

# INDIAN HAIR SACRIFICES



# **HINDU BELIEFS AND PRACTICES**

## **REGARDING HAIR SACRIFICES**

This report is compiled of information about the tonsuring process (cutting/shaving of hair) performed near many Hindu temples across India. A large amount of the information was taken directly from temple resources (emails, recorded conversations, temple newsletters and books etc )

It is clear from these articles, research papers and books that the hair being cut in the tonsuring halls is considered a religious sacrifice and an offering to the Hindu deity %Govinda+(also known as Lord Venkateswara / Vishnu / Balaji).

The pilgrims are sacrificing and offering their hair (their beauty/vanity) to their deity (g-d) to please him and to receive blessings from him. There are a few important religious explanations in Hinduism for the tonsuring. One is that the hair offerings are meant to pay back a loan that Govinda took for his marriage expenses. The most popular belief is that the sacrificed hair is given to replace the hair that was cut off the deity's head. The name %Govinda+is repeatedly recited by both the pilgrims and the barbers during the tonsuring process.

The pilgrims believe that the sacrificed hair goes directly to the deity and is accepted by the deity. Many pilgrims feel that donating hair to the deity is more valuable than donating money. Tonsuring is not considered a preparation process before entering the temple- it is considered a spiritual offering to the idol. Some pilgrims will take tonsured hair in to the temple itself and place the hair in to the Hundi (a container where pilgrims place money and valuables as an offering to their idol) which is near the deity.

Tens of thousands of pilgrims visit the temples in India daily (millions yearly). One of the largest temples in India is the Tirumala Venkateswara Temple located in Tirupati which is operated by the trust board Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD)

The KalyanaKatta complex in Tirumala is where thousands of devotees tonsure . %ffer their hair to Lord Venkateswara+. Men, women and children are all tonsured there.

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) can be reached by dialing +91-877-2277777 or <http://www.tirumala.org/>

The KalyanaKatta complex can be reached by dialing +91-877-2263460

The author of this report can be contacted by email: [hairsacrifice@gmail.com](mailto:hairsacrifice@gmail.com)

# **IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT TONSURING:**

- **Tonsure** is the practice of cutting or shaving some or all of the hair on the scalp, as a sign of religious devotion or humility.
- There are many temples in India large and small, where tonsuring is practiced.
- Tonsuring halls (Kalyanakkatta) are considered holy (shoes must be removed before entering)
- Indian pilgrims chant the deity's name "Govinda" before, during and after the tonsuring. Many times the barbers chant "Govinda" too.
- Women can tonsure just a few hairs as a sacrifice to their idol instead of cutting off all their hair.
- Many tonsuring halls (Kalyanakkatta) have images of the deity on the walls.
- Tonsuring is not a preparation process before entering the temple. It is its own distinct sacrificial offering (of hair) to the deity. Tonsuring is not required before entering the temple.
- Bathing is mandatory before entering the temple.
- Women are not allowed to enter a house of worship while menstruating. They are forbidden to go in to the temple while menstruating. They are also not allowed to enter the tonsuring hall (Kalyanakkatta) or tonsure their hair while menstruating.
- The barbers are paid to tonsure the hair, but many times barbers volunteer to tonsure
- There are thousands of Indian people that volunteer services at the temple (under the TTD). They are called Srivari Sevakulu-- one who works without salary. They consider this volunteer work a devout service to the deity. One of the jobs they volunteer for is as barbers in the tonsuring halls (Kalyanakkatta).
- All the tonsured hair is placed in a special box. It is then sold by public auction to many hair distributors. The tonsured hair is used in wigs and extensions worldwide.
- Tonsured hair is not considered impure.
- Tonsured hair is allowed in to the temple itself. Some pilgrims will bring packages of tonsured hair in to the temple and place the hair in to the Hundi in the temple.
- A Hundi is a container where pilgrims place money and valuables as an offering to their idol.

- Thousands of Indian men, women and children tonsure daily (millions yearly)
- The temple with the largest amount of pilgrims tonsuring is the Tirumala Venkateswara Temple. The temple is also known by other names like Tirumala Temple, Tirupati Temple, Tirupati Balaji Temple. Lord Venkateswara is known by many other names: Balaji, Govinda, and Srinivasa.
- The Tirumala Venkateswara Temple is operated by the trust board Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD)
- On average, around 35,000 heads are shaved every day at Tirumala. Each barber is trained to shave 60-70 heads during a six hour shift. During festivals, the number goes up to about 45,000 heads per day. An estimated 12 million devotees go for tonsuring annually.
- Pilgrims have their head tonsured as "Mokku", an offering to their idol. They believe that their hair is accepted by the idol.
- There are different reasons for tonsuring:
  - when a request is fulfilled by the deity (to thank him)
  - before beginning a new job or role in life
  - to show love to the deity, the more hair given the more love shown
  - to shed the ego
  - to give ones main beauty to the deity, many Indian women feel that their hair is more valuable than money
  - The following story is a very important religious reason behind tonsuring:

**When Lord Balaji was hit on his head by a shepherd, a small portion of his scalp became bald. This was noticed by Neela Devi, a Gandharva princess. She felt "such an attractive face should not have a flaw". Immediately, she cut a portion of her hair and, with her magical power, implanted it on his scalp. Lord Balaji noticed her sacrifice. As hair is a beautiful asset of the female form, he promised her that all his devotees who come to his abode would offer their hair to him, and she would be the recipient of all the hair received. Hence, it is believed that hair offered by the devotees is accepted by Neela Devi. The hill, Neeladri, one of the seven hills, is named after her.**

- There are seven sacred hills in Tirumala. The seven hills are called Seshadri, Neeladri, Garudadri, Anjanadri, Vrushabhadri, Narayanadri and Venkatadri. The hill Neeladri is named after the princess Neela Devi because of her sacrifice to Lord Balaji
- The Tirumala temple is on the seventh hill -Venkatadri. Therefore the temple is also referred to as the "Temple of Seven Hills"
- The entire Tirumala area is considered sacred, which is why pilgrims will come specifically to Tirumala to tonsure



- The story about Neela Devi sacrificing her hair for Lord Balaji (Vishnu) is currently a very well known and widespread legend in India. This story is written about in many books, articles and on countless online websites and blogs. It is the most quoted story regarding the tonsuring at Tirupati. Most pilgrims who have their heads shaved know the story and believe in it.

- Another important story from Indian mythology behind all offerings to the deity:

Lord Vishnu called for a conference of the gods to win their consent for his marriage with Princess Padmavati. He obtained a heavy loan from Lord Kubera, god of wealth in Hindu Mythology towards expenses for the wedding. He agreed to Kubera that his loan will be repaid by the end of Kaliyuga with interest. Lord Vishnu is still in debt and all offerings to the temple help pay back this debt.

So, when a devotee presents an offering at the Tirumala temple, he tries to help the Lord in his quest of repayment of the loan and he is never sent back empty handed.



Tonsuring Room at the Venkateswara Temple in Andhra Pradesh.

**EMAIL EXCHANGES WITH THE TIRUMALA**  
**TEMPLE AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**  
**ASSOCIATED WITH THE TEMPLE:**

Recent email exchange from:

**TTD (Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam),**  
**the controller/administrative body of Tirumala temple**  
**KALYANAKATTA COMPLEX (temple tonsuring hall)**

**IMPORTANT** - Please hear attached recorded conversations with employees from the information center at the Tirumala temple. The transcribed interviews are at the end of this report.



Nov 24 (2  
days ago)

**Kalyanakatta Complex**

to me

Do women tonsure their hair too?

YES.

What percentage of people that tonsure every day/week/year are women?

35%

Is the tonsuring of the hair considered a religious sacrifice?

YES its religious belief

Is the hair considered an offering to the god?

YES, as they are believing in god

Do the people who are getting their hair tonsured say any prayers to the god before and during the tonsuring process? Do the Barbers say any prayers to the god before and during the tonsuring?

pilgrims chant govinda before tonsuring and even barbers also pray god before starting tonsure. They believe that sacrificed hair will reach the god.

What does "Govinda" mean?

govinda is another name of lord venkateswara ,The name comes from the Sanskrit *go*, which means both "Veda+and *gov*,+and *vinda*, meaning *finding+or* *gaining*."

Regards

DYEO, kalyanakatta complex, tirumala, TTD.

+ 91-0877-2263460

Recent email exchange from:

**TTD (Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam),**  
**TTD INFORMATION CENTRE**



**support services**  
to me

Nov 28 (1 day ago)

As per your Questionnaire, These are the reasons behind hair Offering to GOD.( LORD BALAJI)

**Are there other temples that tonsure? How many?**

Temples Like Tiruttani, Palani, Simhachalam, Vijayawada will also provide the Tonsuring facility to the Pilgrims as a offering to GOD or GODESS after full filling the Vows of the Pilgrims.

**Is the tonsuring of the hair considered a religious sacrifice?**

Its a Offering to God.

**I was told that Indian men and women believe that their tonsured hair will reach the god- would you mind explaining that? Do they believe that the god accepts this hair? Is the hair considered a gift?**

**It is a Strong Belief that God Accepts their Offerings and full fill their strong Desires. There is a Story regarding this Offering.**

**When Lord Sri Venkateswara (MahaVishnu/Balaji) was inside the snake-ant Hill on Tirumala , one sacred cow is to come and give milk to the Lord daily (Brahma took the form as sacred cow), When a cow-herd man at once saw the sacred-cow pouring milk in the snake-ant Hill, he became angry and without understanding the truth, the Cow-herd man took the axe and has hit the cow on the cow's head with the axe. The Supreme Lord Sri Venkatesa(Vishnu) who was present inside the snake-ant Hill received the hurt of the axe on his head from the cow-herd man instead of Cow getting hurt. When Lord received the hurt of the Axe on his head, the portion of his hair on his head disappeared due to hurt by the axe. When mother Neela Devi saw Lord being hurt on his head, she immediately removed the hair from her head and placed on the Lord's head in the portion where the lord was hurt. Immediately Lord became well and Lord's hair reappeared as beautiful as before he was hurt. Lord Venkatesa(Vishnu) knowing that hair is one of the beautiful features of women, Lord Sri Venkatesa promised that his devotees will shave Hair of their head (tonsure) and dedicate their hair to her. Neela Devi accepts the hair sacrificed by Devotees of Lord Venkatesa(Vishnu) and Lord blesses his devotees who sacrifice their hair for the sake of the Lord. This is the reason why Devotees tonsure or shave their head in Tirumala.**

There are also Spiritual reasons: Tonsure or Shaving hair as offering for Lord represents a real sacrifice of material beauty and giving up false-ego in the way of shaving their hair as the sacrifice to please Supreme Lord.

Do the people who are getting their hair tonsured say any prayers to the god before and during the tonsuring process?

Yes People who are Getting Tonsure will Chant "Govinda" as it a significance that they are completely believing and Thanking the Almighty. Govinda or Om Namō Venkatesaya are chanting Mantras.

After the hair is tonsured does it get placed in a special bin/container?

The Tonsured Hair will be kept in Separate place. It will be Cl-inced and Kept in Auction. The Amount will be used in Developing the Temple, Making Ornaments to Lord and for providing facilities to Pilgrims who visit Tirumala.

The Story behind "GOVINDA" name.

Lord Srinivasa once went to the hermitage of Sage Agastya and said, "Munindra.. I have come to Bhu Loka (earth) on a particular mission and going to stay here till the end of the Kali Yuga.. Am very fond of Cow milk and need one for my daily needs.. I know you have a large Gosaala with many Cows..Can you offer me one Cow for my needs..".

Sage Agastya smiled and said, "Swamy.. I know very well that you are Lord Sri Maha Vishnu in the human form of Srinivasa.. Am so happy that the creator and the ruler of this universe came to my hermitage and seeking a favor from me.. But I also know your maya Swamy and know that you have come all the way to test my devotion..".

"So Swamy.. Please allow me to follow the rules.. The holy Cow should only be gifted to a man who comes and seeks it along with his wife.. I shall certainly be happy to gift a Cow to you but will only be able to do so when you come to my hermitage along with my Mother Goddess Lakshmi and ask for it.. Until then You will have to forgive me Swamy..".

Lord Srinivasa smiled and said, "Ok Munindra.. I Shall certainly do what you wanted me to do.. and returned to His place..".

Later Lord Srinivasa married Goddess Padmavathi.. Some days after their marriage Lord Srinivasa came to sage Agstya maha muni's hermitage along with His divine consort Padmavathi to seek the holy Cow.. But the sage was not there in the hermitage.. His disciples who do not know who Lord Srinivasa is asked Him..

"Who are you and what can we do for you..??..".

The Lord replied, "My name is Srinivasa and she's my wife Padmavathi.. I asked your acharya to offer me a Cow for my daily needs.. But he wanted me to come along with my wife and take it.. So I have come now.. Will you please inform your acharya that I have come..+said Lord Srinivasa..

"Our acharya is not there in the ashram (hermitage) right now.. So please come again later to collect your Cow..+said the humble disciples of Sage Agastya..

Lord Srinivasa smiled and said, "I agree.. But am the supreme ruler of this entire place so you can trust Me and offer Me one Cow.. I cannot come again..+

%May be you are the ruler of this place or may be this entire universe.. But our divine acharya is supreme to us and we shall not do anything that displeases him and also without his knowledge and permission..+replied the stubborn disciples

Smiling gently, the holy Lord said, +.I value your respect towards your acharya..Please convey him when he returns,that Srinivasa had come from Gnanadri hills along with his wife to seek the Cow from him..+..

Saying so Lord Srinivasa turned back and started walking towards the seven hills of Tirumala..

Exactly after a couple of minutes, Sage Agastya returned to the hermitage and was extremely disappointed when he heard from his disciples about the arrival of Lord Srinivasa during his absence..

Thinking loudly, +how unfortunate really am not to be there at the hermitage when Sri Mannarayan Himself graced along with my divine mother Lakshmi+, the holy sage immediately rushed into the Gosala (Cow shed); took a Govu (Telugu word meaning Cow) and started running in the direction Lord Srinivasa and Goddess Padmavathi were going..

After running a few paces He found at a long distance, Lord Srinivasa going along with His divine consort Padmavathi.. Running behind them the holy sage started shouting in Telugu laguage,

%Swamy.. Govu Inda (Govu in Telugu means cow and Inda means take).. Swamy,Govu Inda.. Swamy, Govu Inda.. Swamy,Govu Inda..+

But the Lord didn't turn back.. Increasing the speed of his running, the Sage Agastya started shouting further more loudly..

%Swamy,Govu Inda.. Swamy,Govu Inda.. Swamy,Govu Inda.. (Swamy,take this Cow).. Swamy,Govu Inda.. Swamy,Govu Inda.. Swamy,Govu Inda.. Swamy,Govu Inda.. Swamy,Govu Inda..+

Thank you,

Supervisor,  
TTD INFORMATION CENTRE  
PH:2233333, 2277777, [18004254141](tel:18004254141).

Recent email exchange from:

**INDIAN HERITAGE (a non- commercial site providing information on Indian culture)**  
**by Sumathi, Saigan Connection**



Nov 28 (1  
day ago)

to iheritage

Hi,

Are you able to answer this question-

I'm finding the tonsuring process confusing to understand,  
is tonsuring just a purification process done for Indian people before entering the temple to see the gods or is the tonsuring act its own distinct holy act of worship?

Do the Indian people tonsuring their hair consider it a holy act to the gods? Or is it just an act of preparation before entering the temple?

If you could answer any of these questions it would be a huge help!  
Thank you



iheritage

10:23 AM (23  
hours ago)

to me

Hi

**It is not a preparation before entering the temple. Not everyone does it.**

**It is more an offering.** It is done for all children when they are 1 year old or soon after. They do this at their family holy temple.  
It is done as a matter of routine, for children when they reach their first year.

**But sometimes devotees pray to God and when their wish is fulfilled they offer their hair as thanks or even offer their hair as a prayer while wishing.**

In some communities, married women do not offer their hair, though they do so in some communities.

After shaving their head, they have a bath before going for the Lord's darshan.

Regards  
Sumathi  
[www.indian-heritage.org](http://www.indian-heritage.org)  
[www.sumarts.biz](http://www.sumarts.biz)



Recent email exchange from:  
**TTY (Tirumala Tirupati Yatra)**

Cash on Arrival - Tour Packages

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# Tirumala Tirupati Yatra

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## About Us

### Tirumala Tirupati Yatra

*Tirumala Tirupati Yatra* is designed and built by "*New Wave Designers Pro*" (NWD PRO) with an intention to provide the data of multiple temples under a single roof which saves the time of pilgrims and make them know about the place before visiting.

We are here to provide data about temple history, rituals performed, special days to visit the temple, special offerings in the temple and much more. We are here to act as a *partner in your spiritual journey* to Tirumala and providing you tour packages with LOCAL prices so that one need not worry about tariffs hikes during RUSH seasons.


We as a *Team working very hard* to provide most reliable data about temples and related information.

NWD PRO works on 3E's and is implemented in "Tirumala Tirupati Yatra". They are: Enhance Ease Execute.

- **Enhance**- Enhancing the way or the process.
- **Ease**- Making the process clear and easy.
- **Execute**- Making them work on fingertips.

×

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## **Email exchanges with the Tirumala Tirupati Yatra:**

Good Morning,

We would like to thank you for contacting "Tirumala Tirupati Yatra"  
Please find the answers in [blue](#) below

Is hair considered impure according to Hinduism? Is that also why it's cut off before entering the temple?

[It is not mandatory that people have to give their hair to God before entering the temple. As far we know, Hair is NOT impure.](#)

Is tonsuring done to humble oneself or is it done to give ones hair to the gods as a gift?

[One treats giving the hair as sacrifice towards the vows fulfilled by God and there is a short story behind this.](#)

### **Story Begins**

[Neela Devi, Gandhrava Princess is the first devotee who gave hair to Lord and there is a reason for doing that by her.](#)

[When Lord Srinivasa was hit by shepard on his head, small portion of this scalp becomes bald and there is no hair growth at the effected place and Neela Devi is the one who gave the hair to fill the effected place of Lord Venkateswara.](#)

[As hair is the considered as the beautiful aspect of Women, Lord notices her sacrifice and he said all the hair given at Tirumala belongs to Neela Devi](#)

### **Story Ends**

Do pilgrims know about the religious stories behind tonsuring?

[Most of the people knowing the reason behind giving hair to God. As mentioned earlier most of the people give their hair as their wishes were fulfilled by God.](#)

[There are people who will give prior to beginning of any New tasks or works.](#)

Please feel free to contact us for any queries and we are happy to share.

**Best Regards**

Abishek KM

**Tirumala Tirupati Yatra Team**



**Tirumala Tirupati Yatra**

9:25 AM (10  
hours ago)

to me

Hello

We are happy to help you on your research, please find some of the answers below

**It is a custom in temple like Srivaru that Devotees tonsure their heads to show that they are loyal to the Lord.**

**Free tonsuring and free hot water facility for bath is being provided for devotees at Kalyanakatta. (A building where tonsuring is done)  
There are more number of buildings in Tirumala for tonsuring.**

Q:Is the tonsuring hall considered a holy place too?

A:Yes, No Slippers are allowed inside. Tonsure has to be done only by the people of specific castes.

Q:Could people tonsure their hair anywhere or is it better to do it in a place like Tirumala?

A: There are tens of places in INDIA where people can give their hair but Tirumala is the most popular one in INDIA and people will come from parts of the world.

Q:is it acceptable for a woman to tonsure just a few hairs as a sacrifice to the god instead of cutting off all her hair?

A: Very valid point to make a note. Instead of giving their entire hair to Lord, Woman can select Moodu Kathirimpulu in Telugu language (Three Cuts) to Lord Srinivasa.

Three Cuts: One at left, other at right and one is at center (Part of the hair)

Q:Do men grow their hair long for tonsuring?

A:There is nothing practice of growing long hair. It is just an human love towards god for giving high amount of Hair.

We are in process of getting data, feel free to contact if you need any images and we are happy to share them with you.

More answers will be sent to you shortly

**Best Regards**

Abishek KM

to me

Hello

Please find answers in Blue

You may need some of the information from

<http://news.tirumala.org/tonsured-a-major-revenue-source-for-ttd/>

<http://news.tirumala.org/kkc-records-three-lakh-tonsures-during-btus-till-oct-8/>

<http://news.tirumala.org/ttd-nets-rs-1-36cr-in-e-hair-auctions/>

Do you know where the hair of the Mundan ceremony goes to?

A: It all goes to TTD and they can call tenders to sell them.

Does the tonsured hair get placed in a special box at all?

A: Yes, there might be several steps involved after tonsure, picking up the hair, placing them, cleaning, preserving

I know that tonsuring is not required before entering the temple - but is bathing required?

A: Yes Bathing is required and females should not enter the temple during menstruation cycle.

What happens to the hair after it's tonsured?

A: TTD will usually sell tonsured hair to external vendors. (Wigs...etc are the outcome from them for their business)

### **Auction of Tonsured Hair**

Based on the length, they are 5 categories.

1. The first type of hoods of Rs.2,49,494 / kilo were allotted to a total of 9,700 kg and sold for 400 kg. Earning Rs 89.98 lakh in revenue
2. A total of 60,000 kilograms were sold for 2,900 kgs of the second type at Rs 17,223 / kg. Earning an income of Rs 4.99 crore
3. A total of 31,000 kg of beds were placed in the third type of hair at Rs 2,833 / kg. It sold 4,300 kg. An amount of Rs.1.21 crores was received
4. The fourth type at Rs 1,194 / kg was placed at an auction of 1,900 kg. 300 kgs sold. Thus, the income of Rs.3.6 lakh was received.
5. A fifth of the Rs. 24 / - kilograms were sold at a rate of 1,64,000 kg and sold for 2000 kg. And earned up to Rs. 48,000.
6. 6,600 kg of white hair at Rs 5,462 / kg. Nothing sold out

All the VERY BEST for your research paper and we hope the information shared will be helpful.

\*Information provided is only with the knowledge of "Tirumala Tirupati Yatra" and we cannot provide you 100% accuracy.

Thank you  
Abishek K

to me

Hello

Kindly find the answers below in blue

- When you sent the auction info and numbers- is that from this past year?

They were from October or November 2017.

- Is the tonsured hair considered impure?

A: As far we know, **tonsured hair will not be considered as Impure** (as TTD is selling them for lakhs of rupees (by calling tenders)

After getting the Hair, they will divide them into 3 categories based on the length, colour, quality (Category - 1, Category - 2, Category - 3) and they sell them off.

- What is a Hundi?

A: There is a bin for collecting money, coins inside Silver Threshold which is called Hundi. There are other Bins as well

one is for collecting coconuts after breaking them in Akhilandam.

After breaking coconut, One half has to be kept by devotees and other should be dropped in Coconut Hundi (but this is not Mandatory if they wish they can take all pieces of coconuts)

- Do the temples allow the hair to be placed in the Hundi?

**Yes**

- Do Indian people sometimes take some of their tonsured hair from the tonsuring hall into the temple to put in the Hundi? Do people cut their hair in other places (like at home) and then bring it to put in to the Hundi in the temple?

A: They do not cut their hair at Home, (Most of the people do not know taking part of the hair from tonsured halls and dropping in Hundi

They assume - **Leaving hair after tonsure at tonsuring places will be given to God directly.**

Some people will put their part of tonsured hair into HUNDI (along with the money offerings mostly) which is inside silver threshold (Hundi which is very near to the main Deity).

The process is that, before starting the hair shave, 3 cuts will be done based on one's request and they give the same to us, so that we can drop in Hundi after having Darshan. (very less amount of people usually do in this way)

Thank you for contacting TTY

**Best Regards**

Tirumala Tirupati Yatra

to me

Hi,

- Is the information that you emailed me from the TTD? Or is it information that the TTY researches independently?

All the information is from TTD - Data which I Provided on sales of tonsured hair is from TTD PRO (public relation office) and it was from last quarter of 2017

- I just had a question about the barbers- I read that they need to be from the Nayee brahmin (nai) caste. I just don't realize understand what that means.

It is a type of caste in India (There are 100 of castes in INDIA)

- Is it hard to get the position of a barber at the temple? Are there specific religious requirements for the job?

Of course Yes, For any job under TTD he should be of caste - Hindu

- Besides for the Tirumala temple which is under the TTD, are there other temples that have tonsuring (not under the TTD)?

There are many temples under TTD and tonsuring is famous in Tirumala but not in other temples

If so, are any of them big temples with a lot of people tonsuring? Would you happen to know the names of other temples that tonsure and how many people tonsure at these temples?

There are some 10s of temples in India where people tend to give hair to Lord but we will get back to you soon on this.

- do Indian priests ever tonsure their hair?

Just see the image how the priests would be, it is not the kind of head shave.(They will keep part of hair)



One more question!

You mentioned that women can't enter the temple while menstruating- what about in the tonsuring hall? Can they go to tonsure during menstruation?

Strictly speaking NO. But we cannot stop them. 99% of women will not tonsure during mensus.

Thank you so much for your patience. Again, Big "All the Best" for your research and we are happy to be part of your work.

**Best Regards**

Tirumala Tirupati Yatra

Tirumala Tirupati Yatra

Mar 5 (13  
days ago)

to me

Hi,

Do you know if the attached book is from the TTD?

The attached book is from Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams which is in short called T. T. D

There are many authors who has written number of books in Telugu and then translated to english about Tirumala place and history.

Sometimes T. T. D requests the authors to write or Authors write up everything and submit their papers.

After going through the paper and validating the script written, they will be printed and published to people through book stalls

There are number of book stalls in Tirumala and Tirupati.

Information you see in books is 100 percent accurate. Source of attached book is from TTD and you can pretty well use that.

Kindly visit

<http://ebooks.tirumala.org/Home/?Type=New>

This might be useful.

**Best regards**

Tirumala Tirupati Yatra

to me

Hi,

I also was curious why pilgrims don't tonsure in front of the actual god - in the temple? Is it because there are too many people and it would make a mess?

Yes

What you have stated is right.

There are thousands of people who visit swamy for darshan. Usually organization Don't want to make crowd in front of entrances or inside temple.

Tonsuring centers are not even near to temple and they are about mile away from main deity and there are multiple tonsuring centers in Tirumala just to avoid waiting times. It doesn't really matter where you are having tonsure, as all the hill area is considered as holy which is famously called as Tirumala.

And this is the system in any of the famous tonsuring pilgrimage centers.

About tirumala- do pilgrims go there specifically to tonsure (and don't do it at home)? Is the whole area holy?

Yes exactly

Having tonsure at pilgrimage places means that one is giving hair to god. Entire Tirumala - which is an hilly area is considered as sacred.

Below are some things that you don't find in Tirumala.

Movie theaters

Footwear shops

Shops which sell Non Vegetarian

No alcohol and one cannot take alcohol items from Down hill (which is called Tirupati)

No flights should fly above Tirumala.(it's a non flying zone)

Entire land belongs to TTD nothing but Government body. And there are really surprising facts about Tirumala

**Best Regards**

Abishek Kamalakshi

**BOOKS / WEBSITES / NEWSLETTERS FROM  
THE TIRUMALA TEMPLE AND VIDEO CLIPS OF  
DIFFERENT TONSURING HALLS:**



**Pages from a book published by the TTD – “KALYANA MANDAPUM”**

TTD (Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam), the controller/administrative body of the Tirumala temple

## **CHAPTER - III**

**TIRUMALA TIRUPATI  
DEVASTHANAMS :  
A BRIEF HISTORY**

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# **CHAPTER - III**

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## **TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS : A BRIEF HISTORY**

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### **3.0. INTRODUCTION**

Sri Venkateswara temple in Tirumala is located 860 metres above sea level atop a hill named Venkatadri. It is the last of the seven hills one has to traverse through from Tirupati, a transit point for Tirumala.

This temple's importance in Indian religious milieu cannot be undermined. Some of the Vedic hymns aver that in Kali Yuga one can attain bliss (mukti) only by worshipping Sri Venkateswara or Lord Balaji, as he is also known. The evolution of this temple can be traced to Vaishnavite philosophy (a doctrine which maintains that by seeking forgiveness of God almighty people rid themselves of their sins and come close to salvation.)

It is a well documented fact now that people are travelling more than ever before because of better rail, road and air connectivity. This site is intended to give both native Indians and those living abroad an insight into the history. It will also provide useful tips to travelers apart from rare information. It wishes to be more than a mere travelogue. It is meant to encourage every one to look back at our rich spiritual heritage.

### 3.1. HISTORY

**Tirumala Venkateswara Temple** is a famous Hindu temple of Lord Vishnu in the form of Lord Venkateswara located in the hill town Tirumala, near Tirupati in the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh, India. It is located 580 kilometres (360 mi) south of state capital, Hyderabad and 157 kilometres (98 mi) north west of Chennai. The temple is situated on Venkatadri, one of the seven hills of Tirumala, and hence is also known as the *Temple of Seven Hills* (*Saptagiri* in Sanskrit). The presiding deity of the temple, Lord Venkateswara, is also known by other names - *Balaji*, *Govinda* and *Srinivasa*.

The history reveals that Lord Kubera credited money to the GOD Venkateshwara (a form of the god Vishnu) for his marriage with Padmavati. In remembrance of this, the reason devotees go to Tirupati to donate money in Venkateshwara's Hundi ("Donation pot"), is so that he can pay it back to Kubera.

The temple is reportedly the richest and the most visited place of worship in the world. The temple is visited by about 50,000 to 100,000 pilgrims daily (3 to 4 crore people annually on an average); while on special occasions and festivals, like the annual Brahmotsavam, the number of pilgrims shoots up to 500,000, making it the most visited holy place in the world.

According to legend, the temple has a murti (deity) of Lord Venkateswara, believed to have resided there for the entire Kali Yuga. In Sri Vaishnava tradition, the temple is considered one of the 108 Divya Desams.

literally) with its imposing view, magnificence, and readily recognizable identity to any devotee familiar with the temple and its fame.

### **3.2.3. BANGARU VAKILI**

From the Tirumamani Mandapam, you can enter the Bangaru Vakili to reach the inner sanctum sanctorum. There are two tall copper images of the dwarapalakas Jaya and Vijaya on either side of the door. The thick wooden door is covered with gilt plates depicting the Dashavataram of Lord Vishnu. The doorway is directly in line with the Padi Kavali and the Vendi Vakili. It admits pilgrims to the Snapana Mandapam. Suprabhatam is sung in front of this door.

### **3.2.4. PRASADAM**

Laddu is the world famous prasadam provided at Tirumala Temple. Recently the Trust has taken up copy right of Laddu prasaddam, hence, no one can prepare the same Laddu. Many other delicious prasadams are also available including daddojanam (curd rice), pulihora(tamarind rice), vada and chakkerapongali (sweet pongal). Free meals is being arranged daily to the pilgrims, and on Thursdays, the Tirupavadai seva occurs, where food items are kept for naivedyam to Lord Srinivasa.

### **3.2.5. HAIR TONSURING**

Many devotees also have their head tonsured as an offer. The daily amount of hair collected is over a ton. The hair thus gathered is sold by the temple organization a few times a year by public auction to international buyers for use as hair extensions and in cosmetics, bringing over \$6 million to the temple's treasury. As per puranas hair offered

by devotees is to coverup the lost hair(it is a very small portion) of lord venkateshwara swamy.

### 3.2.6. DARSHAN AND QUEUE SYSTEM

Tirumala Temple and Vaikuntam Queue Complex (Semicircular building in the foreground) as seen from *Srivari Padalu* on Narayanagiri hill.

Tirumala possibly has the most elaborate arrangement in India to sequence and guide the visiting devotees through the holy shrine. Because of the ever increasing daily rush of devotees, the temple authorities have set up a virtual queue system, where the devotees are informed a specific time, only after which they will be allowed into the queue complex. This has resulted in a steep drop (by a factor of five) in the time that devotees need to spend within the Queue Complex leading to the main temple.

There are two major kinds of Darshan (meaning "a glimpse of the Lord") at the temple. The first one being Dharma Darshanam - free darshan, which on average takes about 10 hours from the time you enter the Queue Complex. It is worth noting that during a peak season (festivals, holidays, weekends and special occasions) Dharma darshanam can take as long as a whole day, while sometimes during slack seasons it might take only an hour and can be quicker than any paid darshan. The second major type is Sudarshanam - costs Rs 50 and on average takes about 3 hours. Sheegra darshan - costs Rs 300 and takes only 0.45 - 1.5 hrs for darshan. There are also special queues for senior citizens (above 75 years old), physically handicapped and for people with children (below 3 years). One person is usually allowed to accompany the senior, physically handicapped or



offers the food. But in Tirumala only archakas offer food and Lord stays in Garbhagruha. Koluvu means Durbar (Royal Court) which is held every morning where the Panchangam details of Today & Tomorrow are read and explained. Various Utsavas, the income of the previous day is explained to Lord.

### 3.4. ARJITHA SEVA (PAID SERVICES)

Pilgrims can view and participate (in a limited fashion) in the various sevas performed to Dhruva bera (main idol), Bhoga Srinivasa, Sri Malayappa swami and other idols in the temple.

When pilgrims purchase arjitha seva tickets, they get the opportunity to see a seva performed to the Lord, obtain prasadam in the form of *vastram* (clothes), *akshantalu* (sacred and blessed rice) and food articles (laddus, vadas, dosas, pongal, rice items) and a darshan of the utsava murti.<sup>[20]</sup>

### 3.5. THE SEVEN HILLS

The seven hill represent the Saptarishi. They sometimes called the Sapthagiri. Hence the Lord is named Saptagirinivasa. Following are the seven hills:

- Vrushabadri (Hill of Nandi, the vahana of Lord Shiva)
- Anjanadri (Hill of Lord Hanuman)
- Neeladri (Hill of Neela Devi) - When Lord Balaji was hit by a shepard on his head, a small portion of his scalp becomes bald. There is no hair growth over there and this is noticed by a Gandharva princess Neela Devi. She feels "such an attractive face should not have a flaw". Immediately she cuts a portion of her hair

and with her magical power she implants it on his scalp. Then Lord Balaji notices her sacrifice as hair is the beautiful aspect of female, he promises her that all his devotees who come to his abode should render their hair to him and she would be the recipient of all that hair received. Hence it is believed that hair offered by the devotees is accepted by Neela devi.

- Garudadri (Hill of Garuda, the vahana of Lord Vishnu)
- Seshadri (Hill of Sesha, the dasa of Lord Vishnu)
- Naraynadri (Hill of Narayana (Vishnu))
- Venkatadri (Hill of Lord Venkateswara)

The town celebrates most Vaishnava festivals including Vaikunta Ekadasi, Rama Navami and Janmashtami with great splendor, while the Brahmotsavam celebrated every year during September is the most important festivals in Tirumala, when it receives millions of devotees over a short span of a week. Other major festivals include Vasanthotsavam (spring festival) conducted during March-April and Rathasapthami (Magha Shuddha Saptami) is another festival, celebrated during February, when Lord Venkateswara's deity is taken on procession around the temple chariots.

### **3.6. RELATED TEMPLES**

Tirupati is one of the 108 holy temples in Vaishnavite system and is related to a number of other temples, including the ones in Uppiliappan temple, near Kumbakonam and Varagur temple, near Kumbakonam are considered to be the "divine brothers" of Lord Venkateswara.

### Excerpt from the book “KALYANA MANDAPUM”:

Many devotees also have their head tonsured as an offer. The daily amount of hair collected is over a ton. The hair thus gathered is sold by the temple organization a few times a year by public auction to international buyers for use as hair extensions and in cosmetics, bringing over \$6 million to the temple's treasury. **As per puranas hair offered by devotees is to cover up the lost hair (it is a very small portion) of lord Venkateswara swamy.**” (page 42, book published by the TTD)

## Puranas

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **Puranas** (/pʊrˈnə/<sup>[1]</sup> singular: **Sanskrit**: पुराण *purāṇa*), are ancient **Hindu** texts eulogizing various deities, primarily the divine **Trimurti** God in **Hinduism** through divine stories. Puranas may also be described as a genre of important Hindu religious texts alongside some **Jain** and **Buddhist** religious texts, notably consisting of narratives of the history of the universe from creation to destruction, genealogies of kings, heroes, sages, and demigods, and descriptions of Hindu cosmology, philosophy, and geography.<sup>[2]</sup> The Puranas are frequently classified according to the **Trimurti** (Trinity or the three aspects of the divine).<sup>[3]</sup> The **Padma Purana** classifies them in accordance with **the three gunas** or qualities as **Sattva** (Truth and Purity), **Rajas** (Dimness and Passion) and **Tamas** (Darkness and Ignorance), an apparent means by which to rate the texts based on sectarian merit.<sup>[4]</sup>

Puranas usually give prominence to a particular deity, **employing** an abundance of religious and philosophical concepts. They are usually written in the form of stories related by one person to another.

### Dictionary

puranas



Pu·ra·na

/pooˈrənə/

*noun*

plural noun: **Puranas**

any of a class of Sanskrit sacred writings containing Hindu legends and folklore of varying date and origin, the most ancient of which dates from the 4th century AD.





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## TIRUMALA HAIR OFFERING TIMINGS

### Tirumala Hair Offering Timings

The moment one mentions "TIRUPATI" one is reminded of tonsuring and laddus. KalyanaKatta in Tirumala is a multi-storeyed building situated opposite to Free Meals building where thousands of devotees offer their hairs to Lord Sri Malayppa. At a time, Hundreds of devotees can tonsure at KalyanaKatta in Tirumala and tonsuring is done at free of cost. Hari Offering Tirumala is normal practice in Tirumala, devotees offer their hair before going for Darshan, Detailed chart provided on Tirumala Hair Offering Timings below.

Search

#### TEMPLE NEWS

##### TIRUPATI DAI STATUS

November 25, 201

##### TIRUPATI TUE

November 21, 201

##### TIRUPATI DAI TOMORROW

November 18, 201

## Story behind Tirumala Hair Offering At KalyanaKatta

First devotee who gave her hair to god is Neela Devi. Lord Srinivasa named this hill by her name as Neeladri. When Lord Srinivasa was hit by a Shepard on his head, a small portion of his scalp becomes bald. There is no hair growth over that place and this was noticed by Gandharva princess, Neeladevi. She felt such a handsome face should not have any defect. Immediately she cuts a portion of her hair and implants it on his scalp with her powers. As hair is considered as the beautiful aspect of women, Lord Srinivasa notices her sacrifice and **he said all the hair given to him by devotees in Tirumala or Tirupati belongs to Neeladevi**. Giving our hair to god is the symbol of leaving our ego. The word "Tanelalu" is also came from her name.

For any queries on Ear Piercing in Tirumala or Tirumala Hari Offering Timings, please leave your comment below , we will get back to you queries at the earliest.

### Tirumala Hair Offering Location Photo-Gallery



Kalyana Katta - 2

TIRUPATI TO

November 21, 2020

TIRUPATI DA  
TOMORROW

November 18, 2020

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## TIRUMALA SEVEN HILLS

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# Tirumala Seven Hills

Detailed description on Tirumala Seven Hills Naming

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**TIRUPATI  
COUNT**

January 16, 20

## Neeladri – Hill of Neela Devi

Nila Devi (or Neela Devi) is the third consort of Lord Vishnu, the other two being Sri Devi and Bhudevi. In Paramapadam (Sri Vaikuntham) Sri Devi is seated to the right of the Lord, and Bhudevi and Nila Devi to His left. The Veda sings the glory of Goddess Nila in Nila Suktam.

First devotee who gave her hair to god is Neela Devi. Lord Srinivasa named this hill by her name as Neeladri. When Lord Srinivasa was hit by a Shepherd on his head, a small portion of his scalp becomes bald. There is no hair growth over that place and this was noticed by Gandharva princess, Neeladevi. She felt such a handsome face should not have any defect. Immediately she cuts a portion of her hair and implants it on his scalp with her powers. As hair is considered as the beautiful aspect of women, Lord Srinivasa notices her sacrifice and he said all the hair given to him by devotees in Tirupati belongs to Neeladevi. Giving our hair to god is the symbol of leaving our ego. The word "Talanalalu" is also came from her name.



