

# Tiruvannamalai

Q2:38.2 || 3.T

N65

35555

A

SIVA MAYAM  
**TIRUVANNAMALAI**  
**The Hill of the Holy Beacon**

*By*  
G. KALYANAM

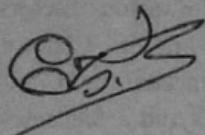
*Published by*  
**Sri Arunachaleswarar Devasthanam**  
**TIRUVANNAMALAI.**

*Board of Trustees:*  
Sri. T. S. BADRACHALAM PILLAI *Chairman.*  
,, S. S. V. S. MUTHIAH CHETTIAR  
,, A. ARUMUGAM B. A., M. L. A.  
,, T. V. SUBRAMANYA CHETTIAR  
,, M. SWAMIRAJ B. A., B. L.,

*Executive Officer:*  
Sri S. RAMASWAMY

First Edition. (English)  
Copyright Devasthanam.

**Price 0-50**



## FOREWARD

By

SRI M. S. SARANGAPANI MUDALIAR, B.A., B.L.,  
(Commissioner, H. R. & C. E. (Adm.) Department, Madras - 34)

I have read the book written by Sri G. Kalyanam on the great Saivite temple of Tiruvannamalai. It is quite comprehensive and has been written in easy prose.

The introductory chapter is very interesting and appropriate. The elimination of "I" and "Mine" is the quintessence of every system of Indian philosophy, and the story of the Sadhu who repeatedly admonished the enquiring disciple "You should come after I die" not only brings out this important principle, but very naturally leads on to the legend of Brahma and Vishnu setting out on the quest of Lord Siva's head and foot, and confessing defeat in their attempt, which did not succeed because both of them had not yet achieved the conquest of the ego in them. Chapter II deals with the location of the town of Tiruvannamalai, and Chapter III deals with the Holy Hill. It demonstrates how the legendary belief about the Hill being one of Fire and about its antiquity receives complete corroboration from the views expressed by a noted American geologist. The author then gives several interpretations of the term "Arunachala", and to these may be added yet another interpretation viz., that the Tamil expression "Annamalai" denotes the great height of the sacred Hill. Sri C. M. Ramachandran Chettiar, the noted Tamil Scholar writes "மலைக்குப் பெயர் அன்ன மலை, உயரம் மிகுந்திருப்பதால் இப்பெயர் வந்தது," The special significance of the Linga of this temple being Jothilinga has been pointed out. In Chapter IV a full and complete description of the

temple and the shrines and Theerthams inside it has been given. In chapter V are detailed the various factors contributing for the greatness of the temple, while in Chapter VI are set out the traditions and legends connected with it. Chapter VII gives a glowing account of the lives and achievements of the great saints and devotees of the place. Chapter VIII dealing with the literature about the temple and its presiding deity is highly interesting. Reference is made to Rig Veda, Bhaskara Samhita, Sarabhu Upanishad and Skanda Puranam in all of which the legend about the quest of Brahma and Vishnu is mentioned. The exceptional sanctity of the temple for the Saivite world is underlined by the fact that all the four Saiva Samayacharyas have sung in praise of the Lord who has taken His abode here. Chapter IX contains a list of the Puja timings and the festivals in the temple, while Chapter X contains a succinct but adequate account of the architectural and sculptural excellence of the shrine. I consider Chapter XI as particularly interesting, since it gives a clear picture of the numerous inscriptions which make the temple a veritable treasure house of valuable information concerning the landmarks in the growth of this temple and the contributions made from time to time by the great ruling dynasties of the Tamil country. Chapter XII describes the present administrative set-up, and at the end is given a list of books which can be referred to for greater and more detailed information about various aspects of the temple.

I may make special mention of the fact that in Chapter X a handsome recognition of the renovation of the temple undertaken by the Nattukottai Chettiaras about the dawn of the present century and the performance of Mahakumbabishekam by them in 1903 has been made. Another Ashtabandana Mahakumbabishekam was performed on 4-6-1944. More than 20 years have elapsed since then, and ashtabandana Mahakumbabishekam is already overdue. Further the temple needs extensive renovation and improvement. Is it too much to hope that the Nagarathar Community and other influential sections of the great Hindu Community will lose no time in taking up this work and accomplishing it as expeditiously as possible ?

I congratulate the trustees on the publication of this book which, I am sure, will enable a wide circle of readers accustomed to the English medium to know much that is worth knowing about this famous Saivite shrine in Tamilnad.

---

## CONTENTS

	PAGE.
I. Introductory	1
2. Location	2
3. The Holy Hill	3
4. Description of Temple	5
5. Greatness of the Shrine	9
6. Traditions and Legends	11
7. Devotees of Arunachala	15
8. Literature	19
9. Pujas and festivals	23
10. Architecture and Sculpture	27
11. Inscriptions	28
12. Temple Administration	33
Literature about Tiruvannamalai	34

SIVAMAYAM

# TIRUVANNAMALAI

## The Hill of the Holy Beacon

### 1. Introductory

Once there lived a Sadhu in a cottage situate outside a town far from the madding ignoble crowd. He renounced all worldly pleasures and was spending his time mostly in prayer and meditation as those are the two ways to attain heavenly bliss. Once in a day this recluse used to go into the town to get only so much of alms as to answer the pinch of his stomach. A man of the town was almost daily observing the Sanyasi going for alms and returning quickly. An illiterate but good-natured fellow he somehow got a fascination for the sadhu. He had also heard something of his divine by pursuits. So he wanted to become his disciple and get initiation for leading a virtuous life. One early morning he walked to the outstreets of the town and reached the cottage. The door was found shut. He knocked at it. "Who is there" asked the stern voice from inside. "I, Sir" replied the man at the door. "Then, come to me after I die" was the command from the inmate. Bewildered at what he heard he wended his way back thinking that the sadhu got angry as he had disturbed him in his meditation. After some days he again went to the cottage this time at midday thinking that the sadhu would be free. The door was shut. He knocked at it. "Who is there" questioned the sadhu, this time in a louder voice. "I, Swamiji" was the trembling reply. "Get away from here. You should come after I die" said the angry tone. This simple man was at a loss to understand what the sadhu said and so he plodded his way home-wards. Some days passed. Still there was the earnest desire in him to become the disciple of the sadhu. This time he decided to request the sadhu for a clarification of what he had said twice before. Emboldened with this resolve he went to the Sanyasi's

## TIRUVANNAMALAI THE HILL OF THE HOLY BEACON

cottage after night-fall. As usual he found the door shut. He knocked at it. "Who is there" was the usual question. "I, Swamiji" was the usual reply. "Had I not told you before that you should come after I die rebuked the sadhu. Mustering up a little courage the man outside told "It is he Swamiji, who used to see you daily at the town. How will he be able to see you after you die." The door was opened and the sadhu came out and said with a gentle smile, "My dear young man, you have not understood what I told. I only said that the 'I' in you must die. From your statement just now I see the change from 'I' to 'he'. So I accept you as my disciple". So goes the story.

This ego of 'I' and "Mine" is found not only in men on earth but also among celestial beings. Even the Gods of the Trinity are no exception to it. A quarrel arose between Bramha and Vishnu as to who of them was great. It could only be settled by Lord Siva. He stood before them as a blazing column without top or bottom. Brahma taking the form of a Swan went up to see the head and Vishnu became a boar and dug deep into the earth to find out the foot. They searched in vain and realised that Lord Siva was the Supreme Being. Their ego vanished. God Siva appeared in the form of a Linga. Brahma and Vishnu prayed to him that He should grace them with His appearance as Jothi at the top of the hill. Lord Siva granted their request and said that He would appear as a blaze on the top of the hill once a year on the day of Karthigai in the Tamil month of Karthigai. Such is the sacred legend attached to Tiruvannamalai. We should therefore know something of this holy shrine. An attempt has been made in this small book to give an account of the location of this sacred place, the description of the temple, its greatness, traditions and legends, its architecture, sculpture and inscriptions, festivals and literature relating to it. I trust that this will serve as a guide to those who wish to know about this sacred shrine and visit it.

## II Location

Tiruvannamalai is a railway station in the Villupuram - Katpadi line of the Southern Railway. It is 42 miles from Villupuram

and 58 miles from Katpadi. It is in North Arcot District and is the headquarters of a taluk of the same name. Till 1911 this taluk was attached to the South Arcot District. Tiruvannamalai is a Municipal town having a population of about half a lakh. There are the Deputy Collector's Office, Taluk Office, District Munsiff's and Magistrate's Courts, Government Hospital, Municipal dispensary, Maternity Home, High Schools, Middle Schools, Elementary Schools, Posts and Telegraph Office and Telephone Exchange. There are good hotels. There are many Choultries, Matams, boarding and lodging houses to serve as resting places. There is a Travellers' Bungalow maintained by the Municipality. Apart from railway connection buses ply to this place from all directions viz., Madras, Bangalore, Chidambaram, Salem, Pondicherry, Vellore, Thiruchirappalli, Kancheepuram, Tindivanam, Cuddalore, Cheyyar, Wandiwash and Chengam. So one can reach the place easily from any direction.

