord's Thiruvadi. Also, the Thiruvadis are covered with golden cover and flowers and basil leaves. One can have a clear view of Thiruvadigal only on FRIDAYS during Thirumanjana seva and Nijapada seva (these sevas are in the early morning hours before Archanai) . May be, this made Annamayya burst into the song "BRAHMA KADIGINA PAADAMU'

STHALAPURANAM :

THE APPEARANCE OF THE LORD:

It is described in Moosala Parvatham in Srimad Bhagavatham that when Lord Krishna decided to complete His incarnation, He relaxed under a tree. At that time, a hunter , Jara, who was Vali in his previous birth, hit the Lord with an arrow. The repentant hunter apologized for his folly and at that time Lord enlightened him about his previous birth . In his previous birth, Jara was Vali whom Lord Rama had killed by hiding behind a tree. This account was settled now. At that time, Lord Brahma, Shiva and other Devas came to offer prayers to the Lord and amidst everyone Lord disappeared from that place to Vaikuntam. Enroute, to everyone's astonishment, when the Jyoti reached Suryamandalam, it turned into an idol and landed at TIRUMALA. Lord proclaimed that in Kaliyuga, He wanted to protect His devotees and has decided to manifest Himself in this earth till the end of Kali Yuga. The Lord is Swayambhoo (Self manifestation) . No one has carved the vighram. He declared that He had chosen TIRUMALA as His residence, because it was in the middle of earth and upper planets and He would be easily accessible to humans and devas. Conceding the devas request headed by Lord Brahma, Perumal granted their wish that they could offer prayers to Him daily. Hence,

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every night, the Pancha paathrams are filled up with fresh water and the temple doors are closed. The devas perform Thiruvaaradhanai to Perumal every day (early morning hours before Suprabhatam). This theertham is offered to the devotees who participate in Suprabhata Sevai. No satari is given during Suprabhata seva.

HOW LORD DESCENDED TO EARTH IN SEARCH OF GODDESS LAKSHMI:

When all the sages were performing yaagam in Naimisaranyam, Naradi Rishi questioned as to whom they were offering the yaagam. It was decided that the best among the Trinities, namely, Brahma, Siva or Vishnu should be made the receiver of the yaagam. Accordingly, Brighu rishi was deputed the task of finding out the best among the Trintiies. Brighu rishi first went to Satyalokam and as Brahma did not pay any attention towards him, he went in a rage to Kailash Mount , the residence of Lord Shiva. Brighu rishi was enraged because he was neglected by Lord Shiva. The furious rishi went to Vaikuntam, where he saw Lord Vishnu in Sayana Thirukolam and Goddess Mahalakshmi was pressing His holy feet. The infuriated rishi straight away kicked Lord's heart thus releasing his temper.

Lord Vishnu who is known for His compassion, immediately got up, paid due respects to the rishi and asked him to be forgiven. Lord Vishnu went to the extent of saying that by kicking His chest, Brighu rishi must be suffering from pain and started pressing the rishi's legs . In the process, Lord Vishnu pressed the rishi's third eye which was under his foot . The rishi felt humiliated by the Lord's kind act and decided that Vishnu was the best diety to be worshipped in Kali Yugam and returned back to the yaagasaala and gave his decision.Goddess Mahalakshmi felt insulted as the rishi had kicked Perumal's heart which was her place and She couldn't bear the act of Perumal being so kind to the rishi and out of anger left Vaikuntam.

The moment Thayar left Vaikuntam, the whole place enveloped with darkness and Perumal also left Vaikuntam in search of Thayar. In due course, Perumal reached Tirumala Hills and being captivated by the calm and pleasant surroundings, He continued to stay there. An ant hill formed in the place where He was sitting . Seeing Perumal's plight, Thayar advised Brahma and Siva to satisfy His hunger. Lord Brahma and Shiva transformed themselves into cow and calf and Goddess Parvathi disguised as an ordinary lady approached the ruler of Thondaimandalam (in and around Tirumala) and sold the cows to the king. While the cows were taken out for gazing, this particular cow used to go near the anthill and empty her udder . Thus, it satisfied Perumal's hunger by giving milk.

However, the king suspected the boy that he was stealing the milk. The boy was curiosu to find out where the cow was emptying the milk and found the anthill. When the boy raised a stick to hurt the cow, suddenly Perumal appeared from the anthill and got hurt. Blood started oozing out of Perumal's head and Lord lost some hair. As that injury left a scar on His head, Neeladri

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assumed a form of a lady and offered her hairs to Perumal so as to cover the scar. Any amount of hair was not sufficient. Perumal was so pleased with her devotion that He declared that He was very much pleased with her sacrifice and said that the devotees who offer hairs in that divya desam to Perumal would be blessed.

VAKULAMATHA'S ROLE IN PERUMAL'S WEDDING: Yasodha of Dwapara yugam appeared as Vakula maatha and took the wounded Srinivasar to her house and took care of Him. It happened that one day Perumal saw Padmavathy Thayar who was the princess of the kingdom. IN Ramavataaram, when sita Devi was carried away by Ravana, Vedavathi , the lady who had cursed Ravana that he would meet destruction because of her disguised as Sita Devi , went to Lanka and underwent all the sufferings. As a token of gratitude for this help, Lord Rama assured her that He would marry her in Kali Yugam. This Vedavati was born as the daughter of Akasa Raja

As soon as one has darsanam of Perumal, one can experience the most happiest serene moment and the presence of the Lord can be felt by one and all. The stone step (padi) near garbagriham is known as "Kulasekhara Padi" because Azhwar had desired to stay as an immovable object in front of the Lord"PADIIYAAYI KIDANDHU UNN PAVAZHA VAAI KANBENEY".

DESCRIPTION OF LORD'S THIRUMENI :

Adiyen is attempting to describe the Lord here and may the Lord of Seven Hills bestow me the gnanam . Lord' image is in Nindra Thirukolam on a high lotus pedestal. The Lord stands majestically on a huge lotus pedestal in the center of the sanctum directly beneath the gold covered Ananda Nilaya divya vimanam. The height of the Lord has never been recorded but we guess it cannot be less than 9 feet from the tip of the makutam (i.e.from the crown to the bottom of the Lotus pedestal) One can have a clear vision on Friday when Thirumanjanam is performed during Vastralankarana seva as all the gold kavachams, clothes, jewellery ornamenting Perumal are removed. Lord's beautifully shaped eyes in Samadhrusti, Thayar on His Thirumaarbhu , rich locks of hair, prominent nose, exquisitely shaped mouth which is always smiling, His pavalavaai (lips), His ears wearing makara kundalam, His chest measuring 36 to 40 inches in width, and waist around 24 to 27 inches, conch-shaped neck, , well shaped body in the posture of a lion, His four arms- upper hands holding Sanku and Chakram(the Sanghu and Chakram are not integral part of the moolavirat but it has been placed on Perumal's upper arms), the lower right hand in Varadahasta pose and lower left hand in Katyavalambita pose (palm resting on Perumal's thigh), yagnopaveetam and set of 4 necklaces are clearly visible on the vighram during Thirumanjanam.

Perumal wears a gem studded golden crown, golden makara kundalams and various other ornaments which are described later. The arms have armlet with fingerlike projection which appear to be Nagabharanam or cobra like ornaments. The upper right arm hold gem studded Sudasrshana Chakra and

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the upper left arm holds the Shankhu. His lower right hand is showing Varada Hastha with the palm facing the devotees all fingers of the hand pointing towards His Lotus feet, indicating that the Lord is giver of boons. His front left hands seems to assure His devotees of protection and indicate that samsara sagara is only hip-deep if they seek His refuge. His ears are adorned with golden makara kundalams. The Kattibandham or waist band is around 2 inches thick. His both knees are bent and slight open upwards giving the stately majestic figure, a grace and a charm that words cannot be sufficient to describe. The Lord's feet are models of perfection and have ornaments near the anklets. The Lord's image on the shoulder has marks resembling scars made by constant wearing of the bow.

A darshan of the Lord instills in us a divine presence, a power and intangible etherial sensation that completely overshadows any troubled emotions. A darsan of the divya mangala moorthi during Thirumanjanam will leave the devotee totally transformed. Certain sense of fulfillment and indescribable indefinable elation of spirit , a certain peace of mind , absolute security on surrender of oneself to the greatest protector, a supreme sense of satisfaction and joy in short, a divine power and bliss envelopes the devotee. On every Friday, during Thirumanjanam some sandal paste are kept on Perumal's hastham,. Thirumaarbhu (whereThayar is seated) and on Perumal's Thiruvadi. The impression of the same gets imbibed on the sandal paste which is dried and later on given to devotees. This is considered to be very sacred. Every day, after Thomala seva, the ekangi (bachelor who alone has the right to touch Perumal's vigraham) anoints Thiruvadi with punugu thailam (scented oil)and the Thiruvadis are covered with a silk cloth known as Sripada vastram. This is changed everyday and the old cloth after wiping Thiruvadigal are given to V.V.I.P.s. This is considered to be the most sacred.