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## WOMEN BARBERS TONSURING TIRUPATI

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## Women Barbers Tonsuring Tirupati

Women Barbers Tonsuring Tirupati will only be available at Kalyanakatta at regular hours from 7 am – 8 pm.

Hair offering at Kalyanakatta is at free of cost.

Barber will start the tonsuring process by saying Govinda, will pour two mugs of water ( antiseptics mixed water) to wet the hair. Barber will use the new blade for each tonsuring. Some devotees will offer 3 scissors instead of complete head shave. Head shave will take around 15 – 20 mins.

### TEMPLE NEWS

TIRUPATI TUES

November 21, 2017

TIRUPATI DAKS  
TOMORROW

November 18, 2017

TIRUPATI DAKS  
TOMORROW

November 17, 2017

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## SRIVARI SEVAKULU ARE BLESSED

"SRIVARI SEVAKULU ARE BLESSED VOLUNTEERS OF LORD AND GODDESS-TIRUPATI JEO

November 2014: Describing the Srivari Sevakulu as the blessed volunteers in the divine service chosen by none other than Lord Sri Venkateswara and Goddess Sri Padmavathi Devi, the Tirupati JEO Sri P Bhaskar called up on the volunteers to make use of this God-given opportunity in rendering impeccable services to the multitude of pilgrims with devotion and discipline.

Addressing the Srivari Sevakulu who came to render voluntary service to the pilgrims for Karthika Brahmotsavams of Goddess Padmavathi Devi at Asthana Mandapam in Tiruchanoor on Wednesday, the JEO said, it is great to see you all to come from far off places to render week-long free services to the visiting pilgrims at your own expenses. "The Srivari Seva has established very well in Tirumala and now we are contemplating to spread this service to all the other shrines located under the purview of TTD. After Tirumala temple, the Tiruchanoor temple occupies the next pride place and there is dire requirement of your selfless services since the pilgrim rush to this famous temple has increased by many folds from the past four years", he maintained.

The JEO also said, TTD is also contemplating to construct a separate building to accommodate men and women volunteers separately even in Tirupati also on the lines of Tirumala. "We are planning to construct the accommodation centre for women in Tiruchanoor and for male volunteers in Tirupati", he added.

In his address, VGO of TTD, Tirupati Sri Ravindra Reddy said, Srivari Sevakulu has now become a part of TTD with their outstanding voluntary services. "In future your responsibility may also increase in the wake of recent incidents that are taking place in Tirumala. Every Srivari Sevakudu should become vigilant and should inform the Vigilance office immediately if they come across any suspicious person in Tirumala or in any other TTD-run temple. Protecting Hindu Dharma is also your prime duty apart from rendering free services to pilgrims", he said.

Meanwhile over 500 srivari sevakulu hailing from the Southern states and also from Maharastra took part in this programme. Special Grade Deputy EO Smt Chenchu Lakshmi, PRO Sri T Ravi were also present.

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TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS

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## HEADLINES

õOFFER TRANSPARENT SERVICES TO PILGRIMS AND ENHANCE THE REPUTATION OF THE INSTITUTIONö-CV&SO\_ భక్తుల

మనోభావాలకు అనుగుణంగా సేవలందించడో ర స.వ.ఎస్.ఓ.

By TTD News On 19 Aug, 2017 At 03:36 PM | Categorized As [General News](#)

Tirumala, 19 August 2017: õOffer transparent services to pilgrims with love and devotion and enhance the image of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams across the globeö, said the Chief Vigilance and Security Officer of TTD Sri Ake Ravikrishna.

An orientation programme to Kalyanakatta tonsuring staff was held in Asthana Mandapam on Saturday. Speaking on this occasion, the CVSO said the tradition of offering hair with devotion before paying obeisance to Lord Venkateswara has been continuing since several centuries.

õToday the society is civilized because of you. You hold the entire credit of making a human civilized. Your selfless services will not only enhance your image but also the reputation of the institution at large. The entire world is watching our every move. So we should also be more legitimate in offering our best possible services to pilgrims. If the tradition has to sustain for 1000 more years, then you should take oath to offer transparent and dedicated services to pilgrims. We will install advanced CC cameras in Klayana Kattas also apart from all places. You all will function under the eagle eye of vigilance. So offer the best part of your services to visiting pilgrims with transparencyö, he reiterated.

Earlier, VGO Sri Ravindra informed the kalyanakatta tonsurers to offer impeccable services to pilgrims as the annual brahmotsavams are fast approaching.

**Kalyana Katta DyEO Sri Venkataiah said, on an average every day nearly 40 thousand pilgrims are offering hair to Lord out of fulfillment of the wish with devotion. “The responsibility is increasing day by day on us. So offer more dedicated services and enhance the reputation of the institution in the eyes of public”, he added.**



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### RENDER TRANSPARENT SERVICES TO PILGRIMS\_ శ్రోహారో

భక్తులకు ఉన్ నత ప్ రమణాలతో సేవలందించండి కల్యణకట్ట

By TTD News, On 3 Dec, 2017 At 06:35 PM | Categorized As [General News](#)

**Tirumala, 3 December 2017: Kalyanakatta barbers should offer transparent services to multitude of visiting pilgrims to Tirumala with devotion and discipline, said Tirumala JEO Sri KS Sreenivasa Raju.**

Addressing 463 kalyanakatta srivari seva barbers in Astana Mandapam at Tirumala on Sunday evening, the JEO said, TTD has taken stern measures against the barbers who are alleged of demanding money from pilgrims for tonsuring activity.

“The management has no vested interest to give you punishment. Our intention is to safeguard the reputation of the institution and remind you about your responsibilities. TTD EO Sri Anil Kumar Singhal is kind enough to give you another opportunity and overcome these allegations. Hence you are reinstated in service from January 1<sup>st</sup>, he added.

**The JEO said, after darshan of Lord Venkateswara, tonsuring is considered to be more pious activity by pilgrims. So live up to the image of pilgrims with your transparent services and enhance the fame of the institution”, he reiterated.**

CVSO Sri A Ravikrishna, KKC DyEO Smt Naharatna, AEO Sri Nagaraju, VGO Sri Ravindra Reddy were also present.



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**TONSURED A MAJOR REVENUE SOURCE FOR TTD**

By [TTD News](#) On 20 Sep, 2015 At 04:21 PM | Categorized As [Special Articles](#)

Tirumala, 20 September 2015: Tirumala is eye of the fashion moguls of the world not only for the glittering festivities, grandeur of the jewelry decked deities but also for the shining black hair donated by the millions of devotees of Lord Venkateswara. Prominent Bollywood and Hollywood actresses and actors have a great crush for wigs and hair extensions made from the tonsured hair donated by millions of devotees at Tirumala.

**Tonsuring of head and offer hair is one of the most popular vows at the Tirumala hill shrine as millions of devotees take that route as a redemption of their vows for the fulfillment of their wishes by Lord Venkateswara.**

The Tirupati brand of hair, the shining char coal black long strides of hair are sold as hot cake in the fashion markets of Paris and London. The human hair offered to Lord Venkateswara by millions of men and women in 2015 and e-auctioned by TTD had earned a whopping Rs.810 crore in view of spiraling international prices in the fashion world. What the regular tendering process earned us was just Rs.40 crore while the e-auctioning has brought transparency in trade and huge revenues of nearly Rs.240 crore per bid says Sri K S Srinivasa Raju, the Joint Executive Officer of TTD.

**Annually over 1.30 crore pilgrims(i.e.70 % of devotees coming to Tirumala)offer their hair to Lord Venkateswara at the two major Kalyana Kattas and nine other mini- kalyana kattas. On June 13 last a record 73,000 devotees offered hair and the TD gathered 370 tons of hair this year and the number of barbers in TTD including that of women barbers has been on the rise.'Now We have some volunteers from Srivari Seva serving as barbers at Tirumala to clear the festival rush' says Smt Devi Sarojini The Deputy Executive officer in charge of Kalyana Kattas.**

The temple administration has started monthly auctions from March 2015 in order to cash in on international prices and also retain the value of the freshly tonsured hair TTD segregates the human hair into six categories going by the length and texture of the human hair before going into e-auction.



While the first variety hair is above 31 inches in length, the second variety is between 16-30 inches, the third variety between 10-15 inches, the fourth variety between 5-9 inches and the fifth variety less than five inches length. Grey hair or white hair is the sixth variety. While the long strides fetch highest rate, others fetch average rate depending on global price fluctuations and demand in fashion markets now making inroads into Asian and American fashion world as well.

The TTD launched e-auctioning of hair in consultation with the MSTC (material scrap trading corporation) in 2011 to beat the syndicate who suppressed the prices to floor level. TTD went into monthly e-auctioning of its stock and has so far conducted 15 e-auctions of hair in the current year.

Indian hair, particularly Tirupati hair was a major attraction at European and Asian markets known for wigs, hair extensions due to its long strides, shining black hair, curlers and the popular variety of Remy. Private parties were dealing with tonsuring of hair since 1938 but since 1985 TTD has taken over the Kalyana Kattas and also sale of human hair. While select agents were dealing with hair auctions since then the TTD began e-auctioning since 2011 leading to massive revenues to the institution.

**Indian hair is in high demand for wig making and hair extensions because it is both “thin and strong,” explains one of the country’s largest exporters of hair from Chennai. ‘ The Tamil devotees top in tonsuring and hair revenue to Lord’ says a TTD official.**



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## **BARBER VOLUNTEERS AT BRAHMOTSAVAM**

By [TTD News](#) On 2 Oct, 2014 At 08:47 PM | Categorized As [General News](#)

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS

BARBER VOLUNTEERS AT BRAHMOTSAVAM

**Tirumala: October 2: Nearly 879 barbers came on voluntary basis as part of Srivari seva and saved the day for TTD in the Brahmotsavam-2014 in addressing the demand for tonsuring of huge surge of devotees.**

**A record 2.59,312 devotees tonsured their head as part of redeeming their vow to Lord Venkateswara, said Sri Krishna Reddy, the DEO of the Kalyan Katta at a meet the press event in the Media center, Tirumala.**

**He said nearly 879 barbers came forward to render voluntary work as part of Srivari Seva in addition to 283 regular barber and 307 piece rate barbers hired for the Brahmotsavam event.**

He said compared to last year 7000 tonsures were additionally done this year compared to 2.52 lakh in 2013 and 2.66 lakh in 2012.

The Deputy EO said the e-auctioning of human hair has found more valuation for Tirupati hair and global customers in view of its long straits, cuts and curly hair stock.



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## **SRIVARI SEVA VOLUNTARY SERVICE – DEVELOPED ON CONCEPT OF THREE D's, “DUTY – DISCIPLINE – DEVOTION”**

By [TTD News](#) On 22 Sep, 2013 At 04:19 PM | Categorized As [Special Articles](#)

Tirumala, the abode of Lord Venkateswara, is visited by millions of ardent devotees every year. With a view to render better services to the pilgrims who come from far-flung parts of the country, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams has launched “SRIVARI SEVA” voluntary service on November 1, 2000. Started with just 200 volunteers in the initial days, so far almost four lakh 30 thousand sevakulu have rendered service in Srivari Seva in the last 12 successful years.

Developed on the concept of Three D's, Duty – Discipline – Devotion Srivari Seva is set to move ahead with the noble taught of offering selfless service to fellow pilgrims.

### **PARTICIPATION IN DEVOUT SERVICE:**

The Seva provides a unique opportunity to the devotees to serve fellow pilgrims and participate in devout service. According to scriptures, the divine grace can be attained not only by worshipping the lord in the sanctum sanctorum but also by serving his devotees. Thus, the Srivari Seva ensures the added benefit of worshipping the lord by the way of selfless service to his devotees.

### **HOW TO ENROLL OR REGISTER:**

The devotees who are willing to render selfless services to fellow pilgrims as Srivari Sevakulu should write a letter at least a month in advance to the following address ó

The Public Relations Officer  
Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams  
TTD Administrative building  
K.T. Road, Tirupati, AP, 517501  
Ph.No.0877 ó 2264392

- They will get the proceedings copy from the office of PRO along with one application form or the SMS in their mobile phone
- The team leader should get the Xerox copies of the application form and distribute it among his or her members, get it filled and bring it to the Srivari Seva Sadan office while reporting for service along with a passport size photo and ID-proof
- Or if the team leader gets the SMS, he or she should bring the photo and ID-proof of each member of his or her team to Srivari Seva Sadan while reporting for service and fill up the application forms in Tirumala
- The photos of Srivari Sevakulu who are reporting for the service is being captures in the bio-metric cameras and the data of each and every individual is being maintained in the office
- The volunteers are later issued with orange colour scarves which are their identity and they are supposed to handle them with care till their service is completed. After the completion of their service they will hand over the scarves back

#### GUIDELINES TO SRIVARI SEVAKULU:

- Each group should consist of not less than 10 members
- Team leaders should not bring children, aged and ill-healthy persons for Seva
- Srivari Sevakulu should wear prescribed uniform i.e. white pant and white shirt for men, green sari with same colour blouse for women while reporting for service and strictly stick to their specified guide lines
- The Srivari Sevakulu should render service where ever they are allotted to do and should not insist on temple duties
- **Srivari Seva is purely a voluntary service. Collecting money from the members or offering money for temple duties is illegal. If anybody found guilty, the entire team will be black listed for a period of two years**
- Separate accommodation with locker, bed sheet and mats facility has been provided for male and female sevakulu and they should stay in their respective accommodation only
- Female Srivari Sevakulu are provided accommodation in Srivari Seva Sadan in Tirumala while the male Sevakulu are being provided accommodation in Hall nos. 7 and 8 in PAC III
- The Srivari Sevakulu should take part in the counseling classes that takes place at Asthana Mandapam on every Friday between 10am to 12pm in Tirumala

#### FACILITIES TO THE SRIVARI SEVAKULU:

ACCOMMODATION: Gender-wise accommodation has been provided to house over 2500 Srivari Sevakulu. While the female sevakulu are being provided accommodation in Srivari Seva Sadan itself which houses nearly 750 volunteers, male volunteers are provided accommodation in hall no.7 and 8 in PAC III which accommodates about 400 volunteers. During peak season viz. annual brahmotsavams, summer vacation, Vaikuntha Ekadasi etc. since over 2500 Srivari Seva volunteers are being invited to render services; additional accommodation is provided in Halls No.5, 6, 7 and 8 in PAC II also where nearly 500 volunteers can stay. Each volunteer is provided with lockers on free of cost and they need not to pay caution deposit Rs.200/- for lockers since they bring lock and keys on their own.

DARSHAN: The Srivari Seva volunteers have to render the voluntary service to the visiting pilgrims for a period of one week. They will be provided free darshan through Supadham entry on eighth day.

SRIVARI SEVA ó A SUPPORTING ARM TO TTD:

**The Srivari Seva voluntary service has become one of the important supporting organs to TTD in its pilgrim crowd management as well in administrative mechanism filling the manpower crisis. The services of Srivari Sevakulu has been utilized in over dozen areas in Tirumala including Vigilance, Health, Annaprasadam, Garden, Medical, Laddu Prasadam, Temple, Transport, Kalyanakkatta, Book Stalls etc.**

PARAKAMANI SEVA: After getting overwhelming response from the pilgrims for Srivari Seva, TTD has began a new service called Parakamani Seva where in the counting and accounting of the currency offerings made by the multitude of pilgrims in Srivari Hundi is done. This exclusive seva meant for retired or in-service employees of public sector, nationalized banks and Insurance companies, aged between 35-65yrs of age has been started by TTD on August 17, 2012. So far from four Southern India states in 117 batches 5700 sevakulu participated in Parakamani Seva.

LADDU PRASADA SEVA: TTD has started yet another novel service Laddu Prasada Seva on 13th January 2013 where in the laddu tokens for the Dharma Darshan (Free) and Divya Darshan (Footpath) pilgrims are being issued. Usually TTD provides two laddus to each pilgrim who prefers the above said darshan categories on a laddu token at a subsidized rate of Rs.10 per laddu. The Laddu Prasada Sevakulu issues these tokens to these pilgrims in the counters of Vaikuntham Queue Complex I. The guidelines are same as that of Parakamani seva. Of the 74 batches so far over 1282 sevakulu have rendered impeccable services to the visiting pilgrims.

CONCLUSION: Today Srivari Seva has become one of the chief supporting organs of TTD with over 50 thousand Sevaks on rolls hailing from different parts of the country. In the coming years, the Srivari Seva will enhance to further levels as TTD is also contemplating to come up with a massive building complex to accommodate nearly 4000 Srivari Sevakulu at one go at an estimated cost of Rs.70cr in Tirumala . TTD is also planning for separate meeting cum prayer hall in this building to train up the volunteers every day on Yoga, Meditation and orientation class on pilgrim service. e TTD is also willing to spread this service concept in its sub-temples, railway and bus stations in Tirupati also.

ISSUED BY TTDs PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER, TIRUPATI





# TTD.NEWS

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS

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## ENHANCED DEVOTEE FRIENDLY SERVICES AT KALYANA KATTA- EO TTD

By [TTD News](#) On 19 May, 2017 At 04:16 PM | Categorized As [General News](#)

### TTD EO DEDICATES BRAND NEW ULTRA MODERN HALL NO 4 AT KALYANA KATTA

**Tirumala, 19 May 2017: The TTD Executive Officer Sri Anil Kumar Singhal today said that more amenities and services will be ushered soon at the Kalyanakatta in Tirumala to make the tonsuring experience of devotees hassle free and comfortable.**

The TTD EO said that henceforth all devotees can fulfil their tonrusing vow to Lord Venkateswara conveniently with ultra modern and hygenic services at Kalyana Katta itself.

He was speaking to media after dedicating the brand new ultramodern Hall No-4 got up at a cost of Rs 34 lakhs at the Kalyana Katta to devotee services after Puja rituals along with TTD JEO Sri KS Sreenivasa Raju.

He said in the last 9 months the TTD has sanctioned Rs 1.60 crore for modernisation of the Kalyana katta and was committed to further enhance the services and facilities to the benefit of ever growing rush of pilgrims to Tirumala.

He also inspected the Hall- 4 in the Kalyana katta which had record number of barbers, hot water and other facilities made available for devotees.

Among others SE Sri Ramachandra Reddy, Kalyana Katta DyEO Sri C Venkataiah, Health officer Dr Sharmista, DE (Electrical) Smt Saraswati, EE (Civil) Sri Prasad, AVSO Sri Chiranjeevulu and other officials.







9 9 start x



5 9 start x



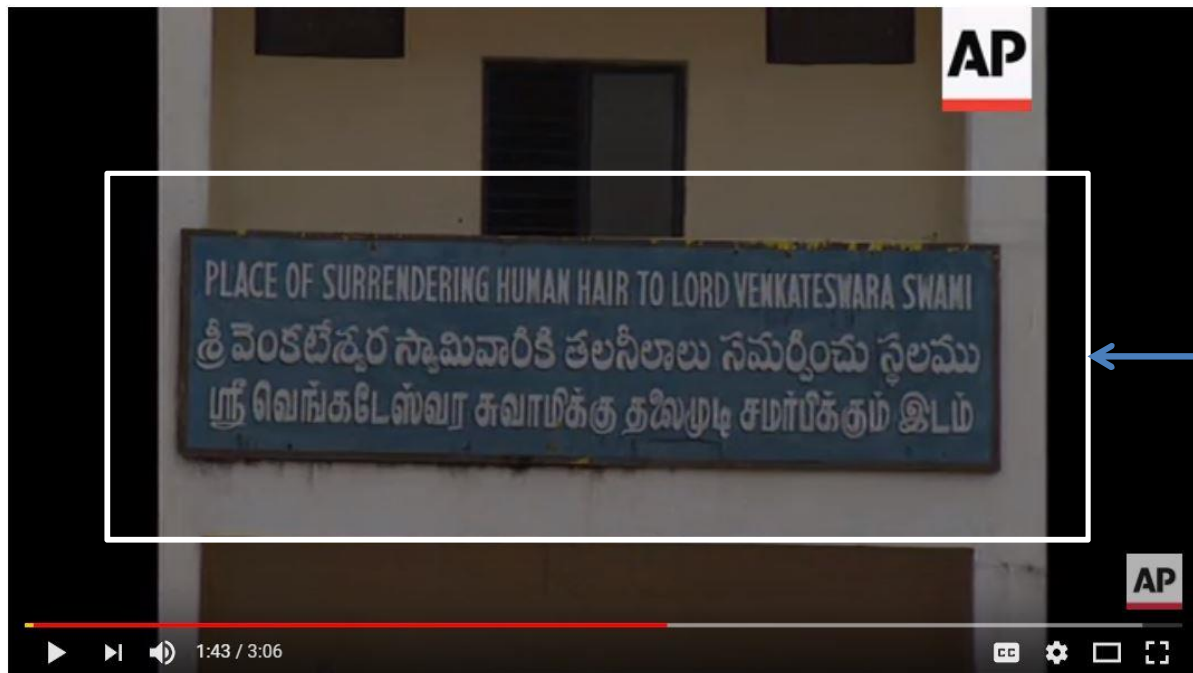
## **CLIPS FROM THE VIDEO - TTD OFFICIALS LAUNCHES NEW KALYANAKATTA BUILDING / TIRUMALA / INEWS:**

In this video there is a dedication ceremony for the new Kalyanakatta building (temple tonsuring hall). A large image of an idol is clearly visible in center of the room. During the ceremony pilgrims place offerings in front of the idol.

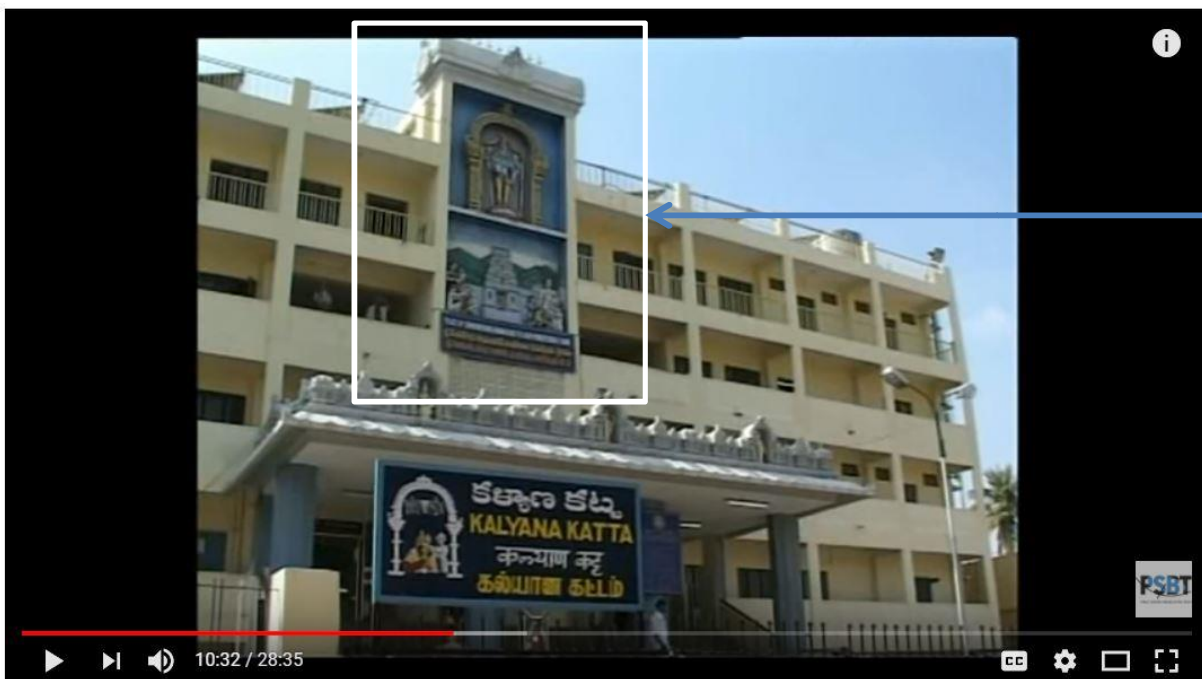




Pictures of the KalyanaKatta complex in Tirumala (tonsuring hall):



INDIA/UK: HINDU PILGRIMS SHAVE THEIR HAIR TO SELL AS WIGS



TIRUPATI - A KARMIC DEBT





TIRUPATI - A KARMIC DEBT



TIRUPATI - A KARMIC DEBT

## CLIPS FROM THE VIDEO - TIRUMALA TONSURE RITUAL... 17 MONTHS HAIR FOR LORD...OM VENATESA:

Published on Nov 17, 2017

In this video an Indian man is receiving a tonsure at the Kalyanakatta Complex (temple tonsuring hall). He chants “Govinda” before, during and after the tonsure. His family chants “Govinda” along with him. Visible during the tonsure is a room in the background. At the end of the clip the camera zooms in on this room- which is clearly a room of idol worship. In the room are pictures of the god.

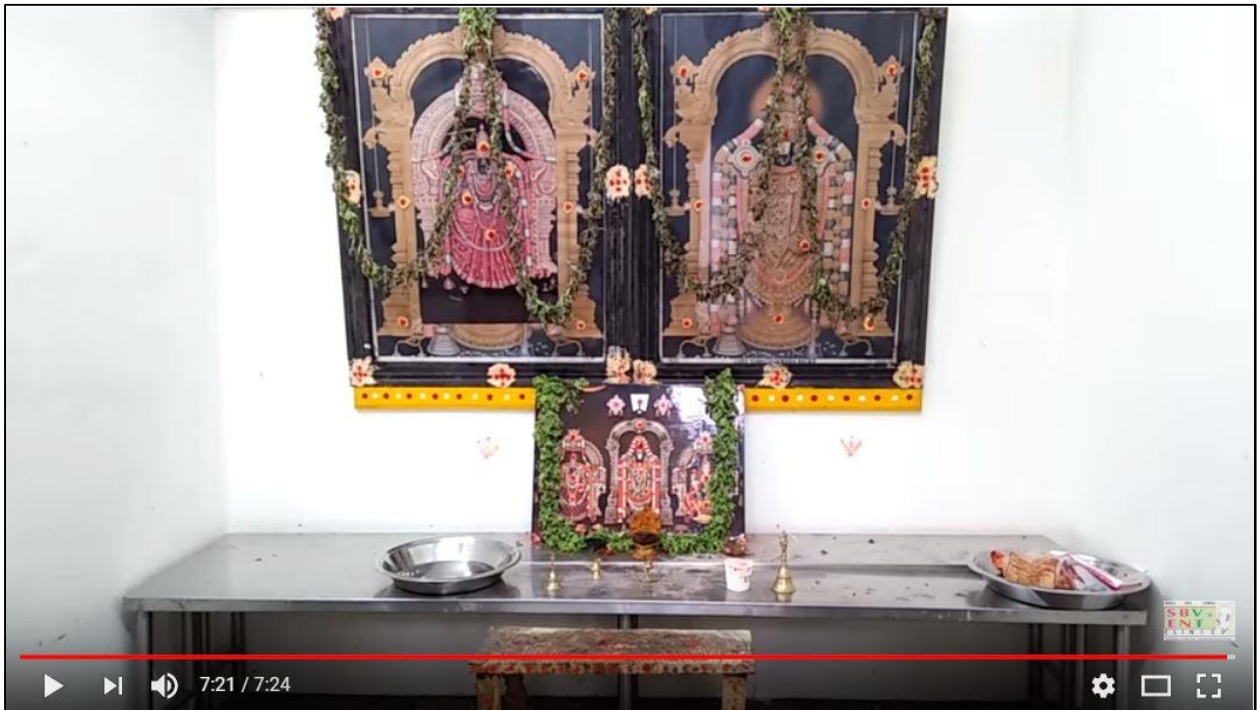
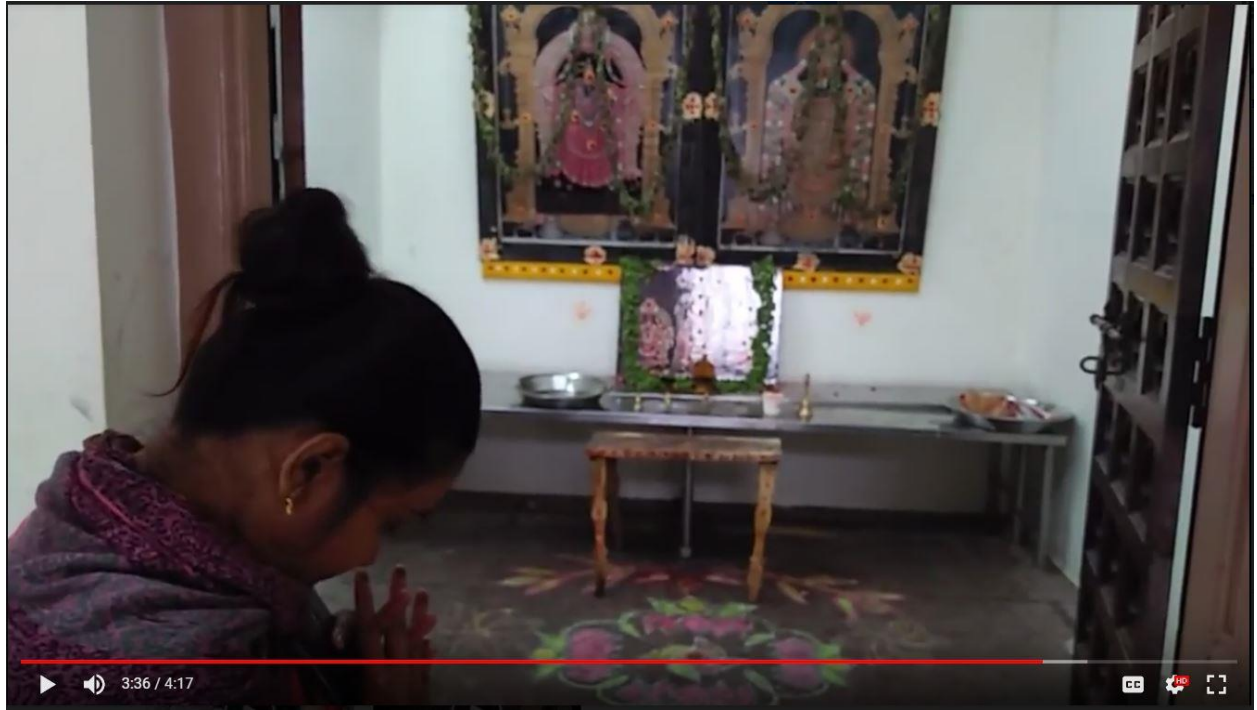












**CLIP FROM THE VIDEO - INSIDE THE TONSURE HALL PALANI  
MURUGUN TEMPLE (pictures of idols on the walls) :**



## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE HUNDI:**

# Hundi In Indian Temples: A Symbol Of Faith & Belief

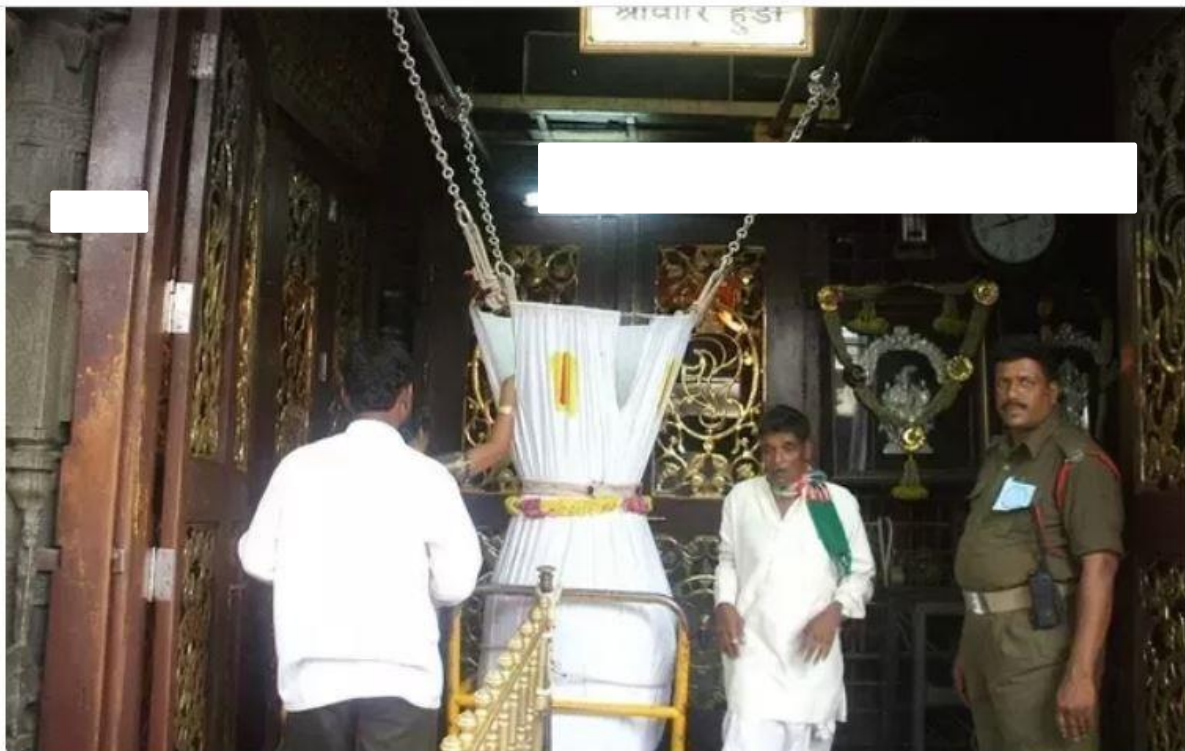
By Meghna

## What Is Hundi?

Hundi is basically a pot placed in many temples in India where devotees offer money to God. You would see most of the Hindu temples having this Hundi placed in the temple premises, where money and valuable are put in by the devotees as their offering to God.

## Why Do We Put Money In Hundi?

Talking about these Hundi in temples, I feel it stands strong because of the faith of the devotees that God does exist. To understand why we offer money in the Hundis in temples we need to understand some mythological stories associated with it. The stories state an incident where Lord Vishnu took a loan from the God of Wealth %Kuber+. It is believed that devotees offer this money in the Hundi as a help to Lord Vishnu to pay back the loan to Lord Kuber.

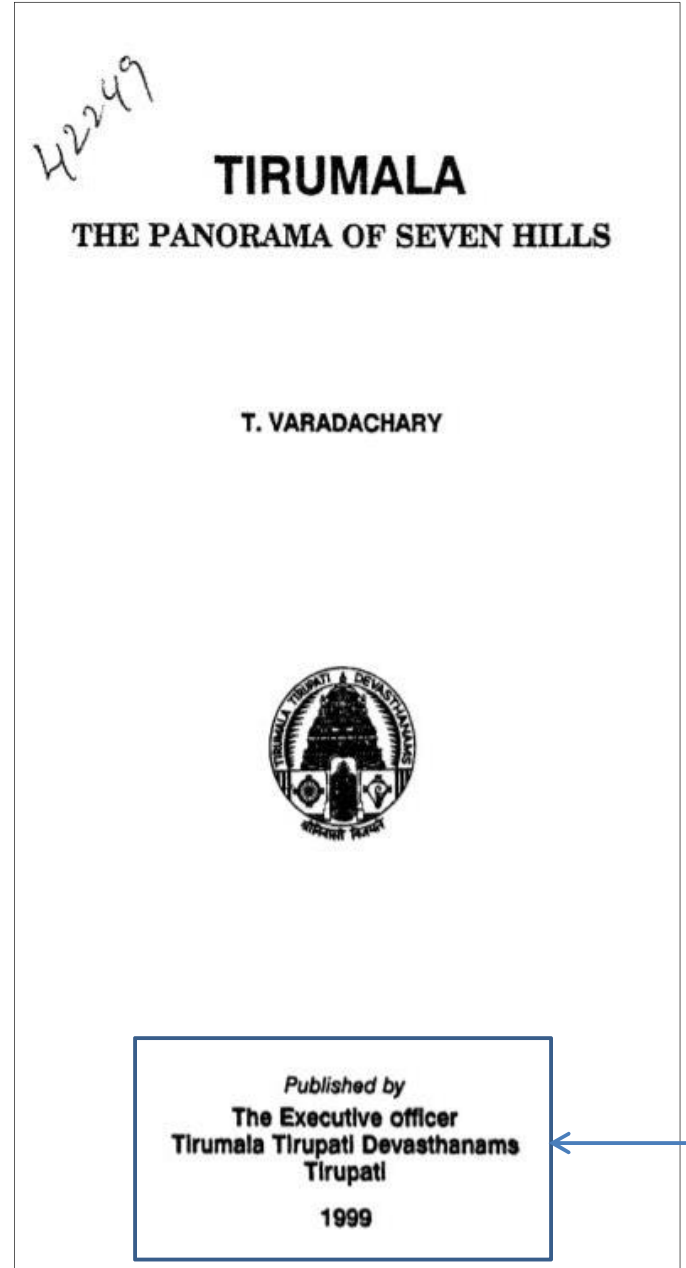




%Some people will put their part of tonsured hair into HUNDI (along with the money offerings mostly) which is inside silver threshold (Hundi which is very near to the main Deity).+  
- TTY(Tirumala Tirupati Yatra)

**E-book from the TTD website (published by the TTD) .**

TTD (Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam), the controller/administrative body of the Tirumala temple



## **TIRUMALA - THE PANORAMA OF SEVEN HILLS**

A Pilgrim's Guide to Tirumala

Author:

T. VARADACHARY

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T.T.D. Religious Publications Series No. 228

T.T.D. First Edition: 1999

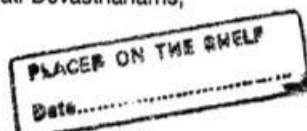
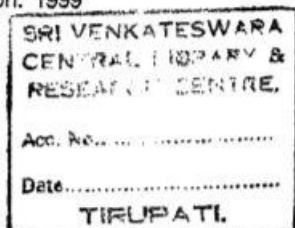
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## **FOREWORD**

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

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

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

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

**EXECUTIVE OFFICER**  
**Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams**

### Koppera (Hundi)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

### **Akhilandam**

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

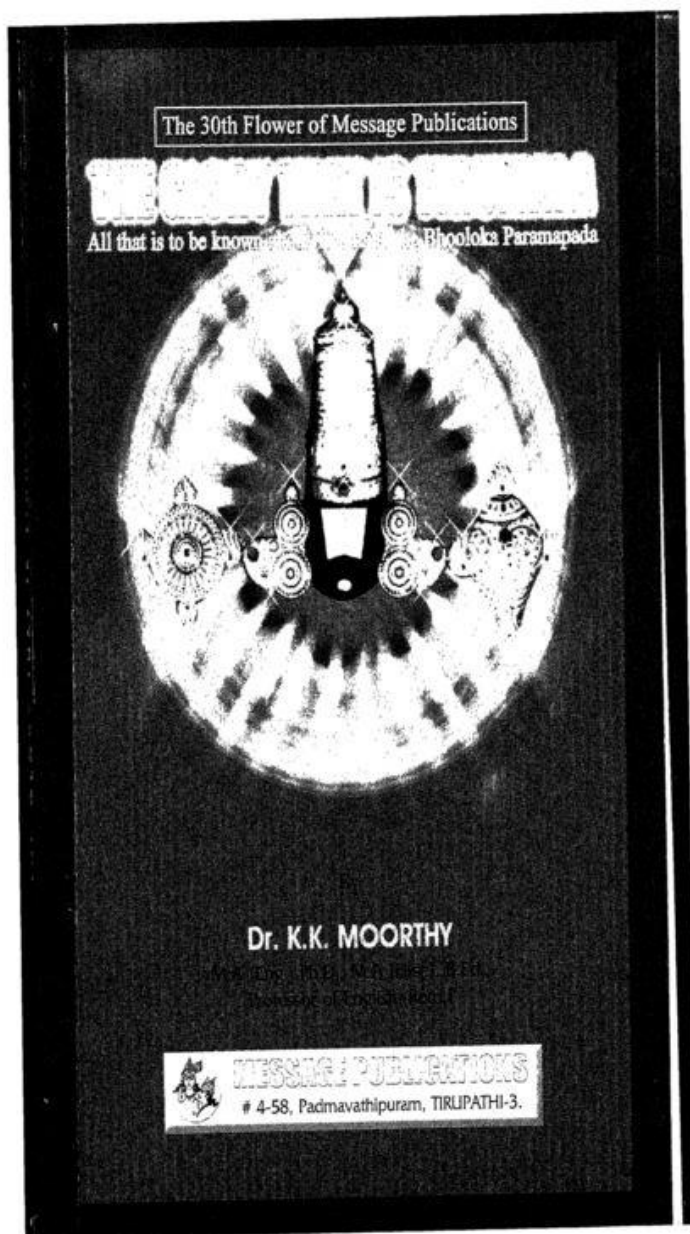
To avoid congestion opposite to the Nadimipadi kavali the camphor Akhilandam with small Hundis, on either side to receive coins, currency notes, and tonsured hair and also the coconut kernel's Hundi, intended to receive the coconut kernels offered by pilgrim devotees, have recently been shifted to the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

### **Lord Venkateswara in Durbar (Koluvu)**

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

## E-book from the TTD website .

TTD (Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam), the controller/administrative body of Tirumala temple



First Edition :1000 Copies

Date : 2005 AD

Price : Rs. 70.00

Copies can be had from A Dr. K.K. Moorthy  
Dr. K.K. Moorthy N Sai Samanth bhavan  
14-61, P.Puram, D samadhi Road Ilcross  
TIRUPATI PUTTAPARTHY-515134  
Pin 517 503 Ph :289360-(08555)

### About message publications

1. The Commissioners of HRCE Department of Andra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu Commended the books for temple libraries and sales in their Information Counters.
2. The Commissioner of Information and Public Relations Andhra Pradesh, likewise commended them for libraries in the District Information Centres.  
And
3. The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati extended Financial Aid for 12 titles. And Potti Sriramula Telugu University, Hyderabad also for one book.  
Besides
4. Some periodicals run by Religious Institutions reproduced many write-ups for public benefit.  
Above All
5. Inspired by the exhaustive information supplied, research scholars have utilised them to augmenting their theses work and obtained Post Graduate degrees too.
6. Deeming the approach and presentation highly laudable. some are translated into Telugu and Tamil.
7. Books are marketed in big cities like Khatmund, Delhi, Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Purraparthi, Tiruchanapalli, Trissur, Kottayam, Chennai, Bangalore, Mysore, Melkote, Trivendrum, Kanyakumari, Palani, Swamimalai, Chidambaram, and Pondicherry.
8. All most all south Indian Universities bought them for scholar's benefit. And State Legislative Assembly Libraries too.
9. Recently one Californian Electronics Firm has taken rights to display 26 books on internet for global attention.

