

Saranagathi



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In this Issue

Dear Sri Bhagavan Devotees,

In Sri Ramanasramam every year we celebrate '[Navaratri](#)'. The Ashram is abuzz with activity during this time. This year the festivities commenced on Saturday the 19th September 2009 and concluded with Vijayadasami on Monday the 28th September 2009.

Laksharchana with Mahanyasa Rudrabhishekam and parayana of sacred works such as Devi Mahatmyam were performed. The Goddess Yogambikai was decorated beautifully each of the 9 days and the event was well covered on the Ashram website.

In this issue we carry an article on Annamalai Tambiran, who took care of Sri Bhagavan, after Uddandi Nayinar, upon his arrival in Tiruvannamalai as part of the 'attendant series' and we continue with the write-up on 'Sri Ramanasramam Archives' from the last issue.

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We hope to hear from you, about your [satsangs](#) and experiences of Him. Please email them to saranagathi@sriramanamaharshi.org

In Sri Bhagavan,

The Editorial Team.

The Essence of Instruction

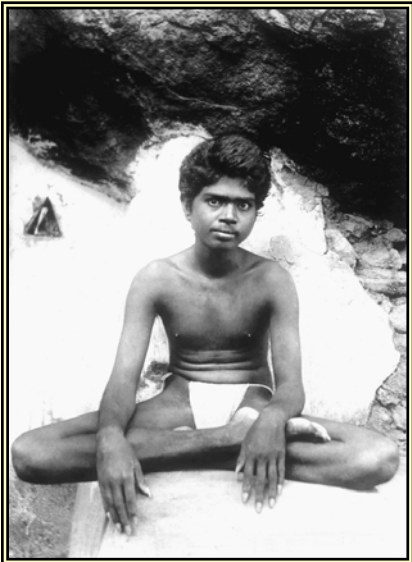
*It is true wisdom
For the mind to turn away
From outer objects and behold
Its own effulgent form.*

– Upadesa Saram by Sri Bhagavan (Verse 16)

Annamalai Tambiran

A little while after Uddandi Nayinar starts taking care of young Sri Ramana in the Arunachaleshwarar temple, Sri Annamalai Tambiran too is attracted by the divinity emanating from the young Swami and takes it upon himself to care for Him. He is the one who convinces Sri Bhagavan to move to the more sheltered and quieter Gurumurtham.

Towards the end of 1896, when Sri Bhagavan was sitting under the *illuppai* tree in the Arunachaleshwarar temple compound, he was covered with dirt, for he never used to bathe. In the cold nights of December he used to fold up the legs, place his head between his legs and remain there without moving. Early in the morning the layer of dirt on His body was soaked with dew and mist and appeared white. After drying up in the sun it appeared dark.



Sri Bhagavan has narrated how he went for *bhiksha* for the first time. "There used to be a lady devotee. She very often used to bring me some food or other. One day she arranged a feast for all the sadhus and pressed me to dine along with them. I signed her to say that I would not do so and that I would be going out begging. I had either to sit and eat with them all or go out for *bhiksha*. Yes, it was God's will, I thought, and started out for *bhiksha*. That lady had doubts as to whether I would go out for *bhiksha* or join the feast. She sent a man behind me. As there was no escape I went to a house in the street to the left of the temple and standing in front of it, clapped my hands. The lady of the house saw me and, as she

had already heard of me, recognized me and called me in. She fed me sumptuously saying, 'My boy, I have lost a son. When I see you, you seem just like him. Do come daily like this.' I subsequently learnt that her name was Muthamma."

At about this time, Annamalai Tambiran of Tiruvannamalai Adhinam came along with Uddandi Nayinar and was paying constant and reverent attention to Brahmana Swami.

This Adhinam (Mutt) which had begun at Tiruvannamalai was moved to Kunrakkudi long ago; and there it developed into a rich and influential Mutt. Annamalai Tambiran had his differences with the head of the mutt there, and came to Tiruvannamalai. By pure austerity and singing of Thevaram (holy songs of the three Tamil poet Saints, Appar, Sundaramurti and Sambandhar) with crowds of followers, he collected alms, fed the poor and maintained the worship of his departed Guru in a building which was therefore known as Gurumurtham, close to Kilnathur, a suburb of Tiruvannamalai. One day he happened to pass near the *illuppai* tree and was deeply impressed with the purity of heart and the ecstatic state of the young Swami. Tambiran thereafter constantly accompanied Nayinar to see the Swami. One day he told the Swami that Gurumurtham was a hall in a field away from the village, quite a retired spot where the Swami could carry on his meditation undisturbed by people, and requested him to go there.

The Swami agreed, followed him to Kilnattur in February 1897 and took up his residence at the shrine. There, at Gurumurtham, Tambiran daily recited hundreds of Thevaram hymns which were elevating and instructive, and which might even be a sufficient sadhana for one's spiritual advancement.

