

Temple Agamas

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1. Vaikhanasa, Pancharatra and Chattada Srivaishnava
2. Saiva and Shakta Agamas and sects
3. Temple worship: terms, utsavams and rituals

1 Vaikhanasa, Pancharatra and Chattada Srivaishnava

The Vaishnava Agamas come in two traditions, Vaikhanasa (the oldest, Vedic, hereditary, the rule at Tirumala, known for the Panchabera) and Pancharatra (Tantric, initiation-based, the five samskaras, popularised by Ramanuja), while the Chattada Srivaishnavas are not a third Agama but a group of Ramanuja's followers who serve in Vishnu temples; EO Paper II asks one fact per item.

Core facts

- **Agama:** "that which has come down"; texts that lay down **temple worship**, building of temples, making of idols (**Pratima lakshana**) and festivals. Three families: **Vaishnava, Shaiva, Shakta**.
- **Four parts (padas)** of an Agama: **Jnana** (Vidya), **Yoga, Kriya** (building and consecration), **Charya** (daily worship and conduct).
- **Vaikhanasa** and **Pancharatra** are the two **Vaishnava Agamas**; they reflect the **Vedic** and the **Tantric** path respectively. (**Raurava** is a **Shaiva** Agama.)
- **Vaikhanasa:**
 - The **most ancient** Vaishnava Agama and the **closest to the Vedas**; gentle (saumya) in nature.
 - **Sri Mahavishnu** taught it to sage **Vikhanas** (Vikhanasa Maharshi), who in this tradition is Vishnu's **mind-born son** (manasa putra).
 - His four disciples and their samhitas: **Marichi, Atri, Bhrigu, Kashyapa**.
 - **Vaikhanasa Kalpasutra: 32 prashnas** (questions/sections).
 - Vedic: they follow the **Krishna Yajurveda** (Taittiriya) and worship with Vedic mantras. They hold that the **fruit of a yajna** is gained through **Vaishnava worship (archana)** of the image.
 - **Garbha (Garbhastha) Vaishnavas** = Vaishnavas **by birth**: the **Vishnubali** rite in the **eighth month** of pregnancy makes the child a Vaishnava before birth, so no separate diksha (**chakrankanam**) is needed.
 - Archakas are **hereditary**, from Vaikhanasa families.
 - Mark on the forehead: **Urdhva pundram**, a white namam with **Sri churnam** (saffron-red line) in the middle.
 - **Panchabera**: Vishnu is worshipped in **five idols**: **Dhruva, Kautuka, Snapana, Utsava, Bali**.
 - **Five forms of Vishnu**: **Vishnu, Purusha, Satya, Achyuta, Aniruddha**.
 - **Tirumala** Venkateswara temple, called **Bhuloka Vaikuntham**, follows **Vaikhanasa** (asked in all three papers).
- **Pancharatra:**
 - Taught by **Sriman Narayana** himself; the name is read as "five nights".
 - Account 1: Vishnu taught it over **five nights** to **Ananta (Adisesha), Garuda, Vishvaksena, Brahma and Rudra**.
 - Account 2: when the demon **Hayavadana** stole the Vedas, the gods worshipped Vishnu for five nights **without Vedic mantras**; hence it is called a **Tantric Agama**.
 - Main acharyas: **Narada** and **Ramanuja**.

- First described in the **Narayaniya** section of the Mahabharata's **Shanti Parva**.
- Traditionally **108 samhitas**; the **Ratnatraya** (three gems): **Satvata, Pauskara, Jayakhya**.
- Other samhitas: **Ahirbudhnya, Aniruddha, Parameshvara** (Srirangam), **Ishvara** (Melkote), **Padma, Lakshmi Tantra**.
- **Five samskaras (Pancha samskara)**: **Tapa, Pundra, Nama, Mantra, Yaga**. Only after this diksha (**chakrankanam**) may one worship.
- **Ramanuja** (Vishishtadvaita) made it popular; **Yamunacharya** defended its authority in the **Agama Pramanya**.
- Five forms of God: **Para, Vyuha, Vibhava, Antaryami, Archa**.
- Temples: **Srirangam, Yadagirigutta, Bhadrachalam, Tiruchanur (Padmavathi), Kanchi Varadaraja**.
- **Chattada Srivaishnava** (Satani, Satana):
 - **Not an Agama tradition**: a group among **Ramanuja's followers**; found in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.
 - Follow **Vishishtadvaita** (asked 2023); value **bhakti** alone and attach **no importance to caste**.
 - Serve in Vishnu temples, often **hereditarily**, as **archakas**, garland makers and reciters of the **Divya Prabandham**.
 - Four sub-sects: **Ekakshari, Chaturakshari, Ashtakshari, Kulashekhara**.
- **Terms asked**:
 - **Bera** = vighraha (idol).
 - **Avabhritha** = the bath at the **end** of a festival.
 - **Pratima lakshana** (the rules for the form of an idol) is found in the **Agamas**.

Explained

Vaikhanasa in detail

- **Vikhanas**: the Vaikhanasa texts make him Vishnu's mind-born son who received the worship code directly from Narayana; some later accounts identify him with Brahma. For the exam: taught by **Mahavishnu**, mind-born son of **Vishnu**.
- **The four rishis' works**:
 - **Marichi: Vimanarchana Kalpa** (Marichi Samhita), the best-known manual on temples, idols and festivals.
 - **Atri: Samurtarchanadhikarana** (worship with an image).
 - **Bhrigu**: a group of *adhikaras* (Khila, Kriya, Prakirna and others).
 - **Kashyapa: Jnana Kanda**.
- **Vaikhanasa Kalpasutra** (32 prashnas): Sruta, Grihya and Dharma sutras, with a Pravara section; the base of Vaikhanasa domestic and Vedic rites.
- **Two kinds of worship**:
 - **Amurta**: in the sacred fire, without an image.
 - **Samurta archana**: with an image.