After Thirumanjanam, the Lord is bedecked with various ornaments and silk clothes and jewellery which is a real feast to the devotees. A brief description of the same is given below:

First, the Lord is covered with a long silk cloth which is 12 yards in length and 2 yards in width. The upper cloth is gold laced and is 6 yards in length and 1 yard in width. (This cloth known as Sesha Vastram is later given to the dignatories as per the rules and norms framed by TTD. As this cloth is in contact with Perumal's Thirumeni, it acquires divya parimalam.)The Lord is later covered with a thin silk cloth so that the ornaments do not prick the Lord. The Lord is adorned with various ornaments like a gold yagnopaveetham, green emerald which is 3 inches in diameter called "MERUPACCHA" which is the biggest. He also wears vajra kavacham (diamond studded kavacham), Lakshmi Haaram which is a big necklace with the images of Lakshmi carved out on each pathakam. He also wears a tulasi necklace,a salagrama garland which contains salagrams encased in gold and on which the Sahasra naamas are engraved. There are also various sets of ornaments which are worn by the Lord apart from the above. Near his knees, He wears a vanghi like gold ornament, a pair of gold anklets, a nagabharanam just below His chest and 2 more nagabharanams in His arms. His Katyavalambita hasta (left hand) and Varada TIRUMALAI.doc

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hasta have 2 covers- one made of gold and the other one studded with diamonds .He is adorned with a sword named “suryakatari/ Nandakam”.(It is believed that the great poet Annamacharya was the hamsam of this sword) The divine Thiruvadis are covered with gold covers. He wears an exquisitely carved Dasavathara belt around His waist which depicts the Lord’s 10 avataarams. On His chest, He has two gold sculptured plaques, one of Srid Lakshmi and the other of Sri Padmavathy Thayar. His two upper hands are also well decorated with gold and diamond studded Sanghu and Chakram are fixed to it. On any ordinary day, more than 100 kgs of gold and diamond jewels are adorned by the Lord.

There is an interesting incident which may be recalled here. Perumal originally was holding Sankhu and Chakram. In order to protect His devotee, Thondaman Chakravarthy’s kingdom, He gave away His Sankhu and Chakram to fight with the king’s enemies and guard the kingdom. As Perumal wanted to be without Sanghu and Chakram for some time, He gave this to the king and said that in future, His devotees would make a sanghu and chakram and present it to Him which He would accept as a token of love. It so happened that the then Saivites came to a conclusion that this divya moorthi was not Naryanan and proclaimed to everyone that the Lord at TIRUMALA was Murugan. A serious dispute arose and the king requested Sri Ramanujar to settle the issue. Ramanujar argued at length enlisting the features of Perumal and the reasons for Perumal not adorning Sanghu and Chakram. Finally, sri Ramanujar requested the king to make ayudhams pertaining to Vishnu Murthi like Sanghu and Chakram and ayudhams of Murugan like Vel and ordered them to be kept in front of the Garbagriham . Accordingly, the ayudhams were made and kept near the Garbagriham and all the temple doors were closed. The king himself stood as guard the whole night. Meantime, our Acharyar, who was the amsam of Adishesan entered the temple in the form of a snake and prayed to Perumal to restore SriVaishnavism. The next morning, when the temple doors were opened, the Lord was seen with Sanghu and Chakram. Hence, it was proved by Lord Himself that He was a Vishnu murthi. Later, our acharyar ordered that the Sanghu and Chakram should never be removed and thus restored SriVaishnavism.

The Lord wears a golden crown studded with precious stones which is believed to have been gifted by Akasaraja. There is also an incident connected with this. It so happened that Lord was injured by a boy when He hid Himself in an anthill. Blood started oozing and the injury was painful. When the ruling king and the boy asked for remedy, the Lord replied that later a king by name Akasa Raja would gift Him with a golden crown during his daughter’s wedding with Perumal and as long as Perumal would wear the golden kireetam gifted by Akasa Raja, He would not suffer from headache. All this only proves God’s compassion towards His devotees.

Sometimes, the Lord is adorned with Vajrakireetam. On 15th of March,2003, Perumal was presented with the world’s largest and costliest ruby which is fixed on Perumal’s Makutam which joins the list of Srivari Jewels like Salagrama Haaram, Chakra Sankamulu,kreetamu offered by Akasa Raja, TIRUMALAI.doc <http://srivaishnavam.com> Page 27 of 53

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karna pathramulu, bhujja keerthulu, kadiyamulu, nagabharanamulu, karabhooshana kadiyamulu, katihasthamu, vaikunta hasthamu, sahasranama haaramu, surya katari(presented by Sun God), astothara sata naama haaramu, chathur bhujja Lakshmi Haaramu, Tulasi patra haaramu, saadarana yagnopaveetham, suvarna yagnopaveetham, gopi pathramu, bangaru puligoru haaramu, pedda kantabharanam, china kantabharanam, dasaavatarasana with chirugantaalu, udharabhandhamulu, kanchigunamu, pagadalu, nooparumulu, suvarna paadamalu, ratna kireetamu, merupaccha, ratnamaya sankhu chakramulu, ratnamaya karna patramulu, ratnamaya vaikunta hasthamu, ratnamaya kati hasthamu, ratnamakara kaanthi, swarna peethambaramu to name a few.

Daily Thirumankaapu is applied to Perumal's forehead by applying thick refined camphor (Paccaikarpooram). This Thiruman kaapu screens the eyes of Perumal and Kasturi Tilakam is applied in between the two lines. The width of the Thirumankaapu and the gap between the lines are all applied as per the norms laid down by Sri Ramanujar. Starting from Monday (the day Perumal appeared), the Lord is adorned with Thiruman in 'U' shape, on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, broad Thirumankaapus is adorned. On Thursdays, kempu, diamond studded Thirumankaapu 'U' shape is adorned. Sri Ramanujar also mentioned that diamond studded Thirumankaapu could be adorned on festive days.

Every day, His chin is pressed with refined camphor. This reminds us of the incident when Perumal disguised Himself as a boy and helped Anantazwar . Anantazwar was digging a well for watering the plants and his pregnant wife was assigned the job of carrying the mud load and deposit it elsewhere. Seeing the plight of Anantazhwar's wife, Lord disguised Himself as a boy and offered to help them . But Anantazhwar was reluctant because he wanted to carry His acharya's kainkaryam by himself without taking help from anyone. When Anantazwar saw the boy helping his wife, he got angry and chased the boy and threw a crowbar. As a result, blood starting oozing out of the boy's chin and the boy disappeared into the garbagriham. Anantazhwar followed the blood marks and reached garbagriham and had a shock of his life as he saw blood oozing out of Perumal's vighram. To the repentant Anantazhwar, an asareeri was heard saying that Perumal was fully satisfied with Anantazhwar's Acharya bhakti and instructed that pachaikarpooram must be applied on His chin everyday as a mark of remembrance. Hence, every morning Pachai karpooram is applied on His chin.

It may be noted that prasadam consisting of cooked rice and curds (made up of cow' milk) is the only cooked food which is taken very close to the Moolavar and offered everyday. Every morning, navaneetham(butter mixed with sugar) is also offered to Moolavar. Other prasadams which are prepared on a very large scale like Pulihora,Chakari Pongal, Laddus etc are offered from Sayana Mandapam itself.

OTHER VIGRAHAMS;

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Apart from the moolavirat (Thayar is on Perumal's Thirumaarbhu) and hence no separate vigraham for Thayar). Out of the Swayambhu divya desa kshethrams, only in this temple, the Lord is seen as Ekamurthi. There is no separate vigraham for Thayar. She is ever residing on Perumal's vakshasthalam. The garbagriham houses 5 utsavars like in Oppaliappan kovil.

The 5 utsava murthis in TIRUMALA are as follows:

- 1) BHOGA SRINIVASA MURTHY- This is an exact replica of the Moola vigraham . The only difference is the conch and chakram are not detachable unlike the moola vigraham. The idol has 6 pointed enthram installed in it. It is in standing pose with 4 hands. It receives all the bhogams and upacharams in the temple. This was consecrated by a Pallava queen in the 10th century. A gold link and a silk cord is still attached to the idol whenever it is brought outside the garbagriham for deputizing on behalf of the Moolavirat on special festive occasions and on Thursdays when Annakootam (during Thiruppavada seva) . Everyday , Thirumanjanam is performed to this utsavar only. During Ekantha seva, for 11 months in a year except Dhanur Maasam, this vigraham is placed in a golden cradle in the Sayana Mandapam and Thaalatu (lullaby) is sung and milk and fruits and dry fruits like cashewnuts, almonds etc are offered . Annamcharyar' keerthanas are sung by the descendants of Annamacharyar.(Pl.Note: When we had the bhaagyam to perform this arjitha seva, instead of vocal, Naadaswaram was played by some vidhwans)
- 2) UGRA SRINIVASAR: This image known as Thiruvengadathuraivar is also in Nindra Thirukolam and is again a replica of the Moolavar Only on three occasions, this utsava vigraham is brought out in a procession (on Uttana Ekadasi, Mukkoti Dwadasi and Dwadasa Aradhana) before dawn and is brought back to the garbagriham before sun rises.
- 3) KOLUVU SRINIVASAR: This utsava murthy manages the finance aspect and every day after Thomala Seva, this utsavar is brought out from Garbagriham with full honours to Thirumamani mandapam (i.e. near Garudazhwar's sannidhi) and is seated on a golden chair under a golden umbrella. This idol officiates for the Moolavar during this function. Hence, He is known as Koluvu Srinivasar. During this function, panchangam for the day is read and the accounts of the previous day are read out in front of this diety.
- 4) MALAYAPPA SWAMY (OR) MANIKUNIYA NINDRA PERUMAL: This utsavar is Swayambhoo and was found under a hill . The asareeri which advised that Ugra Srinivasar should not be used as processional diety directed that there was a vigraham of Perumal in a nearby place and that all utsavams should be performed to this vigraham only. Accordinly, this vigraham was found under a hill and hence came to be known as Malai Kuniya Nindra Perumal and later got corrupted as

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Malaiyappa Swamy. This utsavar seen with Ubhaya Naachiyars, Sridevi and Bhoo Devi is the processional diety and enjoys all utsavams from Kalyana utsavam to Brahmotsavam. Apart from Brahmotsavam, on every Sravanam day, this vigraham is taken around the 4 mada streets ON the 5th day of Brahmotsavam, when Malayappa Swamy comes on Garuda vaahanam, 2 ornaments which are always adorned by Moolavirat are worn by Malayappa Swamy. They are (a) Sahasranaama Mala- 1008 names of the Lord are written on golden coins) and (b) Maragadham (the pacchai kal) which is always seen on Moolavar's chest. This maragadham is the world's largest and the most attractive.