The 30th Flower of Message Publications

# THE GLORY THAT IS TIRUMALA !

All that is to be known about Tirumala, the Bhuloka Paramapada

*By*

**Dr. K.K. MOORTHY**

M.A. (Eng.) M.A. (Hist.) B.Ed;  
Prof. of English (Retd.)



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### **ANNAMAYYA ARA**

There is found next an exclusive chamber called Amamayya Ara. Preserving Annamacharya's vagamrutham solidified and spread over on copper plates. It is a standing memorial to that extra ordinary Vaggeyakara for whom no parallel the world has shown so far. He is not a mortal saint composer singer, but the divine Nandaka aspect Sri mahavishnu. Another room next to it is used for stocking and selling of Srivari gold dollars deemed more potent than the chanted amulets. The dollar it is believed wards off evil, besides heightening aesthetic appearance of the wearer.

### **THE HUNDI**

Just opposite and southern side of this lies a rectangular room with hundi in its centre. This room is an integral part of the Tirumamani mandap of the Mukkoti Pradakshina prakara. The Hundi is about a 3 feet by 2 feet brass vessel with a wide mouth and covered from bottom with a white cloth tapering to a height of ten feet and tied to the ceiling of the hall with provision for putting offerings through openings on its four sides. Besides valuable gold and silver ornaments, coins, notes in all denominations small packets holding the tufts of hair of the persons vowed, in addition to grams, pulses, paddy, rice, jaggery and small live animals in carefully covered packets too are thrust into it through the openings of the cloth cover. As thousands of bhaktas offer from early morn to late in the night, the vessel overflows with collections. And so, thrice or four times empty vessel replace the filled up ones. It acts like redemption receptacle receiving into its broad deep stomach, as it were, the devotees' offerings in multifamous shapes and sizes.

### **VISHVAKSENA GUDI**

Coming out of it, you see there situated in the inner most part, a small niche, for Vishvakse the Chief of the Celestial army. As the entrance for this is not so prominent, very few go inside to availing his darsan. The office he holds is very significant and being one of the Nilyasuris attending on Simhavishnu, paying due homage is quite essential.

### **MAHALAKSHMI STATUE**

Emerging from it, you find a gold plated image of Mahalakshmi set up in the outer wall of second prakara at a height of ten feet facing east. Her standing posture, keeping in her hands akshaya patra induces everyone to hopping to that height and touch her holy feet, presuming to be blessed with wealth.

# Tirumala Tirupati Yatra

Partner In Your Spiritual Journey

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ABOUT US

## Srivari Hundi

### SriVari Hundi - Koppera

The Hundi was established in 25-07-1821 for the first time in Tirumala temple. Later on 25-07-1825 it was named as 'Siri Koluva' and the Caldron was draped around with white cloth and was put on 9' height.

Afterwards our family got the hereditary responsibilities and felt as a boon with the blessings of Lord Srinivasa of Tirumala.

The services to the Lord were recognized and some extent of land was donated to us. It was taken as our responsibility and kept a Guard for protection, look after the Income and expenditure simultaneously.

In continuation of this tradition, myself offered a Caldron in the year 2016 weighing 75 kgs., and again on 04-07-2017 another Caldron. We are extremely happy to do the noble service with the divine blessings of Lord Srinivasa.

### Location

The Hundi was located just opposite and southern side of 'ANNAMAYYAARA' in a room with hundi in its centre, which is an integral part of the Tirumamani mandap of Mukkoti Pradakshina prakara.

This is about 3' by 2' brass Caldron (big Vessel) with a wide mouth and covered from bottom with a white cloth tapering to a height of 9' and tied to the ceiling of the hall with a provision for putting offerings through openings on its four sides.

Valuable gold and silver ornaments, coins, notes in all denominations, other materials etc. are being offered inside as vowed by devotees, thrust into it through the openings of the cloth cover.



### Measurements

At present the Caldron is prepared with the measurements and the procedure as given below:

- Brass metal being used to prepare bottom, ear, rings and Copper metal for Circumference of the big Vessel.
- Caldron measurements will be 25" or 27" and bottom circumference and height 25" or 27".
- 9 ¼' metres white cloth for each Caldron.
- 6 metres yellow cloth for 40 Caldrons.
- 60 metres red cloth to prepare Urdhvapundram (Tirunamam) for 40 Caldrons.

The big Vessel thus appears to all like redemption receptacle receiving into its broad stomach.

### Offerings

The devotees come in large number for offering to the deity in a systematic way, adopting 'Q' line from early morning to late in the night, thus the Caldron overflows with collections.

The filled up Caldrons are replaced number of times by empty ones.

### Curious Offerings to Lord from Devotees

Irrespective of their caste, creed, and region, devotees approach the Lord with curious offerings like

- 'Tala Neelalu' hair on the head,
- 'Niluvu Dopidi' (submission of whatever ornaments on the body at the time of taking the vow)
- 'Tulabharam' (offering of items equal to one's weight),
- 'Anga Pradakshina', (circumnutating around the temple in prostrate position)
- 'Akhandha Deeparadhana', (uninterrupted lighting of lamps) and many such.

Lord gracefully accepts all of them! Not only the commoners, but also the affluent and the famous people have submitted offerings to the Lord.

Kings, business tycoons, movie persons, actors, foreigners, all of them submit themselves and make offerings.





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Tirumala Venkateswara Temple

Temples in India

+2



## Can someone send hair to Tirupati Balaji?

Answer

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6 Answers



Nirmalananda Reddy Kasivi, lives in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, India

[Answered May 11, 2017](#)

If someone sends human hair through someone to Tirupati Balaji, when unable to make pilgrimage, the same could be left or placed at the premises of tonsure “*kalyanakatta*”.



Mahesh, former Doctor at Government of Chattisgarh (2013-2016)

[Answered Aug 4](#)

Yes, you can send tonsured hair or mudu katherlu hair along with someone who is actually visiting tirumala. They can drop it in any of the hundis( there's a hundi outside temple near akilandam).

Hair is given always as part of mukku so better will be to personally do it and just in case if it is not possible or getting delayed then they can do it.

It will serve the purpose.

The hair collected is usually e- auctioned and earns some crores of rupees which is again being used to provide better facilities for the devotees.



Sri Venkata Rama, Software Engineer (2009-present)

[Answered May 11, 2017](#)

yes you can. Just ensure there is someone you know well is going to Tirumala. You can give them the hair and request them to drop it in hundi. It is a strong belief that anything offered in Hundi is a offering to lord Venkateswara. My sisters who are in USA had their kids hair sent to me and we personally took it to Thirumala and offered it in hundi.

It is always better to go in person and offer hair. When it is not possible offer it in hundi.



Sasidhar Darla, Founder at Myoksha Travels

[Answered May 16, 2017](#)

I wouldn't recommend doing that. The whole point of pilgrimage is the journey you undertake to visit Lord Balaji. It has it's complete effect only when someone goes to [Tirupati](#) in person and offers the hair.



Rishi Amudala, btech Computer Science and Engineering & Movie Production, SRM Institute of Science and Technology (2021)

[Answered May 5, 2017](#)

one has to tonsure his hair in the uphill and so one cant practically send his/her hair via parcel. you must deliver on the hills.



Siva Kumar, works at Self-Employment

[Answered May 4, 2017](#)

It is not done. A person under such a vow must visit in person, offer his hair (tonsure) in the proper way, and then visit the deity.

## **ADDITIONAL BOOKS ABOUT TONSURING:**

## Pages from the book – “THE ASIATIC JOURNAL” (from 1831)

In this book published in May, August 1831, an English District Collector of the region writes about his personal experience visiting Tirumala. He explains how offerings (or caunickee) from pilgrims asking for blessings or thanking the deity are placed at the foot of the idol—among these offerings is tonsured hair.

*Henry Dugdale*

THE

# ASIATIC JOURNAL

AND

## MONTHLY REGISTER

FOR

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AND

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LEADENHALL STREET.

1831.

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## THE PAGODA OF TRIPETTY.

THE following account of the celebrated temple of Tripetty, situated about eighty miles from Madras, the precincts of which have never been profaned by Christian or Mahomedan feet, nor has even the exterior been seen, according to Hamilton, but by genuine Hindus, will be interesting; it is contained in a letter, with which we are favoured, from a gentleman whose official duties on the spot qualify him to give the best and most authentic information upon the subject:—

“ Tripetty is in a valley, about the centre of a long range of hills running almost north and south. The town of the same name is about eight or nine miles from the pagoda, but not more than two, perhaps less, from the foot of the hills. On the town side, there appears to the eye only one accessible path up the hill; and at different distances, the last at the top of the hill, are three gopurrows or portals, and the pilgrims all pass through these on their way up. On the other side of the hills, which I have never seen, there are other passes up. No Christian eye has ever seen the pagoda, nor even has the profane Mussulman ever attempted to put his foot on the hills, the mere sight of which so gratifies the Hindoos, that leagues off, upon first catching a glimpse of the sacred rocks, they fall prostrate, calling on the idol's name. None but a pure Hindoo dares step beyond the first portal: so we know nothing about the appearance of the pagoda and other sacred buildings, said to be very handsomely constructed there. The idol is worshipped, by votaries who pour in from all parts of India, under a thousand names, but the three principal ones are,—Vengataramana Swamee, or the repeller of evil and insurer of good; Surinawasa-swamee, implying the habitation of Sri, the Indian Ceres; Seshachellawausah, implying the habitation of Sessa, Seshachella being the hill's name, the etymology of which is *Sessa*, the king of serpents, and *achella*, a mountain: Vishnoo having, in one of his incarnations, assumed the appearance of a serpent, and transformed himself into the Tripetty hill. The idol in the temple is an erect stone figure, about seven feet in height, with four arms, and personifies Vishnoo in two of his hands; the right contains the *chuckr*, or mace of war; the left, the *chank*, or holy shell; the other right hand points to the earth, alluding to the sacred origin of the hill; the other left holds the lotus.

“ The early history of the pagoda is involved in the obscurity of Indian mythology and fable. Its antiquity is undoubted, and the bramins assert that it was erected at the commencement of the Cal-yug, of which, I believe, 4930 years have expired. This period is to last only 5,000 years, when the period of Vishnoo's worship on earth is to cease, and the Hindoos are taught to expect his last and most glorious incarnation in person, terminating the days of “contention and business.” This is generally understood from the *Bhagvat Shrestarum Poorana*. Its founder was Tondimaun Chukrawurtee, or Rajah, and there is a village called Tondimanaund, only twelve miles from Tripetty, but containing no remnants of grandeur of any sort. The district called Tondimanaud forms now a portion of the rajah of Calastry's territory, but I cannot help thinking that a very large portion of country, called Tondeimundalum by the natives, was the original kingdom of this dynasty, if it ever existed. It is true, that long before the English ever came to this land, Tondeimundalum existed only in imagination; but, notwithstanding Hindoo, Mussulmanee, and English changes of names, divisions and districts, a large tract of country, capable of forming a territory to support a very powerful prince, is known to

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" The bramins maintain that the Hindoo princes allowed the revenues from this source to be entirely employed on the spot in religious ceremonies, and that the Mussulman first appropriated, on the score of the above claim, the produce of these oblations. During the early wars we had with the French, in this part of the world, this source of revenue was one of the first fruits of our conquests; though certainly its legitimacy is much to be doubted. These offerings, or *caunickee*, are made generally from interested motives, and are of every diversity of articles conceivable; gold and silver lumps, coins of all sorts, bags of rupees, copper money, spices, assafœtida, the hair cut off the head, frequently vowed from infancy, and given up by some beautiful virgin in compliance with her parent's oath. A man who is lame presents a silver leg; if blind, a silver or gold eye; in fact, there would be no end were I to enumerate the various ways in which Hindoo superstition develops itself on this occasion. The jewels, which a woman has worn with pride from infancy, are voluntarily left before the idol; she appears with a shabby cloth before the stone god, and presents a splendid one, which has never been worn; she tears the bangles from her infant's little legs, and fondly hopes that the god, whom she

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will shower down his blessings on her and hers. She has, haply, travelled hundreds of miles, and accomplished her object; and, perhaps, before a journey, which to her might have been one of terror, never left her village and the bosom of her own family. The birth of a son, reconciliation with enemies, success against the foe, safe termination of a journey, the marriage of a son or daughter, prosperity in trade, enjoyment of health, and the reverse of these, are among the reasons which lead together, in the direction of Tripetty, the wise as well as ignorant heathens.

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A sufficient mass being congregated, the blind leader of the blind strikes the standard and returns whither he came, in time for the nuptial anniversary. The farmers of the customs generally permit all pilgrims to pass free to the temple. The goseynes seldom are detected in stealing the caunickee entrusted to their care, but they no doubt derive some emolument from the pilgrims, as their presence alone secures them from trouble, taxation, and other annoyance. As they journey they chaunt out, every five or six minutes, the name and attributes of the god:—"Gōv-Gōv-Gōveenda Raūz-Raūzōō!" the whole party, men, women, and children, successively take up the word, as rapidly as possible, and then simultaneously burst out with it. On my road to Tripetty, we passed several groups of these besotted heathens, and it made the road quite lively, whilst, strange anomaly! a slight reflexion excited mournful feelings.

"The offerings are, of course, of various extent; they seldom exceed 1,000 rupees. The god compliments the worshippers at his altar with presents proportioned to the liberality of their oblation; if the victim gives 100 rupees, he receives a turband; from 100 to 500, a flowered silk vestment; from this to 1,000, a shawl, &c. A second source of revenue is called *wurtana*, or presents given to the idol for its own use; whether jewels, or horse's cloths, &c. The donor is made to pay the estimated value of the offering to government before he is allowed to make the idol its present; however, the article is then retained for the use of the temple. A third source of revenue is designated *arjeetum*, or receipts, and is of three classes, viz. *abbesheykoom*, or purifications; *naivaidoom*, or offerings; *wahanum*, or processions.

"1st. *Abbesheykoom*. Every Friday throughout the year, the idol is anointed with civet, musk, camphire, &c. and washed clean again with milk. So important a spectacle cannot be seen for love, and the devotee, desirous of viewing the operation, pays what he chooses during the rest of the year, but at the Brumhautsoween, pays through the nose, in a sum formerly more, but now reduced to fifty rupees. This ceremony of rubbing, scrubbing, and causing the god to smell sweet, and *vice versâ*, is styled *poolkaub*. 2d. *Porlungee Seeva*, or enrobing his excellency the god in a flower garment. This ceremony takes place every Thursday. During the festival sixty rupees are paid for seeing the business. 3d. *Soomaulah Seeva*. Twelve rupees are paid under this head by all who delight in seeing the idol decorated with a necklace of flowers, and this pleasure may, for this daily payment, be enjoyed for 365 days of the year. 4th. *Sahasranamaschana*. This term signifies the diurnal worship of the god under his thousand names: five rupees is the price of this piece of devotion. 5th. *Munsoon Secva* is an imposing ceremony, and the spectator yields forth twelve rupees for seeing the mighty object of his worship rocked to sleep!

"Proceed we to *naivadoom*, or offerings. 1st. *Annaidoom*. Under this head are,—1st. *purmanum*, 2d. *poolleevagarrum*, 3d. *moodgarrum*, and 4th. *duddeedarum*.

"The first is an offering of milk, sugar, and rice; the second, tamarinds, sweet oil and rice; the third, doll, ghee (clarified butter) and rice; the fourth, butter, milk, and rice. These good things may be prepared severally by the offerer at option, in which case he pays six rupees only; but if the circar provides the treat he pays sixteen. Second, *Bugchanavaidoom*, or offerings of sweetmeats: the devotee has the offering prepared by the circar, and twenty to twenty-eight rupees are paid for the honour of presenting it. Third *Malanavaidoom*, commonly called *Teeroopowrah*, is a large offering of from 1,000 to 2,000 puccah seers of rice, provided by the circar, but paid for in 100 to

200 pagodas. Fourth, *Amuntranarvoocharrum*, or united offerings of all daily offered, but of course to a less extent: the price is sixty-five rupees. Fifth, *Ookaipudchadee meersa*, a presentation of the plant ookai, said to be peculiar to the Tripetty hill; this is four rupees.

“ There remains now to describe *wahanum*, or processions of the idol. They are twelve in number, and each has a reference to different parts of the Hindoo mythology, as connected with the adoration of Vishnoo. The idol, exhibited on these occasions, is a gilded representation, made of metal, of the stone fellow in the temple, who is too lazy to turn out himself. *Kulpavaroocha wahanum* is a procession of the idol placed under a gilt wooden tree; *andoleeka wahanum* is a procession attending his excellency in a palankeen; *sesha wahanum* is the god carried forth on a gilt serpent, Sesha; *seroah boopaulah wahanum* signifies the carrying the idol on a gilt throne; *sooriah prabuh wahanum* is a procession of the idol attended by a gilt sun; *addah arrah* is a trip of the gentleman to a room surrounded by looking-glasses, adjusted to reflect him several times; *andoolum wahanum* is another kind of palankeen procession. For all the above, the votary, who gives the idol the trouble of coming out, is forty rupees less rich than he was before. *Girda wahanum* is the procession in which the idol is mounted on a gilt parrot; *chundra prabuh* is a procession of the idol accompanied by a gilt moon; *hanamuntrum wahanum* is a procession of the idol mounted upon a gilt figure like an elephant, something in representation of Hanamun, the Indian Pan; *sinha wahanum* is a procession in which the idol rides a gilt lion; *balasesha wahanum* is the last procession of the idol, sitting upon a gilt serpent.

“ The whole of the revenues of the temple, from whatever source derived, are under the management of, and appropriated by, the circar or government. A regular establishment is entertained, paid by salaries; and a horde of bramins are maintained by lands, appropriated for that purpose, over the face of the surrounding country, called *manniyums*, or estates enjoyed on very favourable terms under the government, subject only to a slight jody, or tax. The temple is kept up in all its dignity; and the average receipts, on the account of government, for the last ten years or fuslies, will show what a good thing we make of it. The head general officer there is called the tahsildar, whose business is the general superintendence over the others; to see the pilgrims are well treated and lodged in proper places; supplies kept fairly in the bazaars; ceremonies duly performed as paid for, and that no bribery, tyranny, or oppression of any sort takes place. He reports to the collector or his assistants, according to orders, on all cases of doubt or importance. Next is the sheristadar, or head native accountant, who acts under the tahsildar, assists him in all his responsible duties, and superintends the regularly kept accounts of all disbursements and receipts for the use of the temple. Under him are four goomushtahs, or native writers. The rysager is a police clerk, and is assisted by a ghola, and obeys the tahsildar in all magisterial matters. Common servants are allowed for taking care of the dufters, or records, lighting and sweeping the cutcherry, &c. and twenty peons attend the tahsildar's cutcherry, and are paid a pagoda (eight shillings) a month, with two duffadars, or head peons, with larger salary. During the Brumhautsoween, or nine days' festival, an additional sibbundy is allowed of twenty-five peons, twenty pullwars (another kind of peon on lower salaries), and two hircarrahs, or scouts, to bring intelligence of the arrival of any pilgrim of rank; and to keep the peace among the enormous crowd that annually fills this part of the country; we also assist the tahsildar with forty or fifty peons, a party of whom are constantly on the hills

looking out for the thieves who congregate where the prey may be, whilst another party range the country, assisted by the village police, to apprehend suspicious characters. A company also of sepoy, under a native officer, are stationed, as the tahsildar may choose, as permanent guards. The temple has attached to it a granary and store-house, under charge of the jeengar and ekanjee, or his deputy; these have under them a goomushtah, an alowagher, or grain-measurer, three peons, a sandal-wood carrier, a flower carrier, a musk extractor, a potter, a woodman for the cook, a ghola, a sweeper, and a mossolei, or man to light up the place. The tahsildar always sees that the store contains a sufficient stock for any run upon it; he keeps regular accounts of all that enters the granary. The jeengar keeps account of all that is disbursed upon the orders of the partutteegar, or manager of the temple. The parputteegar, or monigar, supplies daily rations of food to all the numerous servants of the temple, sees that they all do their several duties, and is second only to the tahsildar in general superintendence; he takes care that the gifts presented are duly disposed of, searches the guards and others over the places for receiving the offerings, and, with the result of the day's oblations, accompanies them to the tahsildar, who with him seals up in gunny bags whatever is collected in money, jewels, copper, plate, &c. Attached to this officer is a goomushtah, an alowagher, and four peons, and he keeps another account of all he receives from the store; the offerings of food, sweetmeats, &c. presented by the pilgrims, are prepared for them by his orders, and his accounts are counter-examined by the tahsildar. The partutteegar, previous to drawing in any large quantity on the store, sends the estimate to the tahsildar, who countersigns it.

"In passing through the bangla wakalee, or silver porch, the pilgrims are admitted into a rather confined court, and are introduced to the god, in front of whom are two vessels; one called the gungal, or vase, the other kopree, or large cup, and into these the votaries drop their respective offerings, and, making their obeisance, pass out through another door. At the close of the day, the guards, both of peons and sepoy, round these vessels, are searched. Without examination of any sort the offerings are thrown into bags, and are sealed first with the seal of the pagoda, then by the tahsildar and jeengar; after which the bag is sent down to the cutcherry, below the hill at Govinda Rauz Puttum. At the end of the month these bags are transmitted to our cutcherry here, or *huzzoor*, meaning "the presence," and they are then opened, sorted, valued, and finally sold at auction. However, during the Brumhautsoween, either the collector or a subordinate must be on the spot, owing to the value of the offerings, their number, the crowds of people, and to see that no cheating takes place from the want of power of immediate representation; and on this duty I was bound when I wrote from Chandragherry. I have little more to add, except the average revenues of the last ten years. The annual net proceeds from this source is about 87,000 rupees. In 1822, the collections were 1,42,000 and odd; but this is exclusive of expenses, for which 20,000 may be deducted. In 1820, or fusly 1230, the collections were 1,02,000.

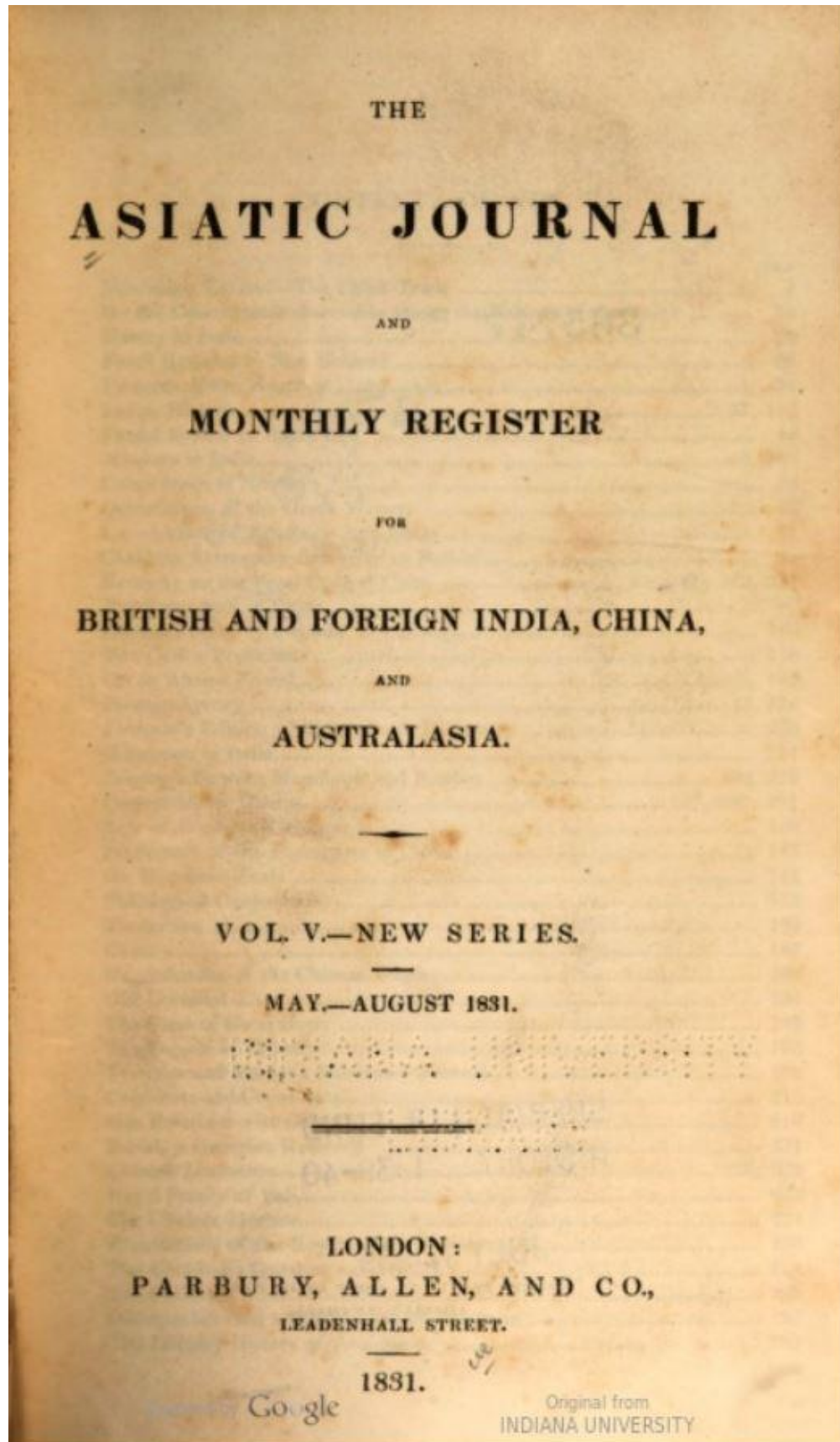
"You may, perhaps, start at such an organized system of religious, or rather you will say profane, plunder on the part of the government. But such, strange as it may appear, is far from the case. Those, who, without just reflexion, join the spiritless cry against our government, are rejoiced in soul to start up such a topic as this, as an answerable specimen of what, with other things, should draw down the vengeance of heaven on us. The fact is this: we find that the resources of this pagoda were legitimately enjoyed by the Mussulman government; for services earned with blood and treasure, and at



the risk of losing our trade on the Coromandel coast, one of the first rewards, or rather poor payment, was this revenue, and it has been paid unremittingly ever since. We found that the allowing the temple to support itself upon its own funds led to the grossest imposition upon settlements of kists; moreover, that the only cultivation in that part of the country was in the hands of bramins, who cannot legally touch a plough; and, therefore, all other castes of ryots were virtually their slaves, and it was absurd for them to dream of holding lands, when it embraced competition with Vishnoo's bramins, under the very nose of his sacred hill; the consequence was, the priests had it all their own way, labour was drawn towards their district to the comparative impoverishment of the surrounding ones, and such was found to be the case all over the presidency. Every village-pagoda was the petty oppressor of its range, and its influence only stopped when the effects of a neighbouring one interfered with it. It was a strange but a determined piece of policy, when, throughout the country, the pagoda lands were resumed by the Company, and tusdeck allowances granted in their place; the lands passed into other hands, and the riches, solely grasped by the bramins, are diffused amongst the real cultivators of the soil, and the coffers of the state replenished by the new stimulus thus afforded to every branch of native manufacture. Our tenure of this country was then very precarious; and, wild as is the Hindoo, he has fought, and will fight again, perhaps sooner than we think of; and the experience of ages tells us what religious enthusiasm, or fanaticism,—or call it what you will—will do when wrought up to despair. What did we? why, secured them in the exercise of their religion—tolerated it—we never encouraged it, we could not if we would. Now let us contemplate the result of this plan. From one end of the country to the other, pagodas are ruined; unmaintained bramins are in trade, serving in the army, and gradually learning that even to them beggary is no livelihood. The oppressive hand of the bramin was removed from the neck of the people, and the influence they once had will never again be felt to a similar extent. The revenues of Tripetty are on a gradual decline, and will die in the lapse of years a natural death. Some of the most celebrated temples in the country are worse off, but there are still, alas! many more strong holds of the devil.

“For the correctness of all the above details I cannot answer, as the temple or devastanum is not within the scope of my duties, although I have the revenue administration of the talook in which Tripetty is; but to the best of my knowledge the information I have given is correct; it is derived from what I can collect in my office; but the natives in general are deplorably ignorant when you push them on such a subject, or perhaps pretend to be so.”

Pages from the original book – “THE ASIATIC JOURNAL” (from 1831)





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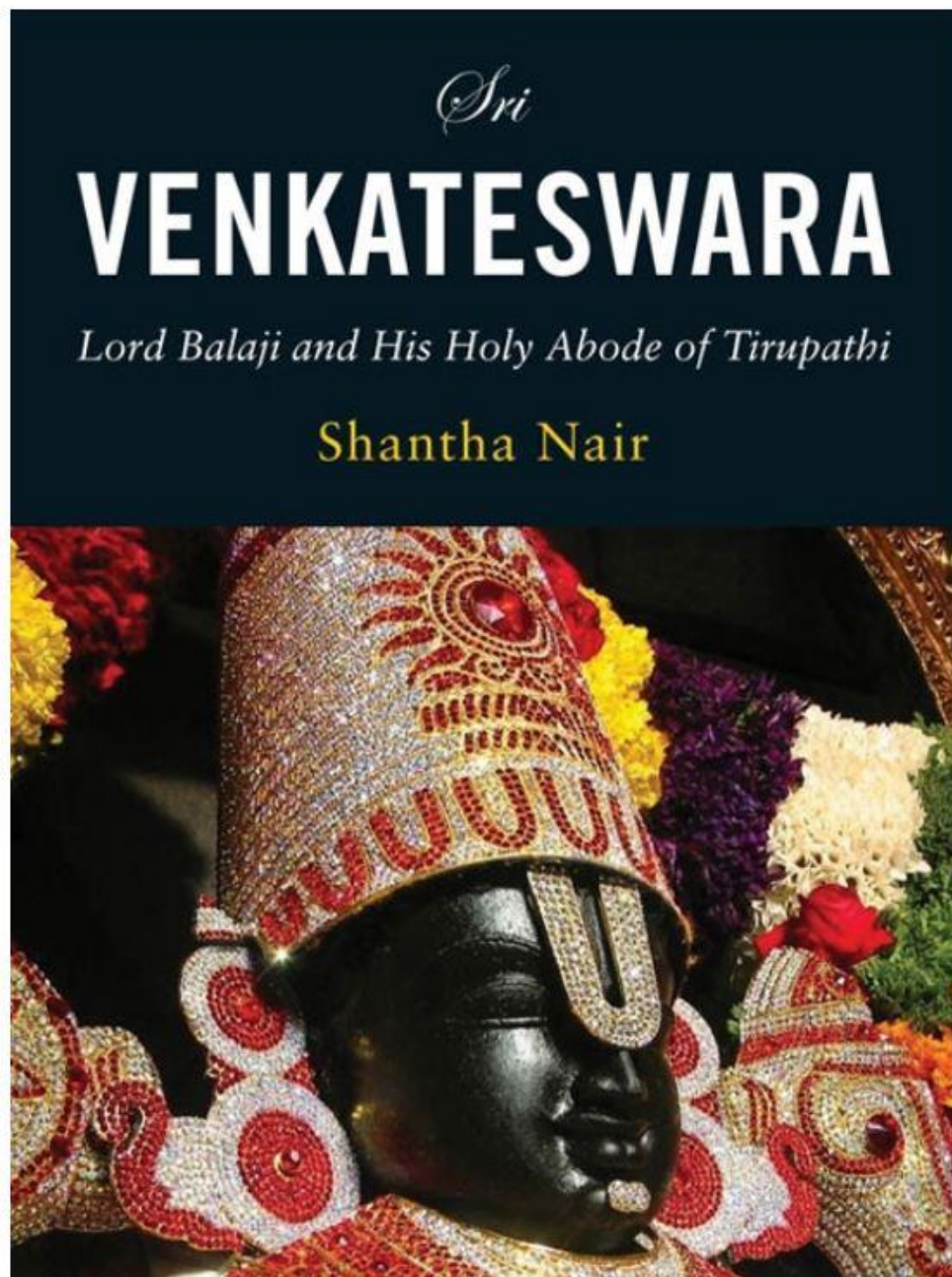
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## Pages from the book – “SRI VENKATESHWARA”

The following pages are from the book “Sri Venkateshwara” by Shantha Nair. On the back of the book it says: "Shantha Nair, MA, PhD, has studied, worked and lived for the majority of her life and career in the temple town of Tirupathi. She has written many books on Hindu religion, spirituality and economics."





*Sri*  
**VENKATESWARA**  
*Lord Balaji and His Holy Abode of Tirupathi*

Shantha Nair



**JAICO PUBLISHING HOUSE**

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I am grateful to my husband Sri K C N Nair for his continuous support, advice, help, guidance and cooperation. I take pride in mentioning the fact that I could obtain most of the material for

writing this book because of the constant assistance and help of my son Uday Gowri Shankar. Since his infancy he has been brought up in Tirupathi and he earnestly feels, along with my husband and me, that our family owes its immense blessings to Lord Venkateswara. May the Lord guide him, protect him and bless him always. I am thankful to my daughter-in-law Roopa Shankar for her cooperation. My grandchildren Pranav Shankar and Gayatri Shankar who have also been brought up in Tirupathi since their infancy, I hope, would feel the same way as their father, my son, and be grateful for all the blessings of the Lord and become good human beings when they grow up. Last but not the least, I owe my gratitude to my late uncle Sri K N Chandrasekharan Nair for encouraging me, till his last breath, to write books.



## Preface

The glory, sanctity and antiquity of the sacred Hill known as Tirumala and that of the Teerthas or the holy springs that are found there, the Temple located on top of it and most important, the Supreme power or energy that resides in the inner core of all beings, and that has manifested itself as Lord Venkateswara or Srinivasa, is beyond human understanding.

However, an attempt is made in this book to describe the sanctity, glory and antiquity of the Temple through the legendary tales found in the various Puranas and in the beliefs of the Bhakthas. The Deity, the Temple and the sacred Hill known as Tirumala attract millions of devotees. It is considered 'Kaliyuga Vaikunta' and the Deity the 'Kaliyuga Varada' who washes away all the sins of His devotees and grants material prosperity and a



happy and peaceful life on Earth for all who sincerely pray to him. He uplifts the minds of those who take refuge in Him and liberates them from the sorrows of life. He blesses them with the experience of Sat-Chit-Ananda that is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

An effort is also made to explain the history of the sacred Hill, the Temple and Tirupathi and Tirumala regions. The structure of the Temple, the inscriptions found on the walls and the Sevas and festivals are also described.

A short sketch of the various activities of the Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanams that administers this Temple and that is taken mainly from the TTD official website is also presented here.

This book is a guide to the visiting pilgrim, both to first-time and regular devotees. I have compiled and summarised the information that I collected from various sources. Therefore any credit due goes to the authors of the sources from where the required information could be obtained and not to the author of this book. The book was written as a mark of gratitude to Lord Venkateswara for all His blessings. I place it at His feet. May the Lord forgive me for any errors. May the Lord bless all beings on Earth with material and spiritual well-being, happiness and peace.

— Dr. Shantha N Nair





## 2

# Sanctity, Glory and Antiquity of the Deity and Tirumala

The origin of the temple of Lord Srinivasa on the Tirumala Hills is shrouded in mystery. It is believed to be extremely ancient, as even the Rig Veda (*Verse X.155.1*) makes an indirect reference to the temple and its deity. We find references to the sanctity of the sacred Hill in the Epics. In *Kamba Ramayana* (Tamil), in the *Kishkinda Kanda*, it is said that the Hill reveals the Eternal Truth as contained in the four *Vedas* and all the *Sastras*.

In the *Puranas*, one can find many legends associated with the Temple. The book *Sri Venkatachala Mahatmyam* narrates the

stories of the Lord's manifestation on Tirumala from the 12 *Mahapuranas*. The greatness of the Temple and the sanctity of the *teerthas* found on Tirumala are mentioned in the *Varahapurana*, *Padma Purana*, *Garuda Purana*, *Brahmanda Purana*, *Markandeya Purana*, *Skanda Purana*, *Brahmottara Purana*, *Harivamsa*, *Brahma Purana*, *Vamana Purana*, *Adithya Purana*, and *Bhavishyottara Purana*. The *Varaha*, *Vamana*, *Bhavishyottara*, *Brahma*, *Brahmanda* and *Padma Puranas* relate that Sri Venkateswara made the Hill His abode 28 Mahayugas or 7,77,60,000 years ago. (One Mahayuga is said to be equivalent to 43,20,000 human years).

The Seven Hills represent the seven hoods of Adi Sesha the cosmic serpent. By merely looking at its peak, it is said that Balarama attained the fruit of all pilgrimages. The sage Agasthya, after performing great penance here, had a vision of the Lord. King Dasaratha was supposed to have visited this sacred Hill and had a holy dip in the Swami Pushkarini. He meditated here and had a vision of Lord Narayana. Then he was blessed with four children, the eldest one being Sri Ramachandra who is considered an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Sri Rama is also believed to have visited this Hill during His search for Sita. All the Devas, Gods and Rishis are believed to have come down to Earth and performed penance on this Hill to have a vision of the Lord.

The *Sri Venkatachala Mahatmyam* or *Thiruvengkata Mahatmyam Teertha* is a Sthala Puranam that was compiled by Pasindi Venkatatthuraivar alias Jiyar Ramanujayyan. It was first read out in the temple in 1491. This book contains the summary of tales from about 12 different *Puranas* along with the additions made by the author. It was translated into Telugu in 1884 when Sri Mahant Bhagavandasji was the administrator. It was later re-



published by his grand disciple Sri Mahant Ramakishoradasji and reprinted in 1928 by his disciple Mahant Prayagadasji, the last Vicharakarta of the temple at Tirumala. Later Sri G V Chalapathi Rao translated this work into English and published the book in 1983.

