

[Eelaththu Thiruneri Tamil Manram of Colombo - Servants of Saivism](#)

Category : [February 1982](#)

Published by Anonymous on Feb. 01, 1982

## Eelaththu Thiruneri Tamil Manram of Colombo - Servants of Saivism

Gunanayagam, A. Eelaththu Thiruneri Tamil Manram of Colombo, Sri Lanka, was established in the year 1972. It had been functioning in an informal way for many years before it was vested with a name and formally inaugurated on June 30th, 1972 with the blessing of the Head of the Kanchipuram Thondaimandalam Meikandar Aadheenam, the late Seela Thiru Jnanapragasa Thesiga Paramasariya Swamigal.

The activities of the Manram mainly consist of the study, promotion and dissemination of the Saiva religion with the twelve Saiva Thirumurais and the fourteen Meikanda Sastras as the base. These activities take the following forms:

Conducting of classes in Saiva religious and ethical works.

Classes in Thirukkural, Tirumantiram and the Meikanda Sastras had been conducted under the able guidance of the well-known Tamil-Sanskrit Pundit, Sivam Karunalaya Pandiyanar until his demise in 1976. Thereafter, a group study of the Periyapuranam is being continued. An important aspect of this study is the detailed perusal of the Thirumurai hymns sung by the Nayanmars at the various temples in the course of their pilgrimages, as and when the references to them occur in the Periyapuranam text.

Guru Puja

Guru Puja observances are held on the due dates of the four Saiva Nayanmars (Thirujnana Sampantha Swamigal, Thirunavukkarasu Swamigal, Sunderamoorthy

Swamigal and Manikkavasaga Swamigal), the four Santhana Kuravars (Meikanda Theva Nayanar, Arul Nandi Sivachariar, Maraijnana Sampantha Sivachariar and Umapathy Sivachariar) and three other Saints, namely: Thiruvallava Nayanar, Thirumoola Nayanar and Chekkilar Swamigal.

Annual Thirumurai Vizha, for three days or more, just preceding the Thiruvembavai festival, in December

This includes a one-day complete recital of the Thiruvagasam from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Maheswara Puja (serving of the midday meal) takes place on this day. Prizes of religious books are given to the young people who perform the recital best. The other highlights of the Thirumurai Vizha are the recital of the holy hymnals and learned discourses by competent persons on the Thirumurais and the Saiva Sastras.

A two-hour prayer meeting is held on every full-moon day, by turn, in the homes of members and friends.

Publication of religious books or booklets for free distribution or at subsidized rates.

One such publications was the 9th Thirumurai, consisting of 301 hymns, complete with extensive explanatory notes on the difficult terms and phrases. This book had been out of print in the open market for some time.

Publication of monthly journal in Tamil, called the The Meikandar Neri, confined to Saiva topics, meant for free distribution to members.

This journal made its first appearance in 1972 and was published regularly, every month, for eight years. Owing to certain difficulties, this has temporarily become a once-in-two months issue. It is hoped to resume the monthly publication before long.

Periodical talks are delivered on religious topics by members of the Manram over the Sri Lanka Radio.

For about a year, the Manram had been conducting a special weekly program over the Sri Lanka Radio. It was called the Sivaneri, and consisted of talks and a quiz program specially meant for children and carrying with it an award of prizes for winners of the quiz contest.

Our Manram consists of 46 life members and 204 ordinary members. The emphasis is on attracting younger members to the Manram.

The activities of our Manram are meant to be a humble attempt to bring about a check upon lethargic attitude and fissiparous tendencies discernible in the local Saiva fold. During the period of about 450 years of foreign rule in Sri Lanka, until the advent of independence in 1948, there was a definite decline in the field of Saiva religion and culture. These would have been wiped out completely if not for the timely emergence of the great Arumuga Navalar of Jaffna, in the 19th century. Thanks to him, there was a renaissance for a time, but again a certain decadence has set in during the present century. The Saiva people are fast losing their moorings. The English educated, considering themselves to be the intelligent lot, generally pay scant attention to their religion and culture, which they even look down upon as out-of-date, and lend themselves to be weaned away by various neo-religious movements, little realizing the scientific basis and greatness of our own Saiva religion. It is our humble hope that in its own quiet, non-ostentatious way the Manram will in some measure succeed in creating the necessary atmosphere for this run-away tendency to be arrested even in a small say, so as to first ensure stability, and thereafter, growth.

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