- 5) SRI KRISHNAR: This vigraham is in navaneetha nritya(dancing) pose alongwith Rukmini Thayar. He is seen holding butter (navaneetham) in his right Hand and His left hand is stretched out gracefully in dancing pose. There is no separate pooja for this vigraham. He shares Lord Venkatesan's nitya archanai. This utsava murthy receives Ekantha Seva during Dhanur maasam. When Malayappa Swamy comes out as Mohini during Brahmotsavam, Sri Krishnar accompanies Mohini. This diety is also taken out in a procession on every Rohini day and on Krishnashtami.

Apart from the above 5 utsavars, there is also a copper image of Lord Rama and Thayar Sita and Lakshmana and Sugivar in the garbagriham towards our right. This reminds us of the incident in Ramavatharam when Vedavati disguised herself as Sita and underwent all the troubles and tortures by Ravana. It is mentioned that when Ravana was carrying away Sita on his pushpakavimanam, Jatayu, an eagle fought with Ravana. At that time, at the instance of Agni Bhagavan, Vedavati assumed the form of Sita and went to Lanka. The original Sita was in safe custody with Agni Bhagavan . After Ravana was killed, during Agni Parisha, the original Sita was handed over and when Vedavati requested Sri Rama to marry her, Lord promised her that He would fulfill her wish when He would appear as Srinivasa. To remind us of this incident, we find the vighrams of Sri Rama along with His consort and Lakshmana. The images of Angadhan, Hanumar are exhibited separately where Theetham and satari are offered. This vigraham is taken out in procession around the 4 mada streets on every Punarvasu day and during Ramanavami, special poojas are performed.

After having Perumal's darsanam, we leave the place contended praying Perumal to grace us with many more darshans .

On the left side of Thirumaamani mandapam, there is a small entrance which is closed. This is known as "VAIKUNTA DWAARAM" and is opened only once in a year on Vaikunta Ekadasi day. The pradakshinam around this which is situated very close to the garbagriham is known as "VAIKUNTA PRADAKSHINAM or MUKKOTI PRADAKSHINAM. It is said that Sri Ramanujar assumed the form of Adishesha , entered the temple and prayed to Perumal to accept conch and disc through this entrance.

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We then go to Vakula maatha's sannidhi (sannidhi for Srinivasar's mother). This sannidhi is at the entrance of Pottu (kitchen where Perumal's offerings are prepared) as she is incharge of the kitchen. From there, we proceed to have Theertha prasadam and satari. Here, the copper images of Hanumar, Angadan , Chakaratazhwar etc described earlier are kept). Just in front of this sannidhi, there is a well known as "BANGARU BHAAVI/ POR KINARU" The water of this well is considered to be very sacred and is used for cooking and Thirumanjanam to Lord. This is considered as nivasa sthalam of Sridevi.

We find a shop selling cassettes, CDs, books , gold coins of Lord. After making few purchases, we go round the temple and on way, we will be given "FREE MEALS COUPON" (It may be mentioned that TTD feeds more than 50,000 pilgrims daily and on festive occasions, this figure doubles. There is a separate hall which can accommodate 1000 pilgrims at a time and the pilgrims are sumptuously fed . Volunteers who are more than 10 in a group offer their service of feeding the devotees and anyone can participate in this by taking prior permission from TTD.)

Then , we come across rooms where the hundi offerings are counted by many TTD employees known as "PARAKAMANI" which is supervised by pilgrims. In one of the rooms , the copper plates containing Annamacharya's keerthanas are kept safely. In another room , known as "SABHAI ARAI" Lords' wardrobes and the cot on which He is put to bed are kept. In open mandapams, pandits recite Vedas. Then, we come across "VIMANA VENKATESWARA SWAMY" which is an exact replica of the Moolavirat. This is found on the northern side of the Ananda Vimana Nilayam.

After having darsanam of Vimana Venkateswara Swamy, we proceeded to Sri Ramanujar's sannidhi which is in the corridor opposite to Hundi. It may be mentioned that in TIRUMALAI, there is no sannidhi for Azhwars and Acharyars except Sri Ramanujar. After Sri Ramanujar attained Paramapadam, Anantazhwar , the most devoted disciple of Sri Ramanujar prayed to Perumal to permit him to install Udayavar's vigraham in the temple premises. Perumal granted this wish and hence we find only Ramanujar's sannidhi in this temple. As mentioned earlier, Sri Ramanujar was solely responsible for organizing various utsavams like Adhyayana utsavam, Brahmotsavam etc in TIRUMALA. Hence, Malayappa Swamy along with His consorts comes and gives darsanam To Sri Ramanujar.

On the north-west i.e.near Ramanujar's sannidhi, there is a shrine for Yoga Narasimhar. This Ekamurthi is seen in yoga posture with 4 arms- the upper 2 holding Sankhu and Chakram. WE are told that previously there was a separate temple for this Lord outside the present temple. As innumerable sins were being committed, this Lord turned ferocious which made the villagers to approach Sri Ramanujar for solution. Udayavar ordered that the vigraham has to be housed within the temple premises of Lord Srinivasar and justified saying that Lord Srinivasar's compassion would dilute Lord Narsimhar's ugram. Hence, a separate shrine was constructed for Lord Narasimhar.

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We then go to Hundi for depositing our offerings known as “KOPPERA”. Even for this , you can find a queue of devotees. Various offerings like money, gold, jewellery etc are deposited everyday. The deposits are so high that every half an hour, the gangalam is changed(a large brass vessel covered with canvas pout) .

Near the hundi, on the left , there is a small shrine for Viswaksenar , the Senathipathi . There is also a golden image of Goddess Lakshmi and we find many devotees placing some money on Her feet and taking it back as they believe this would bring prosperity.

After depositing our offerings in Hundi, we prostrate before Ananda Nilayam and come out of the temple premises and join the queue where free prasadam (laddu/ pulihora/ curd rice/ chakarai pongal) are offered to all the devotees . After taking the prasadam, we come near a well known as “POOLA BHAVI/ POONGKINARU- or a well of flowers) We are told that once when Lord Srinivasar alongwith Sridevi and Bhoodevi were strolling, Thondaman chakravarthy suddenly entered. Seeing him, Sridevi hid Herself in Perumal’s Vakshashtalam and Bhoodevi hid Herself in this well. Knowing this, Sri Ramanujar installed vighrams of Srinivasar and Bhoodevi and ordered that the flowers adorned by Moolavar should be deposited in this well as a mark of respect for Bhoodevi. Hence, this came to be known as “POONGKINARU”. At present, this well is closed and the flowers are dispensed in some other way.

There are big big mantapams wherein the provisions are stored and in one of the mantapams, the prasadam for Arjitha seva ubhayadhars like Kalyana utsava ubhayadhars are given. We come out of the temple and go to the laddu counter to collect the laddus. The laddus are given on production of our tickets.

ROLE OF JEEYAR IN THE DAILY ACTIVITIES:

Sri Ramanujar made 3 visits to TIRUMALA and contributed to a great extent . During his third visit when he was about 95 years, he framed certain rules and regulations to be followed at TIRUMALA. He ordered that delicacies should not be prepared at home and had to be prepared in the temple and after offering it to Perumal, the same could be consumed. He also ordered that all the flowers in TIRUMALA Hills should be offered to Lord only and that mortals should not wear flowers as the fragrant flowers could cultivate some unwanted desires in us which could result in loss of sanctity. But unfortunately, these 2 rules framed by our Acharyar is not followed and nowadays, TIRUMALA has become a picnic spot and we can find food preparations using onions , Chinese, North Indian continental dishes being prepared everywhere and everyone is seen wearing flowers thus polluting the divine atmosphere. Hope TTD revives Udayavar’s rules and make stringent rules to be followed by the devotees.

In order to safeguard the treasury and to supervise the daily activities of the temple, Sri Ramanujar felt that only a self less detached person who remains a bachelor all through his life would be fit for the post. After discussing with

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TIRUMALA Nambi and Anantazhwar, Sri Ramanujar selected one of the disciples of Anantazwar, initiated him into Sanyasa Ashram and gave him all the powers of temple administration. He named him "SENAPATHIJEEYAR/VISHWAKSENAEKANGI" as he was supposed to protect Aiswaryam like Vishwaksena. Sri Ramanujar ordered a matam (a place of residence) to be constructed for the Jeeyar near Bedi Hanumar temple (As the Jeeyar was supposed to be like Hanumar in all aspects especially Brahmacharyam), gave him the idols of Sri Ramar, Seetha, Lakshmanar and Hanumar which he received when he was learning Ramayanam and ordered that Nitya Thiruvaradhanai to be performed daily to this diety, presented him with a ring with Hanumar's figure engraved on it, temple keys, a kodi (staff), a bell and a tridhandam. He also ordered that all the activities of the temple right from opening the temple upto closing the temple in the night should be done in the presence of the Jeeyar. He also ordered that the temple keys should be kept safe with the Jeeyar and Jeeyar alone will have the right of offering Dhoopam Deepam, neivedyam to Moolavar, supervise Saatrumarai, Thirumanjanam and other activities. He ordered that only brahmacharis known as Ekangis would be allowed to touch the Thirumeni of the Lord and once the archakar gets married, he loses the privilege of touching Perumal's Thirumeni.

Even today, after Ekantha Seva, the Bangaru Vaakili doors are closed and sealed and the keys are handed over to the Jeeyar. Next morning, the keys are brought by the Jeeyar and in His holy presence, the temple doors are opened.