## Tales from the *Puranas*

The *Bhavishyottara Purana* contains a chapter on the greatness and glory of Venkatachala and Lord Venkateswara narrated by the sage Sutha to the sage Sounaka and others. In the entire Universe, the holiest and the most sacred Kshetra is Ananda Nilaya on Venkatachala. It is a cure-all for every disease and sin. It is the ultimate goal and sacred refuge for all. There is no Sastra that excels Vedantha and there is no God higher than Sri Venkateswara. There is none more blissful than Sri Venkateswara. His form is Sat-Chit-Ananda. Salvation is assured to one who visits Him. Even Lord Shiva enlightened Parvathi about the efficacy and glory of this holy Kshetra and the merit achieved by bathing in the sacred Teerthas particularly in Swami Pushkarini. Sage Sutha told the rishis who were listening to his narration, that it was impossible for a thousand Seshas to describe for a thousand years the glory of Sri Venkatachala. Even a minor part of it, if narrated, would bestow merit and longevity. If one reads or writes about or listens to the glory of Sri Venkatachala, one would attain prosperity and achieve one's desires.

So-called modern rationalists may belittle these tales as mere mythical claptrap. They may argue that the stories have no logic or reasoning behind them. They may say that these tales have been spun since time immemorial to fool the ordinary man and to



condition the minds of children in a set pattern of behaviour and thinking. But one must understand that these Puranic tales were told, not by ordinary humans, but by ancient sages of advanced intellect. If the sages have passed them down to mankind, they must have had some deeper purpose. These incidents might have actually happened during ancient times, as people of those days were nearer to God the Almighty or the creator, or the divine energy, whatever one may call it. In olden times, spiritual well-being and material comforts and pleasures were given equal importance.

It is also possible that these tales were a combination of real incidents embellished by the creative imagination of the seers, who wanted to make the lofty truths of the *Vedas* and the spiritual quest palatable to the masses. Whatever their origin, one should not see only the outward meaning of the stories. Instead one should dive deep and gather the pearls of wisdom that lie within them. Merely listening to the stories is like eating the rind of a fruit and discarding the sweet flesh. The rind only protects the nutritious edible part of the fruit. The ancient rishis were magnanimous enough to come down to the level of ordinary humans to help them understand the one and the only truth through simple tales.

It is told that after compiling the *Vedas* and composing the Brahma Sutras, the great sage Vyasa was still discontented. It was Narada who made him realise the reason for his discontent. Vyasa was successful in explaining and demystifying the ultimate Truth through the *Vedas* and its gist, the Brahma Sutras, but he failed to reveal the path of Bhakthi or devotion that was suitable for the majority. So he asked Vyasa to compose the *Puranas*. The intention of the seers was to lift the minds of ordinary men to the



higher level of spiritual knowledge or Jnana. They began with stories, for which of us doesn't like listening to stories?

From the lower level of Bhakthi that relates to the worship of the external forms of the divine, where the devotee prays for material comforts and well-being and in which he considers himself as different from that Supreme power, the sages tried to lift the devotee's mind to the higher level of Bhakthi where the Bhaktha seeks nothing from his deity but becomes one with Him; where emotion becomes devotion. To such a person everything that he sees and hears is the Paramatman. Somewhere along the way, the duality disappears and he becomes one with his chosen deity.

Just as the man who tries to rescue another person who has fallen into a pit, bends down a little to catch hold of the other person's hands to pull him upwards, similarly the sages of yore were generous enough to come down from the high perch of their intellect, to the level of the ordinary seeker.

The knowledge or Jnana that the Bhaktha gains in the initial stages through constant and continuous devotion to the Supreme power through idol worship, develops and culminates in Vijnana or wisdom, where he actually experiences the One without name and form. Thus Bhakthi that was at first emotional, then intellectual in content, transforms to Supreme knowledge or Vijnana, enabling the Bhaktha to become that which he worships.

As the great sage Ramakrishna Paramahansa said, Jnana or knowledge means knowing all about a fruit and its taste, but Vijnana or wisdom is actually enjoying and experiencing the taste of the fruit. So to condemn and ridicule mythological tales and the beliefs of the people, only reveals an attempt to view the ancient



wisdom through the lens of modernity. If the people who have no belief in scriptures want to really understand their inner meaning and purpose, then they need to conduct a thorough study.

The worship in the temple of Lord Venkateswara is conducted as per the Vaikhanasa Agama. According to the Bhavishyottara Purana, Sage Vaikhanasa after long *tapas* or penance, had a vision of Lord Krishna who told the sage that he should worship Him as Lord Srinivasa in Seshachala and that he would find the deity in an anthill with the help of His devotee Rangadasa. The sage then proceeded to Tirumala and with the help of Rangadasa, located the deity and started worshipping Him. Since he was the first to worship the Lord at Tirumala, his mode of worship is the one adhered to today.

According to the *Varaha Purana*, Adi Varaha manifested Himself on the western bank of Swami Pushkarini. When Lord Vishnu came down to Tirumala Hills, he met Lord Varaha and informed him about His desire to stay there till the end of Kaliyuga. Lord Varaha agreed and Lord Narayana took the form of Lord Venkateswara and remained on the southern bank of Swami Pushkarini.

According to a story in the *Brahma Purana*, Lord Vishnu asked Narada to suggest a place on Earth for him to visit and Narada indicated a place near Seshachala. In the meantime, Vayu, the Lord of Wind came to Vaikunta to pay his respects to Lord Vishnu. Adishesha, who was guarding the doorway to Vaikunta, prevented Vayu from entering. This led to an argument, with each boasting of his superiority over the other. Adishesha encircled the Ananda Hill that was an offshoot of the Meru Mountain. Vayu tried to blow away the hill with all his might. The fight took a serious turn and



the entire world trembled. All the devas led by Indra requested them to stop the contest. They consented, but Vayu had already blown away Adishesha and the hill to the bank of Swami Pushkarini. Adishesha was merged by the gods with the hill which became Venkatadri. Adishesha turned into Seshadri with his hood as Venkatadri, holding Lord Venkateswara. As suggested by Narada, Vishnu decided to stay there. It is said that Adishesha's middle became Ahobila supporting Lord Narasimha and his tail became Sri Sailam that became Lord Shiva's abode. His mouth became Sri Kalahasthi where Lord Shiva is represented as the element of Vayu or air.

The *Brahmanda Purana* narrates that the Lord ordered the Kreedha Parvatha from Vaikunta to be placed in Tirumala. In the last Kritha Yuga, a demon called Vrishabhasura lived on Kreedha and he was doing great penance near the Thumburu Kona Teertha. When Lord Vishnu appeared before him, the demon pleaded that the Lord fight with him so that he could know who was more powerful. In the end, the Asura was killed by the Lord using His Sudarsana Chakra. The hill came to be known as Vrishabhachalam.

During Tretha Yuga, a woman named Anjana Devi lived near Pampa Saras (Hampi). As she was childless, she did great penance here to beget a child and the god of wind Vayu appeared before her. He blessed her with a child who was Anjaneya. So the hill got the name Anjanadri.

Another tale, similar to the one about Venkatadri, says that in the Dwapara Yuga, when Lord Vishnu was with Sri Lakshmi, Vayu the wind God tried to enter His chamber. Adishesha forbade Vayu from disturbing the Lord and his consort. During the quarrel,



Adishesha wound himself around Mount Meru and covered it with his thousand-headed hood. Vayu began to blow fiercely, throwing the three worlds into a panic. The inhabitants approached Adishesha and requested him to relent by lifting at least one hood for a split second. When he conceded to their request, one bit of Mount Meru whirled away and fell on the bank of River Swarnamukhi. It became the Tirumala Hills and came to be known as Seshachala.

According to one legend, Lord Vishnu bade Sesha to go to Earth and establish himself there as a mountain for the Lord to stay. Sesha accordingly became a mountain with his hood and tail at Kalahasthi, and Sri Sailam respectively and his body forming the sacred mountain of Tirumala, Lord Vishnu's abode.

Another tale relates, that after the great deluge, when the demon king Hiranyaksha hid the Earth under water, Lord Vishnu assumed the form of a boar or Varaha and lifted and brought back the Earth after a fierce battle, at the end of which the Lord killed the demon. It is said that after the battle, the Lord bade His vehicle Garuda to fetch Kridachala that was 30 yojanas long and 3 yojanas wide (1 yojana is equal to approximately 14 km) from Vaikunta. Kridachala was a huge hill with lofty peaks where gold and precious stones were found. It resembled the shape of Adishesha, the king of serpents on which the Lord reclined. It is believed that Garuda brought Kridachala on his powerful shoulders and placed it in a sacred spot to the east of Swami Pushkarini where the Lord was waiting for him. The Lord sat there as Adi Varaha. Since Garuda, the vehicle of Lord Narayana brought Kridachala or Kreedadri to Earth at the Lord's command, the Hill came to be known as Garudadri.



At the request of Lord Brahma and other devas, Lord Vishnu who had adopted a ferocious mien while destroying Hiranyaksha, assumed a gentle form and remained in that place permanently to protect His devotees. In course of time an anthill came up on this spot. Later, the king of the land consecrated Lord Varaha along with His consort Bhudevi in a shrine here. It is also said that all the devas headed by Lord Brahma went to Vaikunta to see Lord Narayana. There they were told that Lord Vishnu had gone to stay in a place called Narayanagiri on Earth. Lord Brahma and the other devas proceeded to Narayanagiri. There, the Lord revealed Himself for the first time.

A legend goes that when the Lord was hit on His head by a shepherd, a small portion of His scalp became bald and this was noticed by a Gandharva princess Neeladevi. She felt that such an attractive face should not have a flaw. So she cut a portion of her hair and implanted it on the scalp of the Lord. Pleased with her act, the Lord promised that the hair offered by His devotees at the shrine would go only to her. It is believed that all the hair offered by devotees is accepted by Neeladevi.

Once, a Brahmin named Narayana meditated upon Lord Srinivasa near Swami Pushkarini. After a long *tapas*, Lord Narayana appeared before him. The Brahmin requested the Lord to name the Hill Narayanachala. The Lord agreed and said that the Hill would henceforth be known as Narayanachala.

A narrative about Rangadasa, a staunch devotee of Lord Vishnu, relates that during his pilgrimage to Tirumala, he had a *darshan* of Lord Vishnu's idol under a tamarind tree fully exposed to sun and rain. So the devotee erected a rough stone wall around the idol and started worshipping it. After some time, the frolicking of a



**LOCATED ON THE VERDANT FOOTHILLS** of the Eastern Ghats, Tirupathi is both a cultural hub and a major pilgrimage site. Nestled in its Tirumala Hills is the famous temple of Sri Venkateswara Swami, fondly called Balaji by his worshippers. Devotees believe that Sri Venkateswara, a form of Lord Vishnu, answers the prayers of all those who seek his help and performs the greatest miracles in granting their wishes. As a result, the temple draws millions of pilgrims to its doors and is the busiest pilgrimage centre in the world.

*Sri Venkateswara: Lord Balaji and His Holy Abode of Tirupathi* is a compilation of numerous folk legends on the benevolent Balaji. The book also offers an insight into the 1000-year-old customs and traditions of the sacred Tirumala Hills.

Written as a mark of gratitude to the Lord, the book details all the rituals, *sevas* and festivals associated with him. Here also are captured glimpses of the many *teerthas*, lakes and waterfalls of Tirumala. Along with this is a wealth of information for visitors and devotees alike on the various educational, medical and developmental activities of Tirupathi.

**SHANTHA NAIR**, MA, PhD, has studied, worked and lived for the majority of her life and career in the temple town of Tirupathi. She has written many books on Hindu religion, spirituality and economics.

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## Information about the popular Indian comic book series – “AMAR CHITRA KATHA”

Amar Chitra Katha is a very popular comic book series in India (and worldwide) that has been teaching about Indian culture and religion for decades. Founded in 1967, they have printed more than 400 comics in over 20 languages that have sold more than 100 million copies.


Amar Chitra Katha is considered a cultural phenomenon. In 2011 they launched a new series depicting the legends of Tirupati. The following pages have pictures from the Amar Chitra Katha website, news articles about the series and pages from one of their books “Tirupati – The Lord of Tirumala”





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# ABOUT AMAR CHITRA KATHA

Amar Chitra Katha is a famed household name. Founded in 1967 by Anant Pai, lovingly called Uncle Pai, the purpose of the comic series was to spread knowledge and create a better awareness about Indian mythology.

The comic series focuses on different genres, including epics and mythology, fables and humor and visionaries, among others. Tales of bravehearts succeeding at war and boxed collections, Amar Chitra Katha has it all.

With more than 400 comics in 20+ languages that have sold more than 100+ million copies to date, Amar Chitra Katha is a cultural phenomenon. With a national distribution across all major book retailers, hundreds of small bookstores and thousands of vendors, the titles remain immensely popular in the classic illustrated format.

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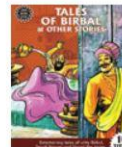
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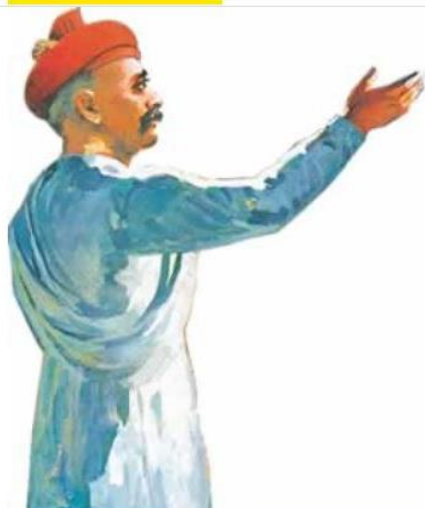
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## A GUIDE TO THE WORLD OF AMAR CHITRA KATHA

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## AMAR CHITRA KATHA TO TELL TALES ABOUT

By Manasi Paresh Kumar | Updated: Jun 28, 2011, 11:50 PM IST



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It is the most well-known ritual associated with the Tirupati temple, yet most people have no clue as to why they tonsure their heads at the richest temple in India. The case of legends and rituals associated with other famous temples of the country is no different.

**Which is why Amar Chitra Katha, Uncle Pai's iconic comic book series which has endeared itself to millions of Indians and become an essential part of growing up, decided to bring the legends of Tirupati to the young readers in a new series.**

And those like Purvaj Rao, a techie, whose five-year-old son refused to shave his head for Lord Balaji, couldn't be more than delighted with Amar Chitra Katha's volume no 829.

“My son was five years old, when we took him to Tirupati. But he refused to have his head shaved as he thought his friends would make fun of him. He finally agreed on the condition that I tell him why he had to do it. I was then forced to come up with my version of the ritual. But to this day I have no clue,” says Rao, with his 7-year-old son still believing that he had his head shaved to please Lord Balaji and let the hair grow back on the bald pate of his grandfather!

**Like Rao, there are millions, devotees or otherwise, who are clueless about legends associated with the temple. The reason why Reena Puri, editor, Amar Chitra Katha, decided on a series on the most famous temples of the country. “The legend about tonsuring at Tirupati is associated with the tale of Gandharva princess Neela Devi who cut her locks to cover a bald patch on Lord Vishnu's head. The deity, who was impressed with the deed, declared that devotees who came to worship him should offer their hair to clear the Lord's debt,” says Reena Puri about the legend.**

For the series, which had earlier come out with tales related to Hampi, it was only natural to choose Tirupati as their next subject. “It is among the most famous temples in the country with lakhs of devotees. It is a legend that needs to be told to our children,” says Reena.

The edition, which will hit the stands on July 15, will narrate tales of how Lord Vishnu came to earth to pacify his wife Lakshmi who was miffed with him after Sage Bhrigu insulted her to the story of King Akasa Raja who is said to have found the statue of Lord Venkateshwara in an anthill and built the magnificent temple around it.

Given the many smaller tales associated with the main myth, which are equally if not more interesting than the original one, the group had its task cut out when it came to picking the stories for the volume. “We selected two of the main stories associated with the temple. We have also included side notes on some of the more well-known rituals,” says Reena.

Interestingly, the facts have not been whetted by priests or their relatives associated with the temple but by an IAS officer.

**“We have had our facts and stories checked by K Venkata Ramanachari, principal secretary-revenue (endowments), Govt of Andhra Pradesh. We have also spoken to devotees who are well-versed with the legend,” she says.**

The next in the series will feature tales and fables surrounding the famous Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu. “We are always looking for stories that speak about our culture and history,” says Reena.



## BOOKS

# Unknown legends and fables about Tirupati in Amar Chitra Katha

By [Lavanya Srinivasan](#) | Published: July 07 2011

Amar Chitra Katha will bring to life unknown legends and fables about Tirupati, the most visited place of worship in the world in its latest series.

**The magic of Amar Chitra Katha never** fades away; it brings alive the Indian storytelling tradition through a unique blend of commentary, dialogue and illustration in comic format. The Indic art style and vibrant compositions lends a sense of drama thus elevating the experience of storytelling. The comics have been an integral part of generations of readers inspiring them with deep rooted culture and values thus making it a -one of its kindøcultural phenomenon. And when they recently announced the launch of their latest comic ó Tirupati, based on facts and legends surrounding India's richest temple, I couldnø help but sit up and take [notice](#).

The comic Tirupati aims to capture a pan-Indian cultural ethos given the temple's iconic status as one of the richest temples in the world and its great reverence amongst Indian people from all walks of life. The temple of Tirupati is an integral part of our cultural heritage. From the northern tip of the country to its huge southern following, Tirupati has always captured the imagination and devotion of India, be it film-stars to tourists. The unique mix of legends like Sage Bhrigu's insult to Lakshmi, the domestic quarrel that leads to Lord Vishnu coming to earth, living as a mere mortal, the unique association of Padmavati with Lord Venkateshwara, **and of how we till today offer our hair to the Lord to clear his debt to a Gandharva Princess, are retold in this comic.**

The launch of Tirupati is the culmination of months of hard work and research for the team at Amar Chitra Katha. Reena Puri, Editor, Amar Chitra Katha, sums it up succinctly, "To pay a tribute as iconic as this, we required various highly motivated individuals to come together as a team. From accurate research to an interesting script and beautiful illustrations, it has been our endeavor to maintain the sanctity and respect due to this magnificent institution. We are also grateful to Dr K. Venkata Ramanachari for vetting the script, and for his valuable inputs."

**Artist, Sundara Moorthy, adds "Amar Chitra Katha has been a part of Indian literature and history for decades now, with an entire generation being brought up on a staple fare of its varied titles.** Before I started drawing the comic, I visited the temple of Tirupati for my research. I spent two days sketching the area and the statues, so I could depict them accurately. A lot of the designs I've used in the backgrounds of the comic have been derived from actual stone carvings and sculptures that I saw in Tirupati."

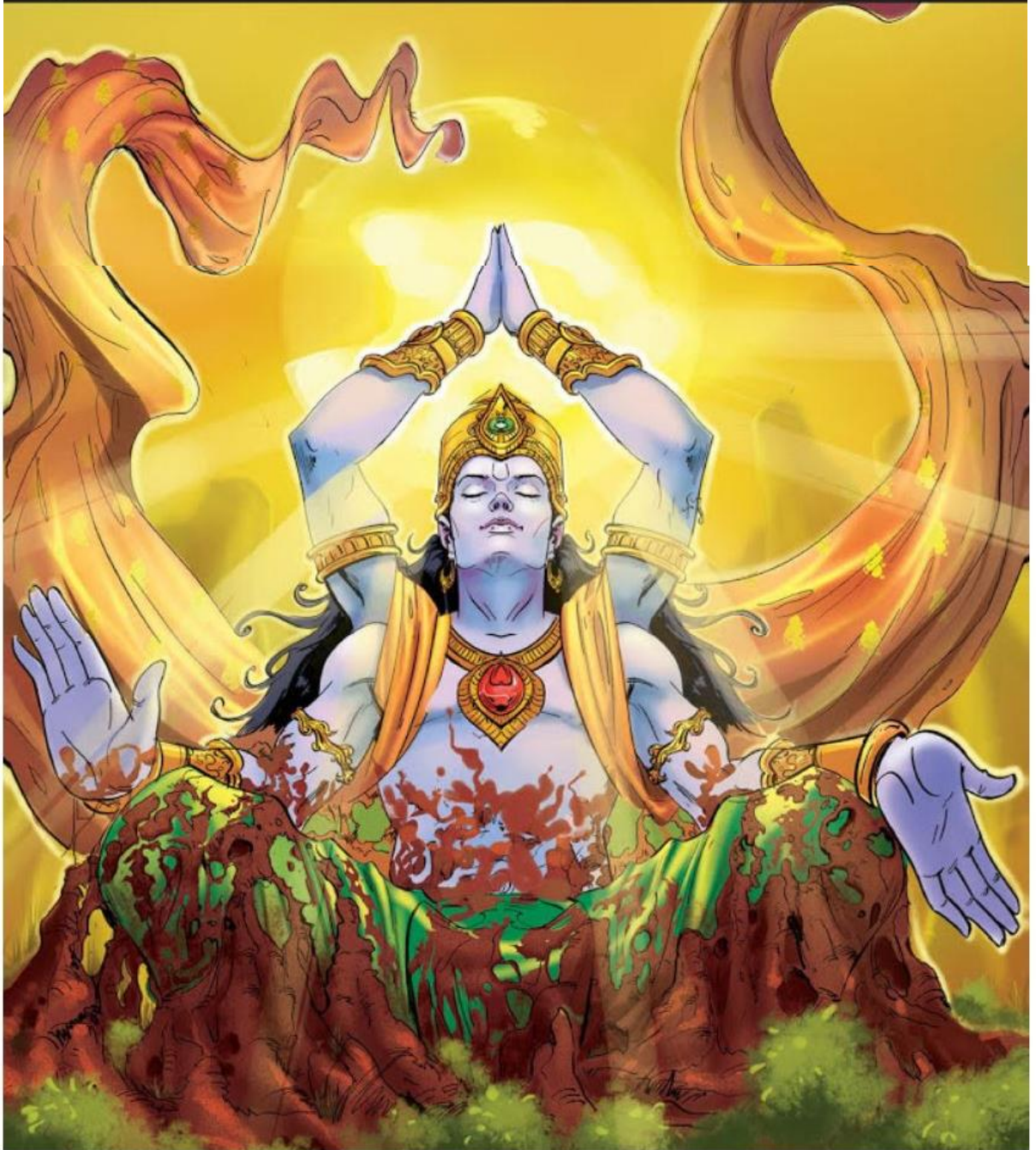
**Tirupati will be available on stands from July 15, 2011.**



# TIRUPATI

THE LORD OF TIRUMALA

Vol 828





The route to your roots

**Founder Editor: Anant Pai**

When they look back at their formative years, many Indians nostalgically recall the vital part Amar Chitra Katha picture books have played in their lives. It was **ACK – Amar Chitra Katha** – that first gave them a glimpse of their glorious heritage.

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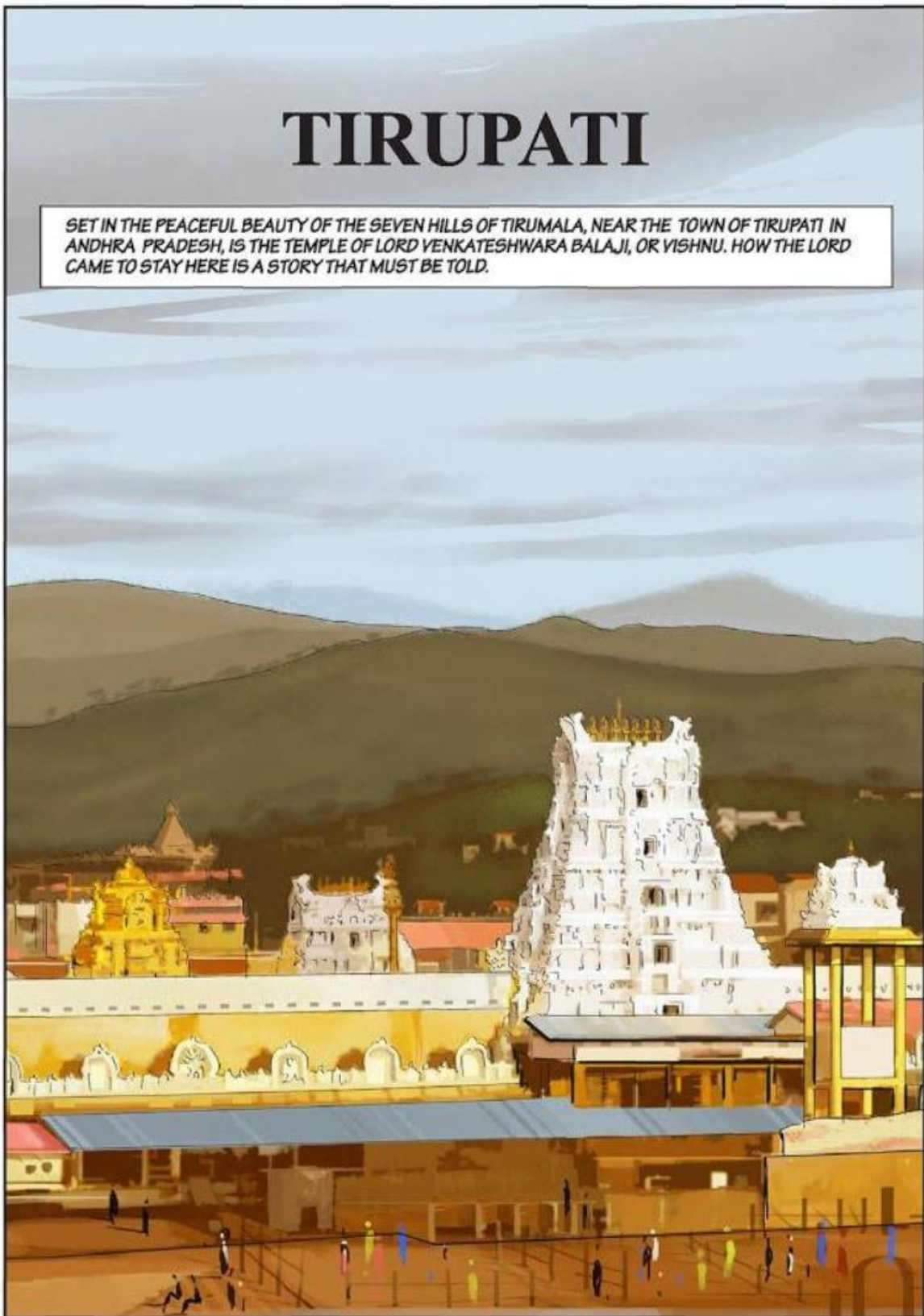
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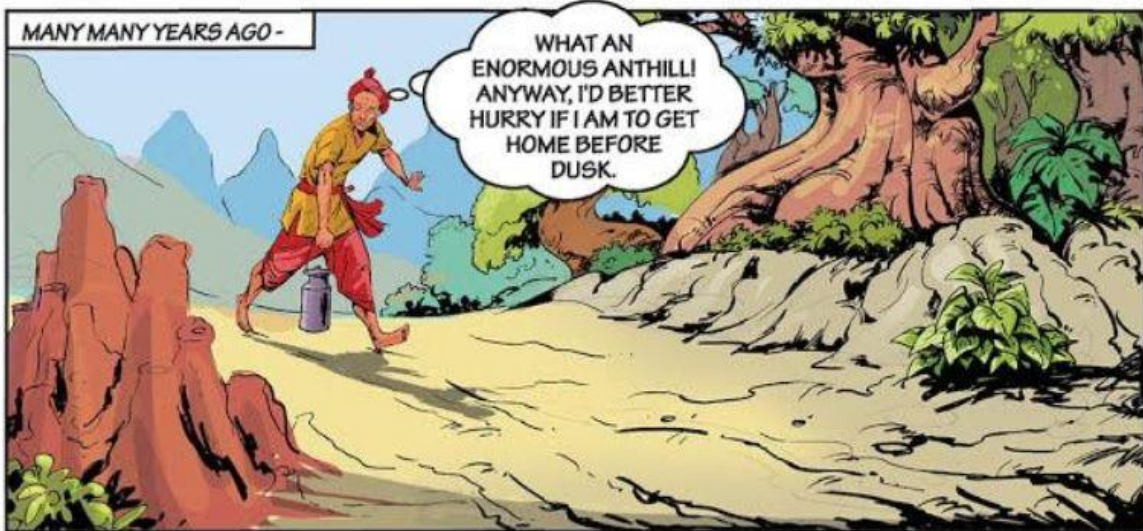


# TIRUPATI

SET IN THE PEACEFUL BEAUTY OF THE SEVEN HILLS OF TIRUMALA, NEAR THE TOWN OF TIRUPATI IN ANDHRA PRADESH, IS THE TEMPLE OF LORD VENKATESHWARA BALAJI, OR VISHNU. HOW THE LORD CAME TO STAY HERE IS A STORY THAT MUST BE TOLD.



MANY MANY YEARS AGO -



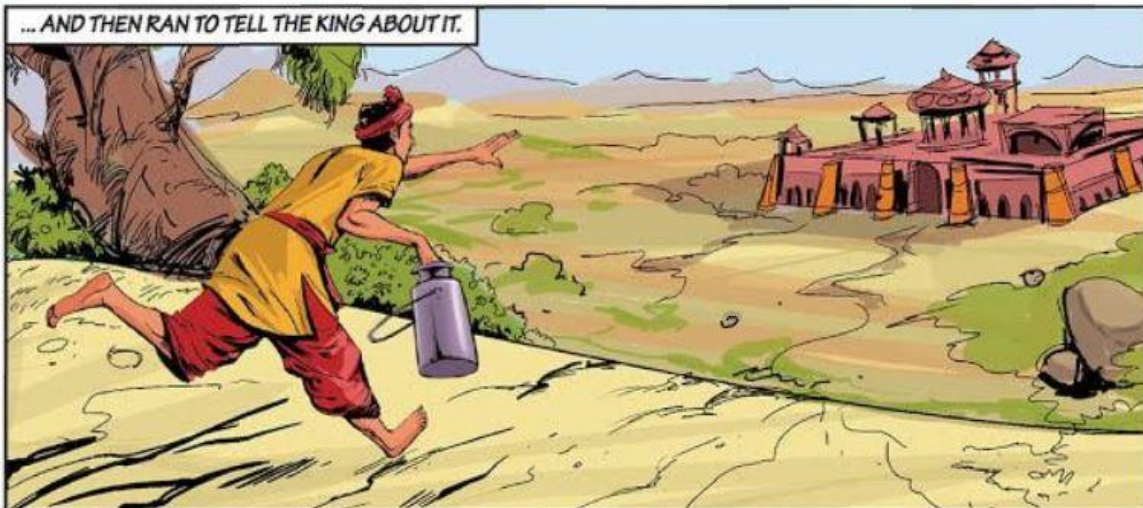
SUDDENLY -



SCARED AND BEWILDERED, THE FARMER POURED MILK ON THE ANTHILL ...



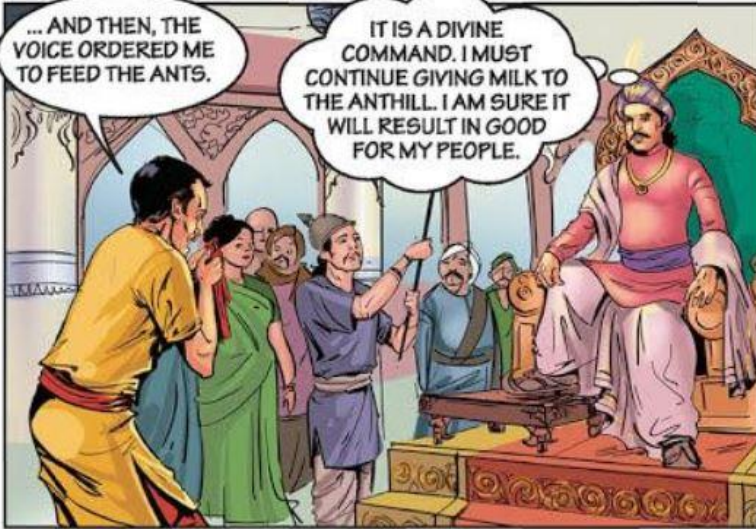
... AND THEN RAN TO TELL THE KING ABOUT IT.





... AND THEN, THE VOICE ORDERED ME TO FEED THE ANTS.

IT IS A DIVINE COMMAND. I MUST CONTINUE GIVING MILK TO THE ANTHILL. I AM SURE IT WILL RESULT IN GOOD FOR MY PEOPLE.



SO, THE KING BEGAN OFFERING MILK TO THE ANTHILL EVERY MORNING.



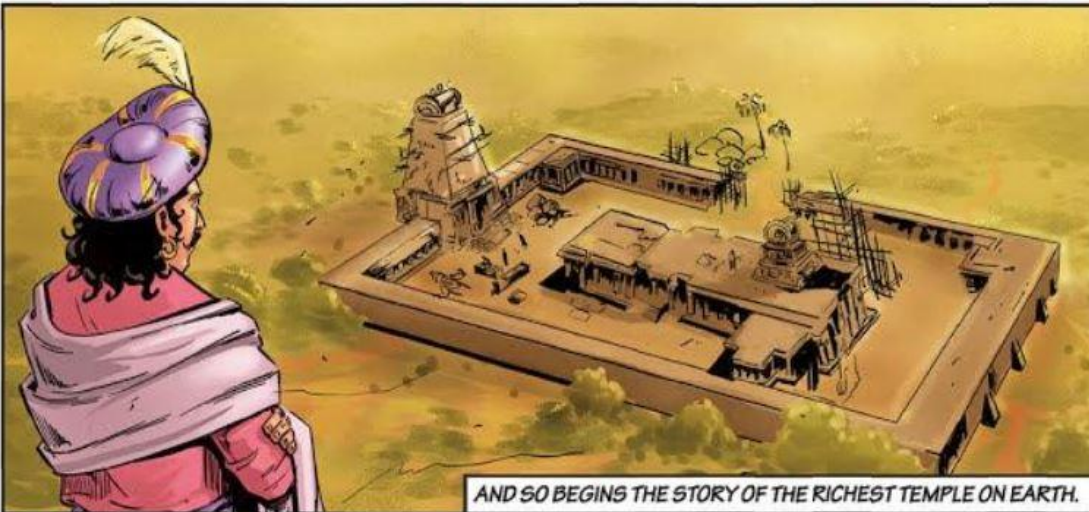
SOON -



WHAT IS THIS? AN IDOL HIDDEN WITHIN THE ANTHILL!



I WAS RIGHT. THIS WAS A DIVINE BIDDING. I WILL NOW BUILD A TEMPLE FOR THIS IDOL, MATCHING ITS SERENITY AND BEAUTY.



AND SO BEGINS THE STORY OF THE RICHEST TEMPLE ON EARTH.



LAKSHMI DESCENDED TO EARTH AND BEGAN TO LIVE IN KARVIPUR\*.

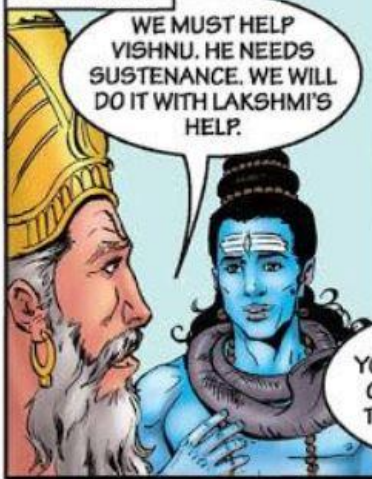
VISHNU WAS DESOLATE.



SEARCHING FOR LAKSHMI, VISHNU CAME TO EARTH AND STEPPED INTO THE SESHACHALAM\*\* HILLS. HERE HE MEDITATED IN AN ANTHILL, WITHOUT FOOD OR WATER.



MEANWHILE -



BRAHMA AND SHIVA TOOK THE FORM OF A CALF AND A COW. THEY WENT TO LAKSHMI WITH NARADA, WHO TOLD HER OF THEIR PLAN.



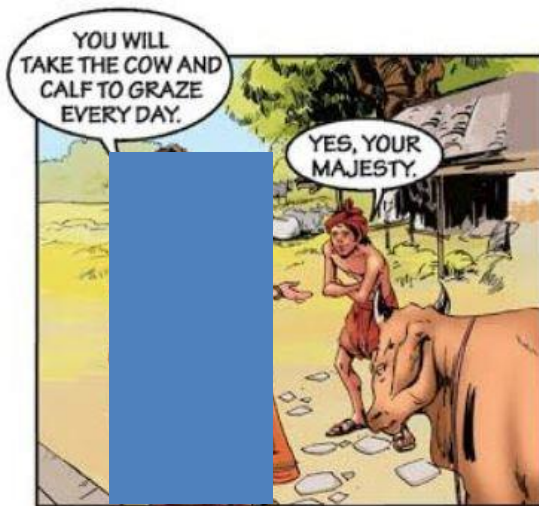
WE REQUEST YOU TO TAKE THE COW AND CALF TO THE CHOLA^ KING.

LAKSHMI AGREED AT ONCE.



THE KING, IN TURN, PRESENTED THE COW AND CALF TO HIS QUEEN AND ASKED HER TO TAKE GOOD CARE OF THEM.







...BUT TO HIS HORROR...



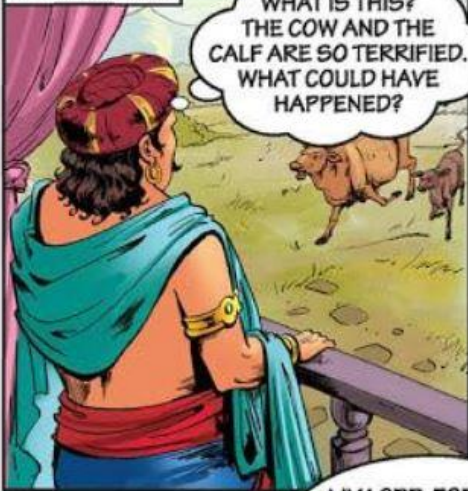
... IT HIT VISHNU, WHO STEPPED IN TO PROTECT THE COW.



SHOCKED AT WHAT HE HAD DONE, THE COWHERD FELL TO THE GROUND, UNCONSCIOUS.

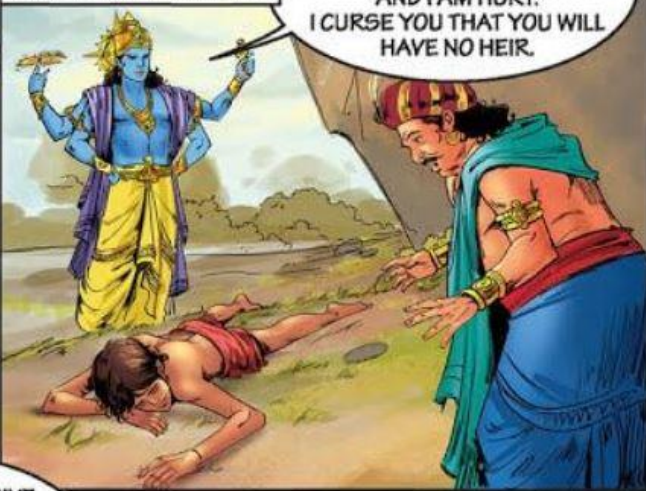


THE TERRIFIED COW RETURNED BELLOWING TO THE PALACE.



WHAT IS THIS?  
THE COW AND THE CALF  
ARE SO TERRIFIED.  
WHAT COULD HAVE  
HAPPENED?

THE COW LED THE KING TO WHERE THE COWHERD LAY.

