



Sri Siva Vishnu Temple

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Vishu

Vishu is the first day in the first Malayalam month of Medam (April - May). The traditional rituals followed in the festival are believed to usher in another year of prosperity for the Keralites. Elaborate preparations are made to ensure that the year ahead will be a fruitful one by following the custom of seeing the **Vishukani** (auspicious sight) early in the morning. The **Vishukani** is the arrangement of 'konna poo', a yellow laburnum flower, fruits like jackfruit and mangoes, vegetables like gourds and snake gourds, ornaments made of gold, bell metal mirror with a white, pleated cloth tied to it's handle (supposedly used by Goddess Parvati), the traditional bronze vessel 'Uruli' filled with rice, items used for daily worship (*asthamangalam*), clothes with pure gold



zari, a split coconut, some coins in a silver cup, some water in 'od', a traditional vessel and a 'grantha', which is a palm leaf manuscript or the Bhagwat Gita. The **Vishukani** is later taken and distributed among the poor people. This festival shares the spirit that can be observed in all the festivals of spring - the spirit of hope and expectations that a new dawn brings with it. People buy new clothes (*kodi vastram*) for the occasion and the elders of the family distribute money to the children, servants and tenants. These tokens are called the **Vishukaineetam** and are usually in the form of coins. People carry on this custom believing that their children will be blessed with



prosperity in future.

The families then celebrate the day with joyous abandon by bursting fire crackers after the **Vishukani**. While the men and children engage in bursting crackers, the women start cooking a variety of delicacies for the day's lunch. The feast or the 'sadya' is prepared by the women of the household and the whole family sits down to enjoy the Vishu lunch together. The dishes are prepared from the vegetables and fruits that are abundant in the season like jackfruits, mangoes, pumpkins, a variety of gourds, and coconuts.



The young people of the village go from house to house, dancing and collecting money. They usually do this in groups dressed up as the 'chozhi' with dried banana leaves tied around their waists and masks on their faces. By evening, the people would collected enough money to spend in the **Vishumela** (the new year fair). The evenings are spent in these fairs with a lot of revelry, music and various dance programs.



The famous temples like Guruvayur, Sabarimala and Padmanaba Shetram are filled with devotees. Special pujas are held in these temples where the people go to worship and pray for a prosperous New Year. They also view the **Vishukanis** that are prepared in each of these temples. At SSVT we follow the same tradition by providing **Vishukani** and **Vishukaineetam** to the devotees on the morning of Vishu.