We had been to this matam several times and here some theertha prasadam and some laddu, kalyana vadai prasadam (as they get a share every day). Is given to the lucky few. In this matam, there is a big photograph of all our Acharyars starting from Udayavar, Mudaliyandan Swamy and other acharyars of Tengalai Sampradhayam. In case we wish to partake lunch in the matam, we must intimate them in advance. Any kainkaryam to the matam in terms of money is always welcome as they use it for some good cause.

KALYANA KATTA

The moment one mentions "TIRUPATI" one is reminded of tonsuring (MOTTAI) and laddus. Kalyana Katta is a multi-storeyed building situated opposite to Free Meals building where thousands of devotees offer their hairs to Perumal. Here, at a time, hundreds of devotees can tonsur. Though this is free of cost, the barbers insist for some money. There is an interesting incident connected with this.

Hair is said to be the 'crowning glory' as one's beauty gets enhanced due to the hair. By shaving off one's head, one loses his ego and with a submissive mind, one would be able to have darsanam. Hence, due to the multifold benefits, thousands of devotees invariably shave off their head. This Perumal is so fond of hairs that as soon as one prays to offer his hair, the hair grows rapidly. Exporting hairs for making wigs is one of the prominent businesses here.

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EAR PIERCING: It may be observed in many South Indian houses whose “KULADEIVAM” is Lord Venkatachalapathy, they pray to offer the hairs of the newborns to Lord Srinivasar and pierce ears of their newborns in this holy khetram. (Mottai Adithal, Kaadhu kuthal) . There is a separate hall near Janata Canteen where there are professionals in ear piercing. One can either give some rice, vegetables, fruits, flowers to the person who does this or can give him some money.

ROLE OF ANANTAZHWAR :

Perumal was so fond of Anantazhwar that He became his sishyan by introducing Himself as Madurakavi daasan and by uttering acharyar dhaniyan. In another instance, Perumal became His son-in-law

Now, Adiyen wishes to briefly mention Anantazhwar’s kainkaryams to Perumal.

Nammazhwar’s Thiruvaimozhi beginning with “OZHIVIL KAALAM...” signifies the kainkaryam to be performed to Perumal . It may be recalled that when Sri Ramanujar was giving explanation to this pasuram, he felt the urge to perform pushpa kainkaryam to Thiruvengadamudaiyan. While the disciples were hesitating to take up the task of going to TIRUMALA (as it was a forest in those days), Anantazhwar volunteered and sought Udayavar’s permission to go and stay in TIRUMALA and do Nitya pushpa kainkaryam to Perumal. Sri Ramanujar was so glad that he felt that Anantazhwar was the only “AAN MAGAN” and appreciated him. Anantazhwar and his wife left for TIRUMALA. Anantazhwar decided to grow a garden full of variety of flowers and for the purpose he started digging a well . The story how Perumal came in the disguise of a boy and offered to help which was rejected by Anantazhwar and how Perumal in the form of the boy got hurt in His chin has already been mentioned. The axe which Anantazhwar threw on Perumal is supposed to be kept near the entrance. But due to heavy rush, we invariably miss to watch it.

Anantazhwar was so keen on carrying out his acharyar’s duties of doing pushpa kainkaryam that he did not even obey Perumal’s summons. Later, when he went to offer garland to Perumal, Perumal refused to accept it and asked him to give an explanation for disobeying His orders. Anantazhwar gave an explanation saying that if he had come without making the garland, the flowers would have blossomed and would have been difficult for making garland. And as he had come to Tirmalai to do pushpakainkaryam to Perumal as ordered by his acharyar and carrying out his acharyar’s instructions was the only goal in his life. He also added that both of them (Anantazhwar and Perumal) had come to stay in the Hills and Perumal didn’t have the right to send him away from that place. Perumal was immensely pleased with his acharya bhakti.

Even now, the place where Anantazhwar used to make garlands is used for stringing garlands of various sizes to Moolavar.

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On the seventh day during Brahmotsavam, Perumal is taken to the garden tendered by Anantazhwar and the divine wedding of Padmavathi Thayar with Perumal takes place. It may be mentioned that Perumal and Thayar used to come to Anantazhwar's garden every night and pluck the flowers. It so happened that one night, Anantazhwar who was on a vigil caught Perumal and Thayar. Perumal escaped and ran away to the temple but Thayar was caught and tied to a tree. Next day morning, Thayar revealed Her true form to Anantazhwar and requested him to be handed over to Perumal. Anantazhwar in turn requested Perumal to marry her and did kanya dhaanam and Anantazhwar thus became Perumal's father-in-law.

Once Perumal disguised Himself as a boy and offered some prasadam to some devotees who were climbing TIRUMALA Hills. When questioned, He introduced Himself that he was Anantazhwar's sishyan and uttered 2 dhaniyans on Anantazhwar-one dhaniyan signifying anantazhwar's acharyatvam and the second dhaniyam signifying the relationship of Anantazhwar with Sri Ramanujar.

" akhilaathmakuNaavaaSam agjaanathimiraabaHam
aachrithaanaam SucharaNam vanthE ananthaaryadhEsikam"

After hearing this, the vaishnavas asked "In this thaniyan, praachaarya Udaiyavar's association is not clear". On hearing this, He immediately composed the second part of the thaniyan

" srimathraamaanujaachaarya sripaathaambOruHathdvayam
SadhuththamaangaSanthaaryam ananthaaryam ahambhajE

Pleased with this, the devotees satisfied their hunger and on reaching the Hills, thanked Anantazhwar for sending his sishyan with prasaadam. Anantazhwar was surprised to hear this and told that he did not have any sishyan by name Madurakavidaasan. An asareeri declared that Perumal treated Anantazhwar as His acharyar. Hence, the disciples of Anantazhwar are known as Madurakavi daasans.

Anantazhwar and Madurakavi Azhwar share some similarities. It is well known that Madurakavi Azhwars did not sing in praise of Perumal but sang only 10 pasurams in praise of his acharyar, Sri Nammazhwar. Anantazhwar also carried out only the kainkaryams as per his acharyar's orders and though he was very close to Perumal, he never prayed to Perumal for moksham as he was very confident that his association with Sri Ramanujar would get him moksham. The thirunakshitam of Madurakavi Azhwar and Anantazhwar falls on the same day i.e. Chithirai maasam, chithirai star.

The pushpa kainkaryam done by Anantazhwar was carried out by his son later.

At this juncture, Adiyen wishes to inform that arjitha sevas can be performed to the Lord by going to Vijaya Bank counter which is opposite to SriVaikuntam

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complex. Ofcourse, this is subject to availability. The prevailing rates for the sevas are as follows:

The sevas can be classified into three : daily sevas, weekly sevas and periodical sevas.

1) DAILY SEVAS:

Arjitha Seva	Amount	Days	Reporting time	Seva time	No. of persons allowed	Bahumanam
Suprabhatam	Rs.110/-	Everyday	1.30 A.M.	3.00-3.30 A.M.	1	1 laddu
Thomala Seva	Rs.220/	Mon-Thurs	2.00 A.M.	3.30 - 4A.M.	1	2 laddus
Archana	Rs.220/-	Mon-Thurs	3.00 A.M.	4.00-4.30 A.M.	ONE	2 laddus
Archana anantara (after) darsanam	Rs.100/-	Except Friday	4.00 A.M.	4- 6 A.M.	ONE	
Kalyana Utsavam (big)	Rs.2,500/-	Everyday	11.30 A.M.	12 noon	Couple + 3	Angavastram,blou
Prathyeka Kalyana utsavam (small)	Rs.750/-	Everyday	11.30 A.M.	12 noon	couple	Angavastram, blouse
Arjitha Bramotsavam	Rs.1,000/-	Everyday			5 pers	
Dolotsavam	Rs.1,000/-	Everyday			5 pers	
Sahasra Deepalankarana	Rs.1,000/-	Everyday	4.00 p.m.	5 p.m.	5 pers.	

WEEKLY SEVAS:

Vishesha Pooja (bilva leaves)	Monday	Rs.3,000/	5 persons
Astadala Pada Padmaraadhanamu (golden lotus)	Tuesday	Rs.3,500/-	5 persons
Sahasra Kalasabhishekam	Wednesday	Rs.5,000/-	6 persons
Thiruppavada sevai	Thursday	Rs.5,000/-	6 persons
Vastralankarana Seva (Thirumanjanam in full)	Friday	Rs.12,500/-	Couple only
Poorabhishekam (part of Abhishekam)	Friday	Rs.750/-	One

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Civet Vessel (Punugu) (abishek)	Friday	Rs.300/-	One
Musk vessel(Kasturi)- abishekam	Friday	Rs.150/-	One
Nijapada darsanam	Friday	Rs.100/-	One

PERIODICAL SEVAS:

KovilAzhwar Thirumanjanam	Preceding Tuesday before ugadi, Anivara Asthanam Brahmotsavam, Vaikunta Ekadasi	Rs.3,000/-	10 persons
Vasantotsavam	During April	Rs.3,000/-	10 persons
Padmavathi Parinayam	During May	Rs.5,000/-	5 persons
Abhideyaka Abhishekam	During June	Rs.2,000/-	5 persons
Pushpa Pallaki	During july	Rs.1,000/-	5 persons
Pavithrotsavam	During August	Rs.7,500/-	5 persons
Pushpa Yaagam	During November	Rs.3,500/-	5 persons
Theppam (float fest)	5 days in a year	Rs.2,500/*	5 persons

Pl.Note: You will have to find out the dates of the above periodical sevas from TTD office Also, please ensure to took the seva tickets in advance else we will be looted by TTD staff. There is no charge for children below 12 years.