### III The Holy Hill

Though devoid of vegetation the hill stands in prominence amidst picturesque surroundings and is visible for miles around. It is 2668 feet high. This hill is of igneous rock (connected with fire) which is one of the four kinds of mountains classified geology. So one sees the truth behind the tradition regarding the origin and formation of this hill. Our religious philosophy is based on science and there is always the combination of Vignana and Meygnana. These two are inextricably intertwined. An American geologist has stated about this mountain thus:— “Arunachala should have been thrown up by the earth under the stress of some violent volcanic eruption in the dim ages before even the coal-bearing strata were formed. This rocky mass of granite may be dated back to the earliest epoch of the history of our planet's crust, that epoch which long preceded the vast Ceditimentary formations in which fossil records of plants and animals have been preserved. It existed long before the gigantic saurians of the pre-historic world moved their ungainly forms through the primeval forests that covered our early earth. It was contemporaneons with the formation of the very crust of earth itself. Arunachala was almost as hoary and

## TIRUVANNAMALAI THE HILL OF THE HOLY BEACON

as ancient as our planetary home itself". "It was indeed a remnant of the vanished continent (Kumarikandam) of Eunken Lemuria, of which the indigenous legends still keep a few memories. The Tamil traditions not only speak of the vast antiquity of this and other hills, but assert that Himalayas were not thrown up till later. Untold centuries, therefore, pressed their weight upon this time-defying pile which arose so abruptly from the plains. The whole Pack offers no pretty panorama of regular outline, straight sides and balanced proportions, but rather the reverse. Even its base wanders aimlessly about an eight-mile circuit, with several spurs and foot hills, *as though unable to make up its mind as to when it shall come to an end.* Its substance is nothing but igneous and laterise rock". What a miracle ! Such a barren rock has captivated the souls of sages and saints for ages together.

Legends say that Tiruvannamalai was a fire (Agni) mountain in krathayuga, Gold (Swarna) mountain in Thrathayugha, Copper (Thambra) mountain in Duwaparayuga and rock mountain in this Kaliyuga.

Arunachala hill has a high status in our sacred tradition and Tamil legends hold that it is far more ancient than the Himalayas which are comparatively known to be of later origin. Arunachala is a combination of two Sanskrit words Aruna and Achala. Aruna means 'red' and Achala means '(immovable) mount', there by known as "Red Mount". It is also called the "Hill of the Holy Beacon" and "Hill of the Holy Fire". The Philosophers would give another interpretation for the word Arunachala. Aruna is force (Sakthi) and Achala is Siva i. e., that which cannot be moved. The hill therefore represents Siva and Parvathi. There is still another interpretation Aruna means "free from bondage" and Achala means "motionless, steady." The true inner meaning of the word is that one can attain salvation only by concentration on God free from worldly bondage. The popular Tamil name is "Annamalai" which is also a combination of two words "Anna" and "malai". Anna or "attained" and malai means hill. This denotes the story of dispute between Brahma and Vishnu and the philosophic truth behind it. From an inscription in the temple and from the

Sanskrit work "Sahitya Retnakara" it is seen that the hill is called as Sonachala (Red Mount). The hill is regarded as Tejolinga (the fire symbol of God) or Jothilinga. It stands at the rear end of the town and the temple is at the foot of the hill. We shall now turn to the temple and have a look at all the main and sub-shrines in it. A detailed and descriptive account of the temple will not be out of place here. A devout pilgrim will no doubt heartily welcome it. To help the reader a ground-plan of the temple with an index is provided.

#### IV Description of Temple

The names of this holy place are various. The common and popular name is Tiruvannamalai. Other names are Arunachala, Arunagiri, Arunadri, Sonachala, Sonadri, Sonagiri, Sivaloka Suddhanagara, Gnananagara, Dakshinakailas, Gowrinagara Desunagara, Vazunagara, Mukthinagara, Sthaleswaram, Arunapuri, Tiruvarunai, Analgiri, Arunaiverpu, Sonaiverpu etc.

The temple is situated east at the bottom of the hill half a mile west of the railway station. It faces east. It has got four stately towers on all the four sides and four high stone walls just like the rampart walls of a fort. The eastern tower called the Rajagopuram is the highest. The southern tower is called Thirumananjanagopuram, that in the west is called Peygopuram and that in the north is called Ammanimal Gopuram. The temple occupies an extent of about 25 acres of land and is one of the biggest in South India. There are five inner rounds. Including what is called madavilagam running just outside the temple walls and the four car streets and the path round the giri the temple is said to have seven prakaras. As enjoined, one should enter the temple by the main gate in front of the sanctum-sanctorum. Before entering the eastern gate we see the sixteen-pillared mantapam and the four-pillared mantapam. When we pass the eastern tower gate we see the Gopura Ganapathi. This deity is held in high esteem and veneration by all devotees and the first worship is to Him. We first come to the fifth prakaram and see before us the Kamoathilayanar Sannidhi and Gnanappal Mantapam. Here it was that God Muruga appeared

## TIRUVANNAMALAI THE HILL OF THE HOLY BEACON

in a Pillar for the sake of the king Prabudadevaraya as prayed for by saint Arunagirinathar in response to his famous song “*வாய்மொலை தீர்த்தம்*”. To the south there is the sacred tank called Sivaganga Theertham. It has stonesteps and Tirumalapathi Mantapam on all the four sides. In the south-east corner of this fifth prakaram there is the Adiyar Viduthi (Devotees' rest house). Siddhi Vinayagar shrine is found in the north-west side of the tank. To the west of the tank is the Theerthawarimantapam. There is Mangalavinayagar Sannidhi in the fifth Southern prakaram and Thiruvarul Vilasa Mantapam just to the west of the south tower. There is the Kothala Vinayagar shrine in the western prakaram. There is nothing worth seeing in the northern prakaram except the big banyan tree which is considered sacred. Coming again to the eastern side of the fifth prakaram we see the Mathapirappu mantapam. A festival with Sri Chandrasekara Swami is celebrated here on the first day of the Tamil month. Then we see the thousand pillared mantapam and the underground temple of Sri Pathala Linga whereat Ramana Maharishi's body was eaten by ants and moths in his state of Supreme awareness. In between Sivaganga tank and thousand pillared mantapam there are the Rudraksha-mantapam and the Big Nandhi mantapam.

From the fifth prakaram we now go to the fourth prakaram by passing the tower-gate of Vallala Maharajan Gopuram. Saint Arunagirinathar wanted to shuffle off his mortal coil by falling from this tower. Lord Muruga appeared before him and saved his life. Hence he came to be called Gopurathilayanar. Along with this deity we see the image of Saint Arunagirinathar also to the north of Vallalam Gopuram. To the south there are the shrines dedicated to Ganapathi, Kalyanasundareswarar, Keswarar and Viranmendar (one of the sixty three saivate saints). On crossing this towargate we enter the fourth prakaram. To the left there are the Kala Bairava shrine and the temple tank called Brahma Theertham with the Theerthavari Mantapam. To the right we see Puravi Mantapam and the Sakthi Vilasam in which religious discourses are held. To the north of the Brahma Theertham we see the shrines of Naleswarar, Vigneswarar, Vidyadhareswarar and Brahmalinga.

#### DESCRIPTION OF TEMPLE

Connecting the fifth and fourth prakarams there are short tower-gates (Kattai gopuram) on the southern, western and northern sides. In the south-western corner of the fourth prakaram there are the Amavasya Mantapam, Vinayagar Shrine and what is called Sthula-Sukshma temple. To its north there is the Tiruppatha Koil. In the north western corner there is the Karthigai Mantapam and Subramanya shrine. On the new moon day Sree Chandrasekara Swami is taken to the Amavasya Mantapam and Lord Subramanya to Krishigai Mantapam on the Krishigai day.

From the fourth prakaram we now go to the further inner circle, the third prakaram. For this we have to cross what is called the Kili gopuram (parrot-tower) gate in the east. Before entering this tower-gate we see on both sides the shrines of Yanaithiraikonda Vinayagar, Subramaniar, Bairavar. Just in front of this entrance there is a sixteen pillared mantapam, called the Katchimantapan. The five deities (Panchamurthis) are brought to this mantapam during the grand annual Karthigai festival. Facing the hill they will give dharsan to the devotees simultaneously with the lighting on the hill top that evening. It is a sight to see and a feast to the devotee's heart's desire.

To the south of the Katchimantapan there are the store room, temple kitchen and pannirmantapam and in the north we see Vasantha mantapam (used as Devasthanam office), Yagasala, and the shrines dedicated to Kalatheeswaras, Chidambareswarar, Ekambareswarar and Jambukeswarar. Thus we have all the panchatalas in the Arunachalam temple. We have the temple of pidari also. In the third southern prakaram there are Mahila trees sacred to this shrine, and the Tirukaliyana Mantapam and Bhimeswarar and Vigneswarar Shrines. Just near the west gate connecting the third and fourth prakarams there is the shrine of Arunagiri Yogeeshwarar. Lord Arunagiri Siddha's centre in the temple is here and it is a very good place for meditation.

The separate temple for Unnamulai Nayaki or Abidhakujambal is situated in the north-western portion of the third prakaram. In the Mahamantapam in front of the Arthamantapam of this shrine

## TIRUVANNAMALAI THE HILL OF THE HOLY BEACON

we see the images of Kalanthagar, Veenadharar, Veerabadrar Adhilakshmi, Santhalalakshmi, Gajalakshmi, Dhanalakshmi, Dhanyalakshmi, Vijayalakshmi, Ayswaryalakshmi, Veeralakshmi, Rudra Durga, Mahasakthi and Saraswathi. In the front mantapam there are also the shrines of Vijayaraghava Vinayagar, Navagrahams and Chitraputhrar. To the back of the sanctum-sanctorum we see the parasakthiamman, Vigneswarar, Cholalingam and Cheralingam. Inside the Garbagraha we see the Charming and graceful Goddess Unnamulai Ambal, the inseparable partner of Sri Arunachaleswarar. The Sanskrit name for the Goddess is Abidhakujambal.

