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thunchan parambu



Thunchan Parambu

Thunchan Parambu was the school where Thunchath Ramanujan Ezhuthachan pursuing his family vocation taught his students in the sixteenth century. It was also his home. He conducted his classes in the cool shade of the Kanjiram (Nux Vomica) tree that still stands in the compound.





Teacher to Students
and Father
to the Language



Ezhuthachan was a great poet. A prolific writer, his best known works are the transcreation of Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Other works include *Harinama Keerthanam* and *Irupathinalu Vritham*, both believed to be composed as texts for his disciples, *Kaivalyanavaneetham Kilippaattu*, the transcreation of a Tamil work by Thandavaraya Swamikal of Tanjore, *Devi Mahatmyam*, *Sri Mahabhagavatam Kilippaattu* and *Chintaratnam*, a Vedantic treatise in verse. It was through these works that he revolutionized the Malayalam language that in his days was a mere variant of the Dravidian colloquial parlance. He virtually created a new language by his judicious assimilation of Sanskrit words and structural modification of syntax. The grateful people of Kerala regard him as the father of the Malayalam language. His works brought the epics within the comprehension of the common people and made people familiar not only with the stories but also the philosophical content of the Vedas and the Upanishads through dialogues between characters as well as the author's own reflections and narrations. Ezhuthachan adopted the genre of poetry known as the Kilippaattu in which the Kili (a parrot) is the narrator.

His Life a Poem in Itself

Ezhuthachan was born in Trikkantiyur in Tirur district where the Thunchan Parambu is situated. He showed signs of spiritual urge and hunger very early in his life. In the prime of his youth he set out on a long journey in search of knowledge. He travelled extensively in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, learned Tamil and Telugu and delved deep into the Upanishads. He was also drawn, at this time, to the Bakthi Movement, the main feature of which was that even the layman was emotionally involved in it. He also enhanced his knowledge of Sanskrit and learned the Vedas and Upanishads, something that would have been impossible for him in his native land because of his under-privileged caste. After return from his knowledge expedition he settled down in Thunchan Parambu and devoted him time to teaching and writing. Towards the end of his life he moved to Chittoor in Palghat district where he lived more or less in ascetic seclusion spending his time in meditation. Apart from this preface of information about his life and times, an authentic biography of Ezhuthachan, undoubtedly one of the greatest luminaries of Indian literature, has not yet been written.





The Language Celebrates its Master



Thunchan Parambu suffered disuse and neglect for over three centuries. In 1906, on the 17th of October Vidwan Manavikraman Ettan Raja, the crown prince Zamorin called a meeting of eminent writers and social workers at Thunchan Parambu to consider ways of reviving the place. However, it was only in December 1954 when a committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Mr. K.P. Kesava Menon that the move took concrete shape. A black granite Mandapam and a small auditorium were built. The foundation stone was laid in December 1961 by Mr. Pattom Thanu Pillai who was the Chief Minister of the state. It is noteworthy that the buildings were inaugurated by the same eminent freedom fighter in January 1964. He was the Governor of Punjab then.



Recent History

In 1964 the government formed a twelve member committee to manage Thunchan Parambu and to plan its further development. Gradually the place came to be widely known among Malayalis and it evolved into a cultural centre. In 1993 Mr. M.T. Vasudevan Nair took over as the Chairman of the committee, Mr. Kumaran Nair was the Secretary. In 2001, the government converted the Committee into a trust and granted substantial autonomy to it. The trust has seventeen Members. Mr. M.T. Vasudevan Nair is the Chairman.





Cultural Leadership

Thunchan Parambu has a four and a half acre campus. Today it holds a position of eminence in Kerala's cultural arena. The Trust conducts many seminars and conventions in the campus that are attended by renowned scholars, musicians, artists and dancers of India.



The Thunchan Festival



Every year the activities in Thunchan Parambu reach their peak with the Thunchan Festival. The whole town of Tirur rises to the occasion. The festival is a rare combination of art, literature and enlightenment. The iron stylus believed to have been used by the Father of Malayalam for writing on palm leaves is taken out in a grand procession led by eminent personalities of art and literature. The townspeople gather in hundreds along the way. The programmes in which eminent personalities from many parts of India representing diverse languages and regional cultures participate are attended by a wide cross section of the population, students forming an important segment of the audience. Seminars on specific subjects are organized. The special session of poets at which eminent poets read out their creations is a great favorite. The Festival is held in the first week of February every year.



The Vidhyarambam Festival

This is a very old ceremony that has existed in Kerala for centuries. Vidya means learning and Arambha means beginning. This festival marks the beginning of learning for young children. The Vidhyarambam ceremony is known as Ezhuthiniruthu in Malayalam. The word may be broadly translated as the process of being made to sit down to write. It is held in two places on the Campus. Traditional teachers hold it in the granite Mandapam. At the same time five or six eminent writers conduct the ceremony in the Saraswathy Mandapam. The child is asked open its mouth and the Guru writes the first letters with a golden ring on the child's tongue. Then the Guru holds the index finger of the child and leads it to write a whole line on rice that is spread on a platter. The ceremony ends with the child handing over the Dakshina – respectful offering – to the Guru. This is usually a small amount of money placed of a betel leaf. The Ezhuthiniruthu has no parallel in any other culture and is one secular festival in which people of all communities take part.





The Literary Museum

The Literary Museum is a great attraction for visitors to Thunchan Parambu. The exhibits trace the evolution of Malayalam language and literature. The Museum also has tools and articles associated with many eminent writers of the past apart from Thunchath Ramanujan Ezhuthachan. The history of the language is narrated through several media such as visual clippings, sound tracks, paintings and photographs.





Thunchan Memorial Library

The library has a substantial collection of books ranging from rare old books to contemporary literature. It is a centre of attraction for scholars and researchers from all over the state. The rapidly expanding library is computerized and manned by trained personnel. Hence visitors have easy access to the books.





Grandhappura: The house of Manuscripts

The Grandhappura holds a precious collection of old manuscripts written on Palmyra leaves. It is one of the authorized centers of the National Manuscript Mission. The manuscripts cover an area that is wider than just literature and consist of a good many documents that touch upon science and arts of ancient and medieval times. It is a valuable source of material for research scholars.

Thunchan Research Centre

The Thunchan Research Centre supported by the Thunchan Memorial Library and the Grandhappura is recognized by the Calicut University. Many scholars doing research for M. Phil. and Ph.D rely on the resources of The Thunchan research centre. The serene atmosphere of Thunchan Parambu is eminently suited for the pursuit of knowledge.



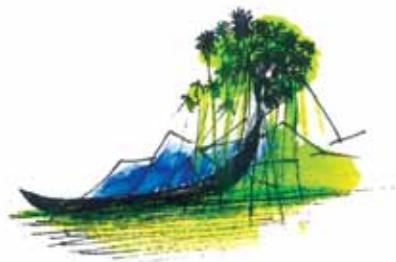


Other features

Cottages and dormitories with all modern amenities are available to visitors to Thunchan Parambu. The place has both open air and in house auditoriums.

Location

Thunchan Parambu is easily accessible. Tirur and the banks of the Nila River that flows by have a history that steeped in art and literature. The nearest Railway station is one and a half kilometres from Thunchan Parambu. It is connected by a good road to the Calicut International airport that is only 27 kilometres away.





Thunchan Memorial Trust

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