- Vaikhanasas treat image worship as the higher form.

- **Five forms (murtis) of Vishnu:**

Form	Stands for
Vishnu	The all-pervading Lord (sarvantaryami)
Purusha	The principle of life
Satya	The unchanging aspect of the divine
Achyuta	The one who never falls or changes
Aniruddha	The one who never diminishes

- Vaikhanasa worships only **Vishnu in his Vedic form**; it does not centre on Vasudeva or Narayana as Pancharatra does. Do not confuse these five with the Pancharatra **vyuhas** (Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna, Aniruddha).

The Panchabera (five idols)

Bera	Role	At Tirumala
Dhruva	Main immovable idol in the sanctum	Mula Virat (Sri Venkateswara)
Kautuka	Smaller idol for daily worship (nityarchana)	Bhoga Srinivasa
Snapana	Takes the abhisheka (bathing)	Ugra Srinivasa
Utsava	Goes out in processions and festivals	Malayappa Swamy
Bali	Offers bali (food) to the parivara devatas	Koluvu Srinivasa

- The power of the fixed Dhruva bera is held to show itself in the other four, each for one purpose.
- **Bhoga Srinivasa** at Tirumala was given by the Pallava queen **Samavai** (Perundevi) in **966 CE**, recorded in an inscription.

Pancharatra in detail

- **Five samskaras** (the ceremony is **Samashrayanam**, given by an acharya):

Samskara	What it is
Tapa	Branding of the conch and discus (shankha, chakra) on the shoulders
Pundra	Wearing the urdhva pundra (namam) on the forehead and body
Nama	A new dasya name (servant of the Lord)
Mantra	Teaching of the sacred mantras (Ashtakshari, Dvaya, Charama shloka)
Yaga	Instruction in worship (ijya) of the Lord

- **Five forms of God:**

Form	Meaning
Para	The formless, eternal Supreme
Vyuha	Four forms for creation, sustenance and dissolution: Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna, Aniruddha
Vibhava	The avatars, such as Rama and Krishna
Antaryami	God dwelling in the heart of every being
Archa	The consecrated image in the temple

- **Five daily duties (Pancha kala): Abhigamana, Upadana, Ijya, Svadhyaya, Yoga.**
- **Initiation (diksha)** decides who may worship; Pancharatra was open to devotees of all castes.
- **Tantra** elements (mantra, yantra, mudra) are especially clear in Pancharatra.
- **Temples:** Srirangam, Melkote, **Kanchi Varadaraja**, **Yadagirigutta** Narasimha, **Bhadrachalam** Sitaramachandra Swamy, **Tiruchanur** Padmavathi Ammavaru and many Divya Desams.
- **Pancharatra inside Tirumala:** although Tirumala is Vaikhanasa, the **Snapana Tirumanjanam** there follows Pancharatra; at nearby **Tiruchanur** the worship (including the nivedana) is Pancharatra.

Vaikhanasa and Pancharatra side by side

Point	Vaikhanasa	Pancharatra
Basis	Vedic (Krishna Yajurveda); yajna	Tantric; mantra and tantra
Taught	By Vishnu to Vikhanas	By Narayana over five nights
Acharyas	Vikhanas; Atri, Bhrigu, Marichi, Kashyapa	Narada, Ramanuja
Five forms	Vishnu, Purusha, Satya, Achyuta, Aniruddha	Para, Vyuha, Vibhava, Antaryami, Archa
Becoming a Vaishnava	By birth (garbhastha); no chakrankanam	Only after diksha (chakrankanam)
Archakas	Hereditary Vaikhanasa families	Initiated Srivaishnavas
Famous seat	Tirumala	Srirangam

Chattada Srivaishnava

- **Chattada** (Satani, Sattada) is read as "one who does not wear" the sacred thread and tuft: most do **not wear the yajnopavitam**. They are mainly non-Brahmin, with some Brahmin families.
- Tradition says **Ramanuja** gave Vaishnava initiation to devotees of every community; the Chattadas come from that movement and keep his rule that **bhakti, not caste**, matters.
- **Four sub-sects:**

Sub-sect	Path to moksha
Ekakshari	Japa of the one syllable Om
Chaturakshari	Japa of the four syllables Ra-ma-nu-ja

Sub-sect	Path to moksha
Ashtakshari	Japa of the eight-syllable Om Namo Narayanaya
Kulashekhara	Wear the sacred thread; claim descent from Kulashekhara Alwar

- In Andhra they serve as **archakas in many Vishnu temples**, make the **garlands**, recite the **Alwars' Divya Prabandham** and lead the **namasankirtana**. The syllabus names them beside Vaikhanasa and Pancharatra, but they are a **temple-service group**, not a separate Agama.

AP angle

- Tirumala**: Vaikhanasa worship by **hereditary archaka families**; the daily order runs **Suprabhatam, Thomala Seva, Archana, Naivedyam, Ekanta Seva**; **Swami Pushkarini** is used for the Chakrasnanam (Avabhritha) of the Brahmotsavam.
- Tirupati Govindaraja Swamy** temple also follows **Vaikhanasa**; **Tiruchanur Padmavathi, Bhadrachalam** and **Yadagirigutta** (Telangana) follow **Pancharatra**.
- Most village **Vishnu temples in Andhra** follow Vaikhanasa; the big **Srivaishnava** centres follow Pancharatra.
- Chattada Srivaishnava archakas** serve in many smaller Vishnu temples under the Endowments department.
- The **SV Vedic University** and TTD publish the Vaikhanasa and Pancharatra texts and train archakas.

Common traps

✗ "Tirumala follows Pancharatra." ✓ **Vaikhanasa** (only some rites, like the Snapana Tirumanjanam, follow Pancharatra).

✗ "Panchabera belongs to Pancharatra." ✓ It is the mark of **Vaikhanasa**.

