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A
SYMPOSIUM
ON
TIRUPATI VENKATESWARA

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TIRUPATI.

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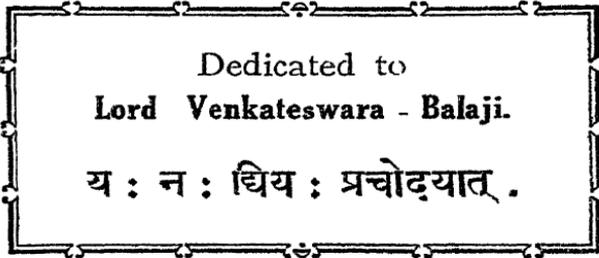
I was brought by my father in my fifth year to Tirupati to have a Darshan of Lord Venkateswara. ever since I had an admiration and appreciation for Him for over two decades, resulting in my settling down here at Tirupati permanantly in the year 1932. I wanted to guess what He stands for and what His message is in terms of Hindu philosophy. I came to a conclusion after twenty years. I felt it my duty to give out what I conceived and this booklet is its manifestation. I thank His Holiness Sri Sri Mahant Narayanadossji Varu of Sri Hathiramji Mutt, Tirupati, who encouraged me in writing this booklet and patronised me in getting this published for the benefit of the public.

Publications under the title of 'History of Tirupati' by sectarian authors gave an impetus to my quest and the latest publication 'Tirupati Sri Venkateswara--Balaji' by Sri V. N. Srinivasa Rao was appeasing. I feel it my duty to offer my thanks to Sri V. N. Srinivasa Rao, who has dealt with the subject in detail in an impartial and nonsectarian way. My pen recorded only original views and failed to make mention of the history, chronologi-

cal sovereignty, religious endowments and the mode of administration relating to the shrine. I am a disciple of Ahobila Mutt and I believe in Vaishnavism but I do not belong to the fanatic school. I am of view that every Hindu has an equal claim to Lord Venkateswara and that even non-Hindus would someday or other devote themselves to Lord Venkateswara, who is an exponent of universal oneness of religion.

May Lord Venkateswara bless us all.

P. T. Jagannadha Rao



TRADITIONAL TERMINOLOGY

- (6) -

TIRUPATI : Tirupati is the name of the present municipal town down the holy hill, on which Lord Venkateswara resides. The word Tirupati appears to be a dialectal form of some original Sanskrit word with some significance. In the English translation of some Malayalam manuscripts made at Chandragiri on 11-6-1802, with reference to the chronological account of sovereigns, references to this town were made as Tirupati and Teeroopatya, the latter also having the same pronunciation. But, in the report of Stratton, district collector, Chittoor, dated 31-1-1803, the hill proper was mentioned to be Tripatty Hill and Tripatty Pagoda and the village down was mentioned to be Tripatty village in all references of the report. In the Mackenzie collections, manuscript translations and reports, translated from Marati by Baboo Rao in 1804, Tripetty was the name given to this town. It is therefore to be inferred that the early part of the nineteenth century was the time for the recognition of the transformation of "Tri" into "Tiru". This is often the case with Sanskrit terms in South India. The cause is simplicity and facility in pronunciation, as it appeals to masses. For instance, Trichinopoly or the present day Tiruchchirapalle

is the transformed dialect of the Sanskrit term. "Tri Sirah Palle". So also Trincomoly, which stands for Trikonagiri of Sanskrit or the present day Tirukkonamalai. In these cases the Sanskrit prefix "Tri" is transformed into "Tiru" to facilitate pronunciation. Similarly in the case of the word Tirupati also the prefix "Tiru" is the transformation of "Tri" of Sanskrit origin. The original word is "TRIPATI". In the details of Sri Venkatesa Ashtakshari Manthram, which is adopted in the routine worship of Lord Venkateswara, its Gayathri Manthram is given as below :-- "Venkatesaya Vidmahe, Tripati Nadhaya Dhimahi Thannah Srinivasah Prachodayath". This Ashtakshari Manthram is in vogue in the family of the author hereditarily. Lord Venkateswara is referred therein to be the Lord of Tripati. Tripati is the name of the hill, on which Lord Venkateswara resides.

Two centuries back this town Tirupati, down the hill was a small village. Fifteen centuries back there was no village at all down the hill, but a huge forest existed, extending all round the hill upto the Bay of Bengal in the east, upto the river Pinakini or Penna in the north, and a long distance in west and south, as per the Kaifiats of Kota, Chittivel, Chowdeswari Nandavanam and Talpagiri. Gradually with the growing importance of

Tirupati hill, a village down the hill emanated and developed into a town. The name of the hill extended to the village or town below, which mainly depended on the former's prosperity. Even today the public of Tirupati call the hill, Up-Tirupati, and the town, Down-Tirupati, the Telugu terms in vogue being "Eguva Tirupati" and "Diguva Tirupati". This has also reference to Stratton's report, which mentions the names of Tripatty Hill and Tripatty Village seperately.

The word Tirupati cannot be a dialectal form of "Triputi" as interpreted by certain authors. There is no significance at all connected with the history of the place or the presiding deity. Nor is it derived from Sripati in a similar manner. The word Tirupati is a Telugu dialectal form and cannot be a Tamil one. In Tamil it should have been "Tirubadi" or "Tiruppadi". These two forms are not at all found in any part of the history of Tirupati nor in any of the inscriptions in Tamil. The hill is mentioned to be "Vengadam" in all Tamil inscriptions. It is a dialectal form of "Venkata" of Sanskrit. Tirumala of Telugu and Tirumalai of Tamil are cognates, derived from the Sanskrit word "Sri Saila" which has reference in the concerned Puranas and the history of Tirupati. But these words are of a very recent origin, coined to create difference between the hill proper and the

town below it. It would not be even a century since these words were used. We do not find them in ancient literature.

TIRUCHANUR : Tiruchanur is a small village within three miles from Tirupati. Tiruchanur is a dialectal form of the Sanskrit term "Sri Suka Puri". The transformation is as follows : Sri Suka Puri - Tiru Chugan Uru - Tiruchchuganur - Tiruchchuhanur - Tiruchanur. The railway station of this village is named "Chiratanur". This is a result of metathesis according to philology. The word Tiruchchuganur is found in certain inscriptions from Yogula Mallavaramu, an adjoining village of ancient repute. Sri Suka Puri is the place, where the famous saint Suka did penance and the two adjoining villages on either side of the river Swarnamukhi, namely Yogulamallavaramu and Munulapudi are pure unadulterated Telugu words with historic reference in vogue from time immemorial. By the side of Munulapudi is another village called Padipeta, renowned for its cattle wealth and Telugu origin.

A brief of this place, Tiruchanur, may not be out of place to an interested reader. Tiruchanur is now called Alamelumangapuram also. Alamelumanga Thayar or Padmavathi, alleged to be the consort of Lord Venkateswara, was installed in an

already existing temple at the time of Vaishnava domination. References from inscriptions denote an ancient temple, going by the name of "Illan Koil" at Tiruchanur. Illan Koil means the temple of the younger. Vaishnavaites interpret Illan to be Bala Krishna and Saivaites interpret Illan to be Bala Subrahmanya, as sung by ancient devotees. Illan Koil is not existing now at Tiruchanur. The present temple at Tiruchanur has a presiding deity, Lord Krishna, directly opposite to the main entrance and Alamelumanga is to a side. This is an evidence to prove that the installation of Alamelumanga is very recent. Some inscribed stones referring to Illan Koil are found in the construction of the present temple. Some other such stones with inscriptions are found at the basement of resident houses. There was an Illan Koil of Saivaite importance at Tiruchanur before the seventh century, when Saivism thrived. But subsequently with the downfall of Saivism during the seventh century this temple was deserted and pulled down and the stones from it were used in the construction of the present temple. Such stones, bearing inscriptions, are noted by the iconographers. To attribute the antique repute of Illan Koil to Vaishnavism the present day temple was built with Krishna as the presiding deity to represent Illan. The worship at this temple is according to Pancha Ratra Agama and by Vaishnavas, whereas the

worship at hill to Lord Venkateswara is according to Vaikhanasa Agama and by Vaikhanasas only.