After worshipping at Unnamulai Amman's shrine we come to the third eastern prakaram. Facing east at the extreme south and extreme north there are the shrines of Sambanda Vinayagar and Palaniandavar. On both sides of the entrance to the second prakaram we see Ganapathi and Subramaniam and the Dwara-palakars (Gate keepers). Taking leave of Adhikara Nandikeswarar in the passage we enter into the second prakaram. In the north we see Isanyalingam and all Utsavamurthis (festival idols) and in the south there is Indra Lingam. On all the three sides of the second prakaram there are a number of deities. They are given below in detail :

Southern prakaram : Janakeswarar, Janandaneswarar, Appar, Sambandar, Sundarar, Manikkavasagar, Janandaneswarar, Janat-kumareswarar, Kausikeswarar, Kuthsarishtiswarar, Valmikiswarar, Vamarishiswarar, Agnilingam, Naradeswarar, Kasilingam, Vaisambadeneswarar, sixty three Saivite Saints, Yamalingam, Kasilingam, Thumbureswarar, Saptha Mathas (Chamundi, Indrani, Varahi, Vaishnavi, Kaumari, Maheswari and Brahmi), Gauthamarishi, Kasilingam and Duruvasarishi.

WESTERN PRAKARAM: Kshetralingam, Vinayagar, Niruthilingam, Somaskandar, Amman, Ardanareeswarar (Utsavamurthis), Venugopalswami with Rukmini and Satyabhama, Varu-nalingam, Vikrapandiswarar, Gajalakshmi, Arumugam with Valli

and Deivayanai, Sahasralingam, Sathalingam, Syamalambal, and Jeshtadeir.

**NORTHERN PRAKARAM:** Vayulingam, Annapurani Utsava idols of Valli, Murugan, Deivayanai, Natarajar, Bikshandavar, and Chandrasekarar, Kubera Lingam, Utsava idols of sixty three Saivite Saints, Bakthanugraha Somaskander, Viswamitreswarar patanjaliswarar, Vyagrapadeswarar, 108-Sivalingam, Agastheeswarar, Jureswarar, Kalasambararar, Bairavar, Utsava idols of Appar, Sambandar, Sundarar, Manikkavachagar, Natarajar and Sivakami.

After going round the three sides of the second prakaram we enter by the east into the first prakaram which encloses the Garbagraha of Sri Arunachaleswarar, the main deity of the temple. He has got many names. The popular Tamil name is Annamalaiyar. Other names are Sonachalesar, Arunagiriswarar, Sonadriswarar, Bhaktapasavimochakar, Vedamurthi etc.

We have seen in some detail the main shrine, subshrines, mantapams and Theerthams in all the inner circles (prakarams) of this big temple. We shall now pass on to know something of its greatness.

## V. Greatness of The Shrine

The very thought of Tiruvannamali will bring salvation. The Sthalapurana says that one can attain salvation by being born in Tiruvarur, by meeting with death in Varanasi (Kasi), by worshipping at Chidambaram and by mere thinking of Tiruvannamalai. So we find in Tiruvannamalai the easiest way to salvation.

It is therefore very essential that we should know all about its greatness, being one of the four Mukthi Kshetrams. The five elements of the universe are earth, water, fire, air and ether and our sastras call them Pancha Boothams. These five elements are represented by five sacred shrines or Pancha Bootha Sthalams of which Tiruvannamalai is one. Prithvi (Earth) Sthalam is Kanchee-

## TIRUVANNAMALAI THE HILL OF THE HOLY BEACON

puram; Appu (water) Sthalam is Tiruvanaikaval ; Theyu (Fire) Sthalam is Tiruvannamalai; Vayu (Air) Sthalam is Kalahasthi ; and Akasa (Ether) Sthalam is Chidambaram. Of the six Atharā Kshetrams, Tiruvannamalai is said to be the Manipooraga Kshetram. It is also one of the Saivite shrines sung by the great saints Appar, Sundarar, Sambandar and Manikkavachagar. Three important factors constitute the greatness of this place, namely (1) The dispute between Brahma and Vishnu which resulted in the origin of Tiruvannamalai and celebration of Karthigai Deepam festival (2) Goddess Parvathi, performed penance and got the left half of Lord Siva's body (Vamabagha) and (3) The association of saintly personages like Arunagirinathar, Guhai Namasivayar, Guru Namasivaiyar, Isanya Gnana Desikar, Deivasikamani Desikar, Seshadri Swamigal and Ramana Swamigal. Skandapuram says that when Lord Muruga marched from north to south to wage war with Sura Padma he visited Tiruvannamalai. Ancient Sanskrit and Tamil literatures have made eulogistic remarks about this shrine and the Deepam festival. Rig Veda, Atharvana Veda, Sarabaupanished, Sootha Samhita, Rudra Samhita, Bhaskara Samhita, Siva Mahapuramam, Sivarahasyam, Jeevakachinthamani, Kar Narpathu, Kalavashi Narpathu, Kanthapuram, Villi Bharatham, Periapuranam, Arunachalapuram, Thevaram, Tiruvachagam and Tirupugazh are a few among the many works that make mention of this holy place. We shall have occasion to deal with these in detail in the latter pages of this book. The place is also noted for the existence of holy waters (Theerthams) the bathing in which will purge one's sins and purify the soul. It is said that there are as many as 360 Theerthams and 400 Lingams in the eight mile circuit of the hill. The names of some of the important Theerthams are as follows :

Sivaganga and Brahma Theerthams are inside the temple. On the eight sides of the hill are found theerthams sacred to the eight guardian angels of Cardinal points namely Indra, Agni, Yama, Niruthi, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera and Esana. On the south-east and south are Pandava Theertham, Vishnutheertham and Agasthya Theertham and on the north is Vasishta Theertham. On the way up the hill there are the Mulaippal Theertham and Patha Theer-

tham. Apart from the Theerthams round the hill in course of the circuit round it, there are the Seshadri Swamigal Sannadhi, Ramanasramam, Durvicasramam, Gouthamasramam, Adi Annamalai temple (popularly called as Adi Annamalai), Manikkavachagar temple, Esanya Gnanadesigar Mutt, Durga temple and Coral hill (Pavala Kunru). In the mid-portion up the hill there are the Kanthasramam, Virupaksha cave, Sadaisami cave, and Mamarathu cave. Its hoary traditions, legendary lore, literary, religious and devotional literature, architectural, sculptural and epigraphical importance, its association with celestial beings, sages and saintly persons down to our present times, its importance in respect of Murthi, Sthalam and Theertham and the grand annual beacon festival-all these have contributed to the greatness of Thiruvannamalai and its name and fame will ever be cherished (by coming generations) till eternity.

## VI Traditions and Legends

The Brahma—Vishnu dispute : There arose a dispute between Brahma and Vishnu about their relative superiority. Brahma said to Vishnu, "I have created the five elements and all the living beings with their endless differences in form and sound. Therefore I am the one Absolute God". Vishnu said, "The whole universe is but an aspect of mine—Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat. Of what use is your creation, if I do not protect ? It is my thought-power that creates, sustains and destroys the whole universe. So I am the only Absolute God ". On account of their quarrel all the creations were put to untold suffering. To put an end to it and also to give a decision Lord Siva appeared before them as a blazing mountain without top or bottom. Brahma and Vishnu vowed that whoever returns first after seeing respectively the head and foot of the luminous pillar shuold be adjudged as the greatest. The former in the form of a swan flew up in quest of the top, and the latter took the form of a boar and dug deep into the earth to find out the bottom. Vishnu's efforts were of no avail and he returned without success. Brahma who went up, got tired and was about to return when he saw a Thalambu (a fragrant flower called Kethaki also)

## TRUVANNAMALAI THE HILL OF THE HOLY BEACON

coming down. He requested the flower to say that both of them came down after seeing the top. Meeting Vishnu, Brahma said that he was the winner and cited Thalambu as the witness. Knowing this trick, God Siva appeared from within the fiery column and said that the flower and Brahma had told a lie and that therefore the flower should be prohibited from use in Siva Pooja and Brahma should not have a separate temple for him. Lord Paramasiva accordingly adjudged Vishnu as the superior of the two. Both Brahma and Vishnu prayed to God Siva that the blazing pillar should establish itself as a small hill, and that He should take the form of a Lingam on the east of the hill and as a remembrance of the fiery column a Jothi should appear every year on the top of the hill on the Karthigai day in the Tamil month of Karthigai. Their prayer was granted. The blazing mountain became a hill and a Lingam appeared at the foot of the hill. Thus came to exist the hill of Thiruvannamalai and Arunachaleswarar and the celebration of Karthigai Deepam. This is in short the story of the Lingothbavan.

Parvathi, the Better-half: There is also another version. One day Goddess Parvathi in sport shut the eyes of God Siva for a moment. The whole universe at once was plunged into deep darkness and all the creation underwent untold sufferings. The gracious Almighty opened His third eye on His forehead and gave light to the world and allayed the sufferings of all the living beings. To purge Herself of the sin of putting the world into misery as a result of Her childish play, Goddess Parvathi resorted to Kancheepuram and began to perform penance. Lord Siva blessed Her there and directed Her to go to Tiruvannamalai and worship Him there, to get Her rightful place in His left half of the body (Vamabhaga). She accordingly worshipped Siva at Tiruvannamalai from Pavalakunru (Coral hill). She was instructed by Maharishi Gouthama about the greatness and the method of worship of Siva. She became a regular anchorite, did hard penance going round Arunachala with deep concentration of His Holy name. In the course of Her penance Devi had to encounter, Mahisha Scora and fight and kill him with all his armies and resources. Uma as Durga Devi led this fight and hence we have the Durga temple with Kadga Theertham, obtained by cutting the rock

with Her sword. She was advised by Siva to found this Theertham and bathe in it for getting rid of the Siva Linga which adhered to Her hand coming out of Mahisha Soora's neck. Bathing in the waters, she was cleaned and the Linga, she installed on the Theertham. We can see it there with a Sree Chakra. The Linga is called Papanasa. Siva was highly pleased with Uma's penance and appeared before Her. Siva declared " You are now rid of the fault of indiscreet sport of shutting my eyes and causing untimely pralaya. My grace is extended to you. Come and be united with Me ". So saying Siva disappeared in the Hill. Mother Uma arranged for a Deva Yaga commencing from Uthrashada. Nakshathra and concluding on the Krithika day. After Avabrutha Gnana she went round Arunachalam with Her hosts of rishis and Saraswathi, Lakshmi and Indrani. She finished the Pradakshina and standing in the Presence of the Lord She prayed for Mahadeva who came to Her and the Mother bowed to Him. They were both united. Hail : Ardhanareeswara. The Day of this consummation is the Karthigai Deepam Day with all the rejoicings of a festive occasion.