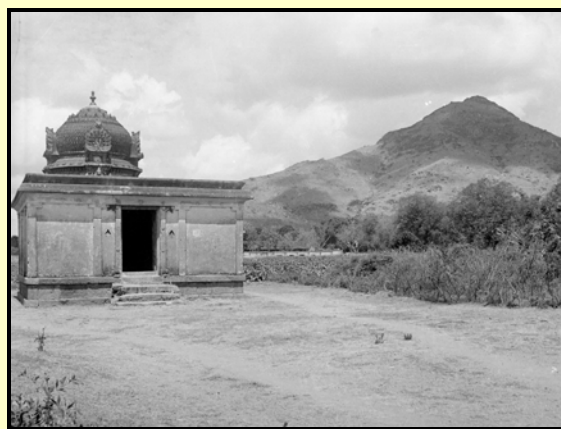
Tambiran was getting over-zealous in his attention; and one day he was arranging to get oil, sandal paste, etc., and making great preparation for treating the young Swami exactly as the sacred idol in the great temple is treated. He proposed, in fact, to pour over the Swami's sacred head oil, water, milk, food, panchamritam (a mixture of honey, ghee, fruits, jaggery), etc. The young Swami did not relish the proposed treatment. So the next day before Tambiran arrived with food, the young Swami had written with a piece of charcoal upon the adjoining wall in Tamil, "this (food) alone is the service (needed) for the body." When Tambiran came and placed the food before him, the Swami pointed to the writing on the wall, and thus made him understand that the ostentatious worship proposed by him was unacceptable.

Incidentally, the revelation was first made to the Tiruvannamalai public that this 'Brahmana Swami' or 'Gurumurtham Swami' was a person with education who could write good Tamil, from the above incident. This discovery led to the early disclosure of his identity. Amongst the sincere admirers who constantly visited him was a Taluk head accountant, Venkatarama Iyer, who knew the Swami could write. One day, the idea seized this elderly gentleman that he must learn the identity of the Swami, that is, his name and the place he hailed from. So in the presence of Tambiran and others he put the question to the Swami, who however remained silent despite repeated questions. Venkatarama Iyer with great persistence declared that he would not eat or move from there till he should learn those facts, even if his prolonged stay there should involve official trouble due to his absence at the Taluk Office. Moved by the ardour of this aged admirer's zeal, the Swami then wrote down his name and village as "Venkataraman, Tiruchuzhi." The officer was wondering where Tiruchuzhi was, being unacquainted with any such place. The Swami then picked up a copy of Peria Puranam lying by his

side, and showed him the name 'Tiruchuzhi', as that of a village honoured by the classic song of Sundaramurti Swami.

The marks left on the wall of Gurumurtham by Sri Bhagavan leaning against it and also His first writing (after coming to Tiruvannamalai) for Tambiran could be discerned for a long time afterwards.

Around August of 1898, Sri Bhagavan's uncle Subba Iyer died at Madurai. His other uncle Nelliappa Iyer and family had gone there for the funeral. Before the ceremonies were over, a young man of Tiruchuzhi gave them unexpected news of their long lost boy. "Venkataraman is a revered saint at Tiruvannamalai", he said. He mentioned also how he came to learn of the fact. He had gone on business to the Tirugnanasambandhar Mutt at Madurai and heard one Annamalai Tambiran of Kunrakkudi Adhinam, describing, with great reverence, the sanctity of a young saint living at Tiruvannamalai. Tambiran mentioned the saint as hailing from Tiruchuzhi. This at once pricked the ears of the Tiruchuzhi youth, who then ascertained further particulars from Tambiran. The youth thought that the saint must be their Venkataraman and consequently hastened to Chokkappa Naickan Street (Subba Iyer's home in Madurai) to impart the news to the family.



Gurumurtham (Old Picture)

Sri Ramanasramam Archives

This is part three of the article about the Archives team, which is dedicated to the arduous task of preserving the Master's memory for posterity. John Maynard, a key member of this team writes the following piece.



Dr Mees Kodak 'Astigmatix'- Ramana Photo Archive

On most weekends one or two devotees from Chennai come to the archive, to scan the original manuscripts, some of which contain Sri Bhagavan's handwritten corrections. These are later colour corrected and stored on archival gold 100–300 year DVDs. This work will take approximately another two years to complete, ensuring that we have the actual manuscripts preserved and that we may always know exactly what was said and written by Sri Bhagavan.



