

[Rudraksha Chariot Reborn](#)

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RESTORATION

Rudraksha Chariot Reborn

Bead-bedecked vehicle

Choodie Shivaram, Bangalore

The rudraksha-covered chariot of Vaidyeswara temple in Talkad (near Mysore) ventured out in procession for the first time in many decades last November 16. Dr. S. R. Rao, a soil engineer in Karnataka, found the abandoned chariot last year. It had a solitary rudraksha still hanging on its side. "I was told by the priest it was more than 100 years old," said Dr. Rao. "I felt hurt by the neglect. Our scriptures tell us that every Siva temple must have a rudraksha chariot. I saw one in the Nanjangud Srikanteswara Temple." He resolved to restore the chariot and purchased from Nepal 95 kgs. of rudrakshas, the hard, ornamented fruit stone of the blue marble tree. He hired a Mysore carpenter to do the work, and local villagers strung the seeds. Talkad is famous for its Panchalingeswara temples dating back beyond 200 bce. They had been covered by sand dunes for centuries until excavated by Indian archaeologists. Talkad was once the capital of the Ganga dynasty. Each of these temples once had a huge chariot entirely covered with rudraksha beads.