On this the Karthigai day the Lord appeared as a blazing light on the hill and asked Mother Uma to go round the hill. When she accordingly did so He appeared on His white bull on the western side of the hill (now called Adi Annamalai or Ani Annamali) and blessed Her. After She came round the hill on the north western side He absorbed Her in the left half of the body. Thus came the form of Ardhanareeswarar. To denote this occurrence the Ardhanareeswarar deity is brought out at the time of Karthigai Deepam festival.

The luminous pillar appeared before Brahma and Vishnu on the Mahasivarathri, Chadhurthasi Thithi, Krishna Paksham (dark fortnight), Thiruona Nakshatram in the Tamil month of Masi. The appearance lasted for 27 Naligais on Mahasivarathri. According to Devas' (celestial beings) calculation, this time will take one to Karthigai day of the Karthigai month for the worldly beings. Hence for the good of the humanity the festival came to be celebrated on the Karthigai day of Karthigai month. Brahma and Vishnu

worshipped the Linga on the Mahasivarāthri Day. Thus from Arunachalam commenced the traditional worship of Siva Linga. The Siva Mahapuranam says that one will attain bliss if he worships Siva here on the Mahasivarathri Day.

**Vajrangadha Pandya :** A descendant of the King Malayadhwaja Pandya by name Vajrangadha Pandya was ruling over the Pandya country with Maduri as his capital. One day he went out into the forest for wild hunt with his retinue. Leaving his followers back he went alone after a mysterious civet (Punugu cat). Riding on his horse he went after it for a considerable distance. The civet went round the hill of Arunachala and fell down dead before him. The horse on which the king was riding also slipped and expired. At once there appeared in the sky two celestial beings and uttered these words :—

We are two Vidhyadharas, Kanthisali and Kaladhara. As we trespassed into the flower garden of Sage Duruvasar he cursed us to turn into a horse and civet. By making the circuit of Arunachala hill we have regained our original forms. You king have committed a sin by coming round this holy hill on horse-back. You will get absolved of it if you come round the hill on foot with sincere devotion ". Having said so the celestial beings vanished into the skies Vajrangadha Pandya went back to his capital and enthroned his son Ratnangadha. Taking some treasure with him he returned to Tiruvannamalai and did great improvements to the temple. Daily he used to go round the hill till one day Arunachaleswarar appeared and blessed him with the position of Indra, the head of the Devas.

**Vallala Maharaja :** King Vallala (Vide Chapter III supra.) was ruling over the country with Tiruvannamalai as his capital. He had two wives, Mallammadevi and Sallamadevi. Though he possessed all the worldly wealth to enjoy he was not blessed with the fortune of having a child. He consulted his ministers as to the way by which he could get a son. They advised him to do all the thirty two kinds of Dharma. Accordingly he erected a Dharma Dhuvaja (charity flag staff) and announced by beat of drum that

all those who would come to him would get what they desired. He was a staunch and devout devotee of Lord Siva. God Siva wanted to test the King's Charitable disposition and also to show to the world Vallala's zealous devotion. Arunachaleswarar and His Sivaganas appeared in the guise of Saiva devotees. He sent all his followers to all the dancing girls' houses at Tiruvannamalai. He himself then went to the palace and asked the king for a dancing-girl. As all the dancing-girls in the city were already engaged the King could find none for this pseudosanyasin. He was therefore brooding over the matter in a melancholy attitude. Sallamadevi, his junior queen noticed it and offered herself to go with the Sanyasin, if the King had no objection. The King readily accepted it and sent her to the devotee. The devotee pretended sleeping on the cot. As soon as the queen touched Him, to her dismay, He became transformed into a child. She took the child to the King. No sooner did she hand it over to him than it disappeared mysteriously, which event caused great sorrow to both. Annamalai Nathar appeared before him mounted on the white bull and said that He would be their son and do their obsequies. He then disappeared. The King and queen were highly pleased by the announcement of Siva being their son and their unbounded devotion to Arunachaleswarar led them to salvation. To commemorate this incident Arunachaleswarar is taken to Pallikondapattu every year on the day of Maga Nakshatram in the Tamil month of Masi and the festival of obsequies is being performed. King Vallala of this legend may be taken to be the Hoysala King Vira-Vallala III who is referred to in the inscriptions in the temple and who reigned in the fourteenth century.

## VII Devotees of Arunachala

In addition to Goddess Parvathi, God Muruga, Vajrangadha Pandya and Vallala Maharaja there were a number of devotees who worshipped Arunachala and attained bliss. To mention a few of them here will not be out of place. Surya (Sun), Chandra (Moon), Ashta Vasus, Ashta Dikkupalas (Eight guardian angels of the eight cardinal points), Gautama Rishi, Pangu Muni, King

Brahadatta of Varanasi, Pulakathipa (an Asura King), Saints Apar, Sambandar, Manilkavachagar, Arunagirinathar, Gudhai Namasivayar, Guru-Namasivayar, Isanya Gnana Desikar, Deivasikamani Desikar, Virupakshadevar, all these attained greatness by worshipping Arunachaleswarar. In recent years we know of other devotees of Tiruvannamalai like Seshadri Swamigal, Ramana Maharishi, Jatini Shanmuga Yogini and Iswara Swamigal. We shall presently know something about the most important personages among those mentioned above.

**Saint Arunagirinathar :** This saint has already been referred to in a previous chapter. He was a native of Tiruvannamalai and he lived in the middle part of the 15th century at the time when King Prabudadeva reigned. As regards his caste, parentage and early life there are differences of opinion among scholars, one thing apparent from his songs is that he was living with his parents, wife and children. He was leading a wayward and reckless life in his younger days. He lost all his wealth and contracted an incurable disease. He therefore got disgusted with life and decided to end it. He ascended the Vallala Gopura in the temple and jumped down. But before he reached the ground Lord Muruga received him in his arms and blessed him. It is how we see Gopurathilayanar shrine to the left of the entrance of the Vallala tower. This was a turning point in his life. He travelled throughout the length and breadth of the Tamil country and sang devotional songs called "Tiruppugazh" about all the holy places he visited. There are stories about his poetic competition with Villiputhar, author of Tamil Bharatam and Sambandar, a Join Court-poet of King Prabudadeva. One thing is definite from his songs that Lord Muruga appeared on a pillar at his earnest prayer and gave Dharsan to King Prabudadeva. This is the celebrated shrine of Kambathilayanar in the Tiruvannamalai temple. There is also a story that Arunagirinathar leaving his mortal body took the form of a parrot and went to fetch the parijatha flower. But before he returned his enemy Sambandaran burnt his body. The sage after his return did not find his body, and so settled in the temple tower in the form of parrot. From there he sang his famous "Kanthal Anubuthi". Hence the tower came to be called

Kiligopura or the parrot tower. The form of a parrot found in one of the Sthubis on this tower is evidence in support of this story.

**Guhai Namasivayar and Guru Namasivayar :** Saint Namasivayar was of Veera Saiva sect from the Kannada country. He resorted to Tiruvannamalai and used to spend his time in meditation in a cave (Guhai) on the hill. Hence he came to be known as Guhai Namasivayar. He had a disciple also of the name Namasivayar. This disciple with his inward eye could see things happening at Tiruvarur and Chidambaram. Guhai Namasivayar found that he was more than a disciple and gave him the title of Guru (Teacher). Henceforth he was known as Guru Namasivayar. On the behest of his master Guru Namasivayar went and stayed at Chidambaram. There he arranged for many endowments to the Nataraja temple. These two great persons have composed songs about Tiruvannamalai, of which we shall see later. In their memory there still exists a Veera Saiva Mutt in Tiruvannamalai.

**Virupakshadevar:** This saint was also of the Veera Saiva Sect and he hailed from Mallikarjuna. He lived during the times of the two Namasivayars and was doing penance in a cave adjacent to theirs. Therefore it came to be known as Virupaksha cave west of this is the Kanthasramam.

**Deivasikamani Desikar :** This saint was a native of Tiruvannamalai and he belonged to the Adhi Saiva sect. A horse of a Chola King who came to Tiruvannamalai fell down dead. On the request of the Chola King, Deivasikamani Desikar by his yogic powers brought it back to life. Sculptures relating to this incident will be found on the walls of the northern prakara of Tiruvannamalai temple. The seventeenth head of this hierarchy by name Nagalinga Desikar went on a pilgrimage to Rameswaram. On the request of the then Raja Sethupathi of Ramanathapuram, Nagalinga Desikar took over the management of five temples from the Ramnad Samasthanam and established the Tiruvannamalai Adheen at Kunnakudi.