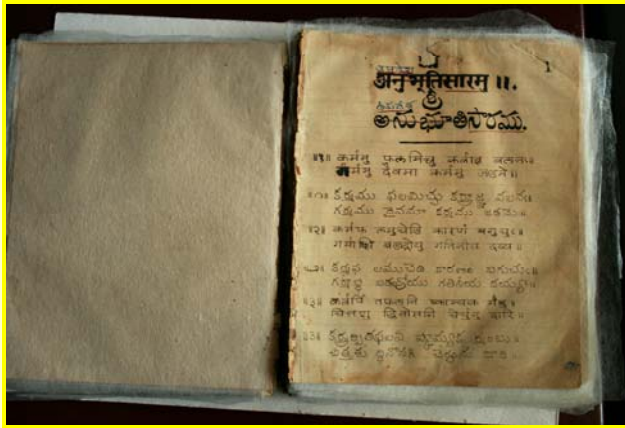
Digital storage of archive photos on Neem wood shelves

Anterior Rooms – Manuscript Room

This room lies off the furniture room, which is visible to all visitors and contains the manuscripts, diaries and other written works in their original form, bound in dyed khadi cloth. You will notice that this binding is of the same colour as that worn by Tibetan monks. This maroon dye acts as a deterrent to insects. These bundles are divided by language: Sanskrit, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu and English, all of which were spoken and written by Sri Bhagavan. There are examples of Ramana's handwriting in each language on show in here as well as in the main courtyard. The original English set of Talks with Ramana Maharshi is kept here among many other scripts. At the back of this room sits a small cabinet containing some more artifacts used by or given to Sri Bhagavan.



Archive Manuscript Room



Upadesa Saram in Sri Bhagavan's handwriting



Old fingernail cutter



Carved Gourd



Vibhuti Bag-gifted but not used perhaps

Anterior Rooms: Cloth and Linen Rooms 1&2

Two other archive anterior rooms house cloth and bed linen used by Sri Bhagavan as well as cloths and drapes etc. used on the old hall sofa and other places where He sat. Rolled carefully onto eight inch diameter plastic cylinders to prevent damage through creasing these are also preserved under the same dyed khadi cloth, and remain in good condition. The second cloth room, shown below, contains the mattress and many pillows used by Sri Bhagavan in the Nirvana room in His last days.



Anterior cloth room with pillows from the Nirvana Room etc.



Congress flag design with Gandhian khadi spinning wheel

Anterior Room: Book Preservation Shelves

Between the photographic archive and the larger of the two cloth rooms there are free-standing rolling book-racks, manufactured by Godrej India, which contain original copies of each book, old and new, published by the ashram as well as by other publishers worldwide. This series of book-shelves are divided up into the various languages in which the books are written. Books of Sri Ramana's teachings exist in Japanese, Chinese, Slovak, Russian and more than fifteen other European and East and West Asian languages, as well as in English and all of the Indian tongues.

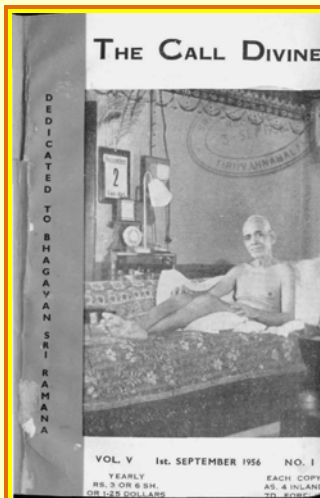
Each book is bound and preserved in a pH balanced paper wrap which is then slipped into a further acid balanced paper sleeve, this paper being obtained from Auroville in Pondicherry. At present there are more than 1200 books and periodicals contained here, many first editions of old ashram books, along with two complete sets of the Mountain Path magazine and more than one complete set of the Call Divine magazine out of Bombay, 1954-1974.



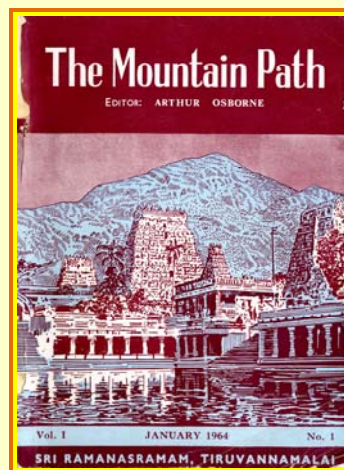
Original publications storage - rolling shelving



Original publications



The Call Divine magazine Vol 5 No.1



Mountain Path - Vol 1 No.1

Anterior Rooms: Air Conditioning Equipment Room

As you enter the archive the physical heart is on the right! This is the air-conditioning room where two 8.1 ton capacity German Liebert precision air-conditioning and humidity control units sit. Each unit is run on alternative days and a service contract with Emerson India is in operation for their monthly and preventative maintenance. The archive is maintained at 20 degrees Celsius with fifty percent humidity. The actual temperature and humidity within each anterior and show-case room is independently monitored with Isuzu Thermo hygrograph analogue monitors on a continuous basis, the

paper recordings of variation being stored for several years.

To protect the archive from fire and lightning strike a conductor was added two years ago, and recently the interior fire alarm, fire plan and extinguishers were updated.



Liebert 8 Ton Air and Humidity control units

Some other articles on show or stored in the Ramanasramam Archive



Sri Ramana's umbrellas



A selection of walking sticks and two umbrellas



Isuzu Thermo Hygrograph monitors the archive temperature and humidity



Binoculars used by Sri Bhagavan

(To be continued)

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