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The Beginning…

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The words, 'begin' or 'originate' have a profound appeal and fascinates me – regardless of what it refers to. It promises a new journey ahead and an initiation of an untold story. This fascination in me saw no-bounds, when it was time to visit the originating point of the much reverred River Cauvery in Coorg. Called the Talacauvery, it is nestled in the laps of the great Western Ghats in the Brahmagiri Hills. This river has been in the headlines for many years now – well, no bonus points for guessing why!



View from atop Talacauvery

On the brighter side, Talacauvery is the source of one of India's major rivers, the Cauvery. The route it ferociously flows in is quite something — it goes through South and East Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and across the Southern Deccan Plateau, where it forms two islands, Srirangapatna and Shivanasamudra. Did you know that the famous Shivanasamudra Falls is the drop of this river from a height of 320 feet? Finally, it empties into the Bay of Bengal.

Legend has it that a dip here gives spiritual and healing powers and hence most men and women alike, walk through the pond to its other end, where a priest sprinkles the holy water on them from the originating spring.



Devotees Entering the Kundike

Most natural phenomena have an underlying science. Curious to know more, I spoke to a Coorgie veteran about the science hidden here. He told me that the river originates in the form of a small perennial spring. The river first flows underground and then emerges above the ground over a short distance, at 4,500 feet above sea level. He welcomed me to the auspicious festival of Tulasankramana that occurs in the month of October every year. It is a festival that is celebrated with great enthusiasm – hundreds of pilgrims visit this place to witness the simple and sudden gush of water from the Brahma kundike and do the 'Walk' in the Holy Tank.

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Where the Bells Toll

As I stood watching the ranges, I knew it was truly breathtaking – both in terms of the views of the Brahamagiri hills and the pace of the wind that blew at me. I wondered, how anything Holy – be it the abodes of Gods, or origin of Rivers is always blessed with a pristine surrounding and a compelling calmness. That is when a line of Thomas Carlyle came to my mind – he had once said 'Science must have originated in the feeling that something was wrong' – but with the origin of river Cauvery, to me, everything was right!

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