Many Alwars referred to Krishna or Manavala Perumal of Tiruchanur in their songs, which do not offer any clue to the date and place of the deity. The deities at Tiruchanur are referred to in inscriptions as Tiruvilonkoil Perumanadigal, Tirumantrasalai Perumanadigal and Tiruvengatattu Perumanadigal. The main deity was Tiruvegatattu Perumanadigal, which was very much mistaken by many authors to be Lord Venkateswara on the hill. These deities date back to the last quarter of the eighth century as per inscriptional authority. The Saivaite Illan Koil should have disappeared in the seventh century and the Vaishnavaites Illan Koil or Tiruvengatattu Perumanadigal should have come into existence early in the eighth century before the period of Sri Ramanuja himself. Inscriptional evidence of grants and endowments for the Akhandam to be maintained in this newly built temple is available. Even today an author interprets Illan Koil to be Snapana Mantapa of Lord Venkateswara on the hill with a motive.

Very early Alwars did not visit Lord Venkateswara, but described him in their prayers to be a blend of Hari and Hara. In the tenth century Nammalwar ascended the hill and prayed Lord

Venkateswara to be the embodiment of the Omni-present Vishnu. He consecrated a silver image at about 966 A.D. in the temple on the hill and called it Manavala Perumal. There is a difference of about two centuries between the consecration of a Vaishnava temple at Tiruchanur and the first Alwar to ascend the hill to consecrate a Vaishnava image on the hill. Many Alwars abstained from ascending the hill to worship Lord Venkateswara for fear that the deity was a Siva with Saivaite paraphernalia. Customarily some turmeric and Kumkum is used to be sent from the hill to Tiruchanur during the annual festival at the latter. But there is no inscriptional evidence to prove it to be an ancient one. Silappadikaram, an oft quoted authority, the antiquity of which was dated back to about 756 A.D. by Dr. Swamikannu, does not tell us that the hill was sacred nor does it say when the god manifested himself there. But the same authority corroborates the facts given above in respect of the deities consecrated at Tiruchanur.

ALIPIRI : This is the name, by which the foot of the hill, from where the route to the hill commences, is called. Alipiri is a pure Telugu word, meaning miniature. It means that Lord Venkateswara in his miniature form dwells there to give Darshan to his non-caste-hindu devotees, who were forbidden in those days to ascend the hill. Mala-

vani Gundam is a pure Telugu term. It is close to Alipiti.

GOVINDARAJA PATTANA : That portion of Tirupati, where Lord Govindaraja is consecrated, is called Govindaraja Pattana. In spite of its existence from the year 1050 A.D., when Tiruverenda Yadavarayalu reigned and got Govindaraja consecrated, the whole town Tirupati is universally called Tirupati only.

CHANDRAGIRI : This is a village six miles off from Tirupati. It is of historic importance with an old fort and remnants of scientific materials, which conduct the gong sound from the Venkatadri hill to Chandragiri fort. Archaeological findings of Jain importance are also found there. The original name is traditionally maintained in its Telugu form. In Tamil it should have been called Sandira Malai, but such a term is absent. This is supposed to have come into existence at about 1330 A.D. from the time of Saluva Mangi Deva.

THEERTHAMS : All the Theerthams of Puranic importance on and around the hill, connected with the shrine of Lord Venkateswara, have retained their original names in Sanskrit, such as Kapila Theertham, Bheema Theertham, Gogarbhram, Pandava Theertham, Akasa Ganga, Papanasanam.

Sesha Theertham, Ramakrishna Theertham, Thum-buru Theertham, etc. There are some Theerthams, which bear pure Telugu names, such as Pasupu Theertham and Seethamma Theertham. All the names, connected with the different parts of the hill and forest around this hill, are of pure Telugu language, as inferred from any map of this hill. The words Vagu, Vanka and Kona are widely used in such terminology.

TRADITIONAL TELUGU WORDS IN USE : The following pure Telugu words were used in the time of Mackenzie in 1803 A.D. :— Kuruvá Dova (Hill path), Padikavali (Gateman), Bangaru Vakili (Gold entrance), Koppera (Hundi), Gudi (Temple), Thotti Theertham (Holy water of the tub), Koluvu (Durbar), Alavattam (Fan), Parasa (Pilgrim), Kanuka (Offering), Cherupu (Food - derived from the word Cherava, meaning a wide-mouthed vessel in which food is made to offer to god), Laddu (A round pudding), Sukiya (A sweet preparation), Thena Thola (Another sweet preparation), Ookaya Pachchadi (A dish made with Ookaya), Mudupu (Money bag), Duggani (Duga + Kani = Two pies), Pavada (An offering as Bali), Etc. In the report of Stratton the following Telugu words were used :— Ookaya, Kanukalu, V a r t h a n a (Maintenance), Mangala Katta (Barbers' bund), Mancham Seva or Panupu Seva (Repóse worship), Addala Ara (Hall

of mirrors), Namala Angadi (Market of marking mud), Poola Bavi (Well used to deposit flowers), Nambi (One who worships god. This term was very widely used by both Mackenzie and Stratton). In both the above reports the following South Indian cognates were observed :— Thiruvardhana (Worship), Thomala Seva (A variety of worship), Vada (A hot cake), Poli (A sweet cake), Dosa (A flat pudding), Appam (A sweet flat pudding), Padi (A measure), Kani (A measure of land), etc. In Cox's gazette the following words were used :— Addakonda (The name of a hill), Muggu Bavi (A well or tank in the middle of the ascent of the hill), Gangalam (A wide-mouthed vessel), Poolangi (Flower decoration), Namala Guha (A cave, where white and red earth is found), etc. Zunnu Padi was endowed by Muru Raja Rama Raja Sripathi Obaleswara at about 1546 A.D. Zunnu is a Telugu term. All the traditional terms are Telugu terms but for a few Vaishnava technical terms of worship, introduced during the era of Sri Ramanuja.

VENKATESWARA : The name of the deity on the hill is Venkateswara. He is also called Venkatesa, Venkatachalapati. Venkataramana, Tiruvengadaththan, etc. He is the Lord of the hill Venkata. The word Venkata is interpreted thus in Venkatachala Mahathmyam :

वेंकारोऽमृत बीजस्तु कटमैश्वर्यं मुच्यते ।
अमृतैश्वर्यं संघत्वा द्वैकटाद्रि रिति स्मृतः ॥

वराह पुराणे अध्या. ३६—श्लो. ३२.