YEARLY SEVAS

UDAYASTHAMAANA SEVA: Amount is Rs.3 lakhs. The donor can choose any one day except Friday (the same date would be continued) and 5 more persons would be allowed along with the ubhayadhar.If the date chosen by him falls on Friday or during festive season like Brahmotsavam or New Year, he would be allowed the next day. Any variation in the date of seava would be intimated to him well in advance. The ubhaydhar along with his relatives would be allowed to participate in all sevas that day like suprabhatam, Thomala Seva, Archanai, Kalyanam, Deepalankaaranam etc. The ubhayadhar has to compulsorily give his photo and names of others who would be joining him. He would be provided with accommodation on that particular day and sanmaanam would be done to him.. On the day of seva, his name would be displayed on the board near Dwajasthambam.

UDAYASTHAMAANA SEVA ON FRIDAYS: Amount is Rs .5 lakhs. Apart from the sevas mentioned above, the donor would be allowed to have darshanam of Thirumanjanam of the Lord. All other privileges detailed above would be given.

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VIMSATHI VARSHA DARSHINI: This scheme facilitates darsan of the Lord during Suprabhatham, Archananthara Darsan, and Sahasra Deepalankara seva for 2 days a year for 20 years. Six persons would be allowed for darsan and the donor would be provided free accommodation for 3 days.

DASA VARSHA DARSHINI: The scheme allows darsan of the Lord during Suprabhatham and Archananthara Darsan for 2 dyas a year for 10 years. Three persons will be permitted for darsan. Free accommodation will be provided to donors for 3 days.

Now a brief note about the sevas:

SUPRABHATA SEVA:

As mentioned earlier, for participating in Arjitha Sevas , one has to go to Vaikuntam Q Complex (VQC) which is right opposite to Vijaya Bank.

During Suprabhata Sevai, for 11 months except Dhanur maasam, sri Venkateswara Suprabhatham , Prapatti, Mangalasaasanam rendered by Sri Prathivadhi Bhayankaran are recited and during Dhanur Maasam, Thirupalliezhuchi is recited. This seva lasts for half an hour from 3 A.M. to 3.30 A.M.

We were told that previously Thirupalliezhuchi alone used to be recited daily . Sri Manavala Maamuni ordered that Suprabhatam be recited daily for 11 months and Thirupalliezhuchi during Dhanur Maasam.

Though the reporting time for seva is 2 A.M., the devotees start gathering at VQC from 0030 hours. The tickets are thoroughly checked by TTD authorities at various points enroute to temple. It takes about 20 minutes to reach the temple premises. There is no queue system followed here and you can literally see people racing towards the temple and obviously, the devotees who reach first would be standing very near to Dwaaram.

It may be mentioned that even today the Jeeyar heads all the activities of the temple . Every night after Ekanta Seva (Pavalimpu) is over, the doors of the temple are locked and sealed and the key is handed over to Jeeyar. The next morning, the Jeeyar comes along with the archakars and in his presence alone, the doors are opened.

As a Yadava used to offer milk to Lord Srinivasa when he was resting in an ant hill and as Lord Krishna was born in Yaadava kulam, even to this day, only the Yadavas have the privilege to have Perumal's Viswaroopa darsanam first.

The doors of Bangaru Vaakili are opened but we could not have Perumal's darsanam as a screen was put. The pujaris who had accompanied Jeeyar recited Sri Venkateswara Suprabhatam starting with "KOUSALYA SUPRAJA RAMA..." Comprising of 29 slokams. This is immediately followed by "KAMALAKUCHA ...which is in praise of Lord consisting of 11 verses, TIRUMALAI.doc <http://srivaishnavam.com> Page 38 of 53

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EESAANAM (VENKATESWARA PRAPATHI consisting of supplication of 16 verses and benediction starting with SRIYAH KANTAYAH.consisting of 14 verses.

Soon after this, the pujaris enter the garbagriham , light deepams and Utsava vigraham is removed from the bed . After suddhi, the curtain is raised and we all had the most memorable Viswaroopa darsanam of Perumal.

Apart from having Perumals'Viswaroopa sevai, another advantage is that we get theertha prasaadam which was offered to Perumal by Devas.

ANGA PRADAKSHINAM:

The best way of offering obesiences to LORD and having his darshan without waiting in Q is doing Angapradakshinam which wipes off all our sins. Recently TTD has introduced a rule that only 750 persons are allowed for the AngaPradakshinam for which one has to procure ticket in advance. The tickets which are free of cost are issued at Arjitha Seva counter opposite to Vaikuntam Q Complex at 8P.M. everyday. The devotee who wishes to do Angapradakshinam must personally go there because the thumb impression is taken which is scanned and checked the next day.

For Anga Pradakshinam, the devotee must compulsorily have bath in Swami Pushkarini and with wet clothes , must go to Vaiku ntam Q Complex by 2 A.M. There are separate queues for ladies and gents. You can find devotees singing devotional songs and doing GOVINDA NAAMA SMARANAM. As soon as the recitation of Suprabhatham starts, the devotees are let inside(ladies and gents separately-ladies first) The devotees do anga pradakshinam around the temple premises known as Angapradakshina mantapam and are allowed to have Perumal's darsanam as soon as the Ubhayadhars for Suprabhata seva leave the place. Having darsanam is again subject to rush and during Fridays as Perumal's Thirumanjanam is performed, the devotes are not allowed inside Bangaru Vaakili. They can have darsanam only from Garuda sannadhi .

It may be noted that children are not allowed inside while doing Angapradakshinam. In case children accompany , they will have to wait outside near Mahadwaaram.

THOMALA SEVA:

After Suprabhata Seva, Suddhi takes place and Thomala Seva starts around 3.45 A.M. and lasts for 45 minutes. This is the seva wherein Perumal is adorned with all types of flowers. The pushpa kainkaryam done to Perumal by Periazhwar, Sri Andal , Thondaradipodi Azhwar and Anantazhwar cannot be described in words. Thomala Seva is the sevai where the Lord of Seven Hills is bedecked with beautiful, fragrant flowers. During this sevai, THIRUPPAVAI is recited and many basketful of flowers are offered to the Lord. Devotees who pay Rs.220/- for this seva are allowed to sit and watch the seva for more than half an hour.

KOLUVU:

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During 4.30 A.M. to 4.45 A.M., Koluvu takes place wherein the accounts of the previous day are read out . This is not Arjitha Seva and is held in privacy. After the accounts are read out, the same is read out in front of Sri Govindaraja Swamy at Tirupati as it is believed that Sri Govindaraja Swamy had lent money to Srinivasar for His wedding and as Lord Srinivasar promised to repay Sri Govindaraja Swamy till the end of Kali yugam, Srinvisar promised to repay Sri Govindaraja Swamy. Hence, every day , the accounts are read out in front of Sri Govindaraja Swamy.

ARCHANA SEVA:

(4.45 A.M. to 5.30 A.M.)The next and most important seva is the Archana Sevai. Every day Archanai is performed thrice to Perumal- one in the morning (Only during morning archania, the devotees are allowed to participate on all days except Friday, Saturday, Sunday and during Brahmotsavams). The seva ticket is Rs.220/- which is worth it. The second archanai is performed in the noon in Ekanatham and the third archanai is performed in the evening.

During Archanai, the devotees are allowed to sit in front of Perumal for nearly half an hour and watch Archanai which is a real feast to the eyes. 1,008 names of the Lord are recited slowly and clearly by a pandit. (When we participated in this sevai, a Saivite pandit was uttering the naamams) Inside the garbagriham, another pujari does pushpaarchanai to Perumal's holy Feet.

This is one of the most sought after sevas and one has to book tickets atleast 6 months in advance.

It looks like this scheme may be removed in the near future and I request the bhagavathas to participate in this seva at the earliest.

You can also go for "THOMALA ARCHANA SEVAI" wherein you will be allowed to participate in both the sevas. But the devotee after watching the Thomala Seva has to once again go in the queue and join Archana Seva ubhayadhars.

Previously, TTD had a scheme for ARCHANA SEVA for 5 years wherein the Ubhaydhar was supposed to pay a sum of Rs.5,000/- and would be allowed for Archana Sevai for 5 years on a day selected by him. Hope TTD revives this scheme.

ARCHANA ANANTARA SEVA;

(5.30 A.M. to 6.30 A.M. on all days except Friday)- Arjitham is Rs.100/- per head and thousands of tickets are issued for this seva. Devotees are allowed to go and have Perumal's darsanam in a queue .

NIJA PAADA SEVAI:

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(5.30 A.M. to 6.30 A.M. only on Fridays)- Only on Fridays, devotees get the bhaagayam of having darshan of Perumal's Holy feet (BRAHMA KADIGINA PAADAMU as rendered by Annamayya) and the devotee who has this darsanam will get rid of the cycle of birth and death.

At present, TTD has come out with two new schemes – DASAVARSHA DARSHINI and VIMSATHI VARSHA DARSHINI schemes.

For DASAVARSHA DARSHINI, the endowment amount is Rs.50,000/- and the devotee along with 3 persons would be allowed to participate in Suprabhatham and Archanaanantara Darsanam for 2 days in a year for 10 years. Free accommodation will be provided to the donors for 3 days.

For VIMSATHI VARSHA DARSHINI, the endowment amount is Rs.1 lakh wherein the devotee along with 6 persons would be allowed to participate in Suprabhatam, Archanananthara Darsan and Sahasra Deepalankarana Seva for 2 days in a year for 20 years. Free accommodation will be provided to the donors for 3 days.

SAATRUMARAI : After Archana anantra darshanam which is 5 .30 to 6.30 AM and after 7 Am on Fridays , the next seva is Saatrumarai. This is not a paid seva and only Sri Vaishnavites who know Saatrumarai pasurams are allowed in this seva. The devotee must have all the looks of Srivaishnavite like clean shaven, have a girudha , a kudumi . Only after the Jeeyar is satisfied with the appearance, the devotee is allowed inside. After neivedyam, Saatrumarai is recited. During this sevai, the devotees are allowed to experience the divya mangala swaroopam of Perumal for 15 to 20 minutes. Only the fortunate get this bhaagyam. After saatrumarai, theertham and prasadam are offered in the garbagriham itself During Dhanur maasam, there are 2 saatrumarais. One is Thiruppavai Saatrumarai at 3.00AM and the other Saatrumarai is after Archana. At 9 AM .