✗ "Tapa-Pundra-Nama-Mantra-Yaga is Vaikhanasa." ✓ These five samskaras are **Pancharatra**.

✗ "Satya is a Pancharatra form; Vasudeva is a Vaikhanasa form." ✓ **Satya** is one of Vaikhanasa's five forms of Vishnu; **Vasudeva** is a Pancharatra vyuha.

✗ "Satvata or Aniruddha Samhita is Vaikhanasa." ✓ Both are **Pancharatra** samhitas.

✗ "Raurava Agama is Vaishnava." ✓ **Raurava** is a **Shaiva** Agama.

✗ "Shankaracharya (or Madhva) made Pancharatra popular." ✓ **Ramanujacharya**.

✗ "Chattada Srivaishnavam is a third Vaishnava Agama." ✓ It is **not an Agama**; it is a group of Ramanuja's followers. They follow **Vishishtadvaita**, not Advaita.

✗ "Bali bera is the daily-worship idol." ✓ That is the **Kautuka** bera; the Bali bera offers bali to the parivara devatas.

✗ "Vaikhanasa Kalpasutra has 18 (or 48) prashnas." ✓ **32.**

Quick revision

- Vaishnava Agamas: Vaikhanasa (Vedic, oldest) and Pancharatra (Tantric); Raurava is Shaiva.
- Vaikhanasa: Vishnu → Vikhanas (Vishnu's manasa putra) → Marichi, Atri, Bhrigu, Kashyapa; Kalpasutra 32 prashnas.
- Vaikhanasa: garbhastha Vaishnavas (Vishnubali, 8th month), no chakrankanam, hereditary archakas, Tirumala = Bhuloka Vaikuntham.
- Panchabera: Dhruva (moola), Kautuka (daily), Snapana (abhisheka), Utsava (procession), Bali (parivara bali).
- Vaikhanasa five forms: Vishnu, Purusha, Satya, Achyuta, Aniruddha.
- Pancharatra: five nights to Ananta, Garuda, Vishvaksena, Brahma, Rudra; Hayavadana story; Narada and Ramanuja.
- Pancharatra five forms: Para, Vyuha, Vibhava, Antaryami, Archa; Ratnatraya = Satvata, Pauskara, Jayakhya.
- Pancha samskara (Samashrayanam): Tapa, Pundra, Nama, Mantra, Yaga.
- Pancharatra temples: Srirangam, Yadagirigutta, Bhadrachalam, Tiruchanur, Kanchi Varadaraja.
- Chattada (Satani): Ramanuja's followers, not an Agama; Ekakshari, Chaturakshari, Ashtakshari, Kulashekhara.

2 Saiva and Shakta Agamas and sects

Saiva temples follow the 28 Saiva Agamas (10 Shivabheda + 18 Rudrabheda); the syllabus groups Saivism into Smarta (Advaita, Panchayatana), Adi Saiva (hereditary temple priests born of Siva's five faces), Veera Saiva and its Jangamas (Basava, ishtalinga) and Kapalika (skull-bearing ascetics), with Aradhya, Pashupata and Kalamukha beside them, while Shakteya worship of the Goddess follows the 64 Tantras.

Core facts

Agamas in general.

- Agamas are temple and worship scriptures, believed to be revealed by the deity. Three families: **Vaishnava** (Vaikhanasa, Pancharatra), **Saiva**, **Shakta** (Tantras).
- An Agama has **four padas** (parts): **Jnana / Vidya** (doctrine), **Yoga** (meditation), **Kriya** (temple building, images, rituals), **Charya** (conduct and worship).
- **Pratima-lakshana** (rules for making images), temple building and festivals come from the Agamas, not from the Vedas.

The 28 Saiva Agamas (Shaivagama, Siddhanta Agamas).

- Said to be taught by Sadashiva from his **five faces** (Sadyojata, Vamadeva, Aghora, Tatpurusha, Ishana).
- **10 Shivabheda** (Shaiva) Agamas: **Kamika**, Yogaja, Chintya, Karana, Ajita, Dipta, Sukshma, Sahasra, Amshumat, Suprabheda.
- **18 Rudrabheda** (Raudra) Agamas: Vijaya, Nishvasa, Svayambhuva, Anala (Agneya), Vira, **Raurava**, Makuta, Vimala, Chandrajnana, Mukhabimba, Prodigita, Lalita, Siddha, Santana, Sarvokta, Parameshvara, Kirana, **Vatula**.
- Each has subsidiary **Upagamas** (traditionally about 207 in all).
- **Kamika** is the first and the most used in temple rituals. **Raurava** is a Saiva Agama (asked 2026). **Vatula** is the Agama the Veerashaivas cite most.

The sects named in the syllabus.

Sect	Key idea	Founder / text	Sign or term
Smarta	Advaita ; all deities are forms of one Parabrahma	Adi Sankara (Shanmata-sthapanacharya)	Panchayatana puja
Adi Saiva	Born from Siva's five faces ; sole right to Agamic rites	Kamika and other Agamas	Sivacharya , Gurukkal
Veera Saiva	Siva alone; linga on the body; bhakti over caste	Basava (Basaveshwara), 12th c.	Ishtalinga , Lingayat
Jangama	Priestly class of the Veerashaivas, "moving linga"	Veerashaiva tradition	Jangama, Ayya

Sect	Key idea	Founder / text	Sign or term
Kapalika	Extreme ascetics of Bhairava	Mahavrata	Kapala = skull (begging bowl)
Pashupata	Oldest named Saiva order; Siva as Pashupati	Lakulisha ; Pashupata Sutra	Pashu, pati, pasha
Kalamukha	Offshoot of Lakulisha-Pashupata; ran temples and mathas	Kalyani Chalukya period	Balligavi, Srisailam
Kashmir Shaiva	Non-dual Shaivism; recognition of Siva	Vasugupta, Abhinavagupta	Pratyabhijna
Shakteya	Supreme Goddess (Shakti)	Tantras; Devi Bhagavatam	Sri Chakra, Shakti Peetha

Smarta and Panchayatana.

