

## Srimathe ramanujaya Namaha

Our Sri Vanamamalai Mutt (Article written by Our Sri Swamy, HH Sri Kaliyan Vanamamalai Ramanuja Jeeyar swamy in the December 2007 edition of the Geethacharyan magazine, Special edition on the occasion of 75<sup>th</sup> thirunakshatra celebration of Sri Swamy)

1. Our Sri Mutt which was established by Sri Varavaramuneendra swami/Sri Manavala mamunigal through his first and foremost disciple among Ashta diggaja shisyas Sri Ponnadikkal Jeeyar Swami in the year 1410 A.D. is rendering unparalleled great service to the cause of Sri Vaishnavism, is very famous all over our country. In Northern part of our Bharat it is by the name Sri Thodadri peeta.
2. It has 83 branches all over India and Nepal. In all those peethas Mahants/Acharyas, appointed by the Head Mutt are doing their propagation service very well.
3. This Mutt has got its most respected Dynasty of sanyasins/Sri Vaishnava Jeeyar swamys without any breakage from the year 1410 A.D. till this time.
4. Our Ponnadikkal Jeeyar, the first one of our Guruparampara became famous by his name, because of being main instrument for Spreading the name and fame of his great Acharya Sri Manavalamamuni in a most effective manner.
5. He lives a full like of hundred years and had made his yathra throughout our country. During the time of his sojourn at Varanasi, Swami Sri Ramananda whose disciples were Sri Tulasidas and Sri Kabirdas became the shisya of Ponnadikkal Jeeyar. This most creditable religious and spiritual connection, our Sri Mutt has got with those famous three gurus.
6. In the Guruparampara of famous Mudaliyandan/Dasarathy the closest disciple of Sri Ramanuja, Sri Appachiar Anna of that age was affectionately ordered by Sri Manavala mamunigal to become the disciple of Sri Ponnadikkal Jeeyar. Sri Appachiar Anna took pancha samskaram from Ponnadikkal Jeeyar and thus became one among the Ashtadiggajas of our Ponnadikkal Jeeyar. Our Sri Mutt considers this a very great credit to itself. Similarly Sri Dhoddacharya/Mahacharya of Sholingar Guruparampara became the disciple of our Ponnadikkal Jeeyar. The famous "Ramyajamatra" Tanian slika was dedicated by

Mahacharya and he was the author of Prapatti Mangalashasana stotras towards our ponnadikkal Jeeyar. This is also felt by Sri Mutt, a most creditable thing to itself.

7. All our Sri Mutts peetadhipathis have been great Ubhaya Vedanta vidwans and especially some of them have been matchless vidwans in all four shastras viz., 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. Some have been great siddhapurushas. Many contemporary renowned and most reputed vidwans had been wonder-struck having experienced highest level of scholarship of these Jeeyar swamys of our Sri Mutt. So many examples we have historically and we don't elaborate here in this small article.
8. Our branch Mutts were established in so many Divyadeshas in south and in Northern part of Bharat. Many kings had become our Mutt's shisyas and they have dedicated most valuable ornaments, golden vessels etc to our temple.
9. We are proud to say that the first Rashtrapathi of our India Dr.Rajendra Prasadji with his entire family made his samashrayana and included himself in our vast shisyavarga. As on date our Sri Mutt has not less than ten lac shisyas spread all over the world.
10. Sri 'Vallabacharya' had come to Sri Vanamamalai, stayed here for about a fortnight for learning sampradaya tattvas. That time the lake Chetru Thamarai was full and looked like a sea. In its main ghat he performed his Havan and had his deep Dhyana whenever people of Sri Vallabha Cult come here, they consider themselves fortunate, having had darshan of this Ghat.
11. We have closest religious and spiritual connection with Sri Swami Narayana. When he was a young person of 18 years, after making his Bharata Bhramana for seven years from his age of eleven, from Kanyakumari arrived here at Vanamamalai in the year 1799 A.D. He was extremely attracted by majestic personality and scholarship of then peetadhipathy, the 16<sup>th</sup> Jeeyar Sri Thirunagari Thiruvankata Jeeyar swamy. He was known by name Neelakanta Varni. He stayed here for three months, became disciple of Jeeyar swami by having Panchasamskara. This was wonderful climaxical point regarding this samashrayana that Sri Neelakanta Varni got the name (dasya nama) as Thodadri Ramanuja das. The swami Narayana Panth cherishes this great turning point in Sri Neelakantavarni who is worshipped as Sri SwamiNarayana, the Aaradhya Deva of this world-wide very huge cult.

12. The Chaitanya MahaPrabhu, the Gowranga had come to our vanamamalai, stayed here for a few days and wished to get the book/Palm leaf script Sri Krishnakarnamruta of Bilwa Mangala/Leela shuka, which depicts the Leelas of Sri Krishna by its nectorlike stanzas and words. Our Sri Manavala Mamunigal has included a sloka of this Sri Karna karnamruta "ya preethihi vidhurarpithE" in his Nithya Granta. The Gowranga Prabhu was directed to go to the king of Thiruvananthapuram, where he got the 'karna Mantra' and wrote commentary to this Bhakthi Rasa literature.
13. Another very much notable and interesting historical fact about our Sri Mutt is the following one. Sri Vanamamalai is called "Sri Romasha Kshetra" also because here the same Romasha performed his penance for years together and as per the divine order of Sri Todadhrinath Bhagavan he lived here permanently. Significantly here all persons, in the beginning of their sankalpa, uttering "Romasha KshEtrE thOdAdrinAthaswami sannidhow" Romasha Maharishi's Ashrama has been here. That place is now very much preserved and in the temple of Lord Krishna Romasha's Vighraha is very much there. That was the areas of the Ashrama. In the age of Sri Nathamuni, Sri Vanamamalai Andan, his close disciple lived here in Vanamamalai, looking after entire worship service of lord Thodadhrinatha, as per his Guru Sri Nathamuni's order. During the time of Sri Alavandar his close disciple Sri Deivanayaka Andan administered all the affairs of the temple and Ashrama. It is said that ancient Ashrama only was given new shape and converted as Sri Vanamamalai mutt by Ponnadikkal Jeeyar as per his Acharya's order and direction. There is great indication of this historically valuable fact that Sri Nathamuni yogi's descendants known as Araiyaars at Srirangam are shining disciples of our Sri Vanamamalai Sri Mutt, because of their true love, affection and devotion to our Mutt.

Conclusion: My Dear Spiritual Friends! Having accepted the request of the secretary of Thirunakshatra committee, I could write a few lines showing greatness of our Sri Vanamamalai temple and our Sri Vanamamalai Sri Mutt. This was very brief account only. If this small write up of mine motivates the readers for getting further more details, I shall consider myself fortunate, My Wholehearted Mangalashanas to you all

Sri Ramanujan  
Aippasi-19  
Sri Manavalamamunigal  
Utsavam-2  
Unjal Utsavam-9