Vem = Eternal ; Kata = Bliss ; Venkata = Eternal Bliss ; the hill that conduces Eternal Bliss is called Venkatadri or Venkatachala and the Lord of such a hill is called Venkateswara. In another version, Vem=Sin ; Kata=Destroy or burn ; Venkata= That which destroys or burns sins or purifier. Many authors are of opinion that these are not etymological. Sanskrit is so tightly knit that not a single word in it is left behind without an etymological origin. These interpretations are of Puranic origin only. They intend to support the supremacy of a particular deity in an idealistic way to convince the masses. The word Vengada is used by both the Andhras and Tamilians in common for Tirupati, but the etymological version is different. In the Andhra version it is Vengi + Kada = Vengada, i.e. the boundary or limit of the territory called Vengi and ruled by the Andhra kings. In Tamil it is Ven + Gadam = Vengadam, meaning a white hill. Venkatachala is said to be of a molten gold colour and hence named Kanakachala. It was praised as such by many devotees of Andhra and Tamil culture. It is not mentioned to be white in

colour by any body anywhere. Therefore the word Vengadam is only a dialectal form of the Sanskrit term, Venkata, and not an independant Tamil word. Chandramana of Hindu calendar is observed by Andhras and the Souramana by Tamilians. Here on this hill in the shrine of Lord Venkateswara Chandramana is observed. New year's Asthanam takes place on the Telugu new year's day. Chandramana is in use upto and includnig Seshachala and Souramana beyond and south of it, as per Jyothisha Siddhantha.

SESHACHALA : SESHAGIRI : SESHADRI : SESHASAILA : These are all synonyms indicating the name of the hill, bearing reference to Sesha or the Adi Sesha. In Venkatachala Mahatmyam it is said that Adi Sesha, in a conflict with Vayu, was blown off and deposited here. This Sesha is connected with Meru and Meru Puthra in the same Purana. This has a philosophical meaning, with special reference to the science of Yoga, which will be explained in the last chapter. **BUSA NAGAPPADU** is a pure Telugu term relating to Lord Venkateswara, indicating his origin to be that of a serpent, in virtue of his residence and identity with Seshadri and his emanating from an ant-hill. He is called Vyala Rupa in his one thousand names and it confirms this view.

SRISAILA : Srisaila and Venkatachala are synonyms. Srisaila is the original name of the hill, as illustrated in Venkatachala Mahatmya :

श्रीपदत्वात् श्रियोवामात् शब्दशक्त्याच योगतः ।

रूढ्या श्रीशैल इत्येवं नामचास्य गिरेरभूत् ॥

वराह पुराणे अध्या. ३६—श्लो. ३४.

Many authors quote a verse from Rigveda and attribute it to this Venkatachala. The early commentators Sayana and Yaska completely ignored this Venkatachala. Later authors commented Vikate Girim to be Venkatachala, attributing the word Sirim Bittasya to it. Sirim Bittasya is said to be Sree Peettasya. It means that the hill is an abode of Sree, which means Sree Chakra or the supreme Chakra, the Sahasrara. This version is in common vogue both in the Andhra and Tamil countries. We hear an Andhra call this deity "Edu Kondala Vadu" and a Tamilian call this deity "Elu Malai Appan". This is not an outcome of or a translation of or a dialectal form of any original Sanskrit term, but an original South Indian term representing this hill to be seven in number in analogy to the six Chakras and the seventh Sahasrara. The establishment of the importance of this hill connected with the Sri Chakra is not limited

only to South India, but extends to the whole of North India. Sri Chakra is a form of worship of Bala Tripura Sundari. Hence the North Indians call the hill and the deity "Balaji". The Vaishnava commentary interpreted Sri to be the goddess Lakshmi, and the abode of which is Sri Nivasam. The latter term, when compounded means Vishnu, the lord of Lakshmi. But the term Sri Saila is in reference to a hill but not a deity thereupon. The derivative explanation of the term, relating to the deity, Venkata, is given quite separately. If Sri is considered to be Lakshmi, Lakshmi-in some form or other should be the presiding deity there on the hill, irrespective of Vishnu. It is not so. There is no place separately for either Lakshmi or any other Sree. A recent devotee connected with the management of the temple introduced "Lakshmi Devi Mahotsavam", which did not gain any importance nor achieve the aim with which it was introduced. One should try to understand the principle on which the consort is omitted to this Lord Venkateswara. This is explained by Yoga science in the last chapter.

CONCLUSION : From a survey of traditional terminology, it is evident that all the terms are of Telugu origin. The area of the hill with its surrounding villages is purely Andhra. There are inscriptional evidences to show that many endow-

ments were made by Andhra kings, but it is a freak to note that such inscriptions are in Tamil. Inscriptions dating back to sixteenth century, ie. 1509 - 1530 : the reign of Sri Krishna Deva Raya and 1565 - 1684 : the reign of Aravidu Rajas, appear in Tamil. It is believed that the heads of temple department then were Tamil Vaishnavaites, who took to inscriptional work in Tamil. There is no evidence to prove that Sri Krishna Deva Raya ever paid a visit to the temple of Govindaraja or that of Alamelumanga, nor that he endowed anything to those temples.

DEVOTEES OF REPUTE.

Gopinatha is said to be the first Vaikhanasa, that worshipped Lord Venkateswara. He did penance on the hill and dedicated his life to Him. Ranga Doss was another devotee from Rangampeta, a village ten miles off from Tirupati, who dedicated his life to Lord Venkateswara. Both of them it is alleged were together doing service to god. They were supposed to be in the reign of King Sakhana of Kambhoja Desa. But historical evidences are not available. Ranga Doss was supplying flowers to god and Gopinath was worshipping god in very early days.

Thallapaka Annamacharyulu was a devotee well known to all Andhras. He was born on a full

moon day in the year 1408 A.D. in the village Thallapakam of Cuddapah district. In his sixteenth year he came to the hill and wholly dedicated his life to Lord Venkateswara. He lived for 94 years. He used to compose one song every day in praise of Lord Venkateswara. He composed about 32,000 songs. They are all inscribed on copper plates in Telugu language and stored in a room on the hill. They are now in the Oriental college down the hill. They may cost if estimated some lacs of rupees now. He had titles :— Samkeerthana Acharya, Harikeerthana Acharya, Pada Kavitha Pithamaha, Andhra Vedantha Kartha, etc. By birth he was a Nandavareeka Smartha brahmin. He latter embraced Vaishnavism. Now the Devasthanam authorities are conducting every year festivals in his honour.

His son, Pedda Thirumalacharya, and his grandsons, Pinna Thirumala Acharya and Chinna Tiruvengala Natha, were also devotees, who spent their whole lives in service to god. They have also composed songs in praise of Lord Venkateswara and added to the library of Annamacharya. They endowed more than twenty villages to Swami. Chinna Tirumala Acharya consecrated Kalyana Venkateswara and built a temple at Mangapuram, very near Tirupati. The temple is now in a delapidated condition, but the Moorthi or idol is in

tact and very beautiful. A devotee is worshipping the Kalyana Venkateswara for his piety but not for any remuneration from any institution. The Devatharchana idols, Japamala of Sphatika and Tulasi and the Chirathalu of Annamacharya are now secured and placed in this temple. Thallapaka Chinnaya Soori, a later devotee, had a melodious tone, appropriate expression and whole-hearted devotion. Lord Venkateswara is supposed to have danced in front of him in praise of his music.

Hathiram Bavaji, a North Indian Brahmin and a disciple of the Mutt of Ramananda, born at Ayodhya in a middle class family, came to Tirupati to serve Balaji out of spontaneous devotion. He served him so whole-heartedly that the public are of opinion that Lord Venkateswara played dice with him, being pleased with his service and devotion. The Mutt after him is still at Tirupati and on the hill.

Tharikonda Venkamamba was a later devotee from Tharikonda, a village very near Vayalpadu, some thirty miles from Tirupati. She was born to Injeti Krishniah, a Smartha Brahmin. Early in the nineteenth century she came to Tirupati in her middle life and dedicated her life to Lord Venkateswara in his service. She is the author of a number of books in Telugu:— Venkatachala Maha-

tmyamu, Rajayoga Saramu, Narasimha Satakamu, Ramaaparinarayamu, Dwipada Bhagavathamu, Ash-tanga Yoga Saramu. These books are published and are available. Some other books are said to have been written by her but not available. They are Krishna Nataka, Siva Nataka, Rukmini Nataka, Gopika Nataka, Chenchu Nataka, Narasimha Vilasa, Krishna Manjari and Parijathapaharana. In her last days to avoid publicity and hindrance from the public she went to Thumburu Kona and did penance. Similarly there was another lady called Balamba at Mangalagiri, near Vijayawada, in the first half of this century with similar devotion. People are reminded of Venkamamba on seeing her and her devotion. Many incidents in their lives were common to both.