**Isanya Gnana Desikar:** There was one Tirunelakanta Desikar of the Vellala Community at Raya Vellore. He had no children. He made fervent prayers to Lord Muruga of Tiruvannamalai and begot a son. He named him as Kandappan. It was a precocious child. When he grew to be a handsome youth his parents wanted to get him married and therefore were in search of a bride. Kandappan was not for marriage and in the absence of his father got permission from his mother and left for Chidambaram. There he became the disciple of Mouina Swamigal who graced him with his Upadesam. Kandappa Desikar then left Chidambaram and had the association of two great souls, Dakshinamurthi Swamigal of Tiruvarur and Uganthalilinga Swamigal of Porulvaithaseri near Nagapattinam. After staying with these two for some time he resorted to a cave in a hill near Vettavalam next to Tiruvannamalai. There he was looked after by one Muthuswami Udayar. But finding the place not congenial on account of the disturbance to his meditation caused by the Villagers he went to Tiruvannamalai and began his meditation on the bank of Gorakkanathar tank on the south-western side of the place. One Arunachalam Chettiar who had no children used to do all services for him and by the grace of Kandappa Desikar the Chettiar begot a son and named him as Velayudham. Muthuswamy Udayar of Pakkam was pining for his master's separation. Arunachaleswarar appeared in Muthuswamy Udayar's dream in the guise of Kandappa Desikar and directed him to the Isanya (north-east) of Tiruvannamalai. He also appeared before Kandappa Desikar in dream and told him that as a devotee would come to see him at the Isanya of Tiruvannamalai he must remove himself to that place. Accordingly he shifted to the south bank of Isanya Theertam and began to meditate under a great banyan tree. Muthuswamy Udayar saw his guru in that place. It is said that tigers would keep guard round Kandappa Desikar during his deep meditation. one Nayakkar of Pudupalayam got his colic disease cured by the grace of our Desikar who thenceforth began to be called as Isanya Gnana Desikar. Hearing of his greatness an European Collector was attracted to Desikar, who by his grace cured him of his acute asthma. The Collector requested Desikar to permit him to grant lands free to him. Desikar with a smile

said. "There you see a man with a wife and two children and any large extent of lands may be granted to him", pointing his hand to Arunachaleswarar and Unnamulai Ambal. Once this European Collector was hurrying to Tiruvannamalai for the Car festival. On account of heavy rains there were floods in the river Pennar and he had to cross it. He spoke to the horse on which he was riding, "we must see our grandfather and attend the car festival" and then went down into the river on the horse. It that time Isanya Gnana Desikar opened his eyes, stretched his hand to the south and lowered it a little. Nagai Ramalinga Swamigal who was by his side requested for an explanation of Desikar's action. He replied "For whoever falls into the river I am held responsible" and kept silent. Just then the European Collector came there and exclaimed that by the grace of Desikar he crossed the river floods. Desikar had many disciples around him and he also composed songs in praise of Arunachaleswarar. He attained Samadhi on the 26th day of the Tamil month of Margali, Virodhi year (A. D. 1829). His Samadhi temple and Mutt in his name are even now places of adoration by those who come to Tiruvannamalai.

### VIII. Literature

Vedas, Upanishads, Samhitas and other Sanskrit works and Tamil Literary, religious and philosophical works speak of the greatmen of Tiruvannamalai. Many of them are wholly devoted to this holy place and festival. We shall presently deal with a few of them which are important. Two slokas mention about the search of head and foot of Lord Siva by Brahma and Vishnu "Brahma searched the head of Siva, taking the form of Swan for a thousand years, He said' "I have not seen your head. You are the mother, father, brother and everything. If one realises this he will attain Siyasayujya". "Vishnu dug deep into the earth in the form of a boar for a thousand years to find out Siva's foot. He exclaimed, you are the mother, father, brother and everything." Whoever comes to know of this will attain bliss".

**Bhaskara Samhita** : "Brahma and Vishnu quarrelled with each other on account of their self-conceit. To save the world Siva appeared in the form of a luminous pillar. Stopping the quarrel, Vishnu went down the earth in the form of a boar and Brahma went up in the form of a swan". Sarabhu upanished : "Those lotus—feet which were sought after by Vishnu. Siva showed His grace to Vishnu who made devout prayers to Him who is beyond expression and thought".

**Skandam** : In his Sanskrit work "Skandam" Vyasa had included an account of the greatness of Arunachala in 37 Chapters consisting of 2060 verses in the Maheswarakandam.

**Saint Sambandar** : When Sambandar was worshipping at the temple of Araininallur (Arakandanallur) near Tirukoilur he was shown Tiruvannamalai. From there itself he sang Pathigam of eleven songs in praise of God Arunachaleswarar and Unnamulai Ambal. After reaching Tiruvannamalai he worshipped Annamalai-nathar and dedicated another Pathigam of eleven songs. One noteworthy feature is that in the ninth verse of all his Pathigams in the Thevaram he makes mention of the Brahma-Vishnu search after the head and foot of Lord Siva.

**Saint Appar**: This Saint visited this holy place and sung three Pathigams of ten verses each on God Arunachaleswarar. In one Pathigam he mentions "Ani Annamalai" which scholars presume as the present "Adi Annamalai".

Saint Sundarar has made a reference to this place in one of his songs and has not left any separate Pathigam.

**Saint Manikkavachagar**: This saint stayed at Tiruvannamalai saw maidens going to take their bath during the early hours of the month of Margazhi (December-January) and singing the praise of God. For their benefit the saint sang his immortal songs "Tiruvembavai". These are twenty in number and as we know they are very popular in our country. These form part of the Saint's famous Thiruvachagam. This devotional work has been translated into English by Dr. G. U. Pope and Thiruvachagamani, K. M. Balaji.

subramanian, B.A., B.L. A song from the latter's translation is given below :

"We know that Mount not known to *Mall* nor seen by the  
"Four-faced one !

Thou didst speak the falsehood thus, O maid of  
guileful mind,

Whose mouth does surge with milk and honey. Come  
and open thy door.

We sing the beautiful Form of His, unknown to  
the world and heaven

And all the rest and His greatness in making  
us His own,

And fondling us in grace. We also cry aloud,  
"O Siva,

And O Siva ; yet thou wakest not and seest not  
If this thy nature, thou of perfumed locks ?

O Embavoi !

(Tiruvembai 5th song.)

Another portion of Tiruvachagam called "Tiruammanai" consisting of 20 verses is also stated to be composed by the Saint during his stay at Tiruvannamalai. The first verse from it as translated into English by Dr. G. U. Pope is given below :—

Great Mal, the red-eyed, delved down, but  
failed to reach His foots' expanding flower !

To earth that foot came down,  
Our birth cut off, made those like us His own  
Lord of the south-land's clustering cocoa-groves  
and Perunturai's shrine,

TIRUVANNAMALAI THE HILL OF THE HOLY BEACON

As a beautiful eyed sage came He and called me in grace,  
And gave release. Sing we His foot when mercy flows !  
Ammanay, See !

**Eleventh Tirumurai:** In some of the songs found in this Tirumurai (compilation) Nakkirar, Kapilar, Paranar and Pattinathar have made references to the greatness of Tiruvannamalai.

**Sekkizhar:** This great poet in his famous "Periapuranam" containing the histories of the sixty-three Saivaite Saints mentions that Sambandar and Appar came to Tiruvannamalai and worshipped at the temple on the hill.

**Saint Arunagirinathar:** A great devotee of God Muruga has sung as many as 87 songs in Tiruppugazh for this sacred shrine and has also made mention of it in his other compositions Kanthar Anubuthi, Kanthar Alankaram, Kanthar Anthathi and Tiruvahuppu.

**Guhai Namasivayar and Guru Namasivayar:** They have both composed "Arunagiri Anthathi" and "Annamalai Vemba" respectively each with 100 verses. They are considered to be very good pieces of devotional literature. Each of the hundred verses in Annamalai Vemba ends with the word "Annamalai".

**Turaimangalam Sivaprakasa Swamigal.**—This poet-saint had composed "Sonasaila Malai" consisting of hundred stanzas.

**Saiva Ellappa Navalar.**—This poet composed the Tamil "Arunachalapuram." It consists of fourteen sargas and 649 verses. This is considered not only as a good religious work but also as one of literary excellence. He has also composed two other works relating to Tiruvannamalai namely "Thiruvarunai Kalambakam" and "Thiruvarunai Anthathi". Tamil minor poems have been classified into 96 kinds of which Kalambakam is one. Scholars consider Ellappa Navalar's Kalambakam as one of the best in Tamil literature. Apart from this poet's "Arunachala-

puranam" there is another Sthala Puranam by name "Arunagiri Puranam" composed by Marugnana Desikar of Chidambaram.

There are a large number of other Tamil and English works relating to this second shrine and the festival.

## IX Pujas and festivals

<i>Daily pujas :—</i>	(1) Ushathkalam	7-30 A.M.
	(2) Kalasanthi	9-30 ,,
	(3) Uchikalam	11-30 ,,
	(4) Sayarakshai	5-30 P.M.
	(5) Irandamkalam	8-30 ,,
	(6) Ardha Jamam	9-30 ,,

### PANCHA PARVAMS

First day of all Tamil months, all Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays, Sukla Chathurthi, Sukla Sashti, Prothosham, Krithigai, Amavashi and Pournami.

### ANNUAL FESTIVALS (Tamil monthwar)

Chitrai : Vasantha Utsavam—10 days beginning from Mriga-seerisha Nakshatram.

Azi : Dakshinaya Brahma Utsavam—10 days.

Adi : Adi Puram—10 days ; last day fire-walking festival.

Purattasi : Navarathri—10 days.

Aipasi : Kantha Sashti—6 days.

Karthigai : Brahma Utsavam-Deepam festival—10 days.

Margazhi : Manikkavasagar Utsavam—10 days.

Thai : Sankaranthi Utsavam—10 days.

Panguni : Uthram festival 6 days.

### SPECIAL FESTIVALS (Tamil Monthwar.)

Chitrai : Natarajar Abishekam—Thiruvona Nakshatram,

Chitrai : Thirunavukkarasar festival—Sathaya Nakshatram.

Vaikasi : Abishekam—Visaka Nakshatram.

,, Tirugnanasambandar festival—Mula Nakshatram.

