

Sri Thondaradipodi Azhwar (ஸ்ரீ தொண்டரடிப்பொடி ஆழ்வார்):

He was born in திருமண்டங்குடி (*Thirumandangudi*), as the *amsa* (incarnation) of the Lord's Ornament *Vaijyanthi* on the auspicious கேட்டை (*Khettai Nakshtram*) day in the month of மார்சுழி (*Marghazhi*). He was called *Vipra Narayana*. His story is most human and depicts how he is transformed into a great *bhakta* of Lord Sri Ranganatha by the intercession of the Lord freeing him from the grips of human frailties. He renamed himself as “தொண்டரடிப்பொடி,” which means, “dust at the feet of the devotees of the Lord.” All his life, he served Lord Sri Ranganatha making flower garlands and maintaining a *nandavanam* (flower garden) on the banks of Cauveri. Both his works are on Lord Sri Ranganatha. One is திருப்பள்ளியெழுச்சி (*Thiruppalli Yezhucchi*) which is to wake the Lord like in *Suprabhatam* and the other is a beautiful sweet garland of 45 verses called திருமாலை (*Thirumaalai*) all on Sri Ranganatha. To read, listen or to recite these verses will move one to tears and enrich the love of the Lord. The often quoted and famous verse which most may be familiar with is

பச்சை மாமலைபோல் மேனி பவளவாய் கமலச்செங்கண்
அச்சுதா அமரரேறே ஆயர்தம் கொழுந்தே எண்ணும்
இச்சுவைத் தவிர யான்போய் இந்திரலோகம் ஆளும்
அச்சுவைப்பெறினும் வேண்டேன் அரங்கமாநகருள்ளானே 2. *Thirumaalai*

O Lord of holy Srirangam. I prefer the delight of uttering your holy name, calling you -- “O Achuta, with the form resembling the great green mountain, with lotus eyes and coral like lips; Lord of the eternal attendants and the gem of the cowherds.” to any pleasures of the world of Indra even if it were conferred upon me.