There are several others, who have in silence preferred to serve Lord Venkateswara and devote their lives for holy service. Most of the devotees, who have gone over to Tirupati out of spontaneous devotion, were all Andhras. The regular sect of Vaikhanasas who worship Lord Venkateswara from time immemorial are all Andhras. A section of people from South settled down at Tirupati as Inamdars and Kainkarya Karthas, but not out of pure devotion, as devotion is void of power and remuneration.

RELIGIOUS RIVALRY.

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A religion is that, which manifests by establishing a particular system of faith and worship. That, which receives the state support, is called an established religion. In Bharath Khanda, the ancient India, there was only one universally acknowledged religion. It was imbibed in the daily routine of human life. In those days religion meant duty, Dharma. The Omnipresent and the Omnipotent was worshipped. As ages passed by the mental culture in masses had a retrogression. The original method of worship was limited to the cultured and idol worship was introduced to the masses. Idolatry developed many branches in itself. There was Vaishnava, Saiva, Saktha, Soura and Ganapathya schools. All the five were approved schools. Panchayatan worship originated as a consequence. The minor differences in these methods of worship were lost for a common good cause of improving the psychic power. During this period of transition that Upanishads originated. They supplemented the Vedic culture. As the population increased, different territories were established. From Sanskrit and the then spoken language Prakrit many dialectal languages were coined, each peculiar to its own territory. Inter-

pretations of Vedas and Upanishads differed from territory to territory. Deviations were many and the subsequent differences of opinion were also many. Self and false prestige developed in the minds of masses. An extreme end of such a one became atheistic. To put down atheism religious preceptors were a necessity. Different preceptors from different places had their own commandments, which were controversial materially but had the same spiritual ultimate aim. The cultured aimed at the goal but the masses laid more stress on the material aspects than the spiritual. This was the stage of religion in India in the early centuries A.D. Egotism was prevailing with the vanishing psychism. Idealistic preceptors with cheap commandments preached Buddhism and Jainism to check the fall of psychism and elevate masses to introspection. Both these religions were in their bloom in the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries A.D. Sankaracharya propogated Vedic religion in contrast to Buddhism and Jainism. There was a decline in the latter two religions. In the eighth century Saivism was upheld, incorporating into it the Panchayatan system of worship, ie. Vishnu, Sakthi, Ganapathi and Sun.

Saivism was an established religion under the rule of Cholas. It was the eighth and ninth centuries. In the tenth century under the regime

of Pallavas all the religions were encouraged without any partiality. When Saivism was at its climax under Cholas, Vaishnavism sprouted. The early Alvars were compromising. They showed no hatred towards Siva. They praised Lord Venkateswara as a blend of Hari and Hara. In the tenth century when all the religions were encouraged alike the rivalry between Saivism and Vaishnavism was very keen. Major parties aligned themselves by either Saivism or Vaishnavism. Buddhism and Jainism had no status. They had to disappear from the battle field. Let us consider the South Indian situation in connection with the temple and hill of Lord Venkateswara. As a token of Pallavas encouraging all religions, we see even today a Jain temple at Arungulam, five miles from Tiruttani. And as a token of the subsequent keen rivalry we see at Nallattur, a village very near Tiruttani, idols of Vishnu and Siva deserted and kept on the ridges of cultivated lands, being dug out of the same lands. It is to be inferred that these idols were pulled out of their respective temples by the sectarian opposite parties and buried underground. From the eleventh century with the advent of Sri Ramanuja, Vaishnavism prevailed. It had an opportunity of becoming an established religion too, acquiring the state support. But it had its staunch opposition in the form of Veera Saivism, commencing from the same period. Veera Saivism

dwindled away in the reign of Thalalu Gosina Yadava Rayalu or Sri Bhashya Yadava Rayalu, who was a staunch veteran of Vaishnavism. This Yadavarayalu beheaded a number of Saivaites, who claimed Lord Venkateswara to be Siva. For this fanatic and brutal act he was honoured by Sri Ramanuja with the title Sri Bhashya, to be named after him. In the same century during the reign of Thoya Yadava Raya ensued the conflict between the Saivaites of Kalahasti and Vaishnavaites assembled at Tirupati regarding the identity of Lord Venkateswara. It was at this period that the gold plate Disc and Conch were fitted to the hind wrists of the original deity. During the same period Govindaraja was consecrated down the hill. Sri Ramanuja is said to be during that period. The dates differ with a gap of two centuries 10,000 to 12,000 A.D. according to different authors.

In the thirteenth century from Kumbhakonam came to Tirupati Sri Tatacharyulu during the reign of Pedda Venkatapati Rayalu. The royal family fell a victim to him. Sri Tatacharyulu became a local Acharya Purusha. He cauterised the royal family and baptised it, against the traditional Acharya Purusha of Ahobila Mutt. In the same century the Vimanam of Lord Venkateswara was repaired in the reign of Veera Narasinga. In the fourteenth century inscriptional evidences of the

already existing Sri Varaha appeared. This was about 1378 A.D. Most of the inscriptions dating from this period relate mostly to the donations, endowments, assignments, etc. We hear of the first Jeeyar as Mullai Thiruvengada Jeeyar in 1387 A.D. Convincing the rulers and obtaining state support Vaishnavaites crept into the management of the temples. It is in this century, that as a compromise between them and the Saiva Vaikhanasas, Sattumurai was introduced, which had no inscriptional evidence but for tradition. In the fifteenth century the shrines of Varādaraja, Ranganatha and Narasimha were built. Idols of Rama and Lakshmana were consecrated by Ramalakkan Doss in the temple during the same century. In the very early part of the sixteenth century, in 1512 A.D. a separate shrine for Garuda was built. In 1535 A.D. Achuta Raya Maharaya tried to link Venkatachalam with Ahobilam. Inscriptional references of Sri Kapila Theertham were found during that time. Venkatachala Mahatmyam edited by Passindi Venkata Thuraivar came into existence then only. In the later part of the sixteenth century and early in the seventeenth century, inspite of the Andhra kings ruling the country, their endowments were all recorded as inscriptions in Tamil by the Vaishnavas, who were then managing the temple. In the seventeenth century Galigopuram was gifted by Matla Anantharaya. In the year 1801 A.D. the manage-

ment of the temple went into the hands of the British, The management by the British Government of the temple was quite fair and satisfactory. They regulated everything and satisfied with the truth within. But after the inauguration of the Committee to manage the temple affairs two Garudas find their seats on the Ardha Mantapam and the shrine of Ramanuja. The management is expected to maintain what existed originally but not to introduce what it liked by a sectarian spirit.

