

Bedara Kannappa

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For narration in Chat With Chocolate Program for VSNA Children



Kannappa was a staunch devotee of Shiva and is closely associated with [Srikalahasteeswara Temple](#).^{[1][2]}

He was a hunter and is believed to have plucked his eyes to offer to Srikalahasteeswara linga, the presiding deity of Srikalahasti Temple.

Location: Kalahasti temple is 23 miles east to Tirupati and 70 miles north to Chennai. He is also considered tenth of the 63 Nayanars or holy Saivite saints, the staunch devotees of Shiva.

Kannappa Nayanar was born in a vyadha (hunter) family, the son of Raja Naga Vyadha and his wife in Uduppura (modern Vutukuru) near Sri Kalahasti, in present-day Utukkuru, Rajampet Andhra Pradesh. His father was a notable gerent among their hunting community and a great Shaiva devotee of Sri Kartikeya. His wife's name was Neela.

Previous life: When Arjuna was meditating on Lord Shiva for Pashupatastra, to test him, Shiva entered that forest as an animal hunter and a war started between Shiva and Arjuna, a battle took place between both and finally impressed by Arjuna's heroic fight, Shiva gave him the Pashupatastra. However, because of his boastful nature of being the greatest warrior, he is born again as a devotee in the Kali Yuga as Kannappa Nayanar and finally got liberation.

Kannappa was a staunch devotee of the Vayu Linga of the Srikalahasteeshwara Temple which he found in the forest while hunting. Being a hunter, he did not know how to properly worship Lord Shiva.

How he worshipped? It is said that he poured water from his mouth on the Shiva lingam which he brought from the nearby river Swarnamukhi. He also offered Lord Shiva whatever animal he hunted, including pork from pig. But Lord Shiva accepted his offerings since Kannappa was pure at heart and his devotion was true.

First test: Once, Lord Shiva tested the unshakable devotion of Kannappa. With his divine power, He created a tremor and the roof-tops of the temple began to fall. All the priests ran away from the scene except for Kannappa who covered the linga with his body to prevent it from any damage. Hence he was named thereafter as Dheera (valiant one).

Second Test: Kannappa noticed that one of the eyes of the Shiva linga was oozing blood and tears. Sensing that Lord Shiva's eye had been injured, Kannappa proceeded to pluck his one eye out with one of his arrows and placed it in the spot of the bleeding eye of the Shiva linga. This stopped the bleeding in that eye of the linga. But to complicate matters further, he noticed that the other eye of the linga has also started oozing blood. So Kannappa thought that if he were to pluck his other eye too, he would become blind to exactly know the spot where he has to place his own second eye over the bleeding second eye of the lingam. So he placed his great toe on the linga to mark the spot of the bleeding second eye and proceeded to pluck out his other and only eye. Moved by his extreme devotion, Lord Shiva appeared before Kannappa, stopped him from plucking his only eye and restored both his eyes. He made Kannappa the 10th of the 63 Nayanars. Kannappa merged into the linga along with Lord Shiva and Kannappa, who was Arjuna in his past life, got moksha (liberation) at last.

The story of Kannappa's devotion is recounted in several literary works, including Harihara's *Ragalegalu*. Harihara was a prominent poet of the 12th century, a significant period in the development of Vachana literature.



Dr. Rajkumar's first movie is Bedara Kannappa and it is the first movie to ran 365 days in theatres and the first one to win the National Award.