- Smartas follow Sankara's **Advaita Vedanta**; no one deity is supreme, all are forms of one **Parabrahma**.
- **Panchayatana** puja: five deities on one pitha: **Siva, Vishnu, Ambika (Devi), Ganesha, Surya**. The worshipper's chosen deity (**ishta-daivam**) sits **in the centre**, the other four at the corners.
- **Ayyappa, Bhairava, Kartikeya (Skanda), Hanuman** are **not** in the Panchayatana (asked 2023: Ayyappa).
- **Shanmata** (six paths) adds **Kumara / Skanda**: Shaiva, Vaishnava, Shakta, Ganapatya, Saura, Kaumara.

Adi Saiva.

- "The very first Saivam"; the root priestly line of Siva temples.
- The **Kamika** and other Agamas say Adi Saivas were born not from Brahma but from the **five faces of Paramashiva**; so only they may do Agamic pujas and pratishtas in Siva temples.

Veera Saiva (Lingayat).

- **Basava**: minister of the Kalachuri king **Bijjala** at **Kalyana**; gave the faith wide publicity in the **12th century** (the tradition itself is older); wrote **vachanas** in Kannada; built the **Anubhava Mantapa** (presided by **Allama Prabhu**). Other sharanas: **Akka Mahadevi**, Channabasava.
- Doctrine: **Shakti Vishishtadvaita**; supreme text: **Siddhanta Shikhamani**.
- Rejects **caste** and Vedic ritualism (karmakanda); gives primacy to **bhakti**.
- **Ishtalinga**: small linga always worn on the body, worshipped on the palm.
- **Panchacharyas** (five peethas): **Revanaradhya** (Rambhapuri), **Marularadhya** (Ujjaini), **Ekoramaradhya** (Kedarnath), **Panditaradhya** (Srisailam), **Vishwaradhya** (Kashi).

Pashupata and Kalamukha.

- **Pashupata**: Siva as **Pashupati**; **Lakulisha** systematised it; text **Pashupata Sutra**, with **Kaundinya's Panchartha Bhashya**.
- **Kalamukha**: closely related to **Lakulisha-Pashupata**; strong in Karnataka and the Deccan under the **Kalyani Chalukyas**; centres **Srisailam** and **Balligavi**.

Shakteya.

- Texts: the Tantras (traditionally **64**), **Devi Bhagavatam**, **Kalika Purana**, Devi Upanishads, **Devi Mahatmya** (Durga Saptashati, 700 verses, in the **Markandeya Purana**), **Lalita Sahasranama** (in the **Brahmanda Purana**), **Saundarya Lahari** (attributed to Sankara).
- **Sri Kula**: South India; **Lalita Tripurasundari**; **Sri Chakra / Sri Meru**; the upasana is **Srividyā**.
- **Kali Kula**: North and East India; fierce forms **Kali**, **Chandi**, **Durga**; Tantric rites.
- **Navadurgas** = 9, **Saptamatrikas** = 7, **Ashtadasha Shakti Peethas** = 18.
- **Shakti Peethas**: places where parts of **Sati**'s body fell after **Daksha**'s yajna; **51** in the common count (asked 2023), **18** in the Ashtadasha list.
- **Gramadevatas** (village guardian goddesses, local forms of Shakti): **Poleramma**, **Maisamma**, **Yellamma**, **Peddamma**.

Explained

Saiva Siddhanta, the doctrine behind the 28 Agamas.

- Three realities: **Pati** (Lord Siva), **Pashu** (the bound soul), **Pasha** (the bonds).
- Three bonds (**malas**): **Anava** (sense of a limited self), **Karma**, **Maya**.
- Release comes by Siva's grace through **diksha** (initiation): samaya, vishesha, nirvana, and **acharya-abhisheka** for those who become priests.
- In Tamil country the Siddhanta also draws on the hymns of the **63 Nayanars** (Tirumurai; their lives in the **Periya Puranam** of Sekkizhar).

Panchayatana: stones and elements.

- Natural stones used: **Bana linga** (Narmada) for Siva, **Saligrama** (Gandaki) for Vishnu, **Svarnamukhi** stone for Ambika, **Shonabhadra** stone for Ganesha, **Sphatika** (crystal) for Surya.
- The five are also read as lords of the five elements, so the worshipper sees God in the elements within.
The standard verse pairs:

Deity	Element
Vishnu	Akasha (space)
Ambika	Agni (fire)
Surya	Vayu (air)
Siva	Prithvi (earth)
Ganesha	Jala (water)

Adi Saivas.

- Said to descend from five gotra-rishis linked with Siva's five faces (Kaushika, Kashyapa, Bharadvaja, Gautama, Agastya).
- Only an initiated Adi Saiva **Sivacharya** may touch the main linga and do the inner worship; the belief is that worship by others brings calamity. Title: Sivachariyar / Gurukkal.

- The Adi Saiva uses **Sanskrit Agamic** liturgy; the Veerashaiva Jangama uses his own rites and does not need a temple.

Aradhya Saivas: the four triads.

- A Saiva line strong in Andhra, close to the Veerashaivas but keeping Vedic rites. Twelve teachers are grouped in four triads:

Triad	Members
Siddha trayam	Revana Siddha, Marula Siddha, Ekorama Siddha
Acharya trayam	Srikanthacharya, Haradattacharya, Bhaskaracharya
Aradhya trayam	Udbhataradhya, Vemanaradhya, Vishwaradhya (also called Kotipalli Aradhya)
Pandita trayam	Sripati Pandita, Sivalenka Manchana , Mallikarjuna Panditaradhya

- The **Pandita trayam** spread Aradhya Saivism in Andhra. **Palkuriki Somanatha** told Mallikarjuna Panditaradhya's life in the **Panditaradhya Charitra**.

Veerashaiva practice.