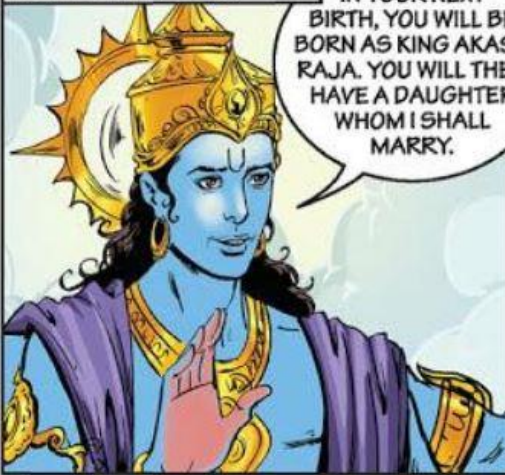


YOU FOOL! BECAUSE  
OF YOUR IGNORANCE, THIS  
COWHERD LIES UNCONSCIOUS  
AND I AM HURT.  
I CURSE YOU THAT YOU WILL  
HAVE NO HEIR.

MY LORD, FORGIVE  
ME, FOR I DID NOT  
KNOW. GIVE ME A CHANCE  
TO ATONE FOR  
MY SINS.



SEEING THE KING'S REGRET,  
VISHNU FORGAVE HIM.



IN YOUR NEXT  
BIRTH, YOU WILL BE  
BORN AS KING AKASA  
RAJA. YOU WILL THEN  
HAVE A DAUGHTER  
WHOM I SHALL  
MARRY.





## NEELA DEVI

WHY DO PEOPLE MAKE AN OFFERING OF THEIR HAIR AT TIRUPATI? THE ANSWER LIES IN THE STORY OF LORD VISHNU'S DEBT TO A KIND-HEARTED GANDHARVA PRINCESS, NEELA DEVI.

THE WOUND THAT THE COWHERD'S AXE HAD INFLICTED ON LORD VISHNU, DID NOT HEAL COMPLETELY AND THE HANDSOME GOD WAS LEFT WITH A PERCEPTIBLE BALD SPOT. WHILE HE BROODED OVER HIS REFLECTION IN THE WATER, A GANDHARVA PRINCESS NAMED NEELA DEVI WATCHED HIM WITH GREAT INTEREST FROM BEHIND A TREE.

MOVED BY HIS MISERY, SHE DECIDED TO HELP HIM. APPROACHING HIM, SHE SAID, "MY LORD, SUCH AN ATTRACTIVE FACE SHOULD BE WITHOUT A FLAW." SHE CUT OFF HER OWN LUSTROUS HAIR AND PRESSED IT ON VISHNU'S BALD SPOT.

OVERWHELMED BY HER SELFLESS ACT, VISHNU DECREED THAT WHOEVER CAME TO WORSHIP HIM WOULD SACRIFICE THEIR HAIR TO HER. EVEN NOW, THOUSANDS OF VISHNU'S DEVOTEES FLOCK TO TIRUPATI AND OFFER THIS HIGHLY UNUSUAL GIFT, TO CLEAR HIS DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO NEELA DEVI.

**ARTICLES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**  
**ABOUT TONSURING:**

# Venkateswara Temple, Tirumala

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



**Venkateswara Temple** is a landmark Vaishnavite temple situated in the hill town of **Tirumala** at **Tirupati** in **Chittoor district** of **Andhra Pradesh**, India. The Temple is dedicated to Lord **Sri Venkateswara**, an incarnation of **Vishnu**, who is believed to have appeared here to save mankind from trials and troubles of **Kali Yuga**. Hence the place has also got the name Kaliyuga **Vaikuntham** and Lord here is referred to as Kaliyuga Prathyaksha Daivam.

**The temple is also known by other names like Tirumala Temple, Tirupati Temple, Tirupati Balaji Temple. Lord Venkateswara is known by many other names: Balaji, Govinda, and Srinivasa.**<sup>[1]</sup>

The Temple is constructed in Dravidian architecture and is believed to be constructed over a period of time starting from 300 AD. The Garbagriha (Sanctum Sanctorum) is called AnandaNilayam. The presiding deity, Venkateswara, is in standing posture and faces east in Garbha griha. The temple follows Vaikhanasa Agama tradition of worship. The temple is one of the eight Vishnu Swayambhu Kshetras and is listed as 106th and the last earthly **Divya Desam**. The Temple premises had two modern Queue complex buildings to organize the pilgrim rush, Tarigonda Vengamamba Annaprasadam complex for free meals to Pilgrims, hair tonsure buildings and a number of pilgrim lodging sites.

**It is the richest temple in the world in terms of donations received and wealth.**<sup>[2][3][4]</sup> **The temple is visited by about 50,000 to 100,000 pilgrims daily (30 to 40 million people annually on average), while on special occasions and festivals, like the annual Brahmotsavam, the number of pilgrims shoots up to 500,000, making it the most-visited holy place in the world.**<sup>[5][not in citation given]</sup> **In 2016, it was reported that 27.3 million pilgrims visited the temple.**<sup>[6]</sup>

## Temple Administration

**Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams(TTD) is the trust board which oversees and manages the operations of Tirumala Venkateswara Temple.** It is operated by a Board of Trustees that has increased in size from five (1951) to eighteen (2015)<sup>[15]</sup> through the adoption of Acts. The



daily operation and management of TTD is the responsibility of an executive officer who is appointed by the [Government of Andhra Pradesh](#).

The temple attracts approximately 75,000 pilgrims every day.<sup>[16]</sup> The annual budget, estimated at INR 2530.10 Crores for the financial year 2015-16,<sup>[17]</sup> runs charitable trusts whose funds are derived from the budget and donations from the devotees.<sup>[18]</sup> The popularity of the temple can be judged by its annual budget. The annual income is estimated at INR 10 billion in 2008. Most of its income is derived from the donations in SriVari Hundi. Devotees donate to the TTD, which runs into millions of rupees. TTD, the organization running the welfare of the temple, runs various charitable trusts, whose funds are derived from the budget and donations from the devotees.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Hair Tonsuring

**Many devotees have their head tonsured as "Mokku", an offering to God.** The daily amount of hair collected is over a ton.<sup>[30]</sup> The hair thus gathered is sold by the temple organization a few times a year by [public auction](#) to international buyers for use as [hair extensions](#) and in cosmetics,<sup>[31]</sup> bringing over \$6 million to the temple's treasury.<sup>[32]</sup> This is the second highest income generating activity in the temple next to the Hundi Collection.

When Lord Balaji was hit on his head by a shepherd, a small portion of his scalp became bald. This was noticed by Neela Devi, a [Gandharva](#) princess. She felt "such an attractive face should not have a flaw". Immediately, she cut a portion of her hair and, with her magical power, implanted it on his scalp. Lord Balaji noticed her sacrifice. As hair is a beautiful asset of the female form, he promised her that all his devotees who come to his abode would offer their hair to him, and she would be the recipient of all the hair received. Hence, it is believed that hair offered by the devotees is accepted by Neela Devi. The hill, Neeladri, one of the seven hills, is named after her.

## Worship

The temple follows "[Vaikhanasa Agama](#)" tradition of worship, which is believed to be revealed by Sage Vikhanasa and is propagated by his disciples [Atri](#), [Bhrigu](#), [Marichi](#), [Kasyapa](#).

**Vaikhanasa is one of the principal traditions of Hinduism and primarily worships Vishnu (and his associated Avatars) as the Supreme God.** This ancient texts recommends six times [puja](#)(worship) a day for Vishnu, of which minimum one puja is mandatory.<sup>[20]</sup>

**“pilgrims chant govinda before tonsuring and even barbers also pray god before starting tonsure. They believe that sacrificed hair will reach the god.” - email from DYE0, kalyanakatta complex, tirumala, TTD**



Famous image of Govinda

# Govinda

## Definition - What does *Govinda* mean?

Govinda is one of the many names of Krishna, the incarnation of the Hindu god, Vishnu, in Vaishnavism and much of the pan-Hindu traditions. The name comes from the Sanskrit *go*, which means both "Veda+and %ow,+and *vinda*, meaning %inding+or %aining.+Therefore, it translates as %inder of Veda+as well as %ow keeper.+The latter refers to Krishna's occupation as a youth in Gokula, a community of cow herders. He is often referred to as both Gopala ("child cow keeper") and Govinda.

# Govinda

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia     *This article is about the names of Vishnu.*

**Gōvinda** and **Gopāla** (also known as **Govind**, **Gobind** and **Gopal**) are the names of [Vishnu](#) which mean "The finder of Veda" & "Protector of Veda" as 'Go' means Veda, Cow and also senses. So Govinda, Gopala means *Cowherdor Protector of Cows*, or one who gives pleasure to senses. These names are also popularly addressed to [Krishna](#), referring to his youthful activity as a [cowherd](#) boy. This name appears as the 187th and the 539th name of Lord Vishnu in [Vishnu Sahasranama](#). Lord Vishnu or his complete incarnation Krishna are regarded as the Supreme God in the [Vaishnava](#) tradition and also by much of the pan-Hindu tradition.

Gopala Krishna of [Krishnaism](#) is often contrasted with Vedism when Krishna asks his followers to desist from Vedic demigod worship such as [Indra](#) worship. Thus the character of Gopala Krishna is often considered to be non-Vedic in one interpretation, while it can also be based on the popular understanding or rather misunderstanding of the [Rig Vedic](#) texts.<sup>[1]</sup>

According to [Klaus Klostermaier](#), Kumar Gopijanavallabha, Krishna the lover of the [Gopis](#), is the latest stage in the historical process resulting in contemporary Krishnaism, being added to the worship of [Bala Krishna](#) (the Divine Child Krishna), and the original cult of [Krishna-Vasudeva](#) which may date back to several centuries before the Common Era.<sup>[2]</sup>



## VIEWPOINT

# Tonsuring in India and the Global Trade in Human Hair

**Barry Ladizinski, MD**  
Department of  
Dermatology, Duke  
University Medical  
Center, Durham, North  
Carolina.

**F. N. U. Nutan, MBBS, MD**  
Department of Internal  
Medicine, Good  
Samaritan Hospital,  
Baltimore, Maryland.

**Niharika Ganta, MD, MPH**  
Yale Primary Care,  
Waterbury Hospital,  
Waterbury,  
Connecticut.

**Scott A. Norton, MD, MPH**  
Department of  
Dermatology,  
Children's National  
Medical Center,  
Washington, DC.

**Most Hindus living in India** will tonsure their hair at least once in their lives. In Hindu culture, tonsuring is performed for various reasons, including as a means of honoring the gods, remembering a loved one (usually deceased), seeking purification or fulfillment of wishes, or as a form of protest or punishment.

While certain Hindu sects have practiced tonsuring for centuries, the hair was not always sold for profit. Since the 1960s, however, tonsured hair has been collected, cleansed, and auctioned to commercial hair distributors from around the world in a series of events that is not part of the religious ritual. Today, tonsured Indian hair is considered of the finest quality, generating millions of dollars in the wig and hair extension market,<sup>1</sup> as recently publicized by Chris Rock's documentary *Good Hair* and Al Jazeera's documentary *Hair India*. Thus, hair that is sacrificed at the altar of a deity and renounced by the participant is the source of much of the West's high-quality wigs and hair extensions.<sup>1,2</sup>

## Religious Aspects of Tonsuring

The *Grhya Sutras* ("domestic writings") of the Vedas, which were written in late Vedic Sanskrit around 500 BC and mainly relate to the rites of passage, advise that *mun-dana* ("tonsuring") or *chudakarana* (*Cūḍākaraṇa* or arrangement of the hair tuft), the eighth of the 16 Hindu *saṃskāras* ("sacraments"), be performed during the first 3 years of life so that children can be cleansed of impurities incurred during their previous incarnation. Children are usually tonsured with sparing of a round patch or tuft of hair (*śikhā*, *shikha*, or *cūḍā*) on the vertex or crown of the scalp.

During the ancient times of *Gurukul* (*guru* meaning teacher and *kula* meaning extended family), a period from roughly 1000 BC to 700 AD when students lived with their teachers while learning scriptures, the *sikkha* was grown into a ponytail that was tied to the ceiling when the student was studying. Consequently, if he fell asleep, his nodding head caused a sharp tug of the hair, thus awakening the somnolent young scholar. The *sikkha* is also believed to protect one's memory. Furthermore, in some Indian families, following the death of an elder, the oldest son will offer his hair so that the deceased may reach the heavens; some widows also tonsure their heads following the death of their husbands.<sup>2</sup>

The main purpose, however, for tonsuring is to have one's *mannat* (wishes) fulfilled by a temple-specific deity. The most famous deity associated with tonsuring is Tirumala Tirupathy Venkateshwara Swamy, whose temple is situated on a hillock in southern India. This temple is the site of the world's largest recurring pilgrimage and communal tonsuring that attracts approximately 50 000 visitors everyday, about half of whom

**Table. Examples of Hair Customs Practiced by Some Individuals Within Various Religious Groups**

Religion	Hair Practice
Hinduism	Men and women tonsure their hair to honor temple-specific deities
Islam	Men tonsure their hair prior to the Hajj pilgrimage; women cover their hair with a hijab
Roman Catholicism	Tonsuring practiced by several religious orders as a mark of subservience and to prevent ringworm until Pope Paul VI banned the practice in 1972
Buddhism	Tonsuring performed as part of the monk ordination ceremony; thereafter heads and faces are kept clean shaven
Jainism	Monks pluck their hairs one by one with bare hands as a symbol of sacrifice and to keep the scalp clean and devoid of lice
Judaism	Orthodox men wear long uncut sideburns and beards; married women cover their hair with scarves or wigs
Sikhism	Men wear long uncut hair and untrimmed beards
Rastafarianism	Men and women wear hair in long, twisted, matted cords called <i>dreadlocks</i>
Amish	Married men wear long uncut beards, but shave their mustaches; women cover their hair with bonnets

donate their hair. The devotees span a diverse group of individuals from illiterate paupers to rich industrialists and movie stars. Regardless of a person's status, the entire scalp is usually tonsured and the hair offered with profound deference to the deity. This ceremony is performed with great fanfare, often followed by a large feast. Participants believe the hair that regrows is more luxurious and long lasting.<sup>2</sup>

Tonsuring is also practiced for spiritual reasons by some Buddhist and Jainist monks; in general, hair serves a prominent role in many religious practices (Table). In some orthodox Jewish sects, men and boys never cut their sideburns; thus, Jewish boys are often seen with long uncut sideburns (or sidelocks, *payot*, פאות), and men with full unshaven beards, based on Leviticus 19:27, which states "Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard."<sup>3</sup> Married orthodox Jewish women are modest about their hair and often wear scarves or wigs (*sheitel*), sometimes made of Indian hair, over shorn scalps, although this practice has recently been deemphasized by certain Orthodox groups that consider Hindu tonsuring to be an idolatrous practice.<sup>4</sup> Both Sikh men and women take pride in their long hair, while many Muslim women cover their hair with a *hijab*.

Nonreligious uses of tonsuring include forms of protest by, for example, dissatisfied workers. In addition, criminals are sometimes tonsured and paraded through the streets as a sign of shame (usually one-half of their head and one-half of their mustache is shaved to symbolize dishonor).

**Corresponding Author:** Barry Ladizinski, MD, Department of Dermatology, Duke University Medical Center, PO Box 2822, Durham, NC 27710 (barryladizinski@gmail.com).



### Commercial Aspects of Tonsuring

Upon entering Tirumala temple on behalf of themselves or with the child to be tonsured, practitioners purchase a ticket and a new double-edged razor blade and then proceed to a large hall, where tonsuring is performed assembly-line style. The blade is handed to 1 of over 600 barbers, and then affixed to a scalpel. Prior to the human immunodeficiency virus epidemic, a single blade was often used to tonsure a large number of heads. After wetting the hair, the barber shaves off a small patch on the crown and then proceeds to enlarge the shaved area on the central scalp, followed by the frontal, lateral, and posterior portions. Individuals are encouraged to chant "Tirumala Tirupathy Venkateshwara Swamy" during the process.<sup>5</sup>

The hair is subsequently swept up and piled into warehouses where it dries. Meanwhile, a marketing representative from the temple accepts offers from various international hair exporters for a silent auction. The hair is then shipped internationally to the winner's factories, where it is sorted, cleansed, dyed, packaged, and then shipped to resellers around the globe.

The temple's involvement in the hair industry began in the early 1960s, encouraged by solicitations from wig makers for raw materials. Before the auctions began, the hair was burned, but this prac-

tice was banned in the 1990s owing to concerns for air pollution. At the first hair auction in 1962, a kilogram of hair sold for about \$24.50; today it is sells for up to \$600. Indian hair is renowned for its superior strength and shine; furthermore, Indian women frequently comb their hair and rarely treat their hair with chemicals. In the West, wigs or extensions made of high-quality Indian hair range in price from \$400 to \$10 000.<sup>5,6</sup>

While much of the hair is sold in urban areas as wigs and extensions, not all tonsured locks become part of the hair industry. A large portion, particularly men's hair that is too short for the cosmetic market, is sold to chemical companies and transformed into a purified L-cysteine, the amino acid that gives hair its strength. L-cysteine is used as fertilizer, as a cigarette additive, and also as a nutritional additive (usually labeled as L-cys) in various food products (eg, Tastykakes, Tasty Baking Company; Kraft Lunchables, Kraft Foods; Noahs Bagels, Einstein Noah Restaurant Group Inc; Emergen-C, Alacer Corp). L-cysteine is used in an effort to soften snack cakes and enhance the meat flavor in Lunchables.<sup>5,7</sup>

Regardless of the hair's ultimate destination or uses, given that this sacrificial act is one of humility and purification, supplicants are not typically concerned with the shrine's proprietary efforts.

### ARTICLE INFORMATION

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PMCID: PMC2929550

## Tonsuring: Myths and facts

[Kaliaperumal Karthikeyan](#)

### Author information

Assistant Professor, Department of Dermatology & Venereology, Sri ManakulaVinayagar Medical College, Pondicherry.

Tonsuring is the act or process of cutting the hair, especially as a religious rite or custom.[1] Tonsuring is a fashionable practice in many races. But the origin of the tonsure is something of a mystery. Early Celts, a people based in northern Britain, were thought to have worn the tonsure prior to their contact with the Roman Empire and with no relation to religion. Members of both the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church wore the tonsure, and both claim that its origins go back to the time of Jesus Christ. In the Latin or Western Rite of the Roman Catholic Church, 'first tonsure' (generally consisting of a symbolic cutting of a few tufts of hair or at most a coin-sized bare spot toward the back of the head) was the rite of inducting someone into the clergy. There are different types of tonsures based on the pattern such as clerical, baptismal, and monastic. The practice was in vogue till the Roman Catholic Church abolished the practice of tonsure in 1972.

Tonsuring is also a religious ceremony in Hindu religion. According to the rules of the Vedas, the Chudakarana (tonsuring of hair) should be performed either in the first or the third year of the child. It is practiced even today in most Hindu communities. In Buddhism, tonsure is a part of the rite of becoming a monk. This involves shaving the head and face. This tonsure is renewed as often as required to keep the head cleanly shaven, and some Chinese Buddhist monks also have 6, 9, or 12 dots on the top of the head as a result of burning the shaven scalp with the tip of a smoking incense stick. In Islam, it is often customary for pilgrims on the Hajj to shave their heads before entering Mecca as a sign of their rejection of vanity and for cleanliness. Jain monks pluck their hair so as to keep their scalp bare and devoid of lice. They do not use blade or knife.

**Tonsuring is a common ritual rite in the temple town of Tirupathi (South India) and daily both men and women tonsure in thousands. Hindu devotees offer their hair to Lord Balaji for favors received, to show gratitude and respect. Both men and women offer their hair.** It is interesting to note that more than 1,500 women partake in the ceremony daily. Temple authorities sell the hair thus obtained. In 2007, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams sold human hair worth 450 million Indian rupees.[2] The long hair of women

is more priced and used in making hair extensions and wigs. The tonsured hair from men is used to extract l-cysteine. It is a precursor in the food, pharmaceutical, and personal care industries. One of the largest applications is the production of flavors.[3]

The common myth prevalent among public is that shaving of hair increases the hair growth. The effect of repeated shaving on human hair growth was studied by Lynfield and Macwilliams.[4] In their study, five healthy young white men each shaved one leg weekly for several months and left the other leg as a control. No significant differences in total weight of hair produced in a measured area, or in width or rate of growth of individual hairs, could be ascribed to shaving. The probable reasons for the misconception could be the shortness of the shaft of a shaved hair allows changes in its length to be noticed more easily. Taking the example of the male with a full beard, it is impossible to detect the daily increase in beard growth. But it is a different story with the clean-shaven person whose bristle growth can be seen on the very same day. The short, shaved hairs being held more erect by the follicles clasped firmly around them cause apparent coarseness. Tonsuring can also be therapeutic in curing many diseases such as pediculosis, plica polonica, and peidra. Tonsuring can also be associated with secondary bacterial infections if clean blades are not used. Further tonsuring is associated with the risk of transmitting HIV and Hepatitis B virus infection if the blades are reused without sterilizing.

[Go to:](#)

## Footnotes

**Source of Support:** Nil

**Conflict of Interest:** None declared

[Go to:](#)

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## From Hair in India to Hair India

[Ralph M Trüeb](#)

**Address for correspondence:** Prof. Ralph M Trüeb, Center for Dermatology and Hair Diseases, Bahnhofplatz 1A, CH-8304 Wallisellen, Switzerland.

See the article "[From Science to Spirituality](#)" in volume 6 on page 154.

### Abstract

*"Do not seek illumination unless you seek it as a man whose hair is on fire seeks a pond."*

*Ramakrishna (1836–1886)*

In all cultures, human hair and hairdo have been a never-ending subject of declamation for moralists, and a popular object of fashion and style. The underlying fact is that our hair is not without a purpose. The hair represents a part of our body, and at the same time reflects how we feel, both mentally and physically, and communicates this to our peers.

Hair is a powerful metaphor in Hindu mythology. By definition, the myths represent traditional sacred stories, typically revolving around the activities of gods and heroes, that purport to explain natural phenomena or cultural practices. Tracing back the importance and significance of human hair to the dawn of civilization on the Indian subcontinent, we find that all the Vedic gods, Shiva (the destroyer or transformer), Vishnu (the preserver) and Brahma (the creator), are depicted as having uncut hair in mythological stories as well as in legendary pictures. The same is true of the Hindu avatars (incarnations of deities), Rama and Krishna, the epic heroes of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata (and Bhagavad-gita).

Finally, there are a number of hair peculiarities in India pertinent to the creed and religious practices of the Hindu, the Jain, and the Sikh.

[Go to:](#)

### IN HINDUISM

The *ō*Laws of Manuö (Manusmirti) represents the most important and earliest metrical work of the Dharma śtra textual tradition of Hinduism. The text presents itself as a discourse given by Manu, the progenitor of humankind, to a group of seers, who beseech him to

convey to them the law of all the social classes. According to Hindu tradition, the Manusmirti records the words of Brahma.

According to the Manusmirti, catching hold of the hair in any way is forbidden even in a fight. It is mentioned that as a good and just I should immediately punish anyone who, out of wickedness, dishonors someone by snatching and dragging him by his hair, and the punishment would be to cut off both his hands. The reason was that the uncut hair has always been considered as giving great prestige to its possessor. Therefore, handling of the hair, either by a hairdresser or by a clinical trichologist, is to be considered as a special prerogative.

At the same time, hair has long been used in India to convey a message [Table 1]: Unbound unruly hair represents wild nature, and well-oiled and combed hair represents the culture. Shiva has thick matted hair. Shiva's dreadlocks represent the potent power of his mind that enables him to catch and bind the unruly and wild river goddess Ganga. Krishna has curly hair. The Goddesses Lakshmi (consort of Vishnu), Saraswati (consort of Brahma), and Durga (or Shakti, the concept, or personification, of divine feminine creative power, sometimes referred to as 'The Great Divine Mother') have loose, unbound hair. Kali's (the fierce aspect of the goddess Durga) hair is unbound, while Parvati's (the gentle and nurturing aspect of Hindu goddess Shakti) hair is well bound.

In the Ramayana, the last jewel of Sita (consort of Rama) is the hairpin that she gives Hanuman (the monkey deity) to convey to Rama that her honor, and his reputation, stand in a precarious position.

Shaving the head is associated with asceticism: Brahmins shaved their head, but left a tuft (a Choti or Sikha) in the end, an indicator that they were not monks but very much part of worldly life. This Brahmin tuft is tied up to show control. Any religious act is performed after tying the tuft. Only the funeral and death anniversaries are performed with tuft untied or with disheveled hair.

It is very inauspicious to remain with disheveled hair. It is done only in times of great sorrow or calamity. In the Mahabharata, Draupadi took an oath in the assembly of the Kurus when she was molested by Dussasana that she would remain with disheveled hair until the enemies were properly revenged. In the Ramayana, Kaikeyi remained with disheveled hair in her apartment with the object of getting two boons from Dasaratha which were detrimental to the interests of Rama, the favorite of Dasaratha. Indian teacher, philosopher, economist, jurist, and royal advisor Chanakya (350-275 BC) famously untied this tuft to display his rage and tied it only when the Nanda dynasty of Magadha had been brought to its knees.

Sannyasa is the life stage of renunciation within the Hindu philosophy of four age-based life stages known as Ashramas, with the first three being Brahmacharya (Bachelor student), Grihastha (householder), and Vanaprastha (forest dweller, retired). Sannyasa is a form of asceticism, that is marked by renunciation of material desires and prejudices, represented by a state of disinterest and detachment from material life, and has the purpose of spending one's life in peaceful, love-inspired, and simple spiritual life. An individual in Sanyasa is known as Sannyasin in Hinduism, which in many ways parallel the Sadhu traditions of Jain

monasticism and the monk or nun of Christianity. A Sannyasin shaves his head completely. The shaving of the head (Mundana) removes him from all external beauties, and indicates that he is no more of the world. He will not have to take care about dressing his hair with scented oils, etc., and the time he would have otherwise spent in drying, combing, and dressing his hair, he now spends in prayers and meditation. He now dwells in the Self, which is Beauty of beauties.

Hindus practice a variety of rituals from birth to death, that are collectively known as Samskaras, meaning ōrites of purification.ö These are believed to make the body pure and fit for worship. In Hindu tradition, the hair from birth is associated with undesirable traits from past lives. Thus, on the occasion of the Mundan ceremony, the child is shaven to signify freedom from the past and moving into the future. It is also believed that the shaving of the hair stimulates the proper growth of the brain and nerves, whereas a tuft at the crown of the head, protects the memory.

A boy's first haircut, usually in his 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year, is known as Choula, and represents yet another such Samskara. It is considered an event of great auspiciousness. Conventionally, a Hindu girl never has her hair cut after the first haircut, which generally happens at the age of 11 months. Therefore, the first haircut for the girl is very important because that is the only time they do. However, some Hindus practice a tonsure ceremony for girls as well. While complete tonsure is common, some Hindus prefer to leave some hair on the head, distinguishing this rite from the inauspicious tonsure that occurs on the death of a parent.

Those who practice complete tonsure generally ritually offer the hair to their family deity. Many travel to temples such as the famed Tirumala Venkateswara Temple to perform this ritual.

At the Hindu temple of Tirumala Venkateswara located in Tirupathi on the coastal state of Andhra Pradesh in Southern India, every day, thousands of Indian women offer their hair as a token to the presiding deity, Lord Venkateswara (a form of Vishnu). At the same time, it is starting place and principal provider for an astonishing industry of trade in human hair. There are eighteen vast shaving halls, and the crowds are so large that women and girls wait queue for up to 5 h. Six hundred and fifty barbers sit in lines on the concrete floor, nimbly tying up into ponytails the hair, and shaving the heads of the women seated in front of them with few expert sweeps of a razor. The average woman's head yields about 300 g of hair. Baskets filled with hair are collected every 6 h and stored in piles in a vast warehouse. The hair, strong and healthy, has never been dyed or subjected to anything more abrasive than the traditional herbal soaps and coconut oil.

Mayoor Balsara, CEO of India's largest exporter of human hair, Sona Devi Trading Company, says: ōFor poor rural women, their hair is their only vanity. They have saved up to make a once-in-a-lifetime journey. Thousands have made an oath to their gods ó they may have asked to be blessed with a child or for a good harvest. Should their wish be fulfilled, they offer their most precious possession as a sign of gratitude. Offering your hair to the god is a symbolic gesture of surrendering one's ego, and a way of giving thanks for your blessings.ö The hair is transported in fiber sacks by truck to *Bangalore*. *“We buy hair in metric tons,” Mr. Balsara explains, “a ton represents 3000 women.”* In his factories, the hair



is washed by hand in giant baths, and then laboriously pulled through long beds of spikes by hand to smooth it before being tied into neat bundles of 200 strands each. Finally, the hair is packed into cardboard boxes and flown to Nepi, Italy, where the pigment is removed, a process that involves soaking of the hair in rows of small white baths for up to 20 days. India exports an estimated 2000 tons of hair a year, and ships it around the world. "Temple hair," as it is known, finds its way to hundreds of British salons, where it is sold in the form of real hair extensions. Great Lengths International, a leading manufacturer, supplies 1'300 salons in Britain alone. The advantage of human hair is obvious: It both looks and feels better than synthetic additions. Moreover, the quality of Indian hair is known to be extraordinarily good. In comparison, European hair is too thin in diameter for the process, while Chinese hair, is too thick and rigid for use with European clients.

### Conflicts of interest

The author has been invited speaker on the occasions of Hair India 2012 and 2014, and has given lectures for Cipla Ltd., Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Ltd., and Abbott Healthcare India in major cities throughout the subcontinent of India. The Center for Dermatology and Hair Diseases Professor Trüeb offers doctors-in-training as dermatologists international traineeships in dermato-trichology.

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# Hindu Adhyathmikam - About Hinduism, Hindu Religion, Festivals, Hindu Pujas

Hinduism may not be called religion in the sense other religions are known. It has no founder. It is much more than a religion. It is a total WAY OF LIFE.

May 29, 2013

## Reason for Tonsure or Shaving Head in Tirumala



When Lord Sri Venkatesha (MahaVishnu/Balaji) was inside the snake-antHill on tirumala, one sacred cow is to come and give milk to the Lord daily (Brahma deva took the form as sacred cow), When a cow-herd man at once saw the sacred-cow pouring milk in the snake-antHill, he became angry and without understanding the truth, the Cow-herd man took the axe and has hit the cow on the cow's head with the axe. The Supreme Lord Sri Venkatesha(Vishnu) who was present inside the snake-antHill received the hurt of the axe on his head from the cow-herd man instead of Cow getting hurt. When Lord received the hurt of the Axe on his head, portion of his hair on his head disappeared due to hurt by axe. When mother Neela Devi saw Lord being hurt on his head, she immediately removed the hair from her head and placed on the Lord's head in the portion where lord was hurt. Immediately Lord became well and Lord's hair reappeared as beautiful as before he was hurt. **Lord**

**Venkatesha(Vishnu) knowing that hair is one of the beautiful features of women, Lord Sri venkatesha promised that his devotees will shave Hair of their head (tonsure) and dedicate their hair to her. Neela Devi accepts the hair sacrificed by Devotees of Lord Venkatesha(Vishnu) and Lord blesses his devotees who sacrifice their hair for the sake of the Lord. This is the reason why Devotees tonsure or shave their head in Tirumala(tirupathi).**

**There are also Spiritual reasons: Tonsure or Shaving hair as offering for Lord represents a real sacrifice of material beauty and giving up false-ego in the way of shaving their hair as sacrifice to please Supreme Lord.**

# Why do People Tonsure at Tirupati?

*By Rama Krishna*

Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh is one among the most famous religious places in India, where the shrine of Vishnu is located. The temple is called as Tirumala Venkateswara Temple and Vishnu takes the avtar of Lord Venkateswara. The word Tirupati means the Pati (spouse) of Lakshmi Devi. There are seven sacred hills and it is on Venkatadri that the shrine is situated. Govinda, Srinivasa and Balaji are a few names of Vishnu.

According to the reports, Tirupati is visited by numerous devotees (almost 1 lakh) everyday and this number increases on special days like Brahmotsavam festival. It is estimated that the temple sees almost 3 to 4 Crore devotees annually. Worshippers of Lord Vishnu believe that the temple is one of the 108 holy places in India.

## Mythology

According to the beliefs of Hindus, when Lord Kubera married Padmavati, he donated money to the temple. It is to pay back the debt of Lord Vishnu that devotees still deposit huge amount of money in his Hundi (pot).

## History

It was under Vijayanagara emperors' rule that the place and the shrine grew famous. People believe the temple received gold and valuable stones from the emperors. Under the rule of Krishnadevaraya, the shrine inside the holy sanctuary was plated with gold. Some years after, Raghoji Bhonsle set up the administrative system to manage the shrine.

## The Seven Hills

Tirupati has 7 sacred hills known as Saptagiri or Saptarishi. Saptagirinivasa is also a name of Lord Vishnu, got from the names of these hills.

The seven hills are the abode of different Gods worshipped by the Hindus. **The names of the seven hills are Neeladri - Neela Devi's home**, Garudadri - hill of Garuda (vehicle of Lord Vishnu), Narayanadri - the hill of Vishnu, Vrushabadri - the abode of Nandi, the vehicle of Shiva, Anjanadri - home of Hanuman and Venkatadri - abode of Venkateswara.

## Why Cutting Hair at Tirupati is Famous?

**According to the legend, Vishnu lost a small portion of hair after a shepherd hit him. It is after observing this that Neela Devi offered her hair to Lord Vishnu. Vishnu promised Neela Devi that his worshippers will cut their hair for her good deed as he thought hair is very important to women. Thus the hair cutting practice began and worshippers even today cut their hair to the goddess. Popular belief is that Neela Devi accepts the hair offered by Venkateswara devotees.**

## Celebrations

All festivals of Vishnu is being observed in Tirupati as it has more believers of Vaishnavism. Rama Navami, Vaikunta Ekadasi and Janmashtami are celebrated with grandeur by devotees. Devotees also celebrate Vasantholsavam and Rathasapthami too. It is in Rathasapthami that Vishnu's idol is taken by people in procession.

*About the Author:*

To learn about Hindu pilgrimages like [Tirupati](#) and know more about holy Hindu texts such as [Ramayana](#), visit Prabhuhakti.



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## Story Behind Hair Tonsuring at Tirupati Temple

On 6/17/2010 07:15:00 AM with [1 comment](#)

When Bhrigu visited Lord Vishnu who was in a private meeting with his consort Goddess Lakshmi and failed to immediately receive and honour the sage, the sage felt humiliated and angry by this act. Sage Bhrigu kicked Lord Vishnu in the chest, to which Vishnu did not react and instead apologized to the Sage by massaging his feet. During this act, he squashed the extra eye that was present in the sole of Bhrigu's foot. The extra eye is believed to represent the sage's false egotism. The sage then realised his grave mistake and begged forgiveness from Lord Vishnu.

Vishnu's chest is significant as the abode of Goddess Lakshmi, the Goddess felt highly insulted at the sage's misdemeanour and Vishnu's silence at the act and left Vishnu heavenly abode (Vaikunta).

After the departure of Mahalakshmi due to Bhrigu rishi, Lord Vishnu left Vaikuntha and went to earth in the search of Mahalaxmi. Ultimately his quest brought him to the Seshadri hills where he stopped to rest in an anthill. Listening about the separation of Vishnu and lakshmi, Brahma and Shiva got upset and decided to intervene. Thereafter Brahma and lord shiva took to form of cow and its calf and went to live at the place of a Chola king. The sun god informed to goddess lakshmi about the plan of Brahma and shiva and requested her to sell the cow and calf to the king

of the Chola country assuming the form of a cowherdess.

The chola king bought the cow and its calf and sent them to graze in the Seshadri hills. On this hill, the cow would secretly visit the anthill where Vishnu was living without sustenance. Emptying her milk, the cow would then return to the palace. The cowherd was angry because cow never yielded any milk to him. To find out the reason behind that, he watched movement carefully and his explorations brought him to the anthill. He discovered the cow emptying her under over the ant-hill. The cowherd got wild over the conduct of the cow, and he aimed a blow with his axe on the head of the cow. Because the cow was the actually Brahma, the Lord Vishnu rose from the ant-hill to receive a wound in the head, resulting in a loss of some hair.

When Lord Balaji was hit by a shepard on his head, a small portion of his scalp becomes bald. There is no [hair growth](#) over there and this is noticed by a Gandharva princess Neela Devi. She feels "such an attractive face should not have a flaw". Immediately she cuts a portion of her hair and with her magical power she [implants](#) it on his scalp. Then Lord Balaji notices her sacrifice as hair is the beautiful aspect of Female, he promises her that all his devotees who come to his abode should render their hair to him and she would be the recipient of all that hair received. Hence it is believed that hair offered by the devotees is collected by Neela devi.

Thus was born the tradition of offering hair to Lord Balaji at Tirumala.

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# Tirupati Balaji Temples,Hindu God Tirupati Balaji,Shree Venkateswara,Tirumala-Tirupati Photo

Here is the information on Hindu God Tirupati Balaji,Tirupati Balaji Temples,Balaji Bhagwan,Tirumala- Tirupati Balaji Photo, Video, Mp3, Bhajan, Aarti,etc.

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Sunday, February 8, 2009

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## Hair offering at tirupati

**Tirupati Balaji Temple** is almost famous for its head shaving, wealth and its laddus. Every day about 30000 devotees have offered their hair to Lord Venkateswara by thinking that their all troubles will disappear along with their hair.

As per the Vaishavite tradition in tirupati, it is compulsory for the devotees to offer their hair to the lord Venkateswara which symbolizes effacing of the ego. Not only for men who partake in this ritual but also have children and women of all ages shave their head in Tirupati. The tonsuring facilities are available at tirumala hills on cost of Rs. 10/- per head. The barber places at Kalyana Katta, a massive four floor building operating round the clock, near the temple. Devotee can take bath after tonsuring at near Kalyana Katta. Bathroom facilities are also provided by the TTD trust. After taking a holy dip in the Pushkarini tank, devotee can visit the temple for Darshan. **There is a very short legend about hair offering at tirupati.**

## Story of Hair Offering at Tirumala-Tirupati

After the departure of Mahalakshmi due to Bhirigu rishi, **Lord Vishnu** left Vaikuntha and went to earth in the search of Mahalakshmi. Ultimately his quest brought him to the Seshadri hills where he stopped to rest in an anthill. Listening about the separation of Vishnu and lakshmi, Brahma and Shiva got upset and decided to intervene. Thereafter **Brahma** and **lord shiva** took to form of cow and its calf and went to live at the place of a Chola king. The sun god informed to goddess lakshmi about the plan of Brahma and shiva and requested her to sell the cow and calf to the king of the Chola country assuming the form of a cowherdess.

**The chola king bought the cow and its calf and sent them to graze in the Seshadri hills. On this hill, the cow would secretly visit the anthill where Vishnu was living without sustenance. Emptying her milk, the cow would then return to the palace. The cowherd was angry because cow never yielded any milk to him. To find out the reason behind that, he watched movement carefully and his explorations brought him to the anthill. He discovered the cow emptying her under over the ant-hill. The cowherd got wild over the conduct of the cow, and he aimed a blow with his axe on the head of the cow. Because the cow was the actually Brahma, the Lord Vishnu rose from the ant-hill to receive a wound in the head, resulting in a loss of some hair.**

**When all this happen, there were one witnessed of this matter, named Neeladri, She quickly rushed forward to offer her own hair to replace what the Lord had just lost. Thus was born the tradition of offering hair to Lord Balaji at Tirumala.**

## Hair business at tirupati :-

**TTD** exports human hair on a lot of quantity to the many countries. There is a high demand for the hair in Europe especially long hair of women. The tonsured hair of Men is used to extract a protein called L-Cystein. This protein is used in a many products, also including eatable products. The hair is also used in coat linings and Chinese hair industry mixes it with hair from china to make cheap wigs and hair extensions

Even Hollywood star also used the Indian hair. Because they think that other countries hair has damage due to use of various chemicals shampoo to clean and beatify their hair, Whereas Indian peoples use natural methods to protect their hair. So that Indian hair is natural, strong, durable and can be colored. It is assumed that the final product which made from Indian hair is very costly



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## Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanam(TTD)

By: Hari Prasad Doddi On: 2015-01-26 Category: Ancient Temple Views: 2231

Sri Venkateshwara temple (Tirumal Tirupathi Devasthanam) or the Tirupati temple is the richest temple in India. It is the most popular and counted among the most visited temples in India. The temple is considered one of the eight Sywayambu Kshetras of Vishnu where presiding deity is believed to have manifested on its own.