TIRUVANNAMALAI THE HILL OF THE HOLY BEACON

- Ani: Manikkavachagar festival—Mega Nakshatram.  
" Natarajar Ani Thirumanjanam—Uthra Nakshatram  
Adi: Ambal Niraiani (Varalakshmi Nombu.)  
" Sundarar festival—Swathi Nakshatram.  
" 15th August — Independence-Day Arunagirinathar festival.  
Avani: Vinayaga Chathurthi.  
" Srikrishna Jayanthi.  
" Pittu Tiruvizha—Mula Nakshatram.  
" Natarajar Abishekam—Sukla Chathurthasi.  
Purattasi: Saraswathi Puja—Ambal Niraiani, Sukla Navami.  
" Natarajar Abishekam—Sukla Chathurthasi.  
" Arunagirinathar festival—Mula Nakshatram.  
Aipasi: Annabishekam—Asvini Nakshtram.  
Karthigai: 10C8 Sangabhishekam—Somavaram.  
Margazhi: Vaikunta Ekadesi.  
" Thiruvathirai—Arudra Dharsanam.  
Thai: 2nd date—Tiruvudal Utsavam.  
" 5th date Manalurpettai Theerthawari.  
" Kalasapakkam Theerthavari—Rathasapthami.  
" Thai Poosam, Theerthawari.  
Masi: Pallikondapattu Theerthavari. — Vellala Maharajan obsequies—Maga Nakshatram.  
" Mahasivarathri—Amara Chathurthasi:  
" Natarajar Abishekam, Sukla Chathurthasi.

The Pancha Murthis (Five deities, Annamalainathar, Unnamulai Ambal, Vinayagar, Muruga and Chandeswarar) go round the hill, a circuit of eight miles, twice a year that is on the day next to Karthigai Deepam and on Thiruvudal festival (2nd day of Thai month.)

Karthigai Deepam festival : We should know in detail about this annual holy beacon festival. Brahma and Vishnu were both quarelling about their relative superiority. To give a decision on it and to erase their ego Lord Siva stood before them in the form

of a blazing mountain. Having failed in their attempt to find out its top and bottom the two prayed to Lord Siva for His grace. He blessed them saying that he would appear in the form of Jothi on the top of the hill every year on the day of Karthigai in the month of Karthigai. To commemorate this event the Deepam festival is being conducted at Tiruvannamalai every year.

There is ample literary evidence to prove that this lighting festival is one of the oldest in the Tamil country. Tholkappiam is the oldest extant work in Tamil literature. In commenting on one of the Sutras in Tholkappiam, Nachinarkiniar, the Prince of commentators, mentions "the light lit on the Karthigai day of the Karthigai month. Scholars ascribe the age of Tholkappiam to be three thousand years old. Jeevaka Chintamani, a Jain work and one of the five great Tamil Epics by Thirthakka Daver mentions "lighting a lamp on the hill on Karthigai day": Kar Narpathu and Kalavazhi Narpathu, the two old Tamil literary works refer to lighting on Karthigai day. Saints Appar and Sambandar who hailed in the 7th century A.D. make references in this respect. There is a proverbial saying "light on the hill" when one wants to express a thing world-wide known. This bears eloquent testimony to the antiquity of the lighting festival on the hill.

Of the five elements earth, water, fire, air, and ether, fire is considered important as being in the middle. Adding Sun, Moon and soul to these it is said that God exposes Himself in eight forms" "Ashtamurthams." So the Pedas, Agamas and Puranas extol God as Rudragni Sivajothi and Paramjadar. Just as fire destroys impurity in anything, God destroys the darkness of ignorance and egoism in men and blesses them with the light of wisdom. This in short is the philosophic truth behind the celebration of this festival.

Something should be said about the festival proper which will be of use to a devout pilgrim. The Karthigai Deepam festival is celebrated in the Tamil month of Karthigai (November-December). It begins on Uttradam day with flag hoisting and goes on for nine days. In the early hours of the tenth day Bharani Deepam in five

agantams will be lit in Arunachaleswarar's Sannidhi. In the evening the Pancha Murthis will be brought to the Katchi mantapam. At dusk (Pradosha) the Karthigai day synchronising with the full moon day, the deity Ardhanareeswar is taken out to this place with the five deepams which are put in a big receptacle near the flag-staff. At the same time the beacon light on the hill is lit. The huge concourse of devotees from all parts of our country in a million voice raise a cry simultaneously "Harohara to Annamalai" which will rend the air. It is a sight for the Gods to see. On the hill top there is big copper urn in which large quantities of camphor, ghee and wicks (cloth) are poured and when these are lighted it will be seen for miles around for some days after the Deepam festival day. We do not have such a huge light in any other place of our country. On the same night the eleven storeyed Gopuram is also lit with "Ahals" (earthern oil lamps) set in rows in all the storeys. Though this festival is special to Tiruvannamalai it is common throughout the Tamil Country. Lighting festival is celebrated in all the temples of South India including Vishnu temples. All the houses will also be illuminated with a number of lamps being arranged in rows to give a beautiful appearance.

It is ordained that a pilgrim to Tiruvannamalai for this festival should take one meal on the previous (Bharani) day, worship Bharani Deepam during the early hours on the Karthigai Deepam day, go round the hill walking the entire distance of eight miles, see on the way Adi (Ani) Annamalai temple and fasting completely that day should see the lighting that evening. He should take food only the next day. The intrinsic truth about seeing the light may be summed up thus ; "Body is the hill; mind the vessel ; love the wick; incessant meditation the ghee; breath the camphor and wisdom the fire. To light this flame and dispel the darkness is the effect produced on one who sees the light"—(Arunachala Mahatmyam by Eswara Swamigal translated into English by Major Alan W. Chadwick).

## X. Architecture and Sculpture

Tiruvannamalai should have been under the sway of the Pallava Kings who ruled from Kancheepuram before the ninth century A. D. We do not find any inscription in the temple prior to A. D. 850 and hence the present temple could not have existed then. Saint Sambandar in his Thevaram relating to this place mentions a temple. Saints Appar and Sambandar belonged to the seventh century. Sekkizhar, the renowned author of Periapuranam mentions that both the Saints Appar and Sambandar worshipped Arunachaleswarar in the hill temple. The Chola Kings ruled over the country for more than four centuries from 850 A.D. to 1280 A.D. Some earlier kings of the Vijayanagar dynasty must have begun to construct the inner shrine (Garbagraha). In the fourteenth Century the Hoysla Kings had their capital at Tiruvannamalai. Afterward the Kings of Vijayanagar and Nayak Kings of Thanjavur ruled over this part of the country. In the seventeenth century it came under the sway of the Nawabs of Carnatic. There was confusion and chaos after A. D. 1753. Murari Raya, Krishna Raya, Mrithis Ali Khan, Burkat Ullakhan, French Soupires and Sambrinet, English Captain Stephen Smith besieged this place and had their successes and defeats. In A. D. 1790 it was captured by Tippu Sultan. During the first half of the nineteenth century it came under the British rule.

The temple at Tiruvannamalai is one of the biggest and grandest temples in South India. With the hill as background it gives the appearance of a fort to those who see it from a distance. It is unique on account of its stately towers, high rampart walls, broad quadrangles, spacious gateways, large mantapams and fine tanks. It is also of much architectural importance and sculptural beauty.

The extent occupied by the temple is about 25 acres. The walls on the east and west measure 700 feet each. The south wall

is 1479 feet long and the north wall 1590 feet. The Rajagopuram which adorns the east gateway is 217 feet high with 11 storeys. Its base measures 135 feet by 98 feet. This tower was built by King Krishna Devaraya of Vijayanagar and completed by Sevappa Nayaka of Thanjavur. Krishna Devaraya also constructed the thousand pillared mantapam and dug the tank opposite to it. Ammani Ammal a Sanyasini built the north Gopuram which is called after her name.

The towers, the pillars in the mantapams and Vimans consist of figures of sculptural excellence. In the side walls of the entrance by the East Gopuram there are dance poses and figures of bewitching beauty. Generally stone-idols are fixed with what is called "Ashtabandana". But in this case it is "Swarnabanda" (Gold) which is of special importance. The big Sambanda Vinayagar, the fierce looking Kala Bhairava, Bikshandanar, Ashtalakshmis, Rudra Durga, Maha Sakthi, Veenadharar, Veerabadrar in the pillars of the Maha Mantapam in Amman shrine, and the lovely and graceful figure of Abidhakujambal are worth seeing.

The temple was in disrepair in the nineteenth Century. Some seventy years back the Nattukottai Chettiar took up the renovation of the temple at a cost of 35 lakhs of rupees and the Mahakumbabishekam was celebrated on 12—6—1903. Again another Ashtabandana Mahakumbabishekam was performed on 4—6—1944 at a cost of Rs. 40,000.

## XI Inscriptions

The Tiruvannamalai temple is not only of architectural grandeur and sculptural splendour but also of epigraphical importance and value. It is one of the few temples having a large number of inscriptions. The Department of Epigraphy, Madras Circle, has taken copies of the inscriptions and these have been numbered as

INSCRIPTIONS

A.R. Nos. 469 to 574 of 1902 and 419 to 428 of 1929. Of these the originals of A. R. Nos. 469 to 574 of 1902 have been published as Nos. 57 to 165 in South Indian Inscriptions, Vol. VIII. Apart from these 119 registered inscriptions there are others yet to be copied. It is hoped that the Government will take early steps to take copies of those remaining which may throw some new light to research scholars.

The languages used for the inscriptions are Tamil, Sanskrit and Kannada and they are of Tamil and Grantha Characters. Most of them are Tamil and there are a few Tamil verses. An inscription in Tamil blank verse relating to the time of Kopperunjinga of Pallava origin is a piece of literary excellence and most informative in character. We find all these inscriptions on the walls of the central shrine of Arunachaleswarar, walls of the first prakaram, walls of Muruga, Ekambareswarar and Chidambareswarar shrines, on both sides of the Kili Gopuram, Vallalan Gopuram, East and West Gopurams and the thousand pillared mantapam.