- **Ishtalinga** contrasts with the **sthavara linga** (fixed in a temple) and the **jangama** (the living, moving teacher). Veerashaivas rank the wandering devotee above the fixed temple linga.
- **Jangamas** are the community's gurus and priests: they give diksha and teach Siva dharma.
- **Ashtavarana** (eight shields): guru, linga, jangama, padodaka, prasada, vibhuti, rudraksha, mantra.
- **Panchachara** (five codes): Lingachara, Sadachara, Shivachara, Bharityachara, Ganachara.
- **Shatsthala** (six stages): bhakta, mahesha, prasadi, pranalingi, sharana, aikya.

The five Panchacharya peethas.

Acharya	Peetha	Place
Revanaradhya (Renuka)	Veera Simhasana	Rambhapuri (Balehonnur)
Marularadhya (Daruka)	Saddharma Simhasana	Ujjaini (Karnataka)
Ekoramaradhya	Vairagya Simhasana	Kedarnath
Panditaradhya	Surya Simhasana	Srisaillam
Vishwaradhya	Jnana Simhasana	Kashi

Old ascetic orders.

- Ramanuja's **Sri Bhashya** names four Saiva schools that he criticises: **Kapala (Kapalika)**, **Kalamukha**, **Pashupata**, **Shaiva**.
- **Kapalika**: used a human **skull as a begging bowl** (kapala) and carried a skull-topped staff (**khatvanga**); lived in cremation grounds, smeared ash, sometimes went naked, offered liquor and meat, and worshipped **Bhairava**; the vow was the **Mahavrata**. Non-Vedic and now almost extinct. Bhavabhuti's play **Malatimadhava** shows a Kapalika.
- **Pashupata**: **Pati** = the Lord, **Pashu** = the **jiva held in bondage**; by Pashupati's grace the jiva, freed of ignorance and karma, reaches the end of sorrow (**dukhanta**). Practices: wearing ash, japa, dhyana,

yoga, tapas. **Lakulisha** (Nakulisha), held by some Puranas to be an avatar of Siva, had four disciples:

Kushika, Gargya, Kaurushya, Maitreya. Kaundinya wrote the commentary, not a disciple.

- **Kalamukha**: "black-faced"; seen in inscriptions from about the **8th century**; grew under the **Kalyani Chalukyas**; its acharyas ran temples, mathas and schools, learned in the Vedas, Agamas and Nyaya; later merged into other Saiva groups.
- The **Aghoris** of Varanasi are seen as later heirs of the Kapalika style.

Kashmir Shaivism.

- **Vasugupta** received the **Shiva Sutras**; **Somananda** wrote Shivadrishti; **Utpaladeva** wrote the Ishvara-pratyabhijna-karika; **Abhinavagupta** wrote the **Tantraloka**; **Kshemaraja** wrote the Pratyabhijnahridayam.
- **Pratyabhijna** = "recognition": the soul recognises that it is Siva. Non-dual (Trika). Asked 2023: Pratyabhijna Shastra belongs to Kashmir Shaivism.

Shakteya worship.

- Shakti is the cause of creation, sustenance and dissolution; Brahma, Vishnu and Siva act only through her power.
- **Panchamakara** (the five Ms of Vamachara): madya, mamsa, matsya, mudra, maithuna; **Dakshinachara** (right-hand path) replaces them with symbols.
- **Saptamatrikas** (seven mothers, the powers of the gods): **Brahmi, Maheshwari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrani, Chamunda**.
- **Navadurgas**, in the order of the **Devi Kavacham**, one each day of Navaratri from **Prathipada to Navami**:

Day	Form	Mark
1	Shailaputri	Daughter of the mountain (Himavan); rides a bull; trident and lotus
2	Brahmacharini	Maiden doing tapas; japamala and kamandalu
3	Chandraghanta	Bell-shaped half-moon on her forehead; rides a lion
4	Kushmanda	Made the universe with her smile; eight arms, so Ashtabhuja Devi
5	Skandamata	Mother of Skanda, holds him on her lap
6	Katyayani	Daughter of sage Katyayana; slayer of Mahishasura; the gopis' Katyayani vratam (Bhagavata Purana)
7	Kalaratri	Fiercest form; rides a donkey ; also Shubhankari as she still grants good
8	Mahagauri	Pure white form after tapas; rides a bull
9	Siddhidhatri	Giver of the Ashta Siddhis (Anima, Mahima, Garima, Laghima, Prapti, Prakamya, Ishitva, Vashitva)

- **Navaratri / Dasara** is the main Shakta festival; the Devi Mahatmya tells of Mahishasura, Chanda-Munda, Shumbha-Nishumbha and Raktabija.
- **Shakti Peetha story**: Sati gave up her body at Daksha's yajna; as Siva wandered with it, **Vishnu's Sudarshana chakra** cut it, and each place where a part fell became a peetha.

- **Gramadevatas** are worshipped outside the Agamic system with jataras, often by non-brahmin priests.

AP angle

- **Srisailam** (Mallikarjuna and Bhramaramba) is both a **Jyotirlinga** and a **Shakti Peetha**, the seat of the Veerashaiva **Surya Simhasana** peetha (Panditaradhya), and an old **Kalamukha** centre.
- **Telugu Saiva poets**: **Palkuriki Somanatha** wrote the **Basava Puranam** and **Panditaradhya Charitra** in Telugu dvipada metre; **Mallikarjuna Panditaradhya** is one of the three Telugu Shaiva poets (with Somanatha and Nannechoda) and of the Aradhya **Pandita trayam**.
- **Ashtadasha Shakti Peethas in the Telugu states**: **Srisailam** (Bhramaramba), **Draksharama** (Manikyamba), **Pithapuram** (Puruhutika), and **Alampur** (Jogulamba, now Telangana).
- **Svarnamukhi** stone for Ambika in Panchayatana is named after the Svarnamukhi river, which flows past **Srikalahasti**.
- **Gramadevatas** of AP: **Gangamma** (Tirupati jatara), **Poleramma**, **Peddamma**, **Kanaka Mahalakshmi** (Visakhapatnam), **Paiditali** (Vizianagaram, Sirimanu utsavam).
- **Vijayawada Kanaka Durga** on Indrakeeladri is the main Shakta temple of AP; its biggest festival is the Dasara Navaratri.