Usually, Adiyen has the bhaagyam of participating in Dhanur Maasa Saatrumarai on New Year day (By Lord's grace, Adiyen makes it a point to be at the holy abode of Perumal on January1st every year) During this saatrumarai, Upadesaratnamaalai etc are recited instead of Pallandu.

After these sevas, darshan is open to general public and goes on upto noon until archana Seva in Ekantham is performed.

These are daily sevas which are performed to Moolavar as far as I know.

WEEKLY SEVAS:

As enlisted already, Visesha Pooja, Astadala paada padmaaradhanamu, Sahasrakalasaabhishekam, Thiruppavada seva, Poolangi Seva and Vastralankarana seva (Thirumanjanam) are the weekly sevas performed to Perumal .

VISESHA POOJA:

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During this sevai, adiyen is told that Archanai is performed to Perumal with bilva leaves on Monday. Thayar is fond of bilva leaves and hence this archanai is performed.

ASHTADALA PAADA PADMAARADHANAMU:

During this seva which is performed on Tuesdays, Sahasra naama archanai is performed to the Lord with 1,008 golden lotuses.

SAHASRA KALASAABHISHEKAM:

During this seva which is performed on Wednesdays, abhishekam to utsavar with 1008 kalasams are performed .

THIRUPPAVADA SEVAI (ANNAKOOTAM):

During this seva, on Thursday mornings, huge quantities of variety of prasadam cooked and heaped on the floor in the shape of Perumal's Thirumugam in front of Perumal near Garuda sannadhi. Various delicacies like Pulihora, Chakarai Pongal etc are heaped on the floor. For this seva, Bhoga Srinivasa Murthy who is ever linked to Moolavirat by means of golden chord is brought to the mandapam at the entrance of Bangaru Vaakili and neivedyam is offered. The huge quantities of neivedyam are briskly removed by poor people who would be eagerly waiting outside . The archakars also partake their share . Lots of prasadam are distributed during this seva and it is believed that one who does this seva will not have any scarcity for food in his life.

As this sinner couldn't get the bhaagyam of participating in the above sevas, I am unable to write much .

POOLANGI SEVA and NETRA DARSANAM:

On every Thursday evening, as a part of preparation for next day's Thirumanjanam, all the precious ornaments except Lakshmi Haaram , Sankhu and Chakram are removed from Perumal's Thirumeni and Perumal is fully bedecked with a variety of flowers. Even Perumal's THIRUMAN KAAPU " which covers His eyes are removed and hence only on Thursday evenings, the devotees can have NETRA DARSANAM of Perumal. This is very eye captivating and one must not miss to have Netra darsanam of Perumal.

VASTRALANKARANA SEVA:(THIRUMANJANAM): Seva cost is Rs.12,500/- only couples are allowed. The seva has to be booked atleast 3 years in advance. The booking for Vastram No. 1 is already over upto the year 2015

This is the best among all sevas because we are allowed to sit in His holy presence for more than 1 ½ to 2 hours. Only the blessed get the opportunity of performing Thirumanjanam to the Lord who swallowed the whole world and was lying as a small child on a banyan leaf during pralaya, the Lord who covered the 14 worlds with his three steps . Lord Srinivasa is known for his 3 gunas sowseelyam, sowlabhyam and vatsalyam .

A PILGRIMS EXPERIENCE

On 3-3-2000, we HAD PERFORMED THIS SEVA . We need to report at 2.30 A.M. As we were strictly prohibited from taking our children, we left them in the room along with my brother, Raju. We reached Vaikuntam Q Complex around 2.45 A.M. The Lord was awakened at 3.00 A.M. with the recitation of Suprabhatham. Both of us recited Suprabhatham while waiting in the Queue. Around 3.15 A.M, we were allowed to get inside. Around 3.20 A.M., we reached the temple premises. We were all asked to wait near the sannidhi where they usually give Theerthaprasadam. An Executive of T.T.D. started calling out names from the list which he had. First, the ubayadhars of Vastralankara seva were called. It is then followed by Rs.750/- Abhisheka ubayadhars. Ours was Vastram No. 7. We were asked to sit in a room which is adjacent to Vakula Matha sannidhi. All were asked to sit according to their Vastram No. Our Vastram No. being 7, we were asked to sit in the 7th place. I sat behind my husband. After all the ubhayadhars took their seat, a pujari started giving a Melchat Vastram and a blouse piece to all of us. It is believed that this Melchat vastram was previously adorned by the Lord. As a sanmaanam, the pujari put the melchat vastram around the ubhayadhar. The melchat which we received is red in colour and the blouse is meron in colour. These clothes have Perumal's Thiruman, Sankhu and Chakram embedded on it. In this context, I would like to mention that after watching Thirumanjanam, when we were about to leave, someone came and gave me a blouse piece which had fallen on the ground. Mistaking it to be mine, I took the same. Later , we realised that we were having 2 blouse pieces. (May be it was Shivajinagar Secunderabads Perumal'and Ubhaya Nachiyar's sankalpam). Since we wanted to get the Melchat to Hyderabad and adorn the Lords at Shivajinagar and Kamalanagar temples, we accepted it in our hands. On a table, new vastrams of the Lord for the week were kept in a big silver plate . Then the Jeer came and he was followed by T.T.D.Executive Officer and his wife. It is believed that the E.O. along with his wife comes on every Friday and only after their arrival the program starts. First, the H.H.Jeer , the E.O. and his wife were given big bowls which contains Turmeric paste for the Lord. Then all the ubhayadhars were given the plate which contained the Vastram for the Lord. The ubhayadhars wives were given a silver bowl which contained turmeric paste. The colour of our Vastram was dark pink with leaf-green temple border. It is believed that there is a separate factory which manufactures only Perumal's Vastram . The vastram may be app.15 yards. My husband carried the plate containing Vastram on his head and I followed him with the silver bowl in my hand. Both of us were continously reciting Dwayam. The procession towards the garbagriham started with full temple honours(with mela-thaalam,white umbrella etc.) First, the H.H.Jeer started walking. He was followed by E.O. and other Vastralankara Ubhayadhars. We went round the Dwajasthambam and reached near garbagriham. We went near Kulasekhara Padi and handed over the plate and silver bowl to the archakas present there. For the first time,

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we were standing very near to garbagriham. The Lord's image is still very clear in our minds. All the flower decorations were removed. The Lord was adorned only with a white waist cloth. It may be noted that the sankhu, chakram and Lakshmi Haaram around Perumal's neck were not removed. The Lakshmi Haaram is made of silver and this long chain reaches almost Perumal's stomach. The couples were asked to sit. On the left side, the gents were seated and on the right side the ladies were allowed to sit. I had the opportunity to sit beside my husband and watch Thirumanjanam of our Saviour.

THIRUMANJANAM for the Lord started at 4 A.M. A big table was placed in front of the Lord. Next to it, on a stool an Ekanki who performs Thirumanjanam was standing. Behind the Lord, on a ladder another Ekanki was standing. It may be noted that only Ekankis (brahmachari) have the privilege to perform Thirumanjanam to the Lord. These Ekankis were assisted by 3 more archakars. The Jeer was standing near the table on the left side. Just outside the garbagriham, to my husband's left, 4 veda pandits were standing and they started reciting Pancha Sukthams

Holy Water for Thirumanjanam was brought by my cousin, Sri.Balaji. Elakkai, lavangam, Kunguma poo (saffron), pachai karpporam, etc. were mixed in the water. It may be recalled that in Sri Venkatesa Suprabhatam, there is a sloka which says that : ELALAVANGA KANASAARA SUKANDHA THEERTHAM is ready. Please wake up! Oh Lord Srinivasa. It may be mentioned here that Thirumalai Nambi, a prominent sishyar of Sri Ramanujar who was ordered to do Nitya kainkaryam to Lord Srinivasar, used to bring water for Perumal's Thirumanjanam from Papa vinasanam (one of the holy theerthams in Thiruvengadam hills). Once it so happened that while he was carrying water in a pot, Perumal disguised Himself as a small boy and asked the priest to give some water for quenching His thirst. Thirumalai Nambi refused to give water by saying that he was carrying water for Lord's Thirumanjanam and due to his advancing age he could not go back to fetch water again. Saying so, he proceeded towards temple. But the boy made a hole and drank water from the pot. When the priest reached the temple, he was surprised to see empty pot but at the same time found that Lord had His Thirumanjanam. Nambi realized that the boy was none other than the Supreme Lord. Next day, the same boy appeared before Nambi and said that there was a water source near the temple which was as holy as Papa vinasam and advised the priest to get water for Thirumanjanam from that water falls, which is now known as "Akasa Ganga" There is also a version which says that Akasa Ganga is one of the tributaries of Ganges and is as holier as Viraja Nadhi. We were told that later this practice of bringing water from Akasa Ganga on an elephant with due temple honours was slowly dispensed with and at present, water for Thiurmanjanam and for cooking Perumal's prasaadam are fetched from a well which is inside the temple premises. (near Vaikunta Dwaaram) known as "Bangaru Bhaavi". But some say, that even today a pot of water is brought from Akasa Gangai with full temple honours for Thirumanjanam This seva of bringing water from the well was done by my husband's cousin, Balaji.