Let us now consider the nature of the idol proper and how different claims were put forward by different religionists for the exclusive right of ownership of the deity and its worship. It is clearly known that with the change of time, sovereignty, and religious preception, the mode of worship of a particular idol of a particular temple governed by such environments also changes automatically. The date of the consecration of the idol of Lord Venkateswara on the hill is not at all known to anybody. It is therefore said to be a Swayambhu. The features of the idol are such that they are not modified nor supplemented in the intermediate stages. They cannot be dealt with so easily even with the utmost zeal by any preceptor. Only changes in the mode of worship and decoration may be brought in. In the very early periods, when Hinduism was universally acknowledged as

one religion, it was believed that there was access to anybody and everybody. Buddhism has no claim to this deity as it does not possess this sort of idol worship. But Jains to a certain extent may claim this deity to be their god from the facts that the idol has a Srivatsam on the right side of the chest and that the temple has Simha-Nikethan. These are the emblems of the Theerthankars of Jainism. The first of the Theerthankars was Adimooleswar. Lord Venkateswara might have been called by that name - Adimooleswar - by Jains during their regime. They do not have temples for the consorts. They are always single. As Jainism faded there was none to claim this deity. The controversy is between the Saivaites and the Vaishnavaites only, leaving behind all other religions. The period of Jain regime was the transitional period. Pre-Jain period was Saivaite and the post-Jain period was Vaishnavaites. Yadava families of various branches adopted Jainism. Vishnu Vardhana and his queen, Santala Devi, were devoted Jains. The latter constructed the Ganahathrana Basti at Sravana Bala-gola. From archaeological reports it is inferred that ruins of Jain temples were found in the fort of Chandragiri and at Narayanavanam, the strong holds of the then chieftains. There is still a Jain temple as a token at Arungulam near Tiruttani. Jain royal families were converted into Vaishnavism by a gradual transformation. Adimooleswar of

Jains was named later to be Adimoorthi by Vaikhanasas and Vishnu by Vaishnavaites. Annamacharya termed Lord Venkateswara to be ADIMOOLAM in his songs.

THE SAIVA CLAIM :

1. Every deity or Devatha will have a Manthram of its own. In this connection Lord Venkateswara has his own Manthram. It is an Ash-takshari composed of eight letters, initiated by Narada vide Brahmanda Purana. There are two more Manthrams, Navakshari and Ashtakshari of the same deity initiated by Siva, vide Bhavishyothara Purana - Sri Venkateswara Rahasya. In all these Manthrams the name of the deity is given as VENKATESA only. It is a compound word, Venkata + Esa = Venkatesa. The latter word is a Saiva term not at all used by Vaishnavaites in their terminology or nomenclature. No Vaishnavaites does possess a name as Venkatesa wholly with the word Esa. The Sahasra-Namas of this deity begin with the same term "Venkatesaya Namah". In the Dhyana Sloka given by Narada, all the paraphernalia of Vishnu is given but not accounted for in the idol. In the Dhyana Sloka given by Siva the Moorthi or idol is described to have a Srivatsam on the right side of the chest and adorned by a Naga-

bhushana, which identifies the idol very clearly. The description in a Dhyana Sloka may vary with the author, but the Manthram will not on any account vary. Such instances are not wanting in Manthra Sastrā.

2. The original idol has a Nagabharana. A serpent is seen carved on the idol as a decoration. This is a specific ornament to Siva and other Saiva deities. Not a single form of Vishnu anywhere is adorned by a Nagabharana.

3. In the month of Dhanus, the ninth solar month, this deity is worshipped specially with Bilwa leaf for all the thirty days. Bilwa is specially indicated in the worship of Siva and condemned totally by Vaishnavaites. It is still a wonder, why Vaishnavaites condemn Bilwa, under which tree goddess Lakshmi is expected to be.

4. This idol of Venkateswara has a Jata, plaited hair. Jatajutum is akin to Lord Siva. "Swachcha Mouli Sobha Virajithaya Namah" is one of his one thousand names of worship.

5. Pilgrims, visiting Saiva shrines, get shaved customarily, as is usual at Palani, Tiruttani, etc. So also getting shaved is a custom at Tirupati hill. It is not so at any Vaishnavaita shrine.

6. In the sanctum sanctorum the idol is installed at the centre, leaving much space behind. This is always the custom with Saiva idols. In case of Vishnu idols the idol is installed close to the back wall, leaving large space in front of the idol. There is an unusual vacant space behind Lord Venkateswara.

7. All round Tirupati for about a radius of fifty miles, ancient Siva temples are seen, with their respective legends and allusions - Puranas. Kalahasti, Tiruttani, Takkolam, Tiruvelangadu, Thondavada, etc. are places of Siva temples with antiquity. Talakona, Kailasakona, Sadasivakona, etc. are places of water-falls of Saivaite importance and Puranic antiquity. The other Vaishnava temples found in the proximity of this shrine of Venkateswara are connected with the main shrine by some Purana or imitation, and are consecrated during or after the twelfth century or the era of Sri Ramanuja.

8. On Sivarathri day, dedicated specially to the worship of Siva, all the Archakas and staff of the temple of Lord Venkateswara go to the Kshetra. Palakas and perform Abhishekam according to Saiva form of worship. Probably this is a traceable remnant of some previous grand function at the temple proper, but neglected and transferred after

the twelfth century. Vaishnava authors of History of Tirupati prefer to omit every thing about Kshetra-Palakas or state that the worship of such Kshetra-Palakas is not traditional and that it is not supported by inscriptional evidence. This worship is even to-day being continued by the temple authorities traditionally.

9. Every Tuesday Smartha Saivaites offer food Naivedyam to Kshetra-Palakas and offer the Prasadam to Jeeyangars. The latter being staunch Vaishnavaites ungrudgingly receive the Prasadam. As this tradition could not have been introduced after the establishment of Jeeyars at the hill, ie. 1387 A.D., it should be presumed that it was in vogue even earlier than the fourteenth century. It might have been connected with the original deity and performed in a magnificent manner in the early days of Saivaite climax and got neglected and transferred subsequently. In this connection mention may be made of a similar function at Ahobilam. A Siva Lingam is consecrated in the walled-off portion of the natural cavern, in which Narasimha is worshipped. The Lingam is behind the Narasimha. A special worship by Smarthas, akin to that at this Venkatachala Kshetra, is conducted on the Sivarathri day. Vaishnava domination attenuated the Saiva importance, leaving behind the relic. Such is the worship of Kshetra-

Palakas on Venkatachalam and the observance of the Vinayaka Chaturdhi and Varalakshmi Vratham along with routine worship.

10. On Vinayaka Chaturdhi day, a special pudding, Kudumu, very much relished by Ganapathi or Vinayaka, the son of Siva, is prepared and offered to Lord Venkateswara. The preparation of such a pudding on Vinayaka Chaturdhi day is a custom in Saivism. It is not at all observed by Vaishnavaites. This might be another remnant of an antique dignified form of worship, attenuated by time and transition.

11. Similarly Vara Lakshmi Vratham is adopted in this shrine of Lord Venkateswara. This Vratham is mostly observed by Saivaites.

12. On the northern side of the ridge of the base of the Lord's Vimana in gold, there is still a remnant of Saivaite art, depicting Markandeya embracing Lord Siva in his Lingam form. Such an architecture cannot be found on any place in a Vaishnavaite temple.

13. The person who is deputed to read the calendar daily is a Saivaite. The person who bears the umbrella is a Saivaite. The person who does Kanyadanam in Kalyanotsava is a Saivaite - Thallapaka representative or a Vaikhanasa. The routine worship is done by Saivaites, called Vaikha-

nasas. These are Smarthas, the only persons who have the right of touch, decoration, Abhishekam and worship in all forms. This is hereditary and traditional. Vaikhanasa Munireshta Pujithayanamah is one of his names. The mode of worship here is according to Vaikhanasa Agama, but the mode of worship in Vaishnava temples is according to Pancharatra Agama.