Common traps

X "There are 18 Saiva Agamas." ✓ **28** (10 Shivabheda + 18 Rudrabheda); 18 is only the Rudrabheda group.

X "Rauravagama is a Vaishnava Agama." ✓ It is a **Saiva** Agama.

X "Panchayatana includes Ayyappa (or Bhairava, or Kartikeya)." ✓ Siva, Vishnu, **Ambika**, Ganesha, **Surya**. Kumara comes only in **Shanmata**.

X "In Panchayatana Siva is akasha and Vishnu is jala" (some guidebooks). ✓ The standard verse gives **Vishnu-akasha, Ambika-agni, Surya-vayu, Siva-prithvi, Ganesha-jala**.

X "Revanaradhya's peetha is at Kolanupaka; Ujjaini is Ujjain (MP)." ✓ The Veera Simhasana peetha is at **Rambhapuri** (Kolanupaka is where Renuka emerged); Ujjaini is in **Karnataka**.

X "Kapala means face (or hand)." ✓ Kapala = **skull**, used as a begging bowl.

X "Kaundinya was Lakulisha's disciple." ✓ Disciples: **Kushika, Gargya, Kaurushya, Maitreya**; Kaundinya wrote the **Panchartha Bhashya**.

X "Basava propagated Advaita / Dvaita; Basava was minister of the Kakatiyas." ✓ **Veera Shaivism** (Shakti Vishishtadvaita); minister of **Bijjala** of **Kalyana**.

X "Kushmanda is a Saptamatrika." ✓ She is a **Navadurga**; the Saptamatrikas are Brahmi, Maheshwari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrani, Chamunda.

✗ "Lalita Sahasranama is in the Markandeya Purana." ✓ It is in the **Brahmanda Purana**; the **Devi Mahatmya** is in the Markandeya Purana.

Quick revision

- Saiva Agamas 28 = 10 Shivabheda (Kamika first) + 18 Rudrabheda (Raurava, Vatula).
- Smarta → Sankara, Advaita → Panchayatana: Siva, Vishnu, Ambika, Ganesha, Surya; ishta-daivam in the centre.
- Adi Saiva = born of Siva's five faces (Kamika); sole right to Agamic rites.
- Aradhya triads: Siddha, Acharya, Aradhya, Pandita; Pandita trayam = Sripati, Sivalenka Manchana, Mallikarjuna Panditaradhya.
- Veera Saiva: Basava (12th c.), Shakti Vishishtadvaita, Siddhanta Shikhamani, ishtalinga; Jangama = moving linga, priest.
- Panchacharyas: Rambhapuri, Ujjaini, Kedarnath, Srisailam (Surya Simhasana), Kashi.
- Kapalika: skull bowl, Bhairava; Pashupata: Lakulisha, Pashupata Sutra, Kaundinya's Panchartha Bhashya.
- Kalamukha: Lakulisha-Pashupata branch, Kalyani Chalukyas, Balligavi and Srisailam.
- Shakteya: 64 Tantras, Kalika Purana; Sri Kula (South, Lalita, Sri Chakra), Kali Kula (North and East).
- Navadurgas 9 (Shailaputri first, Kalaratri on a donkey, Siddhidhatri last); Saptamatrikas 7; Ashtadasha Peethas 18.

3 Temple worship: terms, utsavams and rituals

The Agamas turn the formless God of the Vedas (Nigamas) into a God worshipped in an image, and give temple worship its vocabulary: four padas, bera (the image, in five kinds), Pratima-lakshana (rules for making it), daily upacharas, the Brahmotsavam that runs from Ankurarpana and Dhvajarohanam to Avabhrittha (the closing bath) and Dhvajavarohanam, and Samprokshana (re-consecration) to renew a temple.

Core facts

What the Agamas are.

- **Agama sastra**: authoritative texts that lay down **temple building, idol installation** (pratishta), **worship procedure, festivals** and a **code of conduct for priests**.
- Traditional meaning of "Agama": **Aa = Agatam** (came from **Siva's mouth**), **Ga = Gatam** (heard by **Parvati**), **Ma = Matam** (approved by **Vasudeva**). In the Vaishnava tradition the Pancharatra Agamas were taught by **Sriman Narayana**.
- The **Vedas** are the **Nigamas**; the Tantra and Mantra sastras attached to them are the **Agamas**.
- The Agamas are a **bridge**: they turn the abstract thought of the Vedas into **image worship** (murta aradhana) that ordinary devotees can follow.
- "**Tantra**", not "Agama", is the usual word for the **Shakta** texts; Tantra elements are especially clear in **Pancharatra**.
- **Prana-pratishta**, after which the idol is worshipped as a living divine form, rests on the **Agamas**.

Four padas of an Agama.

Pada	Covers
Jnana pada	Philosophy: creation, the creator and the jivas
Yoga pada	Yogic practice for the union of Atma and Paramatma
Kriya pada	Temple building, from site selection to idol installation
Charya pada	Daily pujas, naimittika utsavas and prayaschitta (expiation) rites

Three classes of Agamas.

Class	Supreme deity	Texts
Vaishnavagamas	Mahavishnu	108
Shaivagamas	Siva	28
Shakteyagamas (Tantras)	Adi Parashakti as the root power (mulashakti)	64

Bera (the image).

- **Bera = vigraha**, the consecrated image (asked 2026). Also called murti, pratima, archa.
- **Chala** bera = movable (as in processions); **Achala** bera = fixed; **Chalachala** = both.