The Tirumala Hill comprises seven peaks, representing the seven heads of Adisesha, thus earning the name Seshachalam. The seven hills, also called Saptagiri, represent the Saptarishi (seven sages). Hence the Lord is named Saptagirinivasa. The following are the seven hills:

Vrushabhadri: Hill of Nandi, the Vahana of Lord Shiva

Anjanadri: Hill of Lord Hanuman. It is said to be birthplace of lord Hanuman.

**Neeladri: Hill of Neela Devi - It is believed that hair offered by the devotees is accepted by Neela Devi. It is because of boon granted by Lord Venkateswara to Neela Devi.**

Garudadri or Garudachalam: Hill of Garuda, the vahana of Lord Vishnu

Seshadri or Seshachalam: Hill of Sesha, the dasa of Lord Vishnu

Naraynadri: Hill of Narayana. Srivari Padalu are located here

Venkatadri: Hill of Lord Venkateswara

The temple is on Venkatadri (also known as Venkatachala), the seventh peak, and is also known as the "Temple of Seven Hills". The temple lies on the southern banks of Sri Swami Pushkarini, a holy water tank.

The varied names ascribed to the main deity are Balaji, Srinivasa, Venkateswara and Venkatachalapathy. The goddess Sri or Lakshmi (Vishnu's consort) resides on the chest of Venkateswara, and thus he is also known by the epithet Srinivasa (the one in whom Sri resides). Goddess Lakshmi and Goddess Padmavathi reside on his either chests. The deity is considered the Kali yuga varada, that is 'the boon-granting Lord of Kali yuga' (the fourth and final age of

the Hindu cycle of ages). The temple is held in particular reverence by the Vaishnava sect of southern India, known as the Sri Vaishnava.

### **Deity:**

Moolavirat or Dhruva Beram: The main stone deity of Lord Venkateswara is called Dhruva Beram (beram means "deity") or Moolavirat. The deity is about 8 feet (2.4 m) from the toes to the top of the crown and is considered the main source of energy for the temple.

Kautuka Beram or Bhoga Srinivasa: This is a tiny one-foot (0.3 m) silver deity, which was given to the temple in 614 AD by Pallava Queen Samavai Perindevi, and has never been removed from the temple from the day it was installed. This deity is popularly known as Bhoga Srinivasa, because it enjoys all the Bhoga (worldly pleasures) which the Moolavirat has.

Snapana Beram or Ugra Srinivasa: This idol of the Lord represents the anger part of Lord Venkateswara. He remains inside the sanctum sanctorum, and comes out on only one day each year: on Kaishika Dwadasi, before the sunrise. Snapana means "cleansing."

Utsava Beram: This is the form of the Lord which comes out of the temple to see the devotees. This deity is also called Malayappa, and its consorts are Sridevi and Bhudevi. These three deities were found in a cave called Malayappan Konai in the holy Tirumala Hills.

Bali Beram or Koluvu Srinivasa: This panchaloha idol resembles the main deity, and represents the presiding officer for all activities and rituals in the temple. The idol is also called Bali Beram. Koluvu Srinivasa is regarded as the guardian deity of the temple that presides over its financial and economic affairs. Daily offerings are made to the deity, with a presentation of accounts.

### **Events & Festivals:**

Tirumala Tirupathi celebrates most Vaishnava festivals, including Vaikuntha Ekadasi, Rama Navami, and Janmashtami with great splendor, while the Brahmotsavam celebrated every year during September is the most important festival in Tirumala. The temple receives millions of devotees over the short span of a week. Other major festivals include Vasanthotsavam (spring festival), conducted in March–April, and Rathasapthami (Magha Shuddha Saptami), celebrated in February, when Lord Venkateswara's deity is taken on procession around the temple chariots.

### **Prasadam**

The world famous Tirupati Laddu is given at Tirumala Temple as prasadam. Many other prasadams are also available including daddoanam (curd rice), pulioharey (tamarind rice), vada and chakkera-pongali (sweet pongal), miryala-pongali, Appam, Paayasam, Jilebi, Muruku,

Dosa, seera (kesari). Free meals are given daily to the pilgrims. On Thursdays, the Tirupavadai seva is conducted, where food items are kept as naivedyam to Lord Srinivasa.

## **Other Information:**

### **Hair Tonsuring:**

**Many devotees have their head tonsured as "Mokku", an offering to God. The story behind this offering is:**

*When Lord Balaji was hit on his head by a shepherd, a small portion of his scalp became bald. This was noticed by Neela Devi, a Gandharva princess. She felt "such an attractive face should not have a flaw". Immediately, she cut a portion of her hair and, with her magical power, implanted it on his scalp. Lord Balaji noticed her sacrifice. As hair is a beautiful asset of the female form, he promised her that all his devotees who come to his abode would offer their hair to him, and she would be the recipient of all the hair received. Hence, it is believed that hair offered by the devotees is accepted by Neela Devi. The hill, Neeladri, one of the seven hills, is named after her.*

### **Hundi (donation pot):**

*It is believed that Srinivasa had to make arrangements for his wedding. Lord Kubera credited money to the god Venkateswara (a form of the god Vishnu) for his marriage with Padmavati. Srinivasa sought a loan of one crore and 11.4 million (11,400,000) coins of gold from Kubera and had Viswakarma, the divine architect, create heavenly surroundings in the Seshadri hills. Together, Srinivasa and Padmavathy lived for all eternity while Goddess Lakshmi, understanding the commitments of Lord Vishnu, chose to live in his heart forever.[citation needed] In remembrance of this, devotees go to Tirupati to donate money in Venkateswara's hundi (donation pot) so that he can pay it back to Kubera.*

## **Timings:**

Seva Details	Timings
Suprabhatam	3:00 - 3:30
Suddhi	3:30 - 3:45
Tomala Seva	3:45 - 4:30
Koluvu & Panchanga Sravanam	4:30 - 4:45
First Archana Sahasranama Archana	4:45 - 5:30
Archanantara Darsanam	5:30 - 6:30
First Bell, Bali and Sattumura	6:30 - 7:00
Suddhi, Second Archana (Ekantam), Second Bell, etc.	7:00 - 7:30



Sarvadarsanam	7:30 - 19:00
Kalyanotsavam, Brahmotsavam, Vasanthotsavam, Unjal Seva	12:00 - 17:00
Sahasra Deepalankarana Seva	17:30 - 18:30
Suddhi, Night Kainkaryams (Ekantam) and Night Bell	19:00 - 20:00
Sarvadarsanam	20:00 - 1:00
Suddhi and preparations for Ekanta Seva	1:00 - 1:30
Ekanta Seva	1:30

### Weekly Special Seva Timings:

- Monday: Vishesha Puja -- 7:30 - 9:00 AM
- Tuesday: Ashtadala Pada Padmaradhana -- 6:30 - 7:30 AM
- Wednesday: Sahasrakalasa Abhishekam -- 6:30 - 8:30 AM
- Thursday: Tiruppavada -- 6:30 - 8:00 AM and Poolangi Alankaram -- 9:00 PM - 10:00 PM
- Friday: Abhishekam -- 4:30 - 6:00 AM

### Nearby Places:

- Srikalahasti Temple
- Srinivasa Mangapuram
- Sri Padmavati Devi Alayam (Alamelu Mangapuram)
- Sri Govinda Raja Swami Temple
- Sri Kodanda Rama Swami Temple
- Sri Kapileswara Swami Temple
- Sri Kalyana Venkateswara Swami Temple

### Location:

City : Tirumala

Dist. : Chittor

State : Andhra Pradesh

Country : India

PIN : 517 501

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## A Guide to The Richest Temple of India ó Tirupati Balaji Temple

4th December 2017

Devoted to Sri Venkateswara, Tirumala Tirupati Temple is recognized as the second most visited shrine in the world and one of the top temples in South India. Nearly 50,000 to 100,000 pilgrims visit here daily. Further, the count reaches as high as up to 500,000 during festivals and on special occasions.

A stunning example of Dravidian architecture, this temple stands high on the Ventaka or Venkatachala Hill in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. Dwelling on the seventh peak of Tirupati Hill, Sri Venkateswara is also called as the Lord of the Seven Hills.

Abiding by the rituals of Hinduism, the Tirupati Balaji temple follows the philosophy of love, equality and prohibits sacrificial offerings of animals. The donations given by the devotees and the wealth make it one of the richest temples in the world.

The temple houses Tarigonda Vengamamba Annaprasadam complex which offers free meals to pilgrims, and two modern Queue complex buildings for organizing the rush. Various pilgrim lodging sites and hair tonsure buildings can also be spotted within the premises.

The temple is one of the eight Vishnu Swayambhu Kshetras and the last earthly Divya Desam. Thus, it becomes more important to pay homage to Lord Vishnu here and seek blessings from him.

### History of Tirupati Balaji Temple

Tirumala Temple in south India has a rich historical legacy associated with it. The rein of the temple has been transferred from one hand to another. Various dynasties and rulers have presided over the shrine. The sequential order being that of the Pallavas, Cholas, Vijaynagar Pradhans, Golcondas, French, Nawab of Carnatic, East India Company, Mahants of Hathiramji Muth, TTD and AP State Endowments Dept.

The first noted donation was made in 966 CE by Samavai, queen of the Pallava dynasty. She donated numerous jewels and two parcel of lands to be used as revenue generating resources for celebration of festivals. However, the temple became rich during the Vijayanagara Realm. The roof of the Ananda Nilayam was gilded because of the offerings presented by the Krishnadevaraya in the form of jewels and gold.

Under the rule of East India Company in 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Balaji Temple was leased for auction to a tenant. The tenant was ordered to pay a fixed price to the Company by charging fees and collecting taxes for Sevas in Temple. The walls of the temple depict the tales of endowments and patronage of the dynasties which ruled it.

## Why is Tirumala Temple so famous?

The significance and heavenly atmosphere of Tirumala Temple enchant millions of devotees from far and near. It is a common belief that Lord Sri Venkateswara appeared here to protect human beings from the problems of Kalyug. Thus, the shrine got another name as the Kaliyuga Vaikuntham and the God is known as Kaliyuga Prathyaksha Daivam.

It is suggested in various ancient scriptures that worshipping Sri Venkateswara is the ultimate way to get moksha, in Kalyug. The Rig Veda and Asthadasa Puranas strongly recommend visiting Tirupati Temple.

## Legend associated with the Temple

According to a legend, Goddess Lakshmi felt insulted by Brigu Rishi who kicked Lord Vishnu on his chest. After this she had a fight with the God and left her heavenly abode, the Vaikunta. Due to this she landed on Earth and settled here. In search of his beloved, Lord Vishnu also came to earth and was named as Srinivasa. After all his efforts went in vain, he decided to dwell at Tirumala hills and continue his search. Meanwhile, he met the beautiful daughter of the King of the seven hills in Tirumala, Padmavati. Upon falling in love, they decided to settle into wedlock.

A huge price was demanded by the king. Thus, Lord Vishnu took a loan of one crore and 11.4 million gold coins from Kubera. He agreed but imposed a condition that Vishnu can't go back to Vaikuntha without paying off the debt. To this, God Vishnu agreed and married Padmavathi. Knowing about the marriage, Lakshmi came to question him. But he soon transformed into an idol upon confronting the Goddess.

Since then, Lord Vishnu is staying at Balaji Temple until the debts are paid. Brahma and Shiva, the Hindu Gods, explained Lakshmi that it was the Lord's desire to be here to help human beings from everlasting troubles of Kalyug.

Goddess Lakshmi and Padmavathi also decided to stay with him here. Thus, devotees offer numerous precious things and huge amount of money in donation, to help their lord to pay off the debts.

## Practices in the Temple

### Hair Tonsuring

Many people including ladies shave their heads and donate hair as an offering to the Lord. It is known as 'Mokku'. More than a ton of hair is collected daily. These are then auctioned and generate an income for the temple.

### Thulabaram

Usually performed with newborns, it is another form of donation. The baby or the person is made to sit on one side of the weighing scale and another part is filled with gold coins, tulsi leaves, sugar, jaggery etc. Once both the pans are balanced, the things on the other pan are donated to the temple by the person.



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## Tirumala Venkateswara Temple

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## Tirumala Venkateswara Temple

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**Location:** The Hindu temple of seven hills- 'Tirumala Venkateswara Temple' is situated at the hills of Tirumala, near Tirupati in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh which is around 600 km away from Hyderabad, 138 Km away from Chennai and 291 km away from Bangalore.

**Proper name of the shrine:** Sri Venkateswara Swamy Vaari Temple (a form of Hindu deity called lord Vishnu)

**The sacred water-tank nearby:** Sri Swamy Pushkarini

### Etymology:

- 'Tiru' (sacred) + 'Mala' (a range of mountain/ hill) = **Tirumala** (a range of sacred mountains/hills).
- In Sanskrit language, 'Vem' (all sinful links) + 'Kata' (chop off 1 part out the whole) + 'Eswara' (almighty/the God).

**Prime Deity:** Lord Venkateswara

**Historical era of its foundation:** 300 BC (estimated)

**Evident Scriptures:** Rig Veda & Asthadasa Purana

**Pious occasion to visit the temple:** The religious hub where around 50,000 to 100,000 pilgrims congregate every year to witness the grace of the deities on the following sacred occasions:

### History of the Shrine:

- **Medieval:** The history of this famous shrine dates back to 1,500 years ago during the reign of Pallavas.
  - **Contribution of Pallava dynasty:** The 18" silver sculpture of **Bhoga Srinivasa Murthy** was donated by **Pallava Queen Samavai** in 7<sup>th</sup> century.
  - **Vijayanagara's imperialist:** The coronation ceremony used to be held in 'Tirupati' & most of the shrine's assets were gathered during the reign of this dynasty.

- King '**Krishnadevaraya**' of 1517 donated as much jewels and gold as the roof of inner sanctum (Vimana) was coated with gold leaf to the temple.
- **Raghoji Bhonsle** (the Maratha General) deployed permanent administration for conducting the temple's administration in a better way.
- The king of Mysore & Gadwal also bestowed precious gift in the temple.
- Daily religious rites & rituals used to be performed by the **Pallavas of Kanchipuram** (9<sup>th</sup> century AD), **Cholas of Tanjore** (10<sup>th</sup> century) & **Pradhans of Vijayanagara** (14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> century).
- **Ranga Mandapam** of the temple was the only refuge to the deity of Srirangam, i.e. Ranganatha Swamy, during the invasion of Malik kafur in 1310-11.
- **Modern:**
  - **Administrating authority of the temple:** Seva Dossji of the Hathiramji Mutt at Tirumala as Vicaranakarta till 1 century in 1843 under the Madras presidency.
  - **Descendent administrating authority of the temple:** Consequent to passing of TTD Act in 1932, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) took charge of its administration.
  - After shattering the bondage of Britishers, the administration of Tirumala temple was delivered to Andhra Government due to having majority of Telugu speakers. TTD is regulated by Board of trustees under the direction of a designated executive officer appointed by the state government of Andhra.

**Source of Income:** Donations.

**Songs & hymns:**

- The renowned and proficient Telugu composer namely **Tallapaka Annamacharya** has 32,000 Telugu songs added to his name from which only 12,000 are available now.
- **Purandarsdasa** is another composer who compiled composition of thousands of songs for admiring the deity Venkateswara among which 'Daasana Maadiko Enna', 'Nambide Ninna Paadava Venkataramana' are notable compositions.
- **Ramabhakta & Sri Tyagaraja** have approximately 4,000 compilations of volumes among which 'Tera Teeyagarada', 'Venkatesa! Ninnu Sevimpanu' is the keertan which are worthy to be recorded in the reminiscent.

**Description of the temple:**

- **Vimanam:** It is towering monument having arched gold leafed dome as roof.
- **Garbha Gruha:** The enshrined deity '**Ananda Nilaya Divya Vimana**' is gilded with copper plating holding a golden vase of 13<sup>th</sup> century in Garbha Gruha.
- The self manifested exquisite idol '**Mulaberam**' is adorned with gold (regularly) & diamond (on special occasion) crown with studded emerald in front. The thick double anoints on his forehead screens his eyes. Bending left hand in akimbo, the idol in yellow attire wearing gold belt, gold

string and holding a gold bell looks splendid divine beauty. This magnificent idol has 'yagyopavita' (sacred thread) on whose right chest Sri Lakshmi Devi & on his left Sri Padmavati Devi are carved. Covering his feet with gold flames, gold anklets are looking embellishing there.

- **Bangaru Vakili:** It is the golden entrance that routes to inner sanctum sanctorum from **Tirumamani Mandapam**. The two divine guards (dwarpalaks) namely **Jaya & Vijaya**, sculpted images of copper, resemble as the path –shower to lead ahead in the temple. The silver corridor with **the Padi Kavali and the Vendi Vakili** shows **Snapana Mandapam** where Suprabhatam (greeting song) is sung for welcoming the pilgrims.
- **Deities in the temple:**
  - **Moolavirat or Dhruva Beram**
  - **Kautuka Beram or Bhoga Srinivasa**
  - **Snapana Beram or Ugra Srinivasa**
    - **Utsava Beram**
    - **Bali Beram or Koluvu Srinivasa**

#### Temple rituals:

- **Prasadam:** The prasadam comprises daddojanam (curd rice), pulihora (tamarind rice), vada and chakkera-pongali (sweet pongal), miryala-pongali, Appam, Paayasam, Jilebi, Muruku, Dosa, seera (kesari) including free meals and on every Thursday, Naivedyam is served to lord Srinivas.
- **Hair tonsuring:** The peculiar custom of hair tonsuring is followed on the basis of an ardent belief of getting longer and beautiful hair as per myth which goes that on getting a hit of a shepherd's stick, a part of the head of Lord Vishnu became bald. On witnessing lord's bald segment, a Gandharva princess Neela Devi immediately cut down her hair and transplanted on his head. Pleased lord Vishnu blessed her boon that the hair offered at this pilgrimage would be received by her. Hence, the name of the hill Neelambri was coined.  
Nearly a ton of hair is tonsured every day here.
  - **Hundi :** As per Hindu mythology, lord Kubera lent money to Lord Vishnu for making matrimonial arrangement of Srinivas with Padmavati. The loan of 1 crore & 14 lakhs was sanctioned to him in the form of gold coins. Vishwakarma, the architect of this entire earth, generated a paradise in Sheshadri hills. Understanding his commitment, goddess Lakshmi decided to live in his heart forever. Thus, devotees donate gold coins there just to contribute their part in the generous service of lord Vishnu



## Srivilliputtu Divya Desam      Kapu Naidu **Tirumala Venkateswara Temple**

February 25, 2011

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**Tirumala Venkateswara Temple** is a famous Hindu temple of Lord Vishnu in the form of Lord Venkateswara located in the hill town Tirumala, near Tirupati in the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh, India. It is located 580 kilometres (360 mi) south of state capital, Hyderabad, about 200 kilometres from Bangalore, about 120 kilometres from Vellore, Tamilnadu, and 157 kilometres (98 mi) North West of Chennai. The temple is situated on Venkatadri, one of the seven hills of Tirumala, and hence is also known as the *Temple of Seven Hills*. The presiding deity of the temple, Lord Venkateswara, is also known by other names . *Balaji*, Vishnu, *Govinda* and *Srinivasa*.

The temple is reportedly the richest and the most visited place of worship in the world. The temple is visited by about 50,000 to 100,000 pilgrims daily (3 to 4 Crore people annually on an average), while on special occasions and festivals, like the annual Brahmotsavam, the number of pilgrims shoots up to 500,000, making it the most visited holy place in the world.

According to legend, the temple has a murti (deity) of Lord Venkateswara, believed to have resided there for the entire Kali Yuga. In Sri Vaishnava tradition, the temple is considered one of the 108 Divya Desams.

Thondaiman, ruler of the Thondaimandalam (present day Kanchipuram) is believed to have first built the temple after visualizing Lord Vishnu in a dream.

%Tiru+or %Thiru+in Tamil language means %Shree+or Shri+. The original name of Tirupati was %Thiruvengadam+ in Tamil language. The inscriptions mentioned in the stones of the temple are of Tamil letters.

Discovery of the Venkateswara deity is described as an act of divine providence: There was a huge anthill at Tirupati, and one day a local farmer heard a voice from the heavens asking him to feed the ants. By chance the local king heard the voice and began supplying milk for the ants himself. His compassion resulted in the liquid uncovering the magnificent idol of Venkateswara hidden within the anthill.

Srivaishnavite tradition opines that the Rig Veda verse X.155.1 makes an indirect reference to the temple. One such translation goes as:

%The person, devoid of wealth and vision, is implored to go to the hill which burns up all evil (vikata for Venkata) and drives away all obstacles to peace and prosperity. The call of the rishi Sirimbitha has obviously not gone in vain.+

Thondaiman, ruler of Thondaimandalam in the ancient Tamilnadu (present day Kanchipuram and the surroundings), is believed to have first built the temple after visualizing Lord Vishnu in his dream. He built the Gopuram and the Prakhara, and arranged for regular prayers to be conducted in the temple. Later on, the Chola dynasty vastly improved the temple and gave rich endowments. To date, the various Tamil Grantha scripts are still seen inscribed upon the temple prakara walls. The Sangam literature of Tamil such as that of Silapadikaram and Satana Manimekalai, dated between 500BC and 300AD, mentions Thiruvengadam (now named Tirupati) by the appellation %Nediyon Kunram+as the northernmost frontier of the Tamil kingdoms. In fact, a fairly detailed description of the deity is given in lines 41 to 51 of Book 11 of the Silapadikaram. Again, the appellation %Nediyon+for the deity occurs in the following verses: %High on Vengadam% towering crest, with flowing streams in flood, Betwixt the effulgent glory, of shining Sun and Moon, Like unto a blue cloud in lightning dress. In all the brilliance of rainbow dight, The Red-eyed great

One, majestic stands In dress of flowery brilliance with garland bright, One lotus hand with fearsome disc adorned, and milk white conch (the other held).+

Puranic literature which was composed roughly around the post-Mauryan and early-Gupta era also mentions Tirupati as the Aadhi Varaha Kshetra. The Puranas associate the site with Lord Varaha, a Dashavatara of Lord Vishnu. The Varaha shrine holds great importance in Tirupati and is said to be older than the main sanctum of Venkateswara. There is also the Ranga Mandapam, which is to the left side of the temple as one enters. This is where the main deity, Sri Ranganatha Swamy of Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple (Trichy), was protected for a period of almost 60 years during attacks by Malik Kapur in the 14th century.

### History:

**Lord Kubera credited money to the GOD Venkateshwara (a form of the god Vishnu) for his marriage with Padmavati. In remembrance of this, the reason devotees go to Tirupati to donate money in Venkateshwara's Hundi ("Donation pot"), is so that he can pay it back to Kubera.**

### Medieval history

It was under the regime of the Vijayanagara emperors that the temple attained the majority of its current wealth and size, with the donation diamonds and gold. The coronation ceremonies of the emperors were also held at Tirupati. In 1517, Krishnadevaraya, on one of his many visits to the temple, donated gold and jewels, enabling the Vimana (inner shrine) roofing to be gilded. The Maratha general Raghoji Bhonsle visited the temple and set up a permanent administration for the conduct of worship in the temple. Among the later rulers who endowed large benefactions were the rulers of Mysore and Gadwal.

In 1843, with the coming of the East-India Company, the administration of the Sri Venkateswara Temple and a number of shrines was entrusted to Seva Dossji of the Hathiramji Mutt at Tirumala as Vicaranakarta for nearly a century until 1932, when Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) was established as a result of the TTD Act, 1932.

### Modern history

TTD is operated by a Board of Trustees and has increased in size through adoption of various Acts from five (1951) to fifteen (1987). The daily operation and management of TTD is the responsibility of an Executive Officer (EO) who is appointed by the government of Andhra Pradesh.

The temple attracts approximately 75,000 pilgrims every day. The popularity of the temple can be judged by its annual budget, estimated at Rs 10 billion in 2008, mostly from donations. Devotees give donations which runs into the millions. TTD, the organisation running the welfare of the temple, runs various charitable trusts whose funds are derived from the budget and donations from the devotees and also this was built in the Pandya dynasty.

### Location of main shrine:

Venkateshwara's abode is in the Venkatadri hills near Tirupati. Thus, the main temple of Venkateswara is the Tirumala Venkateswara Temple. The Tirumala temple is believed to be the richest temple in the world. The temple is located in Andhra Pradesh (southern India) in Chittoor district. It is around 500 km (310 mi) from Hyderabad, 150 km (93 mi) away from Chennai and 250 km (160 mi) away from Bangalore.

The Tirumala Hill is 3,200 feet (980 m) above sea level, and is about 10.33 square miles (27 km<sup>2</sup>) in area. It comprises seven peaks, representing the seven hoods of Adishesha, thus earning the name, Seshachalam. The seven peaks are called Seshadri, Neeladri, Garudadri, Anjanadri, Vrushabadri, Narayanadri and Venkatadri. The sacred temple of Sri Venkateswara is located on the seventh peak, Venkatadri (Venkata Hill), and lies on the southern banks of Sri Swami Pushkarini. The temple complex comprises a smaller traditional temple building along with a number of modern queue and pilgrim lodging sites. There are several legends associated with the manifestation of the Lord in Tirumala.

The varied names ascribed to the main deity are *Balaji*, *Srinivasa*, *Venkateswara* and *Venkatachalapathy*. The goddess Sri or Lakshmi (Vishnu's consort) resides on the chest of Venkateswara, and thus he is also known by the epithet Srinivasa (the one in whom Sri resides). Goddess Lakshmi and Goddess Padmavathi reside on his either chests. The deity is considered the Kali yuga varada, that is the boon-granting Lord of Kali yuga (the fourth and final age of the Hindu cycle of ages). The temple is held in particular reverence by the Vaishnava sect of southern India, known as the Sri Vaishnava.

For worshippers, the deity Venkateswara symbolises goodness. When people travel to Tirupati, they chant %edu Kondala Vada Venkataramana Govinda Govindaa+(in Telugu).

With His conch, He creates the cosmic sound from which the creation has manifested. And with His disc, He destroys ignorance and ego in the beings, thus liberating them. Lord Venkateswara is believed by followers to be a very merciful deity form of Vishnu, being the fulfiller of every wish made to him by the devotees.

The Holy mantra chanted is Om Namo Venkateshaya. %he Venkateswara Suprabhatam+, the morning recital of prayers and songs of awakening, is written by Prativadi Bhayankaram Annan of Kanchipuram and sung by famous singer M.S.subbulakshmi. Several composers composed beautiful kirtanas about Lord Venkateswara, the most notable amongst them being Tyagaraja and Annamacharya, who composed mostly in Telugu. Annamacharya or Annamayya is a legendary devotee of Lord Venkateswara and composed songs almost exclusively about the deity.

## Prasadam

Laddu is the world famous prasadam given at Tirumala Temple. Recently the Trust has taken copy right of Laddu prasaddam, hence, no one can prepare the same Laddu. Many other delicious prasadams are also available including daddojanam (curd rice), pulihora(tamarind rice), vada and chakkerapongali (sweet pongal). Free meals are given daily to the pilgrims, and on Thursdays, the Tirupavadai seva occurs, where food items are kept for naivedyam to Lord Srinivasa.

## Hair tonsuring

Many devotees also have their head tonsured as an offer. The daily amount of hair collected is over a ton. The hair thus gathered is sold by the temple organization a few times a year by public auction to international buyers for use as hair extensions and in cosmetics, bringing over \$6 million to the temple's treasury.<sup>1</sup> As per puranas hair given by devotees is to cover up the lost hair (it is a very small portion) of lord Venkateswara swamy.


## The Seven Hills:

The seven hills represent the Saptarishi. They are sometimes called the Sapthagiri. Hence the Lord is named Saptagirinivasa. Following are the seven hills:

- Vrushabhadri (Hill of Nandi, the vahana of Lord Shiva)
- Anjanadri (Hill of Lord Hanuman)
- **Neeladri (Hill of Neela Devi) – When Lord Balaji was hit by a shepherd on his head, a small portion of his scalp becomes bald. There is no hair growth over there and this is noticed by a Gandharva princess Neela Devi. She feels “such an attractive face should not have a flaw”. Immediately she cuts a portion of her hair and with her magical power she implants it on his scalp. Then Lord Balaji notices her sacrifice as hair is the beautiful aspect of female, he promises her that all his devotees who come to his abode should render their hair to him and she would be the recipient of all that hair received. Hence it is believed that hair offered by the devotees is accepted by Neela devi.**
- Garudadri (Hill of Garuda, the vahana of Lord Vishnu)
- Seshadri (Hill of Sesha, the dasa of Lord Vishnu)
- Naraynadri (Hill of Narayana (Vishnu))
- Venkatadri (Hill of Lord Venkateswara)


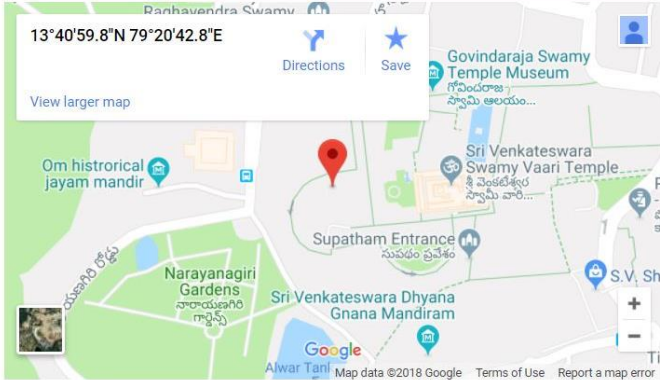
Sri Venkatesa Suprabhatam, the range of 7 hills are known as Seshalam, Garudachalam, Venkatadri, Narayanadri, Vrishabhadri, Anjanadri, Neeladri and represents the great serpent bed.




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TIRUMALA VENKATESWARA SWAMY TEMPLE

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History
HISTORY

Tirumala Venkateswara Temple is built on the Venkatadri hill, one of the seven hills of Tirumala, and hence is also known as the Temple of Seven Hills. It is a famous Hindu Temple of Lord Venkateswara located in the hill town Tirumala of Andhra Pradesh in Chittoor district. Lord Venkateswara is also known by names Balaji or Srinivasa. The temple is the richest and the most visited place of worship in the world. It is said that this temple has a self-manifested idol of Lord Vishnu, who resided here for the entire Kali Yuga. The seven peaks of tirumala are called Seshadri, Neeladri, Garudadri, Anjanadri, Vrushabadri, Narayanadri and Venkatadri. The sacred temple of Sri Venkateswara is located on the seventh peak, Venkatadri. According to history, several rishis performed a holy sacrifice but could not decide whom to dedicate the fruit of their yoga. Bhrigu one of the rishis took the task to himself and went to test Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva. When he attended satyalokam Lord Brahma was found busy chanting the Vedas with one face, uttering the name of Narayana with another and looking at Goddess Saraswati with the third. As Brahma did not took the notice of his arrival, lack of courtesy bhrigu left Satyalokam in a huff. After that when he went to Kailasam he found Lord Siva absorbed in sporting with his consort Parvathi Devi taking no notice of his visit. so he left kailasam. Finally, Bhrigu went to Vaikuntam, the abode of Lord Vishnu and found Vishnu and Sri Maha Lakshmi reclining on Adishesha unmindful of his arrival. Disgusted over this, Bhrigu, known for his intemperate nature, kicked Lord Vishnu on the chest, where Sri Maha Lakshmi was reclining. Vishnu immediately got up, massaged rishi's foot and enquired if his foot was injured when he

kicked on his hard chest. Taken aback over Vishnu's attention and cool composure, Bhrigu returned to the rishis and advised them to dedicate the fruit of their sacrifice to Vishnu, as he deserved it best, among the divine Trinity.

But, Sri Maha Lakshmi was furious over Bhrigu for kicking the holy spot and her favourite abode the bosom of the Lord. She left Vishnu and stayed at Karavirapura to commence a deep penance. Unable to bear Sri Maha Lakshmi's departure, Vishnu left Vaikuntam in search of her and wandered across the forests and hills. Over not finding his consort Vishnu took an ant-hill on Venkatadri under a tamarind tree as his dwelling place. Lord Vishnu reincarnated as Srinivasa as the son of an Vakula Devi who was Yasoda in her previous birth. In mean time Princess Padmavati grew up into an beautiful maiden. Once when lord srinivasa hunting an wild elephant in the forest it led him into a garden of Princess Padmavati. The sight of the elephant frightened the Princess. When Lord Srinivasa appeared in front of the Elephant, it immediately saluted the Lord and disappeared into the forest. Lord Srinivasa noticed princess Padmavathi and enquired about her from her maids. Lord srinivasa told Vakula Devi about his love for Padmavathi. Vakula devi approached Akasa Raja with the marriage proposal for Lord Srinivasa and Padmavathi. In order to have a divine wedding Lord srinivasa took a huge loan from Kubera, the god of wealth. In about six months after this divine marriage, Goddess Maha Lakshmi who left the lord came to know that her husband married again and came to see him in disbelief. When both of them encountered him about the marriage the lord turned himself into an granite statue. Goddesses Lakshmi and Padmavathi also turn themselves into stone idols expressing their wish to be with their Lord eternally. Goddess Lakshmi stayed with him on the left side of his chest while Goddess Padmavati rested on the right side of his chest.

**When Lord Balaji was hit by a shepard on his head, a small portion of his scalp becomes bald. when it is noticed by a Gandharva princess Neela Devi she feels "such an attractive face should not have a flaw". Immediately cuts a portion of her hair and implants it on his scalp. Then Lord Balaji notices her sacrifice as hair is the beautiful aspect of Female, he promises her that all his devotees who come to his abode should render their hair to him and she would be the recipient of all that hair received. Hence it is believed that hair offered by the devotees is collected by Neela devi.**

Sri Varahaswami temple is located in the North West corner of the temple, as he offered the land lord balaji mad a deal that the first offering of his devotees go to him. The "Vimanam" Roof with Shining Golden Exterior of the Inner Temple that houses The Main Presiding Deity is named "Vimanam" in any Hindu temple. In the Tirumala temple, it holds a very special place as the "Ananda Nilayam" with its imposing view, magnificence, and readily recognizable identity to any devotee familiar with the temple and its fame. Annamacharya or Annamayya is a legendary devotee of Lord Venkateswara and composed songs almost exclusively about Lord Balaji. The town celebrates most Vaishnava festivals including Vaikunta Ekadasi, Rama Navami and Janmashtami with great splendor, while the Brahmotsavam celebrated every year during September is the most important festivals in Tirumala, when it receives millions of devotees over a short span of a week.



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# The mystic Tirupati Balaji Temple

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Tirumala Venkateshwar or Tirupati Balaji Temple is located in the hills of Andhra Pradesh. One of the richest and ancient temples has many stories associated with it. Let us have a look at the mystic stories of Shri Tirupati Balaji temple here.

**It is said that the hair on the main idol's head is their real hair. This hair remains soft and silky and never gets tangled. It is said that once a shepherd attacked Balaji. Due to the attack some of his hair got broken and fell down. At that time a Gandharva princess Neela Devi cut her hair and offered them To Tirupati Balaji. Seeing this Balaji blessed Neela Devi by saying that whoever cuts his hair and offers them to him unknowingly will be donating them to Neela Devi.**

The back portion of the Balaji idol always stays wet. If you listen carefully you can very clearly hear the sound of the sea. The temperature of the Tirupati Balaji idol is always 110 Fahrenheit. This despite the fact that the temple is on a height and it is always very cold there. At 04:30 in the morning the Abhishek is done after which sweat forms on the Idol. Later these drops are cleaned by a cloth. On Thursdays when his clothes are taken down for a change they are found to be very warm.

On the right side of the temple, there is a door near which a stick is kept. It is said that this stick was used to punish Balaji whenever he did anything wrong. Once such time when he was being punished he got accidentally hit on his chin. Ever since there has been a tradition of applying a little bit of sandalwood on his chin as well.

Just like we do not look back after we light the pyre of a person the flowers which had been donated to Tirupati Balaji are thrown at the back of the temple. These flowers then float down to a place known as Verpedu. This place is 20 Kilometres far from Tirumala. A priest seeing these flowers is considered to be bad omen hence the tradition.



Just 23 kilometers far from Tirupati there is a village. The residents of this village follow strict traditions. No one else apart from the residents can enter this village. It is believed that this village provides all the flowers, ghee, butter and milk for the temple.

There is a material known as Kaccha Kapooram that is put on the Tirupati Balaji idol. In reality, if we put this material on any stone or granite then it would break into pieces. However it is used on Balaji idol every day and still, the stone of the idol remains unaffected.

Around the year 1800, this temple was closed for 12 years. During that time a king punished 12 people here. He killed them and hung their bodies in the temple complex. It is said that at that very time Balaji Venakateshwar appeared and gave the king punishment for his actions.

The entrance of Tirumala hills is shaped like the mouth of a snake. It is believed that the height of this door is the same as the height of the idol. Vishnu had kept his first step at the highest point of Tirumala hills i.e. Padalu. His next step was at this door and the third at the place where the idol is located.

If you see the Tirupati Balaji idol you will feel it is located in the center of the Garba Gudi. In reality, though the idol is standing at the right-hand corner of the Garba gudi. There are many lamps lit in front of the idol. They have been burning from thousands of years and till now none of them have been put off.

Balaji, Tirumala, Tirupati Balaji, vishnu, Vishnu Temple



## TIRUMALA HILLS & ITS HISTORY:

Tirumala is located about 3,200 feet above the sea level. It is surrounded by seven hills as given below: They are the seven peaks of Seshachalam range. The main temple of Venkateshwara (on Tirumala) is the seventh peak.

### THE SEVEN HILLS OF TIRUMALA ARE:

- 1) Vrushabadri, Hill of Nandi, the vahana of Lord Shiva
- 2) Anjanadri, Hill of Lord Hanuman
- 3) Neeladri, Hill of Neela Devi
- 4) Garudadri, Hill of Garuda, the vahana of Lord Vishnu
- 5) Seshadri, Hill of Sesha, the dasa of Lord Vishnu
- 6) Naraynadri, Hill of Narayana (Vishnu)
- 7) Venkatadri, Hill of Lord Venkateswara

In Tamil, the Tirumala hills is called the Nedion Kunram where Nedion means Vishnu+ and Kuram means Hill+. It is a part of the munt Meru where the Adi Varaha decided to reside to help people of the Earth attain salvation. It is the main idea of helping people who are failing to initiate realization of the God through Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga or Dhyana Yoga. Tirumala Hills came from Vishnu to the Earth by mount Garuda. The

seven hills or the seven peaks are believed to be the seven heads of Adishesha (nagaja, i.e, king of all nagas where Adishesha uncoils to move time forward to the future).

Telugu and Tamil are the main languages and the major religion is Hinduism. Men usually wear Dhotis and women Sarees. **The practice of tonsure and using Tilaka are major practices in Tirumala Tirupati.**

### **SHOPPING:**

Shopping is a massive attraction in Tirupati. There are 1000-s of Religious Souvenirs, black wooden replicas of Tirupati idol besides pictures, pendants, audio and video CD-s and DVD-s, books and Stothras, brass lamps, rangoli stickers, vermilion in garish boxes etc. Tanjore style Gold Leaf paintings also famous in Tirupati (with mythological motifs and themes) and Kalamkari Fabric which is very popular in India and abroad. Lepakshi Showroom is one the best places to get Kalamkari Fabrics and authentic local woodwork. Laminations of Lord pictures, Lord with lighting bulbs are exported from India. Lepakshi Emporium of the Andhra Pradesh state also has an outlet in the Srinivasam Complex. Cotton dress materials are imported. Allagada, Dornakambala, Madanpally, Villages near Tirupati are some of the shopping places in Tirupati.

### **DEVOTIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

Besides Sevas, the following devotional activities are performed in Tirupati:

**1) Tonsuring : Giving away one's hair to Tirupati signifying that one completely surrenders his/her soul to Tirupati Balaji**

2) Angapradakshinam : Pilgrims lying prostrate and then roll around the temple by chanting the name of the Lord.