14. Venkatadri is described in several Saiva Puranas, such as Siva Rahasya Khanda, etc. to be the abode of Lord Subrahmanya, son of Lord Siva. Subrahmanya, being a bachelor, is said to be single without a consort. The tank attached close to the shrine is called by the name "Swami Pushkarini" and claimed to have been named after Kumara Swami. Any way it cannot be after the name of the Swami of the temple, as we see the deity is called "Swami Dhyeyayanamah" and "Swami Theertha Krithavasayanamah."

15. Lord Venkateswara is said to be a blend of Vishnu and Subrahmanya, from the fact that he is called "Karthikeya Vapu Dharine Namah." Karthikeya is Subrahmanya. It means that Lord Venkateswara assumed the form of Subrahmanya. This version is confirmed by the allusion given in Vratha Chudamani text under Sanivara Vratha. The special form of worship or ritual to be performed on Saturdays, considered to be very import-

ant to Lord Venkateswara, is specific to the blended form of Vishnu and Subrahmanya. It is alleged that Vishnu and Subrahmanya worshipped Lord Siva, called Venkata, on this hill and became united with one mind to confer boons to all devotees. In this connection it may be recalled that Lord Venkateswara emanated from an Ant-hill. Snake is one of the forms of Subrahmanya. From this analogy Lord Venkateswara is considered to be Subrahmanya.

16. According to Uttarakamikagama every Siva idol is expected not to exhibit its feet. In several cases the feet, ankles and a portion below the knees are not to be seen, as they are underground. In this case of Lord Venkateswara the feet are underground and not seen. This point is referred to in Varaha Purana - Venkatachala Mahatmya - second part - chapter IX thus :

“वल्मीकगूढपादाब्जमाजानु पुरुषोत्तमम्”

Gold plated feet are placed at the bottom of the idol for exhibition for the sake of the masses.

17. In Brahmanda Purana one thousand names are given to Lord Venkateswara. The list is called Sahasra Namavali. The first one is Venkatesa and the immediate next one is Virupaksha, a name of Siva. There are several names

of Siva appearing in the list. They are:— Virupakshaya, Kalakanthaya, Sambhave, Paresaya, Ugraya, Maheswaraya, Kapaline, Pasine, Sooline, Kuttharine, Digvastraya, Kamari, Bhavaya, Kapardine, Kapilaya, Layaya, Maha Nataya, Niranjana, Urdhwa Lingaya, Purandaraya, Nagesaya, Hanthre, Apataya, Sivankaraya, Bilwamala Jala Snayine, Sthanu-Sthaya, Swachchamouli Sobha Virajithaya, Vakra Danshtrine, Karala Vakthraya, Jwala Karala Vadanaya, etc. More than fifty per cent of the total names apply equally to Vishnu and Siva by virtue of their literal derivations. Generally the above mentioned Saiva terms do not appear in the Vishnu Sahasranamavali.

Saivaites claim the deity to be their goddess also. The following points are in support of their claim :

18. In every temple the top corners of the compound wall bear the emblem of the presiding deity. In this case of Lord Venkateswara, the emblem is a couchant lion. There is no analogy to this freak. Lion is the emblem of a Saiva goddess or Sakthi everywhere.

19. The very important anniversary festival of Lord Venkateswara takes place in Solar Kanya Masa during Navarathri days, specially dedicated to the worship of a Sakthi or goddess or Sri Chakra.

20. The idol of Lord Venkateswara is bathed in turmeric water every Friday, which act is customary with ladies and goddesses.

21. Pavada or Tiruppavada is offered to Lord Venkateswara after the completion of the anniversary festival as a finishing touch. Pavada is a huge quantity of food coloured red, placed in a heap with Margosa leaves before the deity and offered as Bali. This appears to be a substitute to animal slaughter and food mixed with blood as offered to a Sakthi in the way of Bali. The change is said to have occurred during the Jain regime.

22. This idol of Lord Venkateswara is similar to the Durga idol at Tiruvanjikalam, Malabar district, which bears the disc and conch by the hind arms, the fore pair being in the Katyavalambitha and Varada poses. The cloth worn by that goddess is the same Peethambaram.

23. All the North Indians call this deity "Balaji", a revered form of Bala Tripura Sundari or Sakthi. They have taken this word from the tradition that this idol and hill represent Sri Chakra.

24. In Varaha Purana it is said that Thondaman was led by a parrot to a huntsman and that the latter introduced Thondaman to his deity, Venkateswara, who was under a Bilwa tree. This incident identifies the affinity of Lord Venkateswara

to Bilwa, much revered by the Saivaites, Goddess Lakshmi has her abode under a Bilwa tree. This version of Purana might have been even coined to suit the quotation from Veda "Sree Peettasya = Sri Nivasasya". Here Sri means Bilwa.

25. In the prayer of Sankaracharya, Dwadasa Linga Stawam, he describes the deities on the hills of Sri Saila and Seshadri to be Lord Siva only. (Arjunam Mallika Poorvam)

26. Lord Venkateswara is also claimed to be a blend of Hari-Hara. Saivaites have no objection to worship Vishnu but Vaishnavaites take objection to recognise any form of Siva in their worship and prayer. Under unavoidable circumstances and in the presence of facts early Alwars prayed Lord Venkateswara to be a blend of Vishnu and Siva. In the iconography written by T. Gopinatha Rao it is stated that in about 700 A.D. Peyalwar described Lord Venkateswara to be in the form of a Vishnu and Siva or Hari and Hara in his Tirukanden. Similarly in a book of Pasurams published by the Srivaishnava Mudrapaka Sabha Limited in 1901 A.D. a Pasuram bears the following meaning: "On the hill with sacred brooks is the Lord, who has a hanging Jata, long crown, nice axe, a disc and a snake. It is astonishing to find a blend of Hari and Hara in one form here." The early Alwars prayed Lord Venkateswara as a blend of

Hari and Hara and the later Alvars tried to establish Lord Venkateswara to be Vishnu alone, by introducing certain Vaishnavaitic forms of worship on compromise.

THE VAISHNAVA CLAIM :

1. Sri Vatsam on the chest is a Vaishnava mark. Usually the Sri Vatsam will be on the left side of the chest of Vishnu. But in this case it is on the right side of the chest. Right-sided Sri Vatsam is a mark of Jains. We do not find a single instance of Vishnu having the Sri Vatsam on the right side of the chest.

2. Peethambaram worn by the deity refers to Vishnu. Peethambara is worn by Sakthi and Vaishnavi goddess. Bagala has a Peethambara. On Thursdays Lord Venkateswara is decorated with a saree and plenty of flowers. A big sword is attached to the waist, to resemble a Sakthi.

3. The Namam on the face is a Vaishnava mark. This Namam is neither Vadagal nor Thengal. This is not marked with the white and red substances usually. But refined camphor and musk are used. A Namam may appear on any face at the will of the worshipper. For instance at Tiruchanur a Vaishnava family found an idol of Ganapati in their premises, installed it in a small temple with a Namam on its face and named it Thumbikalwar. It is wondered in what history did

Ganapati become a Vaishnavaites to wear a Namam on his face.

4. The method of worship adopted on the hill to this deity is according to Vaikhanasa Agama, where Purusha Sooktham is observed, Purusha Sooktham is not an exclusive Vaishnava portion. It is used by all. It is not an exception to Saivaites in contrast to Rudram.

5. The wearing of a disc and a conch by this deity is a special Vaishnava feature. They are after all artificially attached, and do not disclose the real nature of the deity. They may be as genuine as the artificial gold plate feet. According to Purana Thondaman requested Lord Venkateswara to give him the disc and conch. His request was granted. Thereafter Lord Venkateswara is supposed to have worn artificial disc and conch to please the masses. This point gives room for suspicion. In Pasurams Lord Venkateswara is described to have held in his hands an axe and a disc. Axe is a Saiva emblem. Disc is a Vaishnava emblem. To make the deity wholly Vaishnavaites gold plate disc and conch were fitted to the hands. The artificial disc fitted tightly but the conch supposed to have been fitted to the axe had a shake. Another gold plate conch was fitted on to the already existing one in the year 1800 A.D. by the then Archaka, Srinivasa Dikshitulu, spending about 500 pagodas of gold, as per available evidences.