- Postures: **sthanaka** (standing), **asana** (seated), **shayana** (reclining, like Ranganatha).

The five beras (Panchabera) of the Vaikhanasa tradition, with Tirumala's names.

Bera	Purpose	Tirumala image
Dhruva bera (Moolavirat)	Main fixed stone image, source of power	Sri Venkateswara (Moolavirat)
Kautuka bera	Receives daily worship in place of the main image	Bhoga Srinivasa
Snapana bera	Receives abhisheka (bath)	Ugra Srinivasa (Snapana murti)
Utsava bera	Taken out in processions and festivals	Malayappa Swami with Sridevi and Bhudevi
Bali bera	Offers bali to the parivara devatas; presides over the daily Koluvu	Koluvu Srinivasa

- **Ekabera**: a small temple that uses a **single image** for all rituals.

Pratima-lakshana.

- Rules for the size, proportion, posture, weapons, hand gestures and ornaments of an image. Found in the **Agamas** (asked 2026) and the Shilpa shastras, not in the Vedas, Vyakarana or Shiksha.
- Measure: **tala** (face length) and **angula** (finger width). Major deities are **dashatala** (ten face-lengths tall); lesser figures use fewer talas (navatala, ashtatala and so on).
- Materials: **shaila** (stone), **loha** (metal: panchaloha), **daru** (wood), **mrit** (clay), **chitra** (painting).
- **Ashtabandhana**: a paste of eight materials that fixes the main image to its pedestal; renewed about every 12 years.

Daily worship (upacharas).

- **Panchopachara** (5): gandha, pushpa, dhupa, dipa, naivedya.
- **Shodashopachara** (16): avahana, asana, padya (feet), arghya (hands), achamana, snana, vastra, yajnopavita, gandha, pushpa, dhupa, dipa, naivedya, tambula, nirajana (harati), mantrapushpa with pradakshina-namaskara. The order and names vary a little between texts.
- **Panchamrita** abhisheka: milk, curd, ghee, honey, sugar.
- Kinds of worship by occasion: **nitya** (daily), **naimittika** (on an occasion: festivals, eclipses, consecration), **kamya** (for a wish, sponsored by a devotee).

Brahmotsavam: the order of events.

Step	What happens
Ankurarpana (eve)	Nine grains sown in pots (palikas); with Senadhipati utsavam (Vishvaksena inspects the arrangements)
Dhvajarohanam (day 1)	Flag with Garuda (Vishnu) or Nandi (Siva) hoisted on the dhvajastambha; gods invited

Step	What happens
Vahana sevas (days 1–8)	Utsava murti taken round the streets on a different vahana each morning and night
Rathotsavam (day 8)	Chariot festival
Avabhritha / Chakrasnanam (day 9, morning)	Closing holy bath in the temple tank; at Tirumala the Sudarshana chakra is dipped in Swami Pushkarini
Dhvajavarohanam (day 9, evening)	Flag lowered; festival closes

- **Avabhritha** is performed **at the end** of the festival (asked 2026). The word comes from the bath that closes a Vedic Soma sacrifice.
- The name "Brahmotsavam": tradition says **Brahma** first conducted it for Venkateswara.

Renewal rites.

- **Samprokshana** = re-consecration (sprinkling sanctified water) after repair, renovation or a lapse. In Tamil usage **Kumbhabhishekam**.
- **Nayanonmilana**: opening the eyes of a new image before installation.
- **Balalaya**: a temporary shrine to which the deity's power is moved during renovation, and from which it is returned.
- **Pavitrotsavam**: an annual expiation for lapses in the year's rituals; silk threads (pavitrās) are tied to the images.

Parts of a temple (terms asked as meanings).

Term	Meaning	Term	Meaning
Garbhagriha	Sanctum	Vimana	Tower over the sanctum
Antarala	Vestibule	Gopuram	Gateway tower
Mukhamandapa	Front hall	Prakara	Enclosure wall
Dhvajastambha	Flagstaff	Balipeetha	Altar for bali
Pushkarini	Temple tank	Madapalli	Temple kitchen

Explained

Nigama and Agama compared.

Point	Nigama (Vedas)	Agama
Focus	Yajnas; worship of the formless (amurta)	Worship of God with form (murta), in an image
Method	Offerings in fire , suktas and hymns	Mantra, tantra, yantra and mudra before the image
Nature	Philosophical and abstract	Practical and specific

Point	Nigama (Vedas)	Agama
Goal	The four purusharthas	Moksha through God's grace and love

- The Nigamas explain God's **nishkala** (formless) aspect; the Agamas teach worship of the same God in **sakala** (with form) aspect.

The temple and the community.

- The temple is the centre of a community's life: a mark of its pride, identity and unity, and a centre of learning, arts and architecture.
- The book calls **collective participation** (devotees worshipping and celebrating together) the most important element of temple worship.

The Tirumala Brahmotsavam vahanas (annual, Salakatla, in Bhadrapada / Ashwayuja).

Day	Morning	Night
1	(Dhvajarohanam, evening)	Pedda Sesha vahanam
2	Chinna Sesha	Hamsa
3	Simha	Mutyapu Pandiri (pearl canopy)
4	Kalpavriksha	Sarva Bhupala
5	Mohini avatara (palanquin)	Garuda vahanam (Garuda Seva)
6	Hanumantha	Gaja
7	Surya prabha	Chandra prabha
8	Rathotsavam	Ashwa
9	Chakrasnanam	Dhvajavarohanam

- Garuda Seva** on the fifth night draws the largest crowd. The festival ends on **Shravana nakshatra**, the Lord's birth star.
- In an **adhika masa** year Tirumala holds two: the annual **Salakatla** Brahmotsavam and the **Navaratri** Brahmotsavam.

Pratishtha (installing a new image), in order.