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First, the Jeer gave water from a big pot shaped bowl made of silver to the Ekankis. Both the Ekankis, one from front and the other from behind started pouring water on the Lord. Then thirumanjanam with milk was performed. More than 100 litres of milk was used for Thirumanjanam. Amongst the recitation of Pancha Sukhthams, the thirumanjanam was performed. After "ksheera thirumanjanam", again holy water was poured on the Lord. During Thirumanjanam, the pujari was pressing the Lord's chest, hands and legs (This was similar to the bath given to small babies). The screen was put. When the screen was removed, we could see Lord Madhavan adorned with Manjal Kaapu as Thiruman . (Madhavan = the Lord who has Mahalakshmi seated on his right chest). The table which was placed in front of the Lord was removed. The archakar who was standing on the stool kept some sandal paste on Mahalakshmi Thayar and removed it immediately and gave it to another archakar. Thayar's thiruvuruvam gets imbibed on the sandal paste. This process was repeated for 4 times. After this, Thirumanjanam was performed to Thayar who is clearly seen seated on Lord's chest on the right side with holy turmeric water. It may be noted that Thayar forever resides on Perumal's chest and it is necessary to get her kataksham first . Thayar intercedes on our behalf with Perumal. A true Vaishnavite must first get the grace of Thayar in order to get Perumal's grace. This is clearly emphasised by our poorvacharyas in their teachings of saranagathi thathvam. In this context, I would like to quote the following:

(1)"THIRUKKANDEN PONMENI KANDEN"-Pey Alwar first saw Thayar on Perumal's chest , then Perumal's Sankhu and Chakram and only then he had the vision of Perumal.

(taken from Moondram Thiruvandadhi)

(2)"ESANAM JAGODASYA VENKATAPATHEY VISHNO PARAAM PREYASEEM
THATH VAKSHTHALA NITYA VAASARA SIGAAM THATH SHANTHI
SAMVARTHEENEEM
PADMAALINKRITA PAANI PALLAVA YUGAM PADMASA NASTHAAM
SRIYAM
VAATSALYADHI GUNODHJWALAM BHAGAVATHEEM VANDE JAGAN
MAATHARAM "

(taken from Prapathi slokam from Suprabhatham)

Meaning: I bow down to Thayar who is the wife of Venkatachalapathy who is Jaganathan and who forever resides on Perumal's chest seated on a lotus and whose primary gunam (nature) is vaatsalyam - she intercedes on our behalf with Perumal.

(3) VADIVAI NIN VALA MARBINIL VAAZHGINDRA MANGAIYUM PALLANDU",-
May Thayar who ever resides on your right chest live long

(taken from Pallandu recited by Perialwar)

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(4) "AGALAGILEN IRAIYUMENDRU ALARMEL MANGAI URAI MAARBA", -(I seek sarangathi at the feet of Perumal who has Alarmel mangai(Thayar) on His Maarbu(Chest)
(taken from Namalwar's Saranagathi to Lord Srinivasa)

(5) "MATREL ONDRUMARIYEN MAAYANE ENGAL MADHAVANE" (I have committed innumerable sins , I do not know anything except Lord Madavan-the Lord who has Mahalakshmi on his chest).

(taken from Thirumangai Alwar's sarangathi to Lord Srinivasa)

From the above cited references, it is very clear that we have to first get Thayar's kataksham and only due to her kataksham, we can have darshan of Perumal. She is a true mother. She forgives all our shortcomings and prays to Perumal to answer our prayers. Such is the greatness of our Thayar. She was given Thirumanjanam with holy turmeric water. At that time, Sri Sooktham was recited. After Thayar was given Manjal water Thirumanjanam, Karpooora Haarthi was given. At that time, we could clearly see Thayar on Perumal's chest and Perumal's Thiruvadi (feet) were very clearly visible- The feet which redeems us from all sorrows and shows us eternal bliss.

" BRAHMA KADIGINA PAADAMU ".

The distance between the feet may be around 3 to 4 inches. After this, again Lord was given bath with the holy water. Then civet oil was applied on Lord's Thirumukkam and Thirumeni. Again, water was poured on Lord's Thirumeni. Then the curtain was put . At that time, the first set of 4 veda pandits who were reciting Panchasukhthams left the place and another set of 4 persons came inside and started reciting Perialwar's prabhandham starting from "VENNAIALAINDHA GUNANGAN" from Neeratam. They recited nearly 30 pasurams. After that "THAITHRA UPANISHAD" was recited. When the curtain was removed, the Lord was seen dressed in the new Vastram. He was adorned with Thiruman kaapu on his forehead and Pachai Karpooram was kept on Lord's chin. Then we were given Thirumanjana theertham in the sannidhi itself. This majestic figure of the Lord reminded us of Sri Parthasarathi Perumal at Triplicane. We were all asked to leave the place and make way for others. Myself and my husband stood together and prayed to the Lord to give us another opportunity to perform Vastralankara seva. With the prayer that HIS THIRUVURUVAM must be in our mind's eye permanently, we left the place. Near Acharya Ramanujar's sannidhi, we were offered the milk with which Thirumanjanam was performed. After partaking the milk, we took the remaining milk to Raju and our children. Then were given Chakarai Pongal, Ven Pongal and Curd Rice as prasaadam. We were also given 2 big Kalyana Laddus and 2 Vadas

An attempt to describe THIRUMENI AZHAGU OF THE LORD:

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With great humility , I would like to narrate Thirumeni Azhagu of the Lord. Kindly forgive me for any shortcomings. With my pranaams to our Acharya, I start with my narration.

1. Even during Thirumanjanam, the sankhu, chakram and Mahalakshmi Haaram which adorns the Lord's chest were not removed. The covering of Lotus pedastal on which the Lord is standing was also not removed.
2. The Lord's kreetam may be around 2 feet in height. The kreetam looks as if it was well studded with precious stones.
3. The Lord has long strides of hair and this jadaï reaches his shoulder. He has curly hairs.
4. The Lord has a round smiling face. His eyes are just like lotus (SENTHAAMARAI KAN). He has lovely lips (SENKANI VAAI). The vaatsalya,sowseelya gunas of the Lord can be experienced by a mere look at the Lord's Thirumugam. He has a bewitching smile on his lips.
5. On the Lord's chest, 4 necklaces/ chains are visible.
6. On the right side of Lord's chest, Thayar is seen seated on a lotus.
7. The Lord is seen wearing a silver Lakshmi Haaram which was not removed even during Thirumanjanam. The big silver kaasu on which Thayar was engraved may be around 8- 10 inches.
8. Lord's Yagnopaveetham is very clearly visible.
9. The Lord has a broad chest and very slim waist. Above the nabhi kamalam, a nagabharam is visible.
10. Similarly, nagabharanam are visible on Lord's hands.
11. The Lord has lovely thighs and below the knees, the legs are slightly bent which gives an elegant look.
12. The left hand of the Lord is placed on His left thigh just above His knee. He has lovely fingers and the 4 fingers are clearly seen. This pose is called as
13. The Lord is holding Sankhu and Chakram in his 2 upper hands. It is well known that the Sankhu and Chakram are not integral part of the Moolavirat. But at the instance of our Acharyar Ramanujar's sincere prayers, Lord accepted the Sankhu and Chakram. These were not removed even during Thirumanjanam. His left hand is in Katyavilamba pose (i.e. his palm is resting on His thighs near the knee and 4 fingers of the Lord can be very clearly seen indicating that this samsaraam is only knee deep. His right hand is in Varada hasta pose. It is pointed towards His feet indicating

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that to get rid of the cycle of births and deaths, one must cling to His feet. Even the nails on His fingers are clearly visible.

14. He is seen standing on a lotus pedastal. The stem of the lotus pedastal cannot be seen. It is under the ground. The lotus pedastal is covered with a golden plate. This was also not removed during Thirumanjanam.
15. His feet are so lovely that it cannot be described in words. He has lovely fingers . The distance between his feet may be around 3 to 4 inches. His feet are not very broad as it is picturised in the photographs.
16. Above all, the Lord looks very young. He is full of youth and is very handsome. Nothing can be compared to His beauty.

In a nutshell, I would like to say that His beauty cannot be described in words and one must experience it by themselves to their heart's content to have His paripoorna kataksham (grace)

AGNYANINA MAYA DOSHAANA SSHAAN NIHITHAAN HARE
KSHAMASVATHVAM KSHAMASVATHVAM SESHASAINA SIKAMANE"

Note:

- 1) Only couples are allowed for this seva. The T.T.D. issues only 10 -15 tickets for the seva.
- 2) The vastrams are adorned by the Lord in serial order. For e.x. Vastram No. 1 is adorned by Lord on the day the Thirumanjanam is performed by the Ubhayadhar. On next day i.e. Saturday, Vastram No.2 is worn by Lord. Likewise, Vastram No. 7 is adorned by Lord on next Thursday. Ours being Vastram No. 7 must have been adorned by Lord on 9-3-2000 (Thursday).
- 3) In case someone wants to perform Vastralankara seva, they must ensure that their Vastram No. is below 8 because we were told that the other vastrams(namely,8-10) are simply kept inside.

POORABHISHEKAM: This is a part of Thirumanjana Sevai which has to be booked atleast one year in advance. the cost is Rs.750/- per head and the ubhayadhar is allowed to carry vessel containing turmeric paste and the ubhaydhar has to satisfy himself by having glimpse of God from a distance of half a kilometer (he has to stand near Garuda sannidhi) and after that he is allowed to go out. The next is CIVET VESSEL (Rs.300/- per head -Punugu Ginne) followed by Musk Vessel(Kasturi Ginne- Rs.150/-)

Sevas performed to Utsavar :

KALYANOTSAVAM : There are two categories -PRATHYEKA KALYANA UTSAVAM and PEDDA (PERIYA) KALYANA UTSAVAM: Every day in TIRUMALA, Perumal's Thirukalyana mahotsavam takes place. They say in TIRUMALAI.doc <http://srivaishnavam.com> Page 48 of 53

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TIRUMALA it is "NITYA KALYAANAM PACCHA THORANAM: (Every day Kalyanam is performed to Lord and hence every day maavilai and Vaazhamaram are tied

ALL THE SINS INCLUDING BRAHMAHATHI DOSHAM GETS WIPED OFF IF ONE PERFORMS THIRUKALYANAM TO PERUMAL:

Only couples are allowed and it is a must for the grihastha to wear dhoti and his wife saree.