Most of the inscriptions belong to the chola period for 400 years from the middle of the ninth century to that of the thirteenth century A.D. From the latter half of the thirteenth century to the end of sixteenth century there are inscriptions of Kopperunjinga, Hoysala King Vira Vellala, the Royas of Vijayanagar and the Nayak Kings of Thanjavur. Kopperunjinga, Krishna Devaraya and Sevappa Nayak required special mention as they had constructed important portions of the temples. The donors mentioned in the inscriptions are Kings, Queens, members of the royal family, King's Officers and servants, Vassal Kings, Guilds of merchants, Vellalas and others. The names of Chera, Chola, Pandya, Pallava, Rashtrakut, Hoysala and Tuluva Kings are also found in these epigraphical records. The inscriptions are a mine of information in matters of religion, history, civilisation, customs and manners of Tamilians, local administration and festivals in temples. According to the inscriptions Tiruvannamalai existed (1) on the

north bank of Pennai in Madurantaka Valanadu during Rajendra Chola I's reign (2) on the north bank of Pennai in Vankoppadi of Rajaraja Valanadu and Anna Nadu during the rule of Kulothunga III and (3) on the north bank of Pennai in Vanakoppadi Anna Nadu of Sengunra Kottam of Jayangondachola Mandalam. This mandalam is mainly said to correspond to Thondai Nadu. Saints Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar have sung Thevaram hymns on 274 Siva temples which exist in several nadus or divisions. Tiruvannamalai temple is said to be in Nadu (middle) division. Whether it originally existed in the middle division as a part of Thondai Nadu and later separated is a subject for scholars to decide.

From the data available in the inscriptions we can in a way trace the development in the construction of the temple. We find no Pallava inscriptions in the temple i.e., prior to 850 A.D. Saints Appar and Sambandar visited this place and sang Thevaram. They hailed in the seventh century during the Pallava rule and Sekkizhar the author of Periyapurnam who wrote about their lives mentions that they worshipped Arunachaleswarar in the temple on the top of the hill. Saint Sambandar makes particular mention of the temple in his songs. We have to presume that there existed a temple built of brick and mortar. The temple at the foot of the hill should have been constructed in stone by some early Chola Kings of the Vijayalaya dynasty. The oldest inscriptions are found on the walls of the Garbagraha of Annamalainathar shrine. The earliest of them is that of Parantaka I (A.D. 907-953). So the central shrine should have been constructed between A.D. 850 and A.D. 900. Inscriptions of the times of Rajendra I, Kulothunga III, Rajaraja III, Kopperunjingan (a scion of the Pallava race and a contemporary of Rajaraja III) and Kulasekara Pandya are found in the walls of the second Prakaram. Therefore the walls should have been erected during the latter half of the tenth century and the first half of the eleventh century. Inscriptions of the twelfth century are seen on the walls of Ekambreswarar and Chidambareswarar shrine.

INSCRIPTIONS

in the second Prakaram. One relates to the king Veerarajendra Chola (A.D. 1062-1070) and so these two shrines should have been built prior to that period. There are 33 inscriptions in the Kili Gopuram, the oldest of them being of the year A.D. 1063 in Veerarajendra's reign. The stone construction of the gopuram must have been earlier to that date. Unnamulai Ambal's Tirukamakottam (shrine) should have been built in the twelfth century. An inscription of A.D. 1340 relating to the period of Hoysala King Veera Vellala III is found in the temple. The Vallala Gopuram should have been built in his name after A.D. 1340 and before A.D. 1377, as an inscription of that year is found in the Vallala Gopuram. The gate of this tower is called "Veera Vallalan Tiruvatal." This king Veera Vellala III is taken to be the Vallala Maharaja mentioned in the Sthalapurana. Inscriptions of the years A.D. 1374 and A.D. 1388 are found in the gates of the west towers on the fourth and fifth Prakarams and so those prakaram walls should have been erected in the fourteenth century. The famous Krishna Devaraya of Vijayanagar constructed the eleven storeyed east tower, the thousand-pillared hall and the tank opposite to it. He began the building of the gopuram in A.D. 1512 and it was completed in A.D. 1590 by King Sevappa Nayak of Thanjavur. King Kopperunjinga of Pallava origin and his son Venavudaiyan were responsible for many constructions and munificent endowments to the temple. The Prakaram walls are called Veerakaran Tirumathil, vanatharayan Thirumathil Thiruvegam-bamudanjan Thirumathil and so on. One inscription refers to the erection of a small shrine called "Nangai Azhweeswaram" between the shrines of Annamalainathar and Unnamulai Ambal by a Pallava Princess in A.D. 1269 for which the temple authorities received 10,000 Gold coins and gave 13½ kulis of land. This small temple is not in existence now.

The names of the temple authorities mentioned in the inscriptions are Srirudrar, Srimaheswarar, Srimaheswara Kankani, Sthavathar, Sthanapathi, Maheswarar, Devakannigal, Koilkannakar,

Srikaryam etc. There were dancing girls doing service in the temple. There was an establishment called "Thiruveedhi Andar" for maintaining the temple streets with a supervisor called "Nayagam". One Rajanarayana Sambuvarayar (constructed one Gopuram in the temple (A.D. 1336-1337) and sitting under this Gopuram VamaDevar wrote "Jeernotharasathagam" a work relating to repairs of temples. One inscription prescribes rules for the sale of house-sites in temple streets. Another refers to "Tulabaradhana" i.e. weighing against gold by Krishna Devaraya in commemoration of his victories. We see references to the gilding of the temple by a Bana Chief and also the gilding of the central shrine. We also find mention of mutts such as Ammai Matam, Kangeyam Matam, Sri Rajendracholan Salai etc. A very important inscription of the time of Rajaraja III (A.D. 1216-1256) relates to gift of land made on 22-5-1232 by Meikandar of Thiruvannainallur. He is the author of Sivaganabodha, the foremost work of Saiva Siddhanta philosophy. This may be of use to scholars for fixing the date of Meikandar. How woman took interest in the service of humanity is the subject matter of one inscription. At the time of a drought when rice was selling at one-fourth measure for a gold coin one charitably-minded lady, Mangayarkarasiar, donated all her jewels, properties and lands for the construction of a dam across a river and formation of an irrigation tank.

The inscriptions in this temple contain a plethora of information on subjects such as repairs to tanks, reclamation by people of neglected lands, procedure for utilisation of taxes, remission of taxes on temple lands, Chief promising allegiance to the King and his Prime Minister, Merchants' vow to supply cloth for flag staff for the three annual festivals, assignment of lands in recognition of benefits conferred on the temple, enjoyment of equal privileges by Idangai and Valangai castes among Kaikolas etc. A majority of the inscriptions relate to endowments made in the form of gold, cows, bulls, sheep, lands, villages, ornaments, vessels, and paddy

for the sake of daily offerings, lighting of perpetual lamps, celebration of annual festivals, recitation of Vedas and Thevaram, maintenance of watchmen at the tower-gates and so on.

## XII. Temple Administration.

The Tiruvannamalai temple is under the general control of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (Administration) Department of the Madras State Government. There is a Board of Trustees with a Chairman. There is also an Executive Officer, who is a Government servant to look after the day-to-day administration of the temple. He has got the Devasthanam staff working under him. His office is located within the temple. There is also a library maintained by the Devasthanam.

## **Literature about Tiruvannamalai**

- (1) Namasivaya Swamigal—Sara Prabandam.
- (2) Tiruchithambala Navalor of Mambakkam—Annamalai Sadhagam.
- (3) Puranikar Sonachala Mudaliar — Thiruvannamalai Karthigai Deepa Vemba, Sonachala Venba, Sonachala Sadagam, Thiruvarunai Kalivenba.
- (4) Vadalur Ramalinga Swamigal — Thiruvannamalai Thiruvarutpathigam.
- (5) Arunachaleesar pathigam.
- (6) Arunachaleswarar pathigam.
- (7) Unnamulai Amman pathigam.
- (8) Mahavidwan Chinna Koundar—Unnamulai Amman Sadhagam.
- (9) Purasai Ashtavadhanam Sabapathi Mudaliar—Sri Arunachaleswarar pathigam.
- (10) Arunachaleswarar Navakarigai Malai.
- (11) Unnamalai Ammai Varugai Pathigam.
- (12) Maha Vidwan Kancheepuram Sabapathi Mudaliar—Arunachala Sadhagam.
- (13) Arunachala Akshara Malai.
- (14) Yazhpanam Nallur Maha Vidwasiromani Thiagaraja Pillai—Annamalaiyar Vannam.
- (15) Thirukuruhur Gnana Siddha Swamigal—Thiruvannamalai Pathigangal.
- (16) Annamalai Pancharatnam.
- (17) Ruthra Samathi Thothram.
- (18) Villiputhurar—Baratham.

- (19) Katchaiappa Sivachariar Kantha Puranam.
- (20) Eswara Swamigal Arunachala Mahatmya Vachanam.
- (21) English translation of the above by Major Alan W. Chadwick.
- (22) Guhai Namachivayar Tiruvarunai Thani Venba.
- (23) Sri Arunachaleswarar Unjir Varukkam Padaithar Pamalai.
- (24) Arunachala Akshara Mana Malai.
- (25) Arunachala Navamani Malai.
- (26) Arunachala Pathigam.
- (27) Arunachala Ashtagam.
- (28) Paul Briton—A message from Arunachala.
- (29) Dr. G. Pope—English Translation of Tiruvachagam.
- (30) Tiruvachagamani K. M. Balasubramanyam—English Translation of Tiruvachagam.
- (31) Thiru V. Kalyanasundar Mudaliar—Deepa Matchi, Deepa Vithi, Karthigai Vrathiam, Karthgai Deepa Perumai in his edition of Arunachala Puranam.
- (32) M. Balasubramania Mudaliar—Tiruvannamalai Thala Varalaru.

the experiments of the author of the paper.  
The results of the experiments of the author of the paper  
will be published in the near future.