3) Thulabharam : This means offering one's weight in terms of coins or candies or sugar according to the desire of the Lord.

4) Niluvudopidi : Offering one's belongings to the Lord.

### **FACILITIES AT TIRUPATHI:**

Marriages are also performed at the Tirupati Temple in the name of the Lord ensuring peace and harmony in a married life. There are thousands of Mandaps in Tirupathi,





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## Tirumala

Tirumala is where the Venkateswara (Sri Balaji) Temple is located. Tirumala is located on Vyenkata Hill at an altitude of 840m (2,800 ft). Vyenkateswara means %the Lord of Vyenkatachala.+Vyenkatachala is a chain of hills. The temple is situated on the top of seven adjoining hills, also called Seshachalam Hills, which are said to be an incarnation of Ananta Sesa.

Once Vayu and Sesa entered into a disagreement over who was stronger. Sesa wrapped his long body around Mount Meru and challenged Vayu to move it. Vayu tried but failed. Vayu pretended to be exhausted and stopped blowing. Then Sesa opened his mouth to breathe. At that moment, Vayu blew off part of the hill. After the hill had traveled a great distance, Mount Meru asked Vayu to leave it there. Ashamed of his defeat, Sesa did penance, meditating on Lord Vishnu. When Lord Vishnu appeared and offered a boon, Sesa assumed the shape of the hill and requested the Lord to stay on his head. This hill is called Sesachalam. It is said that when Ramanuja visited here, he walked up the hill on his knees to avoid stepping on Sesa Naga.

The Lord's appearance in Tirumala is mentioned in about 12 different Puranas. According to the Brahma Purana, Lord Vishnu wanted a change from Vaikuntha, so he inquired from Narada Muni about a place on earth for diversion and sport. Narada suggested Sesachalam (the head of Ananta Sesa).

All the property at the top of the hill at Tirumala belongs to the Tirumala-Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD), which is recycles much of its wealth to such humanitarian works as schools, orphanages and hospitals.

Tirumala is an unusual place for India in that the streets are totally clean of trash.

### **Sri Venkateswara (Balaji) Temple**

This temple is one of the most important Vishnu temples in India and is also the richest. It is the most visited temple in India and is one of the most visited religious places in the world. This magnificent temple is located 20km up a hill from Tirupati. It is a very peaceful place and coming to this temple is a very awe-inspiring and devotional experience. On a spiritual tour of South India it is an absolute must.

On an average over 25,000 people visit daily, and on festival days over 100,000 visit. In 1989, over eleven and a half million people made their pilgrimage here.

As you enter the inner sanctum the chanting becomes more and more intense. %Om NamO Venkateswara, Om NamO Venkateswara.+On special days when the Deity is in

Full dress+his entire outfit spreads from one end of the altar room to the other and all the jewels of the dress are real- gold coins, emeralds, diamonds and platinum.

**It is said that at Tirumala, Lord Vishnu grants the wish of anyone who offers him their weight in something, be it gold, fruit, cloth, or whatever. Pilgrims who make such an offering and ask a boon or blessing generally return (after achieving their desire) and make another offering to the Lord, acknowledging his kindness.**

The average income of the temple is \$25,000 (10 lakhs rupees) a day. It has an annual income of 5 billion rupees (125 million dollars) a year. The TTD banks Rs 40 to 50 crores (12 million dollars) yearly. The Hundi (Deity box) collection is over 5 million dollars yearly. It is not unusual when they open this box at the end of the day to find gold and platinum coins and bricks inside.

### **Around the Temple**

There is a large water tank next to this temple called Swami Pushkarini tank, where pilgrims take bath before their dar-shan. The Varaha Purana says Swami Pushkarini was a pond used by Lord Vishnu in Vaikuntha for recreation. Tradition says that Garuda put this tank here.

Next to the tank is the Varaha Swami Temple. It is stated in the Puranas that Lord Varaha was on Sesachala before Sri Venkateswara, and he granted space to Venkateswara to live on Sesachala Hill. It is a tradition to visit this temple before going into the main temple.

There is a small museum called the Hall of Antiquities (opened daily from 8 am to 8 pm; admission Rs 5), which is located opposite the temple entrance.

Akasa Ganga is a sacred waterfall, 5km south of the temple. Water is brought from here for Lord Venkateswara's abhiseka (bathing). On the way to Akasa Ganga is Papavinasha Tirtha.

Tirumala is more like a city than a temple, and one could easily spend a whole day just walking around. There are sacred water tanks and smaller temples that house various paraphernalia, such as the chariot that carries the small processional Deities (utsava Deity) during festivals.

**You can visit the huge head-shaving center, which looks something like a South Indian temple. Devotees offer their hair in expectation of pleasing the Lord. Head shaving (tonsuring) is done by many people (many of them women). The hair is sold for wig making, and these proceeds are used for increasing the prosperity of the Deities and the upkeep of the town, etc. Three or four crore rupees (over a million dollars) is raised from this process each year.**

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Tirumala tirupati devasthanam

# **Tirumala tirupati devasthanam**

## **Temple History:**

There is ample literary and epigraphic testimony to the antiquity of the temple of Lord Sri Venkateswara.

Sri Krishnadevaraya All the great dynasties of rulers of the southern peninsula have paid homage to Lord Sri Venkateswara in this ancient shrine. The Pallavas of Kancheepuram (9th century AD), the Cholas of Thanjavur (a century later), the Pandyas of Madurai, and the kings and chieftains of Vijayanagar (14th - 15th century AD) were devotees of the Lord and they competed with one another in endowing the temple with rich offerings and contributions.

It was during the rule of the Vijayanagar dynasty that the contributions to the temple increased. Sri Krishnadevaraya had statues of himself and his consorts installed at the portals of the temple, and these statues can be seen to this day. There is also a statue of Venkatapati Raya in the main temple.

After the decline of the Vijayanagar dynasty, nobles and chieftains from all parts of the country continued to pay their homage and offer gifts to the temple. The Maratha general, Raghoji Bhonsle, visited the temple and set up a permanent endowment for the conduct of worship in the temple. He also presented valuable jewels to the Lord, including a large emerald which is still preserved in a box named after the General. Among the later rulers who have endowed large amounts are the rulers of Mysore and Gadwal.

After the fall of the Hindu kingdoms, the Muslim rulers of Karnataka and then the Britishers took over, and many of the temples came under their supervisory and protective control.

In 1843 AD, the East India Company divested itself of the direct management of non-Christian places of worship and native religious institutions. The administration of the shrine of Sri Venkateswara and a number of estates were then entrusted to Sri Seva Dossji of the Hatiramji Mutt at Tirumala, and the temple remained under the administration of the Mahants for nearly a century, till 1933 AD.

In 1933, the Madras Legislature passed a special act, which empowered the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams(TTD) Committee to control and administer a fixed group of temples in the Tirumala-Tirupati area, through a Commissioner appointed by the Government of Madras. In 1951, the Act of 1933 was replaced by an enactment whereby the administration of TTD was entrusted to a Board of Trustees, and an Executive Officer was appointed by the Government. The provisions of the Act of 1951 were retained by Charitable and Religious Endowments Act, 1966.

### **About Sri Venkateswara Temple:**

The ancient and sacred temple of Sri Venkateswara is located on the seventh peak, Venkatachala (Venkata Hill) of the Tirupati Hill, and lies on the southern banks of Sri Swami Pushkarini.

It is by the Lord's presidency over Venkatachala, that He has received the appellation, Venkateswara (Lord of the Venkata Hill). He is also called the Lord of the Seven Hills.

The temple of Sri Venkateswara has acquired unique sanctity in Indian religious lore. The Sastras, Puranas, Sthala Mahatyams and Alwar hymns unequivocally declare that, in the Kali Yuga, one can attain mukti, only by worshipping Venkata Nayaka or Sri Venkateswara.

The benefits acquired by a pilgrimage to Venkatachala are mentioned in the Rig Veda and Atharva Puranas. In these epics, Sri Venkateswara is described as the great bestower of boons. There are several legends associated with the manifestation of the Lord at Tirumala.

The temple has its origins in Vaishnavism, an ancient sect which advocates the principles of equality and love, and prohibits animal sacrifice.

The sanctum sanctorum which houses the awe-inspiring idol of the Lord of the Seven Hills is situated in the main temple complex of Tirumala.

### **Hair tonsuring:**

Many devotees have their head tonsured as an offer. The daily amount of hair collected is over a ton.[29] The hair thus gathered is sold by the temple organization a few times a year by public auction to international buyers for use as hair extensions and in cosmetics,[30] bringing over \$6 million to the temple's treasury.[31]

When Lord Balaji was hit on his head by a shepherd, a small portion of his scalp became bald. This is noticed by Neela Devi, a Gandharva princess. She feels "such an attractive face should not have a flaw". Immediately she cuts a portion of her hair and with her magical power she implants it on his scalp. Lord Balaji notices her sacrifice. As hair is a beautiful aspect of the female, he promises her that all his devotees who come to his abode should render their hair to him, and she would be the recipient of all the hair received. Hence it is believed that hair offered by the devotees is accepted by Neela Devi. The hill Neeladri, one among seven hills is named after her.

### **Hundi (donation pot)**

It is believed that Srinivasa had to make arrangements for his wedding. Lord Kubera credited money to the god Venkateswara (a form of the god Vishnu) for his marriage with Padmavati. Srinivasa sought a loan of one crore and 14 lakh (11,400,000) coins of gold from Kubera and had Viswakarma, the divine architect, create heavenly surroundings in the Seshadri hills. Together, Srinivasa and Padmavathy lived for all eternity while Goddess Lakshmi, understanding the commitments of Lord Vishnu, chose to live in his heart forever.[citation needed] In remembrance of this, devotees go to Tirupati to donate money in



Venkateswara's hundi (donation pot) so that he can pay it back to Kubera. The hundi collections go as high as 22.5 million INR a day.[8] Devotees offer gold as a token of their love for God. The annual gold offering goes as high as 3000 kg.[32]

### **Thulabharam:**

One of the most important offering in this temple, is the 'thulabharam.' In the Thulabaram ritual, a devotee sits on a pan of a weighing balance and the other pan is filled with materials greater than the weight of the devotee. Devotees usually offer sugar, jaggery, tulsi leaves, banana, gold, coins. This is mostly performed with newborn babies or children.

### **Arjitha seva (paid services):**

Pilgrims can view and participate (in a limited fashion) in the various sevas performed to Dhruva bera (main idol), Bhoga Srinivasa, Sri Malayappa swami and other idols in the temple.

When pilgrims purchase arjitha seva tickets, they get the opportunity to see a seva performed to the Lord, obtain prasadam in the form of vastram (clothes), akshantalu (sacred and blessed rice) and food articles (laddus, vadas, dosas, pongal, rice items) and a darshan of the utsava murti.[33]

### **The Seven Hills:**

The seven hills, also called Saptagiri (Template:Lang-Te), represent the Saptarishi (seven sages). They sometimes called the Sapathagiri. Hence the Lord is named Saptagirinivasa. The following are the seven hills:

- Vrushabhadri – Hill of Nandi, the vahana of Lord Shiva
- Anjanadri – Hill of Lord Hanuman
- **Neeladri – Hill of Neela Devi – It is believed that hair offered by the devotees is accepted by Neela Devi. It is because of boon granted by Lord Venkateswara to Neela Devi.**
- Garudadri or Garudachalam – Hill of Garuda, the vahana of Lord Vishnu
- Seshadri or Seshachalam – Hill of Sesha, the dasa of Lord Vishnu
- Naraynadri – Hill of Narayana. Srivari Padalu are located here
- Venkatadri – Hill of Lord Venkateswara

# General Facilities at Tirumala

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## General Facilities at Tirumala

### Facilities to pilgrims walking up the hills:

- v T.T.D. provides Free Bus facility from Tirupati Railway Station to Alipiri via R.T.C. Central Bus Station, Kapilatheertham from 4 a.m. to 11 p.m.
- v Free bus from Railway Station to RTC central Bus station.
- v Free Transportation of luggage from Alipiri tollgate to Tirumala.
- v Availability of drinking water all along the footpath.
- v Pilgrim Amenities Complex with all facilities.
- v Availability of toilets.
- v Provision of sunshade at important points for taking rest.
- v Patrolling by Security Guards, Gurkhas and the police all along round the clock to prevent unwary pilgrims from being cheated or robbed by unscrupulous elements.
- v Relay of religious programmes through local broadcasting system.
- v Sale of cool drinks, mineral water etc. at nominal rates.
- v Bhudevi Bhavan - Pilgrims Amenities Complex at Alipiri Bus Station with Dormitories, Bathrooms, Lockers etc.

### Transport from Tirupathi to Tirumala and Vice Versa

Andhra Pradesh Road Transport Corporation runs nearly 250 buses daily making approximately 800 trips to carry pilgrims from Tirupathi to Tirumala and vice versa. There are also long distance direct buses from various parts of the state and neighbouring state to Tirumala and back via Gudur, Sri Kalahasthi, Piler Nellore, Bangalore, Chennai, Kanchi etc. The Authorities to avoid long queue also issue return tickets, which are valid for three days. There are plenty of jeeps, taxis, private cars and vans operated from Tirupati and Tirumala touching approximately 1,000 in Number. The vehicle owners have to pay the tollgate charges and collect token at the Alipiri toll gate.

### By Road

Pilgrims traveling to Tirumala by road can utilize the facility of radiator water, auto clinic with spare parts & mechanics. The car drivers of taxis must wear uniform and pilgrims are prohibited from smoking and drinking and are not allowed to carry such items while going to Tirumala. The vehicles are subject to thorough checking by the authorities. For auto clinic contact tollgate at Alipiri or Tirumala tollgate.

Distance from Tirupati Station to Various temples:

Place	Kms
Sri Govindraj Swamy Temple	1
Srinivasa Mangapuram Temple	12
Tiruchanoor (Alamelumangapuram Temple)	6
Sri Kapilaswara Swamy temple . Kapilteertham	4
Alipiri-Kapilteertham	4
Sri Kodandaramaswamy temple	1
Sri Hare Ram Hare Krishna Temple	5
Sri Aurobindo Shrine	5
Hashtakal Ramam-Urban Hatt	5
Tirumala Hills	25
Narayanavanam . Kalyana Venkateswara	22
Nagalapuram . Lord Veda Narayan Swamy Temple	65
Appalayagunta-Lord Prasanna Venkateswarswami Temple	15
Karvetnagaram . Lord Venugopala Swamy	60
Vayalapadu Lord Sri Rama Temple	100
Kannipakkam . Sri Ganesh Temple	80
Sri Kalahasthi Temple	40

### **By Air**

Airport is 15 kms away from Tirupati. Only Indian Airlines operate flights from Hyderabad to Tirupati and back thrice a week.

#### **Timings:**

1030 Dep Hyderabad

1125 Arr Tirupati

1210 Dep Tirupati

1305 Arr Hyderabad

Flights operated on Thursday, Friday and Sunday

**Transfers from Airport to Tirupati** - APSRTC coaches are available

Prepaid taxi counters are also available at the airport.

Indian Airlines

### **Broadcasting Systems**

TTD has arranged broadcasting systems throughout Tirumala and also covering footpath. The mantras recited during the daily rituals, devotional music, harikathas are broadcasted from suprabhatam till the closure of the temple doors after ekantaseva.

### **Pilgrims amenities complex (Near Central Reception Office)**

The Complex is provided with lockers, tonsuring centre, bathrooms and toilets facilitates free dormitory accommodation to nearly 4000 pilgrims.

### **Free Bus Facilities**

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams is running free bus with a frequency of 10 to 20 minutes at Tirumala covering all cottage areas, hotels, canteen, queue complex and bus station from central reservation office.

### **Kalyana Katta (Tonsure Centre)**

Another unique custom of Tirumala is the tonsure ceremony. Pilgrims to Tirumala usually offer the hair on their head to the Lord as a devotional offering. Persons in need of the assistance of the Lord usually take a vow and when they visit the temple offer their hair at the Kalyanakatta - special hall erected for this purpose. A bath in the Pushkarini follows the tonsure ceremony; the pilgrims then enter the temple and worship the Lord.

It is believed that hair offering establishes a bond between the man and the deity to whom it is offered. As one enters Tirumala one would invariably find a cluster of cottages and choultries built for accommodation of the pilgrims. Just beyond these is the Kalyanakatta. Men, Women and children join the line to get their heads tonsured. A nominal fee is collected for the tonsuring and it is possible that the revenue aspect of this black gold to TTD is commendable. Which goes for its philanthropic activities. Cottages like ATC have a facility from 6am to 6pm where in the pilgrims can avoid the serpentine Queues of Kalyanakatta. It has appointed sufficient barbers to attend. About 15,000 pilgrims have their heads tonsured per day. This complex is maintained well.

Incidentally this custom also has brought in a couple of Guinness World Records for this temple as the largest ever-human hair collected via tonsuring of heads and largest revenue earner by sale of human hair.

### **Facilities to pilgrims in the queue halls**

v Hygienic, airy, large queue halls provided with ceiling fans.

v Catering inside the halls by T.T.D. Canteen.

v Sale of food packets at reasonable prices.

v First Aid.

v Toilet, bathrooms even in the queue halls.



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## Tirupathi Venkateswara Temple ó One of the Most Famous Vishnu temple in India

October 4, 2014 admin Tirupathi

One of the most famous Maha Vishnu temple in India is the Thirumalai Venkateswara temple, in Andhra Pradesh and is situated in Chittoor district in the hill town of Tirumala. Besides the Sree Padmanabha Temple in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, it is the richest pilgrimage centre with an average of 75,000 daily pilgrims and thus making the temple the most visited holy place of worship in the world. **It stretches out through an area of 27 kms, encompassed in seven hills or peaks , which symbolizes Adhi shesha's seven heads. These seven hills are named as Sheshadri – named after shesha naga, Neeladri – named after Neela devi – a gandharva princess, Garudadri – named after garuda, Anjanadri – named after anjaneya, Vrushabadri – named after Nandi – lord Siva's vehicle, Narayanadri and Venkatadri / Venkatachala / Venkata hill – the main temple on the banks of swami Pushkarni river. It is the 7th peak and popularly known as Temple of Seven Hills. It is also believed that these seven hills represent seven sages or Saptha Rishis.**

Lord Mahavishnu's another form of incarnation; Lord Venkateswara is the main god of worship. Devotees worship the Lord using different names such as Balaji, Sreenivasa, Malayappa, Kaliyugavarada, Venkatachalapathy etc. The word Thirumala means Holy Mountain and Venkateswara means the supreme God, who redeems from all the sins of those who visits or submits themselves to HIM and showers holy grace upon them. In Vedas ( Rigveda ), hindu puranas and Shastras, we can find established versions that Venkateswara is the most kind towards the worshipers and during this kaliyuga , worshipping Venkatachalapathy is the only way to reach Parabrama / attain moksha

The Pallavas of 9th century AD, The Cholas of the 10th C AD, Vijayanagar Pradhans of 14th and 15th C were the greatest devotees of Lord Venkateswara and gifted a huge amount of gold , diamonds and ornaments , which made the temple acquire its present financial position. We can see the statues of Sri Krishna Deva Raya and his wife Raja Todar Mal inside the temple premises. In 1932 with TTD Act, Thirumala Thirupathi Devasthanam was established and the whole temple activities , administration and management came under the control of an Executive Officer (EO), appointed by the government of Andhra Pradesh.

Famous musicians ó Tallapaka Annamacharya, Purandadasa, Ramabhaktha, Sri Tyagaraja , all these are sincere devotees of Lord Srinivasa, who wrote thousands of bhakhti songs praising his grace and glory and boundless blessings.

The main idol of Venkateswara is inside the golden roofed tower called -The Vimanam- is placed inside the glittered dome known as Ananda Nilaya Divya Vimana. It is believed that the main deity or Mulaberaam is self evolved and self dressed, as no human has the capability to adorn the Lord so



perfectly and proportionately. Mulaberaam is adorned in its full glory with golden crown, golden earrings and HIS body wrapped in yellow silk, hooked with golden string and golden belt. Padmavathy Devi rests on HIS left part and Lakshmi Devi dwells on HIS right part. Gold framed feet are adorned with golden anklets. Through the Tirumani Mandapam we reach the Bangaru Vakili (golden entrance) ó way to inner main temple where the main diety resides. Lord Venkateswara is guarded by two dwarapalakas ( jaya and vijaya) huge cupper images. Dasavatharam is inscribed on the huge wooden doors add to its antique beauty.

Main Deities in the temple are: ó Moolavirat or Dhruva Beram ó (fixed stone idol), is the idol of Lord Venkateswara having a height of 8 ft and it is the prime force of energy to the temple.

Kautuka Beram or Bhoga Srinivasa ó a small silver idol of one feet inch length and was gifted by the Pallava Queen Samavai Perindevi in 614 AD, remains there till now. It rests beside the Druva Beram on the left side and is tied to it by a holy string- Sambandha Kroocha. This tiny idol enjoys all the earthly happiness, same as the MoolaVirat, hence named as Bhoga Srinivasa. Sahasra kalashabhiskhekom is done every Wednesday and after all the daily rituals, this deity is placed on a golden cot at night.

Snapan Beram or Ugra Srinivasa ó this deity is the anger part of Lord Venkareswara and it is brought outside on kaishika Dwadasi, once in a year, for snapana or cleansing with abhishekams using milk , curd , ghee, turmeric, holy water from holy rivers and oceans.

Utsava Beram is also known as Malayappa because this idol was seen along with the idols of Sreedevi and Bhudevi in the Malayappan Konai Cave. After getting this, it was used for utsavam ó this deity is brought outside to bless the devotees.

- Bali Beram, ó panchaloha idol same as the prime deity, is considered as the guardian of all the functioning of the temple including administration and financial dealings
- Lord Venkateswara is worshipped six times a day.
- Ushakala aradhana ó starts and finishes before early morning.
- Prathakala aradahana ó starts after sunrise and ends before noon.
- Madhyanakala aradhana ó starts and ends at mid day.
- Aparahnakala aradhana ó starts and ends around dawn.
- Ardharathri aradhana ó after sunset

Tirupathi Trust is giving many prasadam as the blessings from the Lord Venkateswara. The most popular one is the Laddu. Some other items are Chakkara ponkal, Curd rice, Payasam, Murukku, Appam, Tamarind rice, Jilebi etc. Devotees can avail free meals daily.

**One of the famous rituals is offering hair to the Lord. Many pilgrims tonsure their head and offer their hair to God and all these hair offered by the devotees symbolically is given to Neela Devi, a Gandharva princess, who with her magical powers replaced the balded part of Sree Balaji with her own hair. Then onwards Lord Srinivasa gave her word for the hair of all the devotees, who visit the Lord.**

Hundi or Donation Pot is the major source of income for the temple. This is based on the belief that Lord Venkatesawara, during his marriage with Padmavathy, borrowed huge amount of gold and money from Lord Kubera in order to construct the godly palace on seven hills. To repay the debt to Kubera, Devotees are donating money and gold for Lord Venkateswara as a symbol of love and affection.

## Khrist Bhakta Movement: A Model for an Indian Church?

Inculturation in the Area of Community Building

Hindus do not eat during the day but after sunset. Some people eat fruit or drink juice or milk while others drink only water. Yet some others eat one meal consisting of no cereal but boiled potatoes or *sabudhāna khicrī*. As practiced among the *Khrist Bhaktas*, the majority drink only liquids during the day between sunrise and sunset. Women fast on all Fridays and all devotees fast on Fridays in Lent. As the element of fasting is common to both Hindu and Christian frameworks, can we see any sign of one of these frameworks in particular at work or are both frameworks operative here? Looking at the mode of fasting, we find the Hindu framework operative while stressing fasting on Fridays, the 40 days of Lent, and the Fridays of Lent depicts a Christian framework.

Another form of expression used by devotees to show their faith in Christ is shaving off the hair and offering it at the *āśram* (4.1.13). Offering the hair to the deity is a practice commonly seen among the Hindus. People offer their hair as a response for favours received. The birth of a child after many years of marriage or passing exams are examples. An oath taken earlier, if and when it comes to pass, will be a sign that God has answered their prayers, and so the hair is offered in return. It is also used as a symbol of total submission to God and a means of seeking forgiveness for sins. Hair is considered as part of the body and by tonsuring at temple the hair is given back to God. The temple in Thirupathi, Andhra Pradesh is a preferred place for the Hindus to perform the tonsure. Tonsuring is also seen among Christians of some regions. Many Christians, especially from the province of Andhra Pradesh, practice the ritual of offering hair at the Christian pilgrim centre. Velankanni in Tamil Nadu is the most favoured place for Christians. Thus, the element of shaving off the hair and offering it to the Lord is present largely in Hinduism while it is also seen in some pockets in Christianity.

The expression of taking *mannat* (a vow to the Lord) includes within it several expressions such as walking to the *āśram* as pilgrimage, offering flowers, fruit, sweets, etc. at the *āśram*, prostrating at several places in the *āśram*, and shaving off hair at the *āśram*. The element of walking to the pilgrim centres is common to both Hindus and Christians in India. The element of making a vow to the Lord is seen primarily in Hinduism but is also present among the Chris-



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Thank you for all you do on behalf of our great city.

Sincerely,



Betsy Price  
Mayor



**BETSY PRICE, MAYOR**

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## Hindu Temple of Greater Fort Worth & Community Center

Grand Opening & Mahakumbhabhishekam



### LORD VENKATESWARA

!! OM NAMO VENKATESAYA NAMAHA !!

The original temple of Lord Venkateswara as all of us know has been on Tirumala (Tiru=sacred, Mala=Hill) for about 12 centuries since Pallava kings established it. The temple is sacred to us all because Lord Venkateswara (Vem= links with sins, Kata=cut, Eeswara=Lord) is one deity who would separate us the devotees from all our sins. As legend has it, Lord Vishnu came to hide in an ant hill on this hill to escape from the wrath of his consort Maha Lakshmi. A cowherd saw his cows providing milk to the Lord and reported to the king who erected the temple. Thus Sri Venkateswara is an Avatar of Lord Vishnu.

Lord Venkateswara of Tirumala hills is known by several other names. Balaji is one such name. According to the legends a boy named Bala was falsely accused of theft. The villagers chased and hit him on the head. The boy ran to the temple and took refuge there. When the villagers searched for the boy in the temple, the boy was not found anywhere but the idol of the Lord was bleeding. Hence name Balaji.

The idol is about eight feet tall and was very precisely sculpted which led some to believe that it was not made by human beings. The fist of His raised right hind hand is implanted with a gem-set chakra, and the corresponding left fist with the sankha suggesting that the temple follows the vaishnava tradition. However all Hindus worship this deity. The slightly outstretched front right hand, has its fingers pointing to His lotus feet, as the only recourse to His devotees to attain oneness with Him and enjoy eternal bliss. His front left hand is akimbo to assure His devotees of protection, and to show that the samsara sagara is only hip-deep if they seek His refuge. The Idol bears Lakshmi Devi on his right chest and Padmavathi Devi on his left chest. Thus he is also referred as Srinivasa (Sri=Lakshmi, Vasa=abode). The presence of Sridevi and Bhudevi metaphorically represent wealth and the source of wealth. There are other names as well. Edukondala vada, is the one on the seven hills, Govinda and others.

We are all happy that we would have a small replica of this highly praised temple. Annamacharya, Thyaga raja (a devotee of Rama), composed several kritis praising Lord Venkateswara. Ramanuja one of the three



famous exponents of Hindu philosophy established the pooja traditions which are followed even today.

Literally millions of pilgrims from all over India as well as Hindus from other countries visit the temple at Tirumalai. Thousands of devotees donate incalculable wealth. Thus he is the richest God in the world. This wealth is well utilized in establishing many educational institutions for the benefit of all.

Devotees give their hair as a sign of submission to the Lord. A legend associated with tonsure (hair donation) describes a devotee by name Nila cut her hair to replace the hair lost on the Lord's head. Many of us may not be able to visit the sanctum sanctorum at Tirumalai but we can in our own humble way worship at this temple.

I thank one and all who made this sacred effort successful. May Lord Venkateswara bless our efforts.

- Pushpa Mundluru



## Hindu Temple of Greater Fort Worth & Community Center

Grand Opening & Mahakumbhabhishekam



the east — and positioned gods there to protect the yajna performance. However, while performing the yajna, his wife Savitri (or Sarasvati in some versions) could not be present at the designated time to perform the essential part of the yajna as she was waiting for her companion goddesses Lakshmi, Parvati and Indrani. So Brahma married Gurjar girl, Gayatri and completed the yajna with his new consort sitting beside him, holding the pot of amrita (elixir of life) on her head and giving ahuti (offering to the sacrificial fire).

When Savitri finally arrived at the venue she found Gayatri sitting next to Brahma which was her rightful place. Agitated, she cursed Brahma that he would be never worshipped, but then reduced the curse permitting his worship in Pushkar.

### Kanchipuram Temples:

The City of 1000 Temples, Kanchipuram is one of the oldest cities in South India, and known for its ancient Hindu temples and silk sarees. The city contains several big temples like the Varadharaja Perumal Temple for Lord Vishnu and the Ekambaranatha Temple which is one of the five forms of abodes of Lord Siva.



### Sri Ranganathaswamy:

Dedicated to Lord Ranganatha (a reclining form of Lord Vishnu), the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple in Srirangam, India is an important shrine that receives millions of visitors and pilgrims every year. With an area of 156 acres (6,31,000 m<sup>2</sup>), the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple is one of the largest religious complexes in the world. The oldest structure of the temple dates back to the 10th century.



### Prambanan:

Prambanan is the largest and most beautiful Hindu temple complex in Indonesia. Located about 18 km east of Yogyakarta, it is somewhat overshadowed by the even more awe-inspiring Borobudur situated just next door. The two sites are quite different in style though, with Prambanan being a collection of tall and pointed Hindu temples, instead of the single large Buddhist stupa of Borobudur.

Prambanan has three main temples dedicated to Vishnu, Brahma, and Shiva and was built around 850AD by the Mataram Kingdom, rulers of central Java.



### Meenakshi Amman Temple:

The Meenakshi Amman Temple is one of the most important Indian Hindu temples, located in the holy city of Madurai. The temple is dedicated to Sundareswar (form of Lord Shiva) and Meenakshi (form of Goddess Parvati). The complex houses 14 magnificent towers including two golden Gopurams for the main deities, that are elaborately sculptured and painted.



The temple is a significant symbol for the Tamil people, and has been mentioned for the last couple of millennia, though the present structure was built in the early 17th century.

### Annamalaiyar:

Annamalaiyar Temple is a noted Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, and it is the second largest temple (by the area used completely for religious purpose). It has got four stately towers on all the four sides and four high stone walls just like the rampart walls of a fort. The 11-tiered highest (217 feet (66 m)) Eastern Tower is called the Rajagopuram. The fortified walls pierced with four gopura entrances offer a formidable look to this vast complex.



### Borobudur, Indonesia:

This temple is built in the form of a lotus that can float in a large lake, similar to which Buddha was born. The temple is located in Central Java. It was abandoned a thousand years ago, eventually being consigned to the dustbin after it was covered with ash after the eruption of the Merapi Volcano. The temple, however, was rediscovered in 1814. Considered to be a monument to world heritage by the UNESCO, the temple features a large stupa bell that the faithful call the Sacred Lotus. There are 504 Buddha statues that adorn the place. It is considered to be the largest and oldest Buddhist temple in the world.



### Venkateswara Tirupati Balaji Temple:

The Pallavas of Kanchipuram (9th century AD), the Cholas of Tanjore (10th century), and Vijayanagara pradhans (14th and 15th centuries) were committed devotees of Lord Venkateswara., under the rule of the Vijayanagara emperors, was when the temple gained most of its current wealth and size, with the donation of diamonds and gold. The temple is the richest pilgrimage centre, and the most-visited place of worship in the world. The temple is visited by about 50,000 to 100,000 pilgrims daily (30 to 40 million people annually on average), while on special occasions and festivals, like the annual Brahmotsavam, the number of pilgrims shoots up to 500,000, making it the most-visited holy place in the world. The seven hills, also called Saptagiri (Temple:Lang-Te), represent the Saptarishi (seven sages). They sometimes called the Sapthagiri. Hence the Lord is named Saptagirinivasa. The following are the seven hills:



Gaaligopuram on Tirumala walkway from Tirupati. Mokalla mitta gopuram Tirumala hills Andhra Pradesh. **Vrushabhadri** – Hill of Nandi, the vahana of Lord Shiva; **Anjanadri** - Hill of Lord Hanuman; **Neeladri** - Hill of Neela Devi – It is believed that hair offered by the devotees is accepted by Neela Devi. It is because of boon granted by Lord Venkateswara to Neela Devi; **Garudadri** or **Garudachalam** - Hill of Garuda, the vahana of Lord Vishnu; **Seshadri** or **Seshachalam** - Hill of Seshha, the dasa of Lord Vishnu; **Narayanadri** – Hill of Narayana. **Srivari Padalu** are located here; **Venkatadri** – Hill of Lord Venkateswara.

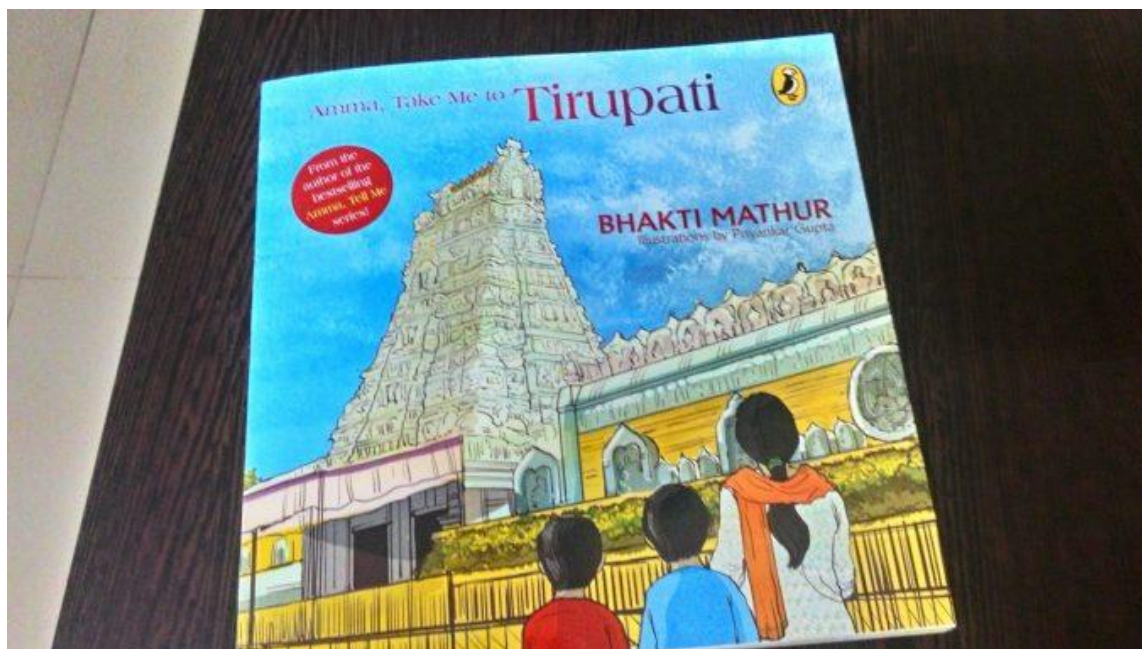
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## Amma Take me to Tirupati Book Review

December 29, 2017   mumsandstories.com   Featured Stories, Reviews 0



### Book Review on Amma Take Me to Tirupati on Mums and Stories

The title caught me by surprise as very few stories are written on religious destinations, though millions of Indians are likely to visit these shrines with families every year. To make a point of having discussions at home on the relevance of these shrines that exist even today, the author does take a different route of having a mum . Amma and her children travel to Tirupati.

The rituals, customs, beliefs, myriad tales on each tradition followed at the holy place are discussed in the story and this book can be of particular interest for children above 9 or 10 years. It would also be a good idea to bring the book if a trip is being planned to Tirupati.



Shiv and Veer in the story have numerous questions like most kids have and it is Amma who has indeed the patience to explain the detailed story of Lord Vishnu. He is also referred as Venkateswara which means the removal of sins and there are intricately woven details like his reasons for descending on the hills, the reason for him to leave a stone statue and more.

For those kids who are already introduced to the ancient tales of Ramayana, Mahabharata and other stories, it would be a good idea to bring about the topic of historical and religious places and their relevance even today.

#### Interesting facts listed in the storybook:

- **The seven peaks that one can see at the holy shrine are said to be the seven hoods of the great snake Adishesha.**
- **The hair donated at the temple premises is due to the belief that it is given to Lord Venkateswara and that will belong to a princess Neela Devi. The tale goes on how Neela Devi had cut her hair for the Lord and impressed by this gesture, Lord Vishnu (lord Venkateswara) said he will bless all those who donate their hair for in doing so they will help the Lord repay the kindness gesture.**
- The reason of the lord dressed in finest and heaviest jewellery as he is the bridegroom.
- Tirupati laddu is patented and there is a secret recipe in making over three hundred thousand ladoos every day.
- Srinivasa means the place where Lakshmi or Sri resides.
- **Devotees when they do offerings at the hundi, they are helping the lord to pay of his debt to Kubera and they also earn the blessings of Goddess Lakshmi.**

There are indeed very few books that talk of Indian festivals, Indian mythological tales and least of all on holy shrines that can have a new audience of children. Bhakti Mathur's Amma Take me to Tirupati though detailed can be a good read for the kids who would like to find more on new destinations.

At one point one of the children asks his amma, if wishes come true and Amma replies tactfully % believe they do. I believe that faith in one's God and the conviction that he is looking over us is what gives us the strength and will to work hard and make our wishes come true.+

The story book has enough illustrations to depict the shrine, rituals, idols and stories behind them. There is also a section on the daily list of prayers held at the holy shrine and the historical traces of the famed Tirupati Venkateswara Swamy temple.

You can buy the book here- <http://amzn.to/2CI0Lwx>

Review by Mums and Stories writer- Reshma Krishnamurthy.

# Hair and how



[Preeti Mehra](#)

FEBRUARY 16, 2012 01:09 IST

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## Thanks to our tradition of tonsuring, hair exports remain buoyant

The economic downturn may have dented India's exports in most sectors, but export of human hair continues to be buoyant. The global import of human hair during 2010 was US\$ 1339 million, against which the exports were to the tune of \$193.90 million.

China, Hong Kong, Brazil and Italy are among the top five markets for India, when it comes to human hair exports.

The Ministry of Commerce has stepped in to promote the export of human hair and exporters are being encouraged to take benefits of schemes such as Advance License Scheme, Duty Entitlement Passbook, Market Development Assistance and Market Access Initiative Scheme, among others. Exporters are also being encouraged to participate in trade fairs and exhibitions in various countries to procure new business opportunities.

**The strong demand from China and Hong Kong is largely on account of the fact that the Chinese population mostly has straight hair, while Indian hair comes in different varieties and can be molded to achieve different effects in hair accessories. However, the US, and Hollywood in particular, are also destinations for Indian hair that plays an important role in their makeover industry.**

**A large chunk of the hair exported comes from the ritual of hair tonsuring at the famous Tirumala Venkateswara Temple in Andhra Pradesh where thousands of devotees offer their hair to Lord Venkateshwara every day. It**

is estimated that over a ton of hair is collected at the temple on a daily basis. Three to four times a year the temple authorities conduct a public auction where private companies buy the hair, process it and export it to various countries for use in salons and the cosmetic industry.

According to folklore the tonsuring ritual became a part of tradition when Lord Balaji was hit on his head by a shepherd, and a part of his head became bald. When Gandharva queen Neela Devi noticed this, she cut part of her hair and used her mystic powers to implant it on the Lord's head.

Thus began the ritual, which has made the Tirumala temple one of the wealthiest pilgrimage centers.

In India hair is also collected from salons and other places of worship, making it a vibrant hair industry.

Although both men and women offer their hair at temples, most of the hair that is exported for the lucrative salon business comes from women and is most in demand by merchants and wig-makers. Men's hair, according to exporters is mostly used for coat linings and raw material for a range of products.