The above write up is by Smt Subashini Varadan,Hydrabad

PRATHYEKA KALYANA UTSAVAM:

Cost of seva is Rs.750/- Hundreds of tickets are issued daily and getting one is not a big problem. The Ubhaydhars are allowed to do sankalpam and must be satisfy themselves by watching Kalyana Utsavam on close circuit TVs. The ubhaydhars are presented with upper cloth (simple designed uttareeyam)and a blouse.

PEDDA KALYANA UTSAVAM:

The cost of the seva is Rs.2,500/- and the devotees are allowed to sit on priority basis. This is the only seva performed to utsavar in which the devotees are allowed to sit based on their ticket number. So, the devotee who books first is privileged to sit right in the first row. By Perumal's grace, as we had booked the ticket 6 months in advance, our number was '1' and hence we were the first couple to sit right in front of Malayappa Swamy.

There were already many ubhaydhars who were sitting in their assigned places. Ours being first, we were directed to go and sit in the first row in front of the dias.

The screen was drawn and the utsava murthis were seated in Simhasanams . Malayappa Swamy was adorned in a separate Simhaasanam and Sridevi Naachiyar and Bhoodevi Naachiyars were adorned in another Simhasanam. A group of 8 to 10 prohibits perform the Kalyana Utsavam. The ubhaydhars were asked to come in a queue and were given some akshadhai (yellow rice) and were asked to utter their names and gothram. Sankalpam was done and yellow thread were tied to our wrists. After that , we were offered melchat vastram and a blouse . We were then allowed to go to a place where Thayar's Thirumaangalyam was kept and one of the prohibits advised us to touch the same and invoke Thayar's blessings. This formality of the ubhaydhars doing sankalpam etc goes on for about 45 minutes. After sankalpam, amongst vedic recitations,. new clothes, jewellery etc were offered to the divine couple. "Samastha upachaarams" were offered. The divine wedding took place Maangalya dhaaranam was over and as per Telugu custom, Jilakara and Bellam (jeera and jaggery) were placed on Perumal's and Naachiyar's heads. Then , VAARANAMAAYIRAM as per Tamil custom was recited and the rolling of coconuts took place for 10 minutes. After this, exchange of garlands took place

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and the Naachiyar's were placed beside Perumal. It is a feast for the eyes to watch Perumal's KALYANA THIRUKOLAM" After the yaagam was over , the devotees were asked to go and take Perumal and Thayar's blessings. A tulasi plant is given as a bahumanam to all the Ubhayaddars. Ofcourse, as in Vada Naadu Divya desams, we came across pandits asking for dakshinai.

The ubhaydhars for Pedda Kalyana Utsavam are offered melchat vastram and blouse as bahumaanam(gift) and 5 big Kalyana laddus, 5 big vadais, 5 dosas, 5 appams, pulihora, chakarai pongal are given to the ubhaydhars.

SAHASRA KALASAABHISHEKAM

: This is performed to Utsavars on every Wednesday -6 persons are allowed for this seva and the cost is Rs.3,500/-. Thirumanjanam is done to Malayappa Swamy with 1,008 kalasams.

ARJITHA BRAHMOTSAVAM:

This is done at the request of the devotees and Perumal would be seated on important vaahanams like Garuda Vaahanam, Sesa Vaahanam etc.

SAHASRA DEEPALANKARANA SEVA:

Every evening around 5 P.M., the utsavar alongwith Sridevi and Bhoodevi are brought to "Kannadi Arai" which is just outside the temple and oonjal seva is performed for the Lord. At that time, 1008 deepams are lit and Annamayya's keerthanas are sung in front of the Lord. This is one of the arjitha sevas (arjitha = paid) and the charge for this seva is Rs.1,000/- and 5 persons would be allowed for this seva. For half an hour, the devotees are allowed to sit and watch this seva after which they are allowed to have Moolavar's darsanam .

BRAHMOTSAVAM-THE NINE DAY WONDER

This is the most prominent festival in Tirumala which attracts lakhs of devotees to this Holy abode. As this utsavam was first performed by Lord Brahma, this is known as Brahmotsavam. To commemorate this, during Brahmotsavam, an empty ratham (chariot) precedes Perumal's vaahanam on all the 9 days.

The Brahmotsavam starts with DwajaArohanam (hoisting flag on the Dwajasthambam inviting the devas to attend the function) on the first day in the morning. AT that time, navadhaaniyangal (9 types of grains) are sown and after the flag is hoisted, the people who are present during the function within a vicinity of one km are not supposed to leave the Hills until the Brahmotsavam is over.

The Ashta dig palakas (the guardian deities of 8 directions, and all other devas like Agni, surya, Indra etc are invited and offered their respective places One can find colourful vigrahams of these deities in their assigned places which is a feast to the eyes.

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For Brahmotsavam, Sri Malayappa Swamy is taken out in procession around the 4 mada streets and during some occasions He is accompanied by His consorts Sridevi and Bhoodevi.

The Brahmotsavam of Lord Venkateswara is conducted according to Vaikansa Agama. Every day during the Brahmotsavam, homas will be conducted in the yagasala. The procession is accompanied by the ritualistic paraphernalia of chatram and chamaram, bulls, horses and elephants followed by mangala vaadyams, vedic recitals and singing of Divya Prabhandas and bhajans. Every evening just before the evening procession begins, Unjal seva is performed to the Lord. At that time, Annamacharyar's sankeerthanas are sung by his descendants.

DAY	TIME	Processional diety	VAAHANAM	SIGNIFICANCE
I	Morning	Malayappa Swamy with consorts	Dwajaarohanam	Marks the beginning
I	Evening	Malayappa Swamy with consorts-spectacular	Pedda Sesa vaahanam (big)	Special imp. Given to Adishesan
II	Morning	Only Malayappa Swamy	Chinna Sesa vaahanam (small)	"
II	Evening	Only Malayappa Swamy	Hamsa vahanam	Discrimination between good and bad, Lord restored Vedas to Brahma and gave him upadesam as Hamsa
III	Morn	Only Malayappa Swamy-adorned with diamond studded crown, gem earrings	Simha vahanam	Omnipotence
III	Even	Malayappa Swamy with consorts	Muthyala Pandiri (muthu pandal- pearls)	Symbolizes purity & loyalty
IV	Morn	Only Malayappa Swamy	Kalpaka vriksham	Grants boons to devotees like Kalpa vriksham, the desire fulfilling tree
IV	Even	Malayappa Swamy with consorts	Sarva Bhoopala vaahanam	All the rulers bow in submission to Lord and assume the

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				form of vahanam
V	Morn	Malayappa Swamy dressed as Mohini and Krishnar-Mohini holds garland of gems and diamonds and hold a golden parrot on a lotus in the right hand brought from Srivilliputtur	Ivory inlaid palanquin; Mohini and Krishnar are taken in proc. Side by side	To celebrate the assistance rend.by taking the form of Mohini,the most beautiful and amritham given to Devas
V	Even	Malayppa Swamy – Makara Khanti and Lakshmi Haaram worn by Moolavar are adorned, AP Govt presents Sesha Vastram, umbrella brought from Srivilliputtur-the most imp. Day –attracts nearly 2 lakhs of devotees	Garuda also known as Peria Thiruvadi-the embodiment of Vedas –the most spectacular procession	God is the ultimate reality-one who has this darsanam will get rid of all sins and attain moksham-
VI	Morn	Only Malayappa Swamy	Hanumantha Vaahanam also known as Siria Thiruvadi	To remind us of help done by Hanuman to Perumal during Rama avataram
VI	Morn	Malayappa Swamy with consorts	Golden Chariot	Having Perumal's darsanam on chariot grants moksham
VI	Even	Only Malayappa Swamy	Gaja vahanam (Airavattam-the celestial elephant)	Symbolizes wealth-Gajendra moksham recapitulated
VII	Morn	Malayappa Swamy decorated with vajra kavacham and stone studded makutam(crown)	Surya Prabha-Sun God drives chariot with 7 horses	Lord is the light of all lights-imparts gayatri manthram-
VIII	Even	Malayppa swamy is decorated only with pearls	Chandra Prabha-riding on Moon God, the	Peace to the mind of devotees-moon

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			commander of mind and king of ausudha (medicine)	and pearls are symbols of peace and tranquility
IX	Morn	Malayappa Swamy with consorts	Wooden chariot	Having darsanam on this chariot will relieve us from cycle of rebirth
IX	even	Only Malayappa Swamy	Aswa vaahanam (Horse)	Symbolizes energy
X	Morn	Malayappa Swamy with His consorts and Sudarshana Chakram	Theerthavari-the End of Brahmotsavam	Thirumanjanam is performed to the Lord on the banks of Swami Pushkarini and Sudarshana Chakram is dipped in the pushkarini. At that time innumerable devotees plunge into the sacred waters.

VASANTOTSAVAM:

This is performed to Utsavar twice in a year during August

TEPOTSAVAM: Boat festival

PUSHPA YAAGAM: this is conducted during spring season when variety of flowers are available. The Lord is fully bedecked with flowers. This is performed for 3 days. Every flower blossomed in Tirumala is only for worshipping the Lord.

KOILAZHWAR THIRUMANJANAM: This is done prior to Brahmotsavam, Ugadi.
To be continued :

Devotees of Lord, Experiences and few good cassettes/CD worth listening on the Holy abode