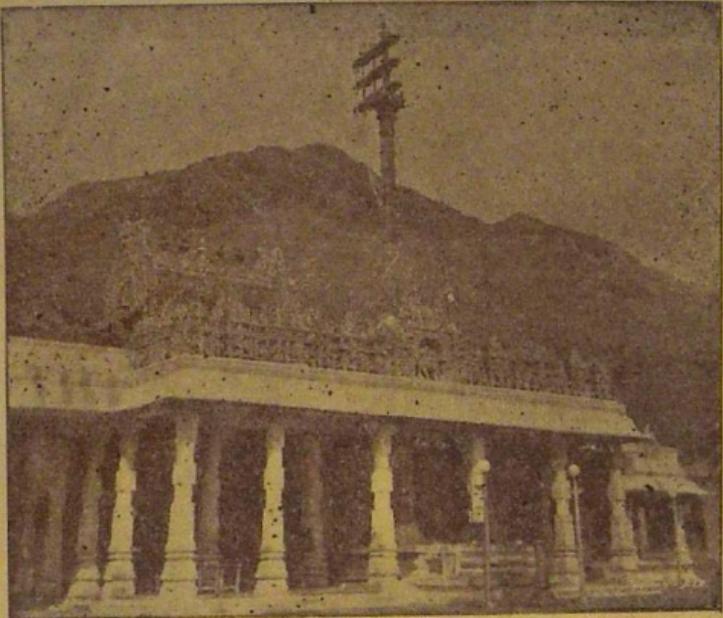
(2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) (11) (12) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (19) (20) (21) (22) (23) (24) (25) (26) (27) (28) (29) (30) (31) (32) (33) (34) (35)

## ERRATA

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Read as</i>
i	5	G. Kalyanam	G. Kaliyanam M.A. Dip. Econ
iv	8	Vada	Veda
iv	18	inscriptions	inscriptions
CONTENTS : No. 12		Tiruvannamaai	Tiruvannamalai
1	16	out streets	outskirts
3	35	contemporaneons	contemporaneous
5	8	"To help the reader a ground-plan of the temple with an index is provided—delete"	
5	29	sanetorum	sanctorum
6	31	towargate	tewergate
9	22	Tiruvannamali	Tiruvannamalai
11	4	Adi	Ani
12	4	firy	fiery
15	10	broading	brooding
15	10	attitute	attitude
16	2	Apar	Appar
16	27	Join	Jain
18	last but one line	Disikar	Desikar
19	9	It	At
19	24	Tiruvannamali	Tiruvannamalai
20	7	beyon	beyond
23	4	second	sacred
24	1	Mega	Maga
25	25	Pedas	Vedas
27	14	Afterwarde	Afterwards
27	16	cams	same
27	22	ninteenth	nineteenth
30	last line	een	seen
35	Serial No. (29)	Dr. G. Pope	Dr. G. U. Pope
	No. (31) line 2	Karthgai	<u>Karthigai</u>

## A T T R I B U T E

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35
36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45
46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55
56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75
76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85
86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95
96	97	98	99	100
101	102	103	104	105
106	107	108	109	110
111	112	113	114	115
116	117	118	119	120
121	122	123	124	125
126	127	128	129	130
131	132	133	134	135
136	137	138	139	140
141	142	143	144	145
146	147	148	149	150
151	152	153	154	155
156	157	158	159	160
161	162	163	164	165
166	167	168	169	170
171	172	173	174	175
176	177	178	179	180
181	182	183	184	185
186	187	188	189	190
191	192	193	194	195
196	197	198	199	200
201	202	203	204	205
206	207	208	209	210
211	212	213	214	215
216	217	218	219	220
221	222	223	224	225
226	227	228	229	230
231	232	233	234	235
236	237	238	239	240
241	242	243	244	245
246	247	248	249	250
251	252	253	254	255
256	257	258	259	260
261	262	263	264	265
266	267	268	269	270
271	272	273	274	275
276	277	278	279	280
281	282	283	284	285
286	287	288	289	290
291	292	293	294	295
296	297	298	299	300
301	302	303	304	305
306	307	308	309	310
311	312	313	314	315
316	317	318	319	320
321	322	323	324	325
326	327	328	329	330
331	332	333	334	335
336	337	338	339	340
341	342	343	344	345
346	347	348	349	350
351	352	353	354	355
356	357	358	359	360
361	362	363	364	365
366	367	368	369	370
371	372	373	374	375
376	377	378	379	380
381	382	383	384	385
386	387	388	389	390
391	392	393	394	395
396	397	398	399	400
401	402	403	404	405
406	407	408	409	410
411	412	413	414	415
416	417	418	419	420
421	422	423	424	425
426	427	428	429	430
431	432	433	434	435
436	437	438	439	440
441	442	443	444	445
446	447	448	449	450
451	452	453	454	455
456	457	458	459	460
461	462	463	464	465
466	467	468	469	470
471	472	473	474	475
476	477	478	479	480
481	482	483	484	485
486	487	488	489	490
491	492	493	494	495
496	497	498	499	500
501	502	503	504	505
506	507	508	509	510
511	512	513	514	515
516	517	518	519	520
521	522	523	524	525
526	527	528	529	530
531	532	533	534	535
536	537	538	539	540
541	542	543	544	545
546	547	548	549	550
551	552	553	554	555
556	557	558	559	560
561	562	563	564	565
566	567	568	569	570
571	572	573	574	575
576	577	578	579	580
581	582	583	584	585
586	587	588	589	590
591	592	593	594	595
596	597	598	599	600
601	602	603	604	605
606	607	608	609	610
611	612	613	614	615
616	617	618	619	620
621	622	623	624	625
626	627	628	629	630
631	632	633	634	635
636	637	638	639	640
641	642	643	644	645
646	647	648	649	650
651	652	653	654	655
656	657	658	659	660
661	662	663	664	665
666	667	668	669	670
671	672	673	674	675
676	677	678	679	680
681	682	683	684	685
686	687	688	689	690
691	692	693	694	695
696	697	698	699	700
701	702	703	704	705
706	707	708	709	710
711	712	713	714	715
716	717	718	719	720
721	722	723	724	725
726	727	728	729	730
731	732	733	734	735
736	737	738	739	740
741	742	743	744	745
746	747	748	749	750
751	752	753	754	755
756	757	758	759	760
761	762	763	764	765
766	767	768	769	770
771	772	773	774	775
776	777	778	779	780
781	782	783	784	785
786	787	788	789	790
791	792	793	794	795
796	797	798	799	800
801	802	803	804	805
806	807	808	809	810
811	812	813	814	815
816	817	818	819	820
821	822	823	824	825
826	827	828	829	830
831	832	833	834	835
836	837	838	839	840
841	842	843	844	845
846	847	848	849	850
851	852	853	854	855
856	857	858	859	860
861	862	863	864	865
866	867	868	869	870
871	872	873	874	875
876	877	878	879	880
881	882	883	884	885
886	887	888	889	890
891	892	893	894	895
896	897	898	899	900
901	902	903	904	905
906	907	908	909	910
911	912	913	914	915
916	917	918	919	920
921	922	923	924	925
926	927	928	929	930
931	932	933	934	935
936	937	938	939	940
941	942	943	944	945
946	947	948	949	950
951	952	953	954	955
956	957	958	959	960
961	962	963	964	965
966	967	968	969	970
971	972	973	974	975
976	977	978	979	980
981	982	983	984	985
986	987	988	989	990
991	992	993	994	995
996	997	998	999	1000



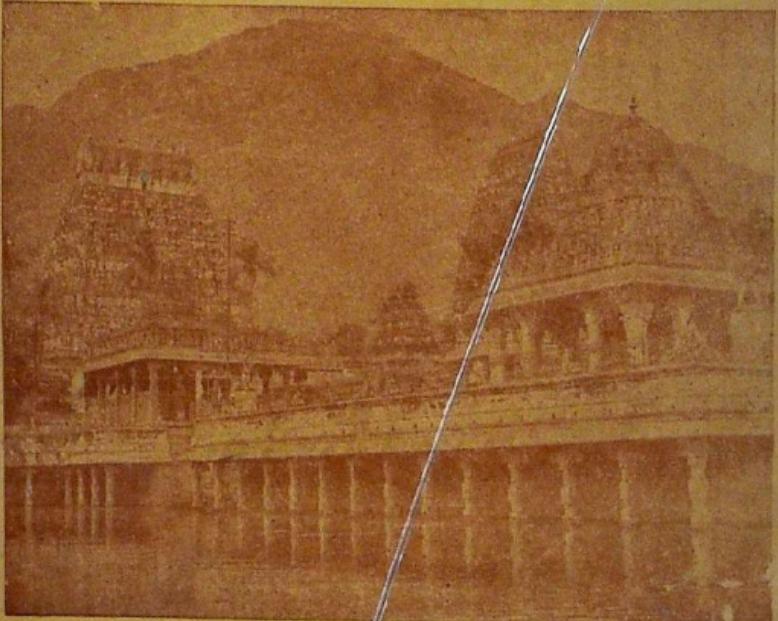
SRI ANNAMALAYAR SANNIDHI



SRI UNNAMULAI AMMAI SANNIDHI



VALLALA MAHARAJAN GOPURAM, BIG NANDI AND  
RUDRAKSHA MANTAPAM



SIVAGANGAI, TEMPLE AND MOUNTAIN