

Classic Poetry Series

**Sri Annamacharya**  
**- poems -**

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# Sri Annamacharya(9 May 1408 – 23 February 1503)

Sri Tallapaka Annamacharya (Telugu: తల్లపాకా అన్నామాచార్యులు) (or Annamayya) was the official songmaster of the Tirumala Venkateswara Temple, and a Telugu composer who composed around 36000 keertana songs, many of which were in praise of Venkateswara, the presiding deity of the temple. The musical form of the keertana songs that he composed have strongly influenced the structure of Carnatic music compositions, which are still popular among Carnatic music concert artists. Sri Annamacharya is remembered for his saintly life, and is honoured as a great Bhakta/devotee of Bhagwaan Govinda by devotees and saintly singers.

He is believed to have been the reincarnation of the precious sword of lord Vishnu ( Nandakam ). He is widely regarded as the Pada-kavita Pitaamaha (grand old man of song-writing) of the Telugu language.

## <b>Personal Life</b>

Annamacharya was born on Vaisakha Suddha Pournami in the year Sarwadhari in Tallapaka, a village in current day Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh, India. His wife, Thimmakka, had written Subhadra Kalyanam, and is considered the first female poet in Telugu literature. He was born into a Telugu Brahmin family. Their son, Pedda Tirumalacharya, and grandson, Tallapaka Chinnayya, were also composers and poets. The Tallapaka compositions are considered to have dominated and influenced the structure of Carnatic music compositions. Annamacharya lived for 94 years until Phalguna Bahula Dwadasi (12th day after full moon) in the year Dhundhubhi.

## <b>Literary Career</b>

Annamacharya is said to have composed as many as 36,000 sankeertanas (songs) on Bhagwaan Govinda Venkateswara, of which only about 12,000 are available today.

Annamacharya considered his compositions as floral offerings to Bhagwaan Govinda. In the poems, he praises Venkateswara, describes his love for him, argues and quarrels with the Lord, confesses the devotee's failures and apprehensions, and surrenders himself to Venkateshwara. His songs are classified into the Adhyaatma (spiritual) and Sringaara (romantic) sankeertanas genres. His songs in the "Sringaara" genre worship Bhagwaan Venkateswara by describing his amorous and romantic adventures of Venkateswara and Alamel

Manga, while others describe the Bhakti of his devotees.

In his later keertanas, he espouses subjects such as morality, dharma and righteousness. He was one of the first few who opposed the social stigma towards the untouchable castes in his era, with his sankeertanas explaining that the relationship between God and human is the same irrespective of the latter's color, caste and financial status, in beautiful yet powerful usage of words in his songs "Brahmam Okkate Parabrahmam Okkate..." and "E Kulajudainanemi Evvadainanemi..."

His choice of words gives a mellifluous tone to his songs, charming the listener. His prodigious literary career earned him a place among the all-time greats of Telugu literature.

According to legend, Annamacharya met up with [Purandara Dasa](http://www.poemhunter.com/purandara-dasa/) and both of them composed music and lyrics. They met when Annamacharya had invited [Purandara Dasa](http://www.poemhunter.com/purandara-dasa/) to join him in singing praise.

While enjoying popularity in his own days, his compositions were forgotten for over three centuries for some inexplicable reason. Mentioned in 1849 they were later found engraved on copper plates, hidden for centuries inside the Sri Venkateswara temple at Tirumala, just opposite the Hundi, concealed in a very small room. An English translation of 150 of these verses was published in 2005.

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, also known as TTD, has been endeavouring to preserve the rich heritage of his compositions. In the year 1950, The State Government of Andhra Pradesh created a committee and appointed Dr M Balamuralikrishna as its head. He set music to over 800 compositions of Sri Annamacharya and are still popular among the devotees. He has been the Asthana Gayaka of the Tirumala temple at Tirupati since two decades. He is regarded as a legend in rendering devotional music in classical style, especially the Annamacharya sankirtanas. He is also an acclaimed poet, singer, and a musicologist.

Dr. Shobha Raju is the first recipient of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams scholarship in 1976 to study and set a trend for the propagation of Annamacharya's compositions, and was also chosen as the first exclusive artiste for the propagation of Annamacharya's compositions in 1978. Her first audio album, "Venkateswara Geeta Malika" is globally popular among Telugu community. She is the founder of Annamacharya Bhavana Vahini (ABV) in 1983,

which is located in Hyderabad, India. She has been awarded Padma Sri by Government of India, in 2010 in recognition of her efforts to promote Annamayya Compositions.

# Song - 1

Sri Annamacharya

# Song - 2

Sri Annamacharya

# Song - 3

Sri Annamacharya

# Song - 4

Sri Annamacharya



# Song - 5

Sri Annamacharya

# Song - 6

Sri Annamacharya