CONCLUSION : Let us have an impartial survey of facts. Puranas relating to a particular deity establish the supremacy of that deity over all the rest. Such Puranic references are to be discounted. All differences in the method of decoration and worship are man-made, hence to be discounted. Let the nude deity be studied in detail.

FEET : The feet being underground the idol is Siva ; the presence of Viraja spring at the feet identifies the idol to be Vishnu.

CHEST : Nagabharanam is an emblem of Siva ; Sri Vatsam is an emblem of Vishnu.

HEAD : The Jata signifies Siva ; the crown signifies Vishnu.

It is therefore evident that this deity is a blend of Hari and Hara, but not a Siva or Vishnu exclusively.

शिवाय विष्णुरूपाय शिवरूपाय विष्णवे ।

शिवस्य हृदयं विष्णुर्विष्णोश्च हृदयं शिवः ॥

यथा शिवमयो विष्णु रेवं विष्णुमयः शिवः ।

यथान्तरं न पश्यामि तथामे स्वस्ति रायुषि ॥

सन्ध्यावन्दन ध्यानम्—

APPENDIX.

Extract from the Government publication of the North Arcot District Manual, 1880 edition, report of Mr. A. F. Cox.

“ There can be no reasonable doubt that originally the idol was worshipped as Siva. This is denied by none and the story goes that Ramanujachari asserting that it was all a mistake, and that the Swami was Vishnu, procured a Chank and Chakram of gold, which he placed before the image and closed the temple doors. When they were next day opened, these ensigns were found grasped in the idol's hands, which was regarded as a proof that he was Vishnu. The Chank and Chakram are not portions of the stone image, but are made of gold and fitted upon the two hands which point upwards. The arrangement of the hair as Jata or tangled mass, the cobras carved upon the body and various other peculiarities prove that Siva was intended to be represented and the priests who are Dikshidars say that they are Saivaites, though they wear Namam. Probably, the Swami who has no consort on the hill was the bachelor Subrahmanyaswami.”

CONCLUSION.

The Hindu mythology is so intellectually depicted that it suits the masses and the cultured as well. Every branch of it expounds both the materialistic and spiritualistic (Sthula and Sookshma) aspects. It is understood by the reader according to his receiving capacity. Idolatry is intended for the masses to educate them in the line of devotion. The innate and absolute divinity is realised by the cultured by inference. Selfish worship or bigoted idolatry is fanatic and idealistic, as it carries with it a motive. If the student of religion were to adhere to the elementary principles of Yama and Niyama, which purify the mind, he would naturally develop to be selfless in his worship. Selfless idolatry tends to generate a quest for truth. Selfless research in religion is realistic and philosophical. Truth is known by such persistent meditation. One who seeks after truth attains several psychic powers even if he fails to realise the absolute Brahman. One who practises attainment of perfection or Siddhi will not be a loser if he fails. He will be a Bhogi, enjoying perfect physical health, instead of a Yogi, enjoying self-realisation. One who practises alchemy will be a good pharmacist if he fails to become an alchemist.

Nothing is lost in any of the Hindu mythological practices. There is certainly a development perceived in proportion to the practice. So every person should aim high to realise the Lord within himself, without prejudice to idolatry, which is intended for those, who have not yet developed a desire for such a goal. Lord Venkateswara is presented in the form of a Hindu mythological deity but he represents the One. He sheds the religious rivalry between the Vaishnavaites and Saivaites; he incorporates Mlechhas (noncaste hindus) into his fold and he imparts the universal religious oneness to all religions alike. In chapter fifty-eight of Venkatachala Mahatmya of Varaha Purana, it is said that Lord Venkateswara gives audience or Darshan to Mlechhas and that even Muslims would attend his festivals at the hill along with Hindus.

Every term, relating to Lord Venkateswara, has a Yogic attribute and every allusion, relating to Him, has a reference to Yoga science. In Brahma Purana a detailed allusion of a contest between Vayu and Sesha, resulting in the existence of this hill is given. Sesha challenged Vayu for a contest. Sesha twisted his body around a portion of Meru, called Meru-Puthra, glittering in a molten gold colour and asked Vayu to lift it up. Instigated by Lord Hari, Vayu filled all the worlds with wind.

Sesha unfolded his hood having become light with wind. Through that space Vayu entered in and lifted up Meru-Puthra which was coiled by Sesha along with Sesha himself. Sesha was defeated and Vayu won. According to Yoga science, Meru is Meru Danda or the vertebral column, through which the physiological spinal cord and the psychological subtle Nadis, such as Sushumna, pass. Spinal cord is visible to the naked eye, but the latter is only realised by Yoga practice. Meru-Puthra is the Adhomukha Swayambhu Lingam situated in the Mooladhara Kamala Karnika, ie. in the first of the six Chakras, with his head turned down. Sesha represents Kundalini Sakthi. This Lingam is coiled by Kundalini Sakthi by three and a half rounds and his face or Brahma Nadi Mukham is closed by its hood. This Lingam is of a molten gold colour. A practitioner of Yoga takes in a deep and full breath, fills the whole body with it, pulls up the anus and Apana Vayu which unfurls the coils, loosens the face of the Kundalini Sakthi covering the Brahma Nadi Vivaram or the Swayambhu Linga Chhidra, turns up the Adhomukha Linga and forces the Kundalini Sakthi pass through the Brahma Nadi to Sahasrara to realise the almighty Paramatman. According to Brahma Purana Meru-Puthra is Venkatachala hill. By its molten gold colour it is called Kanakachala. Therefore Venkatachalam is the Oordhwa Mukha

Swayambhu Linga with Prabodhitha Kundalini Sakthi. Andhras and Tamilians have well recognised this aspect of Venkatachala and call the hill to be Edu Kondalu or Elu Malai, meaning seven hills. The first six hills represent the six Chakras from Mooladhara to Ajna and the seventh hill is the Sahasrara, which is the abode of Paramatman absolute. The mind stops with Ajna Chakra and the absolute Paramatman resides in the Sahasrara.

In the Anganyasa of Sri Venkatesa Ashtakshari Manthram it is said "Venkatesah Paramatma Devathethi Sirasi". Venkatesa is taken to be the Paramatman absolute. Though the hill is illustrated to be seven in number and though the Chakras are six plus one in number, in Hamsopanishad it is clearly stated that these are only different stages or aspects of the One. Yoga begins with the Mooladhara and gets perfected at Sahasrara. Kundalini Sakthi begins at Mooladhara and reaches Sahasrara. The Chakras denote different stages of ascent and perfection. So also Venkatachala is one hill, but illustrated to be seven in number for analogy. Therefore Lord Venkateswara, represented to be the Swayambhu Linga of Mooladhara, is also the Paramatman of the Sahasrara. One who ascends the hill Venkatadri loses his Jeevathvam there and returns blessed with Devathvam. He loses his self there and returns blessed with Amritha. Amritha

is obtained from Viraja at the feet of Lord Venkateswara. Viraja is said to be a stream of Amritha with reference to its existence at Vaikunttha. This has reference in Mundakopanishad and Syama-paddhathi. In Venkatachala Mahatmyam it is described that Lord Venkateswara is a physician and that the holy water of Swami Pushkarini is medicine.