Sunday 24 June, 2001

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## Temple Hair Sale

Human hair is a lucrative business in India. Companies export long hair to the West where it is used for wigs and hair extensions, whilst the shorter hair is mainly sold to Chinese firms who extract amino acids from it.

For large temples, where it is considered auspicious for pilgrims to have their heads shaved, the clippings are a major source of income.

At the Venkateshwara Temple in south India more than 75 tonnes of hair are sold annually, raising nearly £4 million for the temple's charities. Crispin Thorold reports for *The World Today*.

## Devotees

The Venkateshwara Temple, at Tirumala in the south Indian State of Andhra Pradesh, is thought to attract more pilgrims than Jerusalem, Rome or Mecca.

Over 18 million devotees visit every year to pay their respects to an incarnation of Vishnu; the God that Hindus believe protects and sustains all that is good in society.

The temple is India's richest; something that P Krishnaiah, the executive officer of the temple's managing committee, attributes to extraordinary faith:

'People believe that this Lord represents Lord Vishnu. Normally people feel that Gods cannot be seen. But people believe here is a God that is seen. That is how people are willing to donate large sums of money, because they have that faith.'

Some estimates put Tirumala's annual income at a billion rupees, which is a staggering £15 million (\$23 million). Most of this comes from direct donations, but a significant proportion is raised by the sale of human hair as even the

very humblest visitor can offer as much as his wealthier neighbours.

### **Temple Barbers**

In two large halls, hundreds of barbers work around the clock, tonsuring 12,000 pilgrims every day.

**Siddiah is the latest member of his family to become a temple barber. He explains why so many devotees are prepared to lose their locks:**

**'The pilgrims come to Tirumala and donate their hair. The reason they do this is when a head is shaved the person loses their beauty.'**

**'So the devotees who come here want to donate their hair, because a Hindu feels giving hair to the Lord is more important than giving money.'**

This hair is collected and sorted into four types. Long women's hair and grey hair are the most highly sort varieties, but there is also considerable demand for short hair at Tirumala's regular sales.

### **Hair Exporters**

Kishore Kumar is from Gupta Enterprises, a Madras-based firm that is one of India's biggest exporters of human hair. He explains the many uses of hair:

**'What we collect from the temples is used all over the world. Mostly it goes to Italy, a lot of wig manufacturers are there, and a lot of hair extension companies are there.'**

**'The shorter hair is primarily used for the extraction of a protein called El-Cystine. This protein is an amino acid used in food preservatives and various other things.'**

### **Hair Importers**

Importers say that Indian hair is the best money can buy, and good profits can be made.

Werner Diaber is a software engineer in his native Germany, but twice a year he visits India to buy as much

hair as he can carry. He explains the desire for Indian human hair in the West:

**'They are the strongest hair and the most beautiful hairs, and the Indian women they have very long hairs.'**

**'It is a lucrative thing for everybody, because in the Western World these hair extensions are getting very popular now. And if you manage to get the hairs here for a reasonable price you can make money.'**

On this trip Werner was attempting to carry home two suitcases, two holdalls and a cardboard box all full of hair. If he managed to get the 40 kilos back to Germany he would make over £1500 profit (nearly \$2500 profit).

Tirumala's income from human hair is in a different league. Last year they made just under £4 million (\$6 million).

The money that is raised at the temple funds accommodation and other facilities for the pilgrims. The rest goes to a charitable foundation that runs numerous organisations including three hospitals, an orphanage, a university, and religious training institutions.



Magazine

# How Indians shave their head and hope for luck

By Justine LangBBC News, Chennai  
13 April 2016

**Every year millions of people travel to two temples in southern India, hoping for an answer to their prayers. But every miracle requires a sacrifice - and many pilgrims sacrifice their hair.**

Gopala Amma is desperate to reverse her family's bad fortune. They are in danger of losing the one room they share off a small alley in the Chennai suburb of Perambur.

Amma works hard as a cleaner but is struggling to make ends meet. Her husband has lost his job and has begun to drink heavily, while her eldest son is failing in his studies. All this has prompted Amma to think of asking the Hindu gods for help.

**"I have decided to go to the temple at Tirutanni and shave my hair. That way, the gods will bless me and my family," she says.**

**This will not be just a snip but a full head shave - all 81cm (32in) of her long wavy locks will go. By sacrificing something so beautiful to the gods, by shedding her ego, she hopes they will bless her with good luck in return.**

Human hair is valuable in India. Many of Amma's female neighbours collect hair from their combs to sell or barter to the hair collectors who come once a month on scooters calling for "comb waste".

They either trade the hair for pots or are given a few rupees, depending on the weight. The collectors then sell it to the factories.

**But comb-waste hair tangles. Shaved hair is more highly valued because continues to fall naturally, as it did on the original owner's head, and can be used to make a lifelike wig.**

**From Hollywood to the UK to South Africa, the most widely used human hair is Indian, as its texture resembles Caucasian hair, which the hairdressing industry deems desirable.**

To India, the market is worth more than \$250m (£175m) annually. A kilo of shaved hair fetches up to \$130 (£91), so a long head of hair such as Amma's - which comes to about 160g (6oz) - will be worth about \$20 (£14).

But for Amma this is not important.



**The practice of hair-shaving - or "tonsuring" as it is termed when done for religious reasons - is associated with an ancient Hindu myth.**

**There are several versions of the myth but they centre on the god Vishnu, who was hit on the head with an axe, causing him to lose a section of his hair. The angel Neela Devi then offered a lock of her hair as a replacement, and Vishnu was so grateful that he thereafter granted wishes to anyone who offered their hair as a sacrifice.**

**Whole families sometimes offer their hair to Vishnu**

The southern states of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh are where most hair tonsuring in India takes place. Two of the main Hindu temples, in the towns of Tirutanni and Tirupati, collect tonnes of human hair every month.

Around the temple compounds, in long halls known as Kalyankattan or "places of happiness", hundreds of barbers dressed in white sit in rows, with pilgrims at their feet.

"I feel quite shy having no hair but I am happy," explains one pilgrim who has just had her head shaved at Tirutanni.

Auspicious days may be chosen for the ritual. One family is celebrating the parents' 29 years of happy marriage. For another, it could be a sickness in the family or a pattern of bad luck that brings them here.

For Amma, who is 36, it is her last resort. Her husband's drinking has become incessant. She is determined not to lose her home and believes this is the only way to reverse her fortune.

"The gods will bless me if I do this," she says as she climbs the temple's steps.

Sitting down cross-legged in front of the barber with her head bent forward, Amma smiles. The barber wets the crown of her head and takes his razor blade, slowly scraping at her skull. Her hair barely reaches the ground before it is gathered up and placed into a lockable blue barrel.

**“As the barber was shaving I felt my problems lifting away”- Amma**

Hair traders collect the barrels every week. Many temples form contracts with traders, while others hold auctions, selling it to the highest bidder.

Tirupati temple, the largest collector of human hair in the world - and also the most visited holy place in the world, with an average of 100,000 pilgrims per day - nets an average \$3m (£2.1m) a year from this trade.

The money is used for charitable work, schools and maintaining the temple grounds.

The barbers themselves are paid for their trouble - 15 rupees (20c or 16p) per shave.

The shaving process is very quick, and those presenting their hair to the gods just sit down, put their heads in the hands of the barbers and then go.

Afterwards, however, they visit the temple to show their freshly-shaved scalps to the gods, so they can be blessed for their sacrifice.

Amma looks at herself in the mirror and laughs at her changed appearance. She touches her head and says she likes the feel.

"As the barber was shaving I felt my problems lifting away. Now things are going to get better."

She says she does not know where her hair will go. Told that traders sell it to make wigs and extensions all over the world, she laughs again.

"If it makes someone else look beautiful then I am happy," Amma says, before heading out of the temple and beginning her journey home, to see if her life will change.

# Hair and there

**The hair collected is washed, cleaned, dried and sorted-to be stored in steel containers based on colour and length**

[Amarnath K. Menon](#)

August 21, 2006 | UPDATED 11:20 IST

It is a wholly personal offering that the devout, be they wealthy or humble, make at one of the most active religious destinations on earth - Tirupati. It also makes India the largest exporter of hair in the world. Last year, the 90,800 kilograms of hair offered by the devout fetched the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams Rs 33.34 crore.

Tonsure, as the head shave is called, is free of cost at Kalayana Katta, a four-storey building close to the temple, where 665 barbers, among them 20 women, work in shifts, shaving 20,000 heads every day, including those of over 1,000 women, and are paid between Rs 7,000 and Rs 9,000 a month, excluding the tips offered generously by pilgrims though they are forbidden from taking it.

The devout wait for at least 30 minutes for their turn and, during peak season, even for two hours in the four waiting halls. The long-standing ritual to have the head shaven clean, irrespective of age, sex or even religious persuasion, symbolises the effacing of the ego embodied in the Vaishnavite tradition. Some, like former Miss India Nafisa Ali, offer their locks in keeping with a pledge if a personal wish is fulfilled.

**The sacred strands are given away with untold stories of sacrifice and thanksgiving: the birth of a baby, a good harvest after a drought, long life, good health and happiness.**

**Believers say that the hair offerings are supposed to pay back the legendary loan that Lord Venkateshwara took for his marriage expenses, which will be repaid by the end of Kalyug.**

The hair collected is washed, cleaned, dried and sorted-to be stored in steel containers based on colour and length. Male and female hair is stored separately and auctioned off. The hair is sold in three varieties.

Hair longer than 16 inches fetches Rs 9,550 a kg, between eight to 16 inches fetches Rs 3,300 a kg, while shorter hair brings in just Rs 11.70 a kg. Grey hair fetches more than black at about Rs 10,550 a kg. Tirumala hair is valued internationally as most of it has never been permed or treated with chemicals.

**It is exported mostly to China, where it is used to make wigs and extensions, for sale in Europe and the US-all the way to Hollywood, where actors, including A-listers like Gwyneth Paltrow, [Jennifer Aniston](#) and Hugh Jackman pay up to \$3,000 for hair extensions. Men's hair is also used for coat linings and for a natural extract used in preservatives. So next time you admire a star's hairdo, remember it may have come all the way from Tirumala.**

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## NATION, CURRENT AFFAIRS

# Tirumala Board plans free tonsure

DC | [BH. RAMAKRISHNA](#)

**Published** Apr 18, 2015, 10:55 am IST

**Updated** Jan 10, 2016, 8:38 am IST

Proposal aimed at taming barber unions



Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams

**Hyderabad:** The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams is planning to implement free tonsuring at all points on the hills from May 1, a move that has split the barber unions.

The decision had already been taken in principle and if the Board is formed this week, authorities will go ahead with implementing it, said Srinivasa Raju, joint executive officer at Tirumala.

Tonsuring is done at three places, at the main Kalyana Katta and two guesthouses since 1985. Later, due to increasing rush, the TTD had opened another 15 points, mainly at all the devotee guest houses like Ram Bagicha, Varahaswamy, Narayana Vanam, Padmavathi Complex etc.

With reports pouring in of a section of barbers fleecing the devotees, TTD has conducted a survey and decided to close down eight points like Vishnupadam, Kaustubham, Srinvasam, Sannidhanam etc. The staffs are to be shifted to Kalyana Katta and the other centres, a move that has not gone down well with the barbers' unions.

**The barber unions are powerful in Tirumala. There were three of them — the old union with 285 members who were able to get permanent jobs due to the mirasi system; the “piece-rate barbers” with around 305 members who made money by tonsuring devotees at cottages or guest houses; and the third one, Srivari Sevakulu, with 840 members, mostly from Chittoor and neighbouring districts.**

**Members of this last union cut hair free of cost as a service to God. They are posted at Kalyana Katta and other places although allegations of many of them collecting money illegally has often been reported. Now, both contract barbers and the Sevakulus have come together to form one union.**

Tags: [andhra pradesh](#), [current affairs](#), [tirumala tirupati devasthanams](#)

Location: [Andhra Pradesh](#)



TTD to utilise voluntary services of barbers

[ANDHRA PRADESH](#)

## TTD to utilise voluntary services of barbers



[STAFF REPORTER](#)

TIRUMALA:, MARCH 29, 2013 00:00 IST

**The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) management which is gearing itself for the summer crowd, has decided to utilise the voluntary services of barbers at its Kalyanakatta tonsuring centre where on an average one-third of the pilgrims get their heads shaved in fulfilment of their prayers everyday.**

The management had, on an experimental basis, enrolled voluntary barbers under the -Kalyanakatta Sevakuluø scheme from September 15 last year to January 20 this year.

With over 1,100 and odd barbers, including women, executing the task without any blemish, the administration has decided to throw open the opportunity for the second time in the larger interest of the pilgrim fraternity.

The second phase of the scheme will come into being from April 1 to July 31 for four months. The batch-wise duty chart of the registered -sevakuluø is already enlisted on the TTDø official website [www.tirumala.org](http://www.tirumala.org) and also will be put on display at Srivari seva sadan in the APSRTC bus stand complex and the main Kalyanakatta at Tirumala besides at Srinivasam and Vishnunivasam complexes at Tirupati.

# DHARMO RAKSHATI RAKSHITAH

SrivariCollections presents information about Indian Temples, Festivals and Religious Culture & Traditional Events

Sunday, 18 November 2012

## TTD Srivari Seva - Voluntary Service to Sri Venkateswara Swamy, Tirumala

Updated June 1, 2014:

Tirumala, the abode of Lord Sri Venkateswara is visited by millions of devotees/pilgrims every year. In order to provide better and good service to the devotees/pilgrims, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams TTD has launched [SRIVARI SEVA](#), a Voluntary Service to the Lord of Seven Hills. For more details about this seva, the contact telephone number is 0877-2263544.

### What is Srivari Seva:

Srivari Seva is purely a **voluntary service** to serve the fellow devotees/pilgrims and to participate in devout service. Devotees who can render services to the visiting pilgrims are welcome to offer their service through [SRIVARI SEVA](#).



Srivari Sevaks offering Lord Service at Annadanam

This Voluntary Srivari Seva was started by TTD on November 1 in the year 2000 with an aim to provide free service to visiting pilgrims with co-pilgrims.

### Eligibility Criteria to participate in SRIVARI SEVA:

1. **Only Hindus** are permitted for Srivari Seva.
2. Age group should be between 18 to 60 years (for exact Maximum age limit contact :0877-2263544).
3. Both Men and Women are eligible.
4. A group consisting of not less than 10 members is eligible for rendering Srivari Seva for a minimum of seven days.

### How to Apply:

1.) Interested **voluntary groups** (not less than 10 members) can send their requisition letter containing the information of all participants like.. Name of the Voluntary, Father's Name/Husband's Name, Address, Age, Sex, Profession, Telephone Number and Stamp Size Photograph of all participants at least one month in advance with mentioning the preferable dates to the address given below

## Contact Address:

Public Relations Officer,  
TTD Administrative Building,  
KT Road  
Tirupati-517501.  
Telephone Number - 0877-2264561

## Facilities offering to the Srivari Sevaks under the Srivari Seva:

- 1.Free Food and Accommodation will be provided to the Srivari Sevaks(Participating Devotees).
- 2.Sevaks can take part in Bhajans and Nagara Sankirtanas every day.
- 3.Sevaks can utilize the Musical Instruments which are available in Srivari Seva Office,Tirumala.

## Reporting Place @ Tirumala:

Voluntary Groups should report to the Superindendent Officer on Special Duty at Srivari Seva Sadan, inside RTC BusStand, Tirumala on their arrival as per the dates mention in the Sanctioned Order between 10am to 5pm.

## Guidelines to Srivari Sevaks:

- 1.Every Srivari Sevak should put Tirunamam/Tilakam or Kumkuma/Chandanam Bottu to identify as Hindu
- 2.Srivari Sevaks should wear Scarves while on duty.
- 3.Sevaks should be willing to perform duty at least for 8 hours daily.
- 4.Sevaks are requested to attend Training Session compulsory at Asthana Mandapam or Seva Sadan at 7am on every Friday.
- 5.No Temple duties will be provided to Srivari Sevaks.

## Dress Code for Srivari Sevaks:

Srivari Sevaks participating in Srivari Seva must wear the following dress code.

Women: Orange Colour Saree with Maroon Border.

Men: White Pant and White Shirt.

**Under the Srivari Seva, Srivari Sevaks are free to choose any one of the following areas according to their interest and can offer their voluntary service.**

- 1.Annadanam, 2.Queue Lines, 3.Kalyana Katta, 4.Gardens, 5.Laddu Counters, 6.Vaikunta Queue Complex, 7.Free Bus Service, 8.Pilgrims Amenities Complexes, 9.Information Centres, 10.Vigilance, 11.Health, 12.Central Reception Office, 13.Pushkarini, 14.Bus Stops and etc.,

You are here: [Home](#) > [Message Boards](#) > [Beauty & Grooming](#) > [Hair Care](#) > Shave

## Beauty & Grooming Discussion Forum

Skin Talk	Body and Fitness
Make - Up	Smart n Trendy

[REPLY LIST](#) << [PREVIOUS TOPIC](#) [NEXT TOPIC](#) >> [ALL TOPICS](#)

### ? Hair Care:Shave

2014-07-23

**Name:** Niharika Is there s temple in Mumbai where my Husband and I can shave our head? We can do it in salon also, but there i feel shy, and we would prefer to do it in front of god.

[Subscribe to this conversation](#) [Reply Anonymously](#)

### Audio Discussion

**Name:** manva 2016-02-08 #1  
**Subject:** hi  
 i don't think so there is any temple i mumbai where u can shave ur head. why don't u invite barbar at home and then shave ur head. u will not get shy at ur own home. so it can be a good option then.

[Reply to Original Msg](#) [Reply to this Msg](#) [Msg Objection](#) [Top](#)

**Name:** Ram Singh 2014-07-27 #2  
**Subject:** Further details on Charkop temple  
 Dear Niharika  
 You can find further details on Charkop mandir.

Shree Balaji Mandir  
 3-289, Road No. RSC 69, Sector 7,  
 Opp. Priyadarshani School, Charkop,  
 Kandivali(West),Mumbai- 400067.  
 Tel:+91 99207 16663

[Reply to Original Msg](#) [Reply to this Msg](#) [Msg Objection](#) [Top](#)

**Name:** Ram Singh 2014-07-27 #3  
**Subject:** Try Charkop temple  
 Niharika

Alternately you can try the temple in Charkop, Mumbai. I am not sure whether they have tonsure facilities. Make a visit or phone them and ask them.

Shree Balaji Mandir, Charkop  
 Sec 7, Charkop, Kandivali (w) Mumbai - 400067.

Temple Timing : 06.00 am to 12.00 pm & 04.30 pm to 10.00 pm

[Reply to Original Msg](#) [Reply to this Msg](#) [Msg Objection](#) [Top](#)

**Name:** Ram Singh 2014-07-27 #4  
**Subject:** Try the Mini Tirupati temple south of Pune  
 I saw the following on net.

"Mini Tirupati, Sri Venkateshwara Temple"  
 5 of 5 stars Reviewed 17 December 2012

Mini Tirupati, Sri Venkateshwara Temple, located at Kapurhol junction, District is Diwale. Please do not ask about narayanpur. Nobody knows it. After you cross pune junction, approximately 12 kms towards Satara, keep looking on your left. You will definitely see the big board of the temple. Its just before Bhor Phata, where Shivaji Maharaj' s dwelling was confirmed. So if you don' t get directions, then ask about Bhor junction. All locals know it. If you have reached Bhor, that means you have crossed the Kapurhol junction, which was just 1 km behind.

Most Important at the temple : Its actually an exact replica of main tirupati temple at tirupati.  
 Please be advised that head shaving is carried out at the temple. The head shaving department is just next to the footwear counter. During rush hours, male and female departments are different, called as " Kalyan Katta" , but if no rush, then everything is carried out at Gents Kalyan Katta. Donations or Dakshina is not entertained anywhere in the temple. Whatever your offerings are, is supposed to be donated in the Hundi' s located at different places around the temple.

You definitely get the laddoo after the darshan and moreover you get free meals too. Its worth it.  
 Very important : All along the darshan and meals, the maximum waiting time was 30 mins. which is great for a place like mini tirupati.

So, dear Niharika, please go to Pune and a little down south towards Satara on a holiday and get the heads of you and your husband fully and nicely tonsured in front of God. May God bless you both. And please keep us updated on your tonsure.

[Reply to Original Msg](#) [Reply to this Msg](#) [Msg Objection](#) [Top](#)

**Name:** Rahul 2014-07-26 #5  
**Subject:** @niharika  
 do you have any vow?

[Reply to Original Msg](#) [Reply to this Msg](#) [Msg Objection](#) [Top](#)

**Name:** Niharika 2014-07-26 #7  
**Subject:** shave  
 I don' t have a vow as such, but like to dedicate to god. Both of us are working and our schedule does not allow trip to tirumala

[Msg Objection](#) [Top](#)

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## **EXCERPTS FROM VIDEOS ABOUT TONSURING:**

## **EXCERPT FROM THE VIDEO TIRUPATI - A KARMIC DEBT:**

Interviewer: "Why are you going inside?" (the tonsuring hall)

female pilgrim: "I'm going to offer three strands of my hair to God. I made a vow, if my son passed his exams I would offer my hair. My wish has been granted so now I must honour my word to the Lord."

Interviewer: "Are you aware that your hair will be sold?"

Female pilgrim: "That is of no consequence to me. The Lord borrowed money from Kubera and my offering helps the Lord to repay his loan. This gives me great satisfaction."



## EXCERPT FROM THE DOCUMENTARY JUST EXTENSIONS:

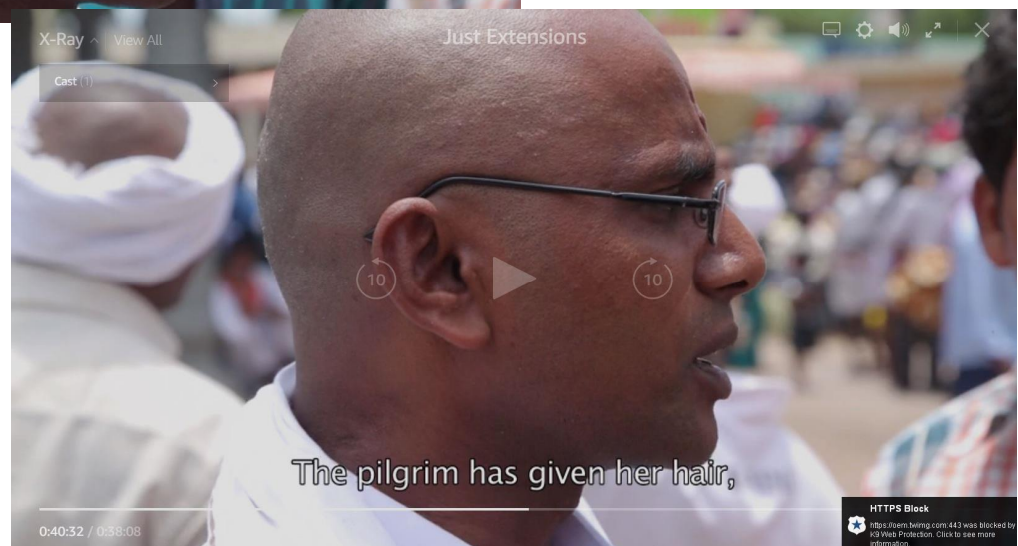
In the documentary “Just Extensions”, Ms. Hailes travels the world to look for top quality human hair to be used in hair extensions (the same hair that is used in extensions is used in wigs). Ms. Hailes travels to India and visits the tonsuring hall where she asks some Indian pilgrims why they tonsure their hair.

Ms. Hailes: “Why did you cut your hair?”

Pilgrim one: “For god.”

Ms. Hailes: “Who has the scar?”

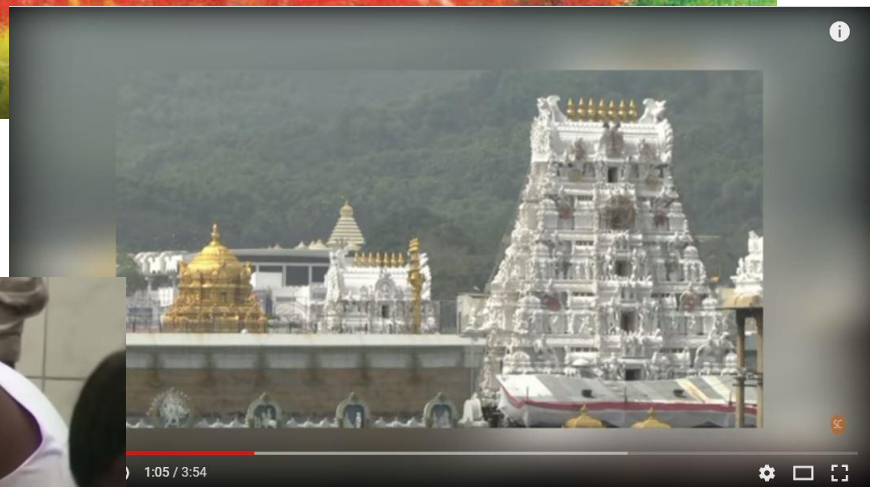
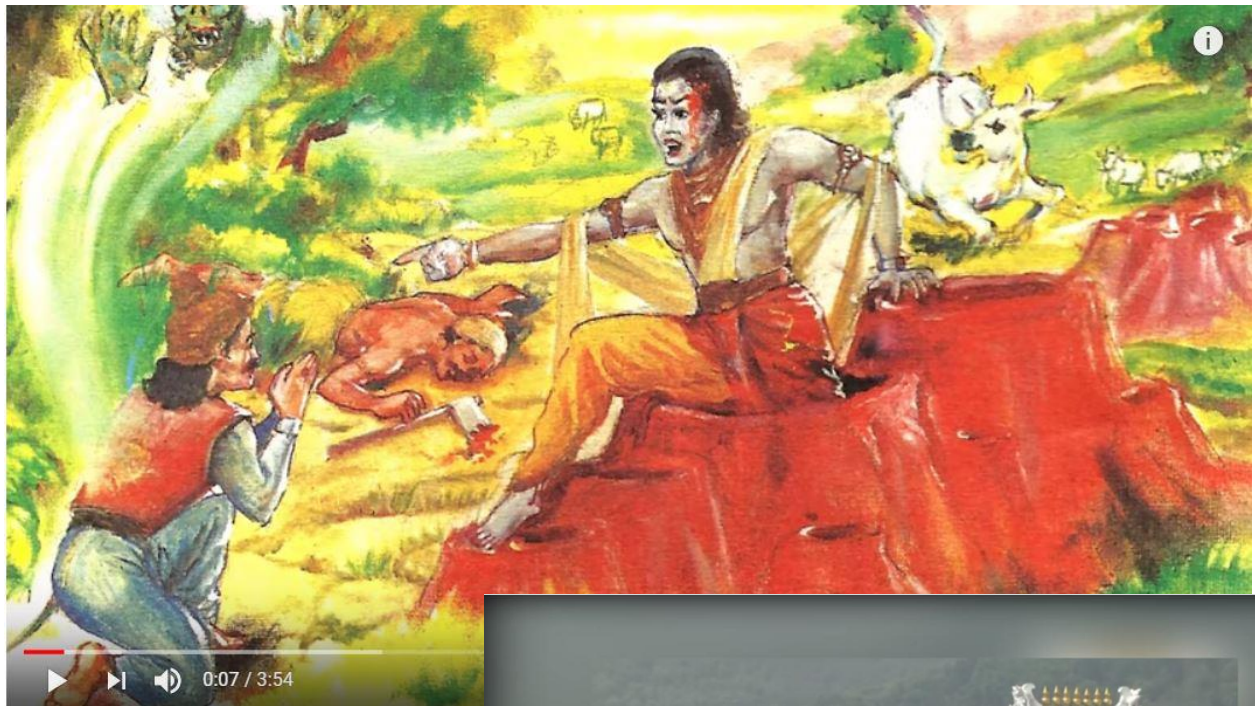
Pilgrim 2: “God has the scar. The pilgrim has given her hair, to cover the scar. And than god gives (blessing) to her. The pilgrim will come here, they will give their hair. Than the hair will be... on his scar.”





## **EXCERPT FROM THE VIDEO TOP 5- TIRUPATHY TEMPLE'S HAIR RISING HAIR FACTS:**

Newscaster: "Lord Balaji or Srinivasa was once hit on his head by a cow herd. The injury caused a small portion of his head to go bald. Neela Devi, a Gandharva princess, saw this saying that a handsome face such as the Lords should not have a fault. She cut a portion of her hair and magically implanted it on his scalp. Seeing her devotion, Lord Srinivasa promised her that his devotees would offer hair to him and she in turn would be the recipient of their offerings."





## **EXCERPT FROM THE VIDEO THE HAIR-BRAINED FASHION** **SCHEME MAKING BILLIONS OF DOLLARS:**

Newscaster: “Millions of Indians believe sacrificing their hair is the path to happiness... in their pursuit of good fortune many will make a very personal offering (their hair). Jihante, her husband and her sister are just three among the thousands making the pilgrimage today.”

Jihante: “About five years ago I was unwell and I made a vow. So I come here to fulfil the vow.”

Newscaster: “Jihante is honoring a promise to the god she believes healed her. She hasn’t anything more valueable to offer than her hair.”

Jihante: “It’s no big deal so I can’t think about whether it’s beautiful or ugly. It’s an offering to God, and therefore I have to go through with it.”

Newscaster: “Jihante knows what she is doing but she has no idea what will become of her hair. She’s not thinking about it.”

Jihante: “We don’t know about that. We have offered it to God. What happens to it we don’t know.”

Newscaster: “On this day the process is being replicated at hundreds of temples across Southern India. With each hour the pile of hair drying in the sun outside the temple grows. Thousands of heads will be shaved. Tons of hair will be gathered.”

Jihante: “A woman is beautiful with hair and after offering the hair to God she’s still beautiful.”



## **EXCERPT FROM THE VIDEO INDIAN HAIR INDUSTRIES PVT. LTD** **TANUKA, INDIA:**

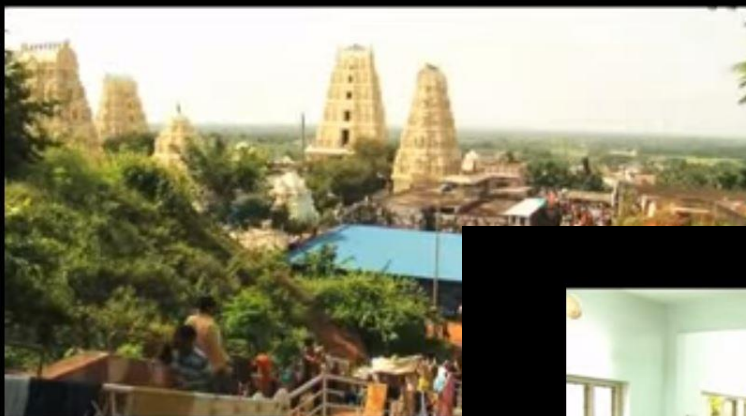
Newscaster: "In this temple in Southern India, thousands of devotees are preparing to make a rather unusual offering. Some of them have waited years for this moment. Growing their hair before giving it to the gods. It is a sacred ritual for millions of hindus."

Woman 1: "My daughter was really sick. I vowed to donate my hair if she recovered."

Interviewer: "Do you know what will happen to your hair?"

Woman 2: "No, I do not know but it will be offered to the gods and that's all that matters to me."

Newscaster: "Every Saturday thousands of pilgrims come to the Dwarka temple to be shaved by one of the 95 barbers that work here. The pilgrims leave behind kilos of hair. The temple has turned the pilgrims offerings in to an incredibly lucrative business. Once cut, the hair is collected and than stored by the temple. It is than exported around the world to be used in wigs and hair extensions."



▶ ▶▶ 🔊 0:02 / 2:40



▶ ▶▶ 🔊 2:05 / 2:40

CC ⚙️ □ 🗑️

## EXCERPT FROM THE DOCUMENTARY GOOD HAIR BY CHRIS ROCK:

Chris Rock: "Over 10 million people tonsure their hair every year. They tonsure their hair in exchange for the gods blessings."

Chris Rock asks a pilgrim at Tirumala: "Why do you tonsure your hair?"

Pilgrim: "When he fulfilled my desires, I promised him I'd give him my hair."

Chris Rock: "Do you ever think about your hair?"

Pilgrim: "No, no I don't think. After making the promise of my hair I don't think."

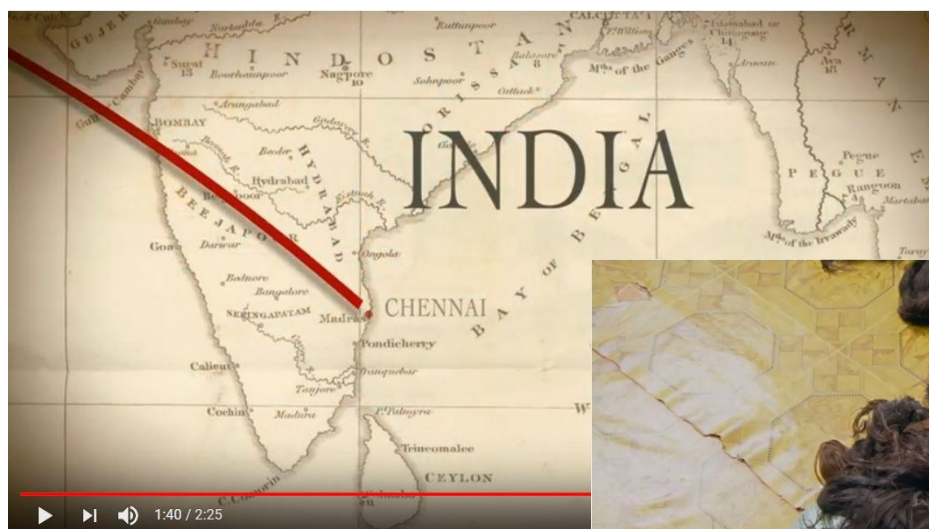
Chris Rock: "Are you thinking about seeing it again on somebody else?"

Pilgrim: "No, no, no. He likes the hair too much."

Chris Rock: "God likes hair?"

Pilgrim: "Yes."

Chris Rock: "Tonsure. That's the word we keep hearing- tonsure. 85% of India's population have had their hair shaved at least twice in a lifetime in a religious ceremony known as tonsure."



# Transcribed Phone Interviews with Employees at the Tirumala Temple in India

(Actual phone conversations were recorded.  
They took place November 2017.)

To verify these conversations and hear the recording itself,  
please call 917-979-8800. Then press 49.

**Temple Employee 1:** What information is it, Ma'am?

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** I wanted to know if, first of all, they say any special words of thank you or words of chanting to the gods?

**Temple Employee 1:** At the time of tonsure?

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** Yes, at the time of tonsure.

**Temple Employee 1:** %Govinda.+ We have to pray to the god %Govinda+while tonsuring we can say "Govinda".

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** People say %Govinda?+

**Temple Employee 1:** Yes.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** Is it considered a sacrifice to the god when they cut their hair?

**Temple Employee 1:** Yea, Ma'am. Suppose, I pray to god to do something for me, then god solves it for me. Then after that, I can give my tonsure, I can give my hair to the god.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** So they're giving their hair to the god?

**Temple Employee 1:** Suppose you have some desire. You're tried so many things. You have difficulties. You pray to god, %that that problem is solved then I can give you hair.+You can give it to the god.  
After the solving of this problem, you can give the hair to the god. That is an offering. You're giving the hair to god.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** So the hair is an offering to the god?



**Temple Employee 1:** Yes.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** Do a lot of women come to tonsure, or is it more men?

**Temple Employee 1:** Both are doing the tonsuring.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** Ok, both are doing the tonsuring. Thank you so much.

---

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** Do women come also to tonsure their hair? Or is it more men, or more women, or both?

**Temple Employee 2:** Yes Ma'am, anyone can do it. In Tirumala everyone will tonsure. Even a child also. Men, women, everybody

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** The Indian people that come to get tonsured, are they praying to their god when they tonsure the hair? Is there a prayer that they say? Do they say something, %Govinda?+

**Temple Employee 2:** Yes, yes. %Govinda."

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** Oh, they say %Govinda"

**Temple Employee 2:** Yes Ma'am

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** What does %Govinda" mean?

**Temple Employee 2:** It's lord Balaji.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** Oh, so they are praying. They say %Govinda.+  
My last 2 questions are, besides for %Govinda,+the people that come, do they say any other prayer, or just %Govinda?+

**Temple Employee 2:** A number of names are there for Lord Venkateswara. Everyone praying in their way. Prayer differs from each and every person.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** Oh, everyone prays in their own way. And is it considered an offering to the god? Or a sacrifice to the god? The hair - when they cut their hair, is that considered a religious sacrifice?

**Temple Employee 2:** Yes, ma'am.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** When the Indian men and women come to tonsure their hair, why do they sacrifice their hair to the god?

**Temple Employee 2:** They're in prayer, Ma'am. Normally, in the history everybody having some head weight. They will bend their head in front of the god itself. Removing hair means they will bend their head in front of the god, right? In front of the other person.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** Oh, so it means they are bending their head in front of the god?

**Temple Employee 2:** Yes, yes ma'am. They will bend their head and the reason they're tonsuring there.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** But the hair itself is a gift to the god? The hair itself?

**Temple Employee 2:** Yeah, Ma'am.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** Do you know how many people come to the temple every day?

**Temple Employee 2:** Yes, around 80,000.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** 80,000 people come every day?

**Temple Employee 2:** Yes.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** Are there a lot of women that come also?

**Temple Employee 2:** Yes.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** Are there a lot of temples that do tonsuring? Is this the only one, or are there other temples that also do tonsuring?

**Temple Employee 2:** There are so many, Ma'am.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** Wow, there are 80,000 people that come every day. That's unbelievable. That would be a lot per year.

**Temple Employee 2:** Yes, yes.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** And when they tonsure, do the barbers also say %Govinda+?

**Temple Employee 2:** Yes, ma'am.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** Oh, they also say %Govinda,+wow. So they are all praying to “Govinda” when they cut their hair.

**Temple Employee 2:** Yes.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** I just have one more question. Why do Indian men and women tonsure their hair? Do you know why?

**Temple Employee 2:** Hair is beauty of human being. Do you believe that?

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** Yes, hair is definitely beautiful.

**Temple Employee 2:** Yes, hair is beauty of human being. By giving tonsure, we are giving our beauty to lord. We are sacrificing our beauty for blessing of god.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** So you are sacrificing the hair?

**Temple Employee 2:** By sacrificing the hair, it means that, %god we are ready to give even our beauty for your blessing.+

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** Wow, so you give up your beauty for the blessing of god. And is the hair considered an offering for the god? Does it go to the god?

**Temple Employee 2:** Yes, it is our beauty. Our hair is our beauty. We are sacrificing even our hair for blessing of god.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** And it is for all blessings?

**Temple Employee 2:** Yes.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** And what blessings does the god give, anything the person needs?

**Temple Employee 2:** Yes all blessings. Any oath.

If we think before the god, if it happened, we will tonsure. Okay? If you have to get any promotion, or you want to buy any vehicle, or whatever it may be, if it happened, we have to tonsure our hair. It is an oath. We are taking from God.

%God, if I get this, I will tonsure my hair. Or if my child healthy, if he get ok, during health problems.+

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** When do they say %govinda?+Before they are getting their hair cut? Or while their getting their hair cut?

**Temple Employee 2:** All the time, %govinda.+It is a chanting.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** Oh, it's a chanting. So people will say it when they're getting their hair tonsured, they'll say "Govinda"?

**Temple Employee 2:** Yes.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** So they're praying to the god the whole time?

**Temple Employee 2:** Yes, ma'am.

**Frum Jewish Interviewer:** This is very helpful, thank you so much for all your help.

**To verify these conversations and hear the recording itself,  
please call 917-979-8800. Then press 49.**

**THE PICTURE BELOW SHOWS IMAGES OF IDOLS ON THE WALLS OF A TONSURING HALL:**



**Fig. 2.** Tonsuring Room at the Venkateswara Temple in Andhra Pradesh