- Karshana** (ploughing the site) and **Ankurarpana**.
- Nayanonmilana**: the eyes of the new image are opened.
- Adhivasas**: the image rests in water (**jaladhivasa**), in grain (**dhanyadhivasa**) and on a bed (**shayanadhivasa**). (The exact order of these steps differs a little between Agamas.)
- Homas in the **yagashala**; power drawn into **kumbhas** (pots of water).
- Prana pratishtha**; **Ashtabandhana**; **Kumbhabhishekam** / **Samprokshana** pours the kumbha water on the vimana and the image.

Four kinds of Samprokshana / Kumbhabhishekam in the Agamas.

Kind	When
Anavartana	First consecration of a new temple
Avartana	Renewal of an old temple after repair
Punaravartana	Rebuilding a ruined or badly damaged temple
Antarita	After a desecration, theft or break in worship

Other festival terms.

- **Kalyanotsavam**: the divine wedding of the utsava murti (at Tirumala done daily as a paid seva).
- **Teppotsavam**: float festival on the tank. **Unjal seva**: swing. **Vasanthotsavam**: spring festival with fragrant baths.
- **Rathasaptami** (Magha shukla saptami) at Tirumala is a "one-day Brahmotsavam": seven vahanas from Surya prabha to Chandra prabha in one day.
- **Pushpayagam** (Kartika, Shravana nakshatra) at Tirumala: a flower offering after the Brahmotsavam to atone for lapses.
- **Koil Alwar Tirumanjanam**: ritual cleaning of the Tirumala temple four times a year, on the Tuesday before **Ugadi**, **Anivara Asthanam**, the **Brahmotsavam** and **Vaikuntha Ekadasi**.
- **Anivara Asthanam** (Dakshinayana, about mid-July): the old start of the temple's financial year, when accounts were closed and presented to the Lord.

AP angle

- **Tirumala** follows **Vaikhanasa Agama**; its five beras, Swami Pushkarini Chakrasnanam and Garuda Seva are the most asked temple facts in the EO paper. The vimana is the **Ananda Nilaya Vimanam**.
- **Tirumala daily sevas**: **Suprabhatam** (waking the Lord), **Thomala Seva** (adorning with flower garlands, right after Suprabhatam), **Archana**, Kalyanotsavam, Sahasra Deepalankara Seva and **Ekanta Seva** (the last of the day).
- **Simhachalam Chandanotsavam**: on **Vaishakha shukla tritiya** (Akshaya Tritiya) the sandal paste is removed and devotees see the **nija rupa** of Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha, once a year.
- **Vontimitta** (YSR Kadapa): the Sitarama Kalyanam is held at night under the moon on **Chaitra shukla chaturdashi** (eve of Chaitra Pournami); the AP government made it the state's official Sri Rama Navami celebration in 2015 (TTD took the temple over that year).
- **Srisailam**: Maha Shivaratri Brahmotsavam with Dhvajarohanam using the Nandi flag; Kalyanam of Mallikarjuna and Bhramaramba.
- **Vijayawada Kanaka Durga**: Dasara Navaratri with a daily alankaram; **Teppotsavam** on the Krishna on Vijayadasami.

Common traps

✗ "Agamas, like the Vedas, worship God mainly through fire." ✓ The **Nigamas** (Vedas) use yajna in fire; the **Agamas** teach worship in an **image**.

✗ "Temple building is in the Charya pada." ✓ **Kriya** pada (site to installation); daily pujas and utsavas are **Charya**.

✗ "Shaivagamas are 108 and Vaishnavagamas 28." ✓ **Vaishnava 108, Shaiva 28, Shakteya (Tantras) 64**.

✗ "Bera means vimana (or dvara, or balipeetha)." ✓ Bera = **vigraha** (the image).

✗ "Pratima-lakshana is in the Vedas (or Shiksha)." ✓ It is in the **Agamas**.

✗ "Avabhritha is at the start; Ankurarpana closes the festival." ✓ Ankurarpana **opens** it (on the eve); Avabhritha and Dhvajavarohanam come **at the end**.

✗ "Bhoga Srinivasa is Tirumala's Utsava murti." ✓ Bhoga Srinivasa is the **Kautuka** bera; the Utsava murti is **Malayappa Swami**.

✗ "Garuda Seva is on the last day." ✓ On the **fifth night**; day 8 is the Rathotsavam, day 9 the Chakrasnanam.

✗ "Siva temples hoist a Garuda flag." ✓ Vishnu temples use **Garuda**, Siva temples **Nandi** (Rishabha).

✗ "Samprokshana is the daily bath." ✓ It is **re-consecration**; the daily bath is abhisheka (Tirumanjanam).

Quick revision

- Nigama = Vedas (formless, fire); Agama = image worship; Agama = Agatam (Siva), Gatam (Parvati), Matam (Vasudeva).
- Padas: Jnana, Yoga, Kriya (building to installation), Charya (pujas, utsavas, prayaschitta).
- Agama counts: Vaishnava 108, Shaiva 28, Shakteya (Tantras) 64.
- Bera = vigraha; chala (movable), achala (fixed); ekabera = one image for all.
- Panchabera: Dhruva (Moolavirat), Kautuka (Bhoga Srinivasa), Snapana (Ugra Srinivasa), Utsava (Malayappa), Bali (Koluva Srinivasa).
- Pratima-lakshana: in the Agamas; dashatala for deities; Shodashopachara 16, Panchopachara 5; nitya, naimittika, kamya.
- Brahmotsavam: Ankurarpana → Dhvajavarohanam → vahanas → Rathotsavam → Avabhritha (Chakrasnanam) → Dhvajavarohanam.
- Tirumala: Pedda Sesha day 1, Garuda 5th night, Ratham day 8; Thomala Seva after Suprabhatam.
- Samprokshana = re-consecration; Nayanonmilana = eye-opening; Balalaya = temporary shrine.
- Pavitrotsavam and Pushpayagam = expiation for lapses; Chandanotsavam at Simhachalam.