

[Two Saiva Saints Arrive From India to Grace San Marga](#)

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Two Saiva Saints Arrive From India to Grace San Marga Black Granite Statues of Tirumular And Tiruvalluvar Settled on Kauai

On Friday, February first, the Hindu holy day, two large wooden crates containing solid granite statues of Saint Tirumular and Saint Tiruvalluvar were ceremoniously uncrated at the San Marga Lingam square where they had been placed a few days before. Each of the crates weighed over 3,000 pounds. Joining Gurudev in the unveiling were several monastics, Derwyn, Carol and Jeff Lackey, and Christopher and Diana Hayden - all Kauai residents.

The pilgrims gathered toward sunset, armed with crowbars and hammers, to be blessed by a brief shower - some of that Hawaiian liquid sunshine. But the sky soon cleared and the board-rending began in earnest. The unveiled saints, sitting silently in the dim light of dusk, showed themselves to be exquisitely carved in black granite. They were perhaps more massive than expected. They have been placed temporarily at the south end of the Lingam square at the end of the Lingam square at the end of San Marga facing the Lingam with Saint Tirumular on the left as you face the Lingam and the Wailua River and Saint Tiruvalluvar on the right. Ultimately the two statues will be placed around the proposed Path of the Nayanars, a foot path circumnavigates a small lake. Placed perhaps fifty or a hundred yards apart along the path will be six Saivite saints - Appar, Sundarar, Sambandar, Manickavasagar, Tirumular and Tiruvalluvar. Each will have a small shrine built around him, and a plaque or kiosk will describe the life of the saint and some of his writings. Pilgrims will be able to walk from shrine to shrine, sitting in secluded niches provided for meditation and quietly reflect on the wisdom and exemplary lives of these extraordinary men. Of course, these plans will take years to manifest, but the arrival of the first two statues has brought with them a heightened inspiration to undertake the task.

During the uncrating ceremonies, Gurudev told the stories of the two saints of our religion. "Saint Tirumular is the very fountainhead of Saiva Siddhanta, and his scripture, the Tirumantiram, is considered the final authority on subtle matters of philosophy and theology in Saiva Siddhanta. In fact, it is said to contain the whole of Saiva Siddhanta. Tirumular lived in North India in the second century B.C. He

was an accomplished siddhar, sent to the South to renew the great revelations. He had to walk all the way. His name was Sundaranatha. Enroute, Sundaranatha halted in the village of Tiruvavaduthurai to find the body of a cowherd, named Mulan, who had died. The cows were wandering around aimlessly, very unhappy with their master's death. The sight moved the peripatetic sage deeply and, leaving his body in a hidden place, he entered and revived the moribund Mulan and cared for the cattle. Later, he was unable to find his original physical body, which he took to be God's message that he should keep the South Indian body and serve in that way. Of course, there were certain advantages. For one thing, he could now speak the native language and knew the customs of the South. He stayed in the village and spent the rest of his life recording the Saiva Agamas in the local language, Tamil. There is a story that he lived to a venerable old age. According to this story, Tirumular meditated quietly in a cave and once each year broke his silent vigil to write down the essence of that year's meditations. Each verse composed in this manner was just four lines long, but the wisdom each contained was boundless. He wrote 3,000 verses in all. They are called the Tirumantiram, the "Holy Mantram." It is interesting to note that three days ago, on the same day that the statue of Saint Tirumular arrived from Mahabalipuram the last tantra of the Tirumantiram also arrived. On the same day! What a coincidence, for these have been different projects, both taking several years each. So the saint arrived along with his scripture. We will be publishing the Tirumantiram in South India. It is a very difficult scripture, extremely esoteric and filled with insight. This will be the first edition ever published in English to my knowledge."

The two saints are both seated composing their respective scriptures. In those early days there was no paper and no pens, so writing was accomplished with a stylus, the characters being scraped or scratched into a specially prepared leaf, called an Ola leaf. Many ancient Scriptures and literature were produced in this manner, and it is amazing that some of the original writings so made still exist today! Certainly no modern day paper would have withstood the centuries so well! The saints are shown with small lap tables which can even today be found in India.

Saint Tiruvalluvar, a native of South India, also lived about 2,000 years ago. In his life he produced a single and small volume, but it is so filled with wisdom that most consider that any further works by him would have been superfluous. His book is called the Tirukural, the "Holy Kural!" or "Holy Verse." It contains a mere 1,330 two line verses, but together they examine the fullest range of human virtue, and caution against the gamut of human vice. In South India these verses are held in most sacred respect, sworn upon in the courts and carved by craftsmen into the marble walls of the temples.

There is an interesting story that attends these two statues. It seems that the friend of one of the families of a devotee of Gurudev's was travelling last year through India and stopped at a small compound to observe a bevy of stone carvers at their trade. "Where are you from?" asked the artisan. "Hawaii," the traveler replied. "That's an interesting coincidence. We are carving these statues for the Saiva Siddhanta Church which is also in Hawaii." "Well! The coincidence is even greater then. I know the church very well. One of my friend's sons is a monastic there." Small world.

Our saints will stay near the Lingam until their pavilions along the Path of the Nayanars are constructed. Pilgrims to San Marga will certainly enjoy them, and we all look forward to the four other Nayanars and to the other stone work that is now being done for the Church in Mahabalipuram.