The site of Venkatachala is called Varaha Kshetra. He is Bhoo-Varaha. The first Chakra, Mooladhara, represents earth. It is of Bhoo-Thatwam. Varaha is the saviour of Bhoo according to mythological legends. The importance of the first Mooladhara Chakra is depicted by calling the site to be the Varaha Kshetra. Varaha Bijam is HUM. It is otherwise called Kurchika Bija also, with the aid of which Kundalini Sakthi is made to ascend from Mooladhara to Sahasrara according to many Tantrik texts. Chapter one, part two of Sri Varaha Purana deals with Dharani Varaha Samvada, in which it is said that Dharani (Kundalini of Mooladhara) attended by her two maids, Ida and Pingala, prayed to Varaha by thanking him for having lifted her up and made her seated at the Sahasrara. In the *twenty-eighth chapter, Ash-tanga Yoga Nirupana, of the first part of Sri Varaha Purana, Yoga practice with Venkatesa Ashtakshari is given.

Padmavathi Devi, the alleged consort of Lord Venkateswara, is said to be the daughter of Akasa Raja and Dharani Devi. The parents represent the first five Chakras of the five elements, ie. from Mooladhara to Visudha. Mooladhara represents earth and hence it is Dharani Devi. Visudha represents Akasa and hence it is Akasa Raja. The mind is with them all along these five Chakras. It has a seperate existence in Ajna Chakra, the sixth. As it gets out of the five elemental Chakras and obtains an individuality it is called a daughter and named to be Padmavathi, representing the mind or conscience. The Jeeva will be conscious of his practice and he will have his mind active as far as he makes Kundalini Sakthi ascend Ajna Chakra. Above Ajna Chakra there is a place called Unmani, where the mind is lost and the practitioner becomes unconscious of himself. Therefore the mind is lost before the Jeeva enters Sahasrara or attains perfection in Yoga Samadhi. It is therefore that Lord Venkateswara has no consort with him at this temple. He is the Parabrahman absolute. Some authors say that the Paramatman absolute is a blend of Paramatman and Prakriti. To prove this he has a Sri Vatsam.

Lord Venkateswara is called Tripathi Nadha. He is the embodiment of the three Bindus of the Parama Bindu at Sahasrara, representing the three

gods — Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara ; the three Gunas — Sattwa, Rajas and Thamas and the three holy letters — **A U M** constituting the Pranava. At Sahasrara the supreme one has no form. He is free from dualism. He is above all. He cannot be described nor can he be explained by words. He is only to be realised by Yogabhyasa.

नित्यशुद्धप्रबुद्धात्मस्वरूपं वागगोचरम् ।

सर्वतो व्याप्तमात्मानं निर्मलं निष्कलं शिवम् ॥

— वेङ्कटेश रहस्ये —

शिवस्थानं शैवाः परमपुरुषं वैष्णवगणाः

लपन्तीति प्रायो हरिहरपदं केचिदपरे ।

पदं देव्या देवी चरणयुगलाम्भोजरसिका

मुनीन्द्रा अप्यन्ये प्रकृतिपुरुषस्थानममलम् ॥

इदं स्थानं ज्ञात्वा नियतनिजचित्तो नरवरो

न भूयात् संसारे पुनरपि न बद्धस्त्रिभुवने ।

— षट्चक्रनिरूपणे —

सहस्रारे ज्वलज्ज्योतिरन्तर्लक्ष्यम् । बुद्धिगुहायां
 सर्वाङ्गसुन्दरं पुरुषरूपमन्तर्लक्ष्यमित्यपरे । शीर्षान्तर्गत-
 मण्डलमध्यगं पञ्चवक्त्रमुमासहायं नीलकण्ठं प्रशान्तं
 अन्तर्लक्ष्यमिति केचित् । अद्भुष्टमात्रः पुरुषोऽन्तर्लक्ष्य-
 मित्येके । उक्तविकल्पं सर्वं आत्मैव । तल्लक्ष्यं शुद्धात्म-
 दृष्ट्या वा यः पश्यति स एव ब्रह्मनिष्ठो भवति ॥

— मण्डलब्राह्मणोपनिषत् —

While concluding it is found necessary to interpret the word Venkata in the known right way for the benefit of those who would be in quest of it. Till now a correct interpretation is not given by any author. According to Venkatachala Mahatmya, Vem is said to be Amṛita Bija and Kata to be Iswarya. No where in Sanskrit literature, do we find the meaning of Iswarya attributed to Kata. In another version Vem is said to be sin and Kata to burn it or destroy it. Similarly Vem does not possess the meaning sin, according to any authority in Sanskrit literature. These are Puranic allusions, which do not have or which do not convey a correct meaning, but add to the idea with which the particular Purana is written, as they are only idealistic. The author is of opinion, subject to criticism,

that the following interpretation of the word Venkata is correct.

Vem, the first letter, is a combination of the twenty-ninth consonant and the fourth vowel of the Sanskrit alphabet with a Bindu. Va is Amrita Bija according to Bija Nighantu. It is also a Bija that indicates Varuna, that counteracts poison and that eradicates death. The Bija Va represents Ap or water. Swadhishtana Chakra, which is the centre of Ap and Vam Bija, has Vishnu as its presiding deity. This Vishnu, depicted by the Bija Va is void of Prakriti. He is Purusha. E the fourth vowel is the Bija denoting Maya. Here Maya is Prakriti, in its latent and unmanifested form without a separate existence. It is one with Vishnu, the supreme deity. Therefore VE is a blend of Vishnu and Maya or Purusha and Prakriti. To make the combination complete and perfect a Bindu is added to form VEM. The next letter is KA. KA represents Brahma. "Ko Brahmani". The Bija Ka is said to be Vishama in Bija Nighantu. It is an odd. Brahma is an odd. "Ekameva Adwithiyam Brahma". Ka is also a Kama Bija, indicating evolution and action, which are the qualities of Brahma. Therefore it is concluded that the letter KA indicates Brahma. The third letter TA is Uchchatana Bija. It is a sign of extermination, a quality of Siva. Hence TA denotes

Siva. The whole word VENKATA therefore depicts the triune nature of the One, which is the Parama Bindu of Sahasrara Chakra. Hypothetically, Parama Bindu is in triangular form. The apex is represented by Brahma, and the two angles at the base are represented by Vishnu and Siva. These three put together is called Parama Bindu, which represents Jiva or god. Hence the word VENKATA denotes unity in trinity. This word represents the mastership or lordship of the three Bindus in one Parama Bindu, from which version we infer the meaning of the word Tripati. Tripati and Vemkata are synonyms, which signify the hill, but not the deity. The deity proper is called Vemkatesa or Tripatinadha, i.e. the Lord of the hill, Venkata or Tripati.

The Three Bindus of the Parama Bindu are taken to be three Gunas also. They are Sattwa, Rajas and Thamas. They are represented by the three component letters of the Pranava, i.e. A. U. M. A stands for Brahma as it is an Atma Bija; U stands for Vishnu as it is a Bija of tone and also a Bija of Varuna or Jalada; and M stands for Siva as it is a Kalarudra Bija. These three Gunas are called Trivarga in a single word, which is also meant by a single letter SRI. The three Bindus of the one Parama Bindu are denoted by SRI and the hill which is signified by this Trivarga is called

Sri Saila. Trivarga is identical with Trimoorthis. The words Venkatesa, Tripathinadha and Srinivasa are synonyms. They carry the same meaning. Hence the Gayathri of Venkatesa Ashtakshari Mantra is read thus :

वेङ्कटेशाय विद्महे त्रिपतिनाथाय धीमहि
तन्नः श्रीनिवासः प्रचोदयात् ॥

Mangalam Shooyath.

