

THE TEMPLE PHOTOGRAPHS

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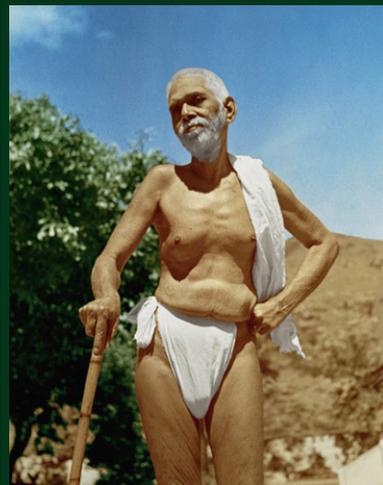
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Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
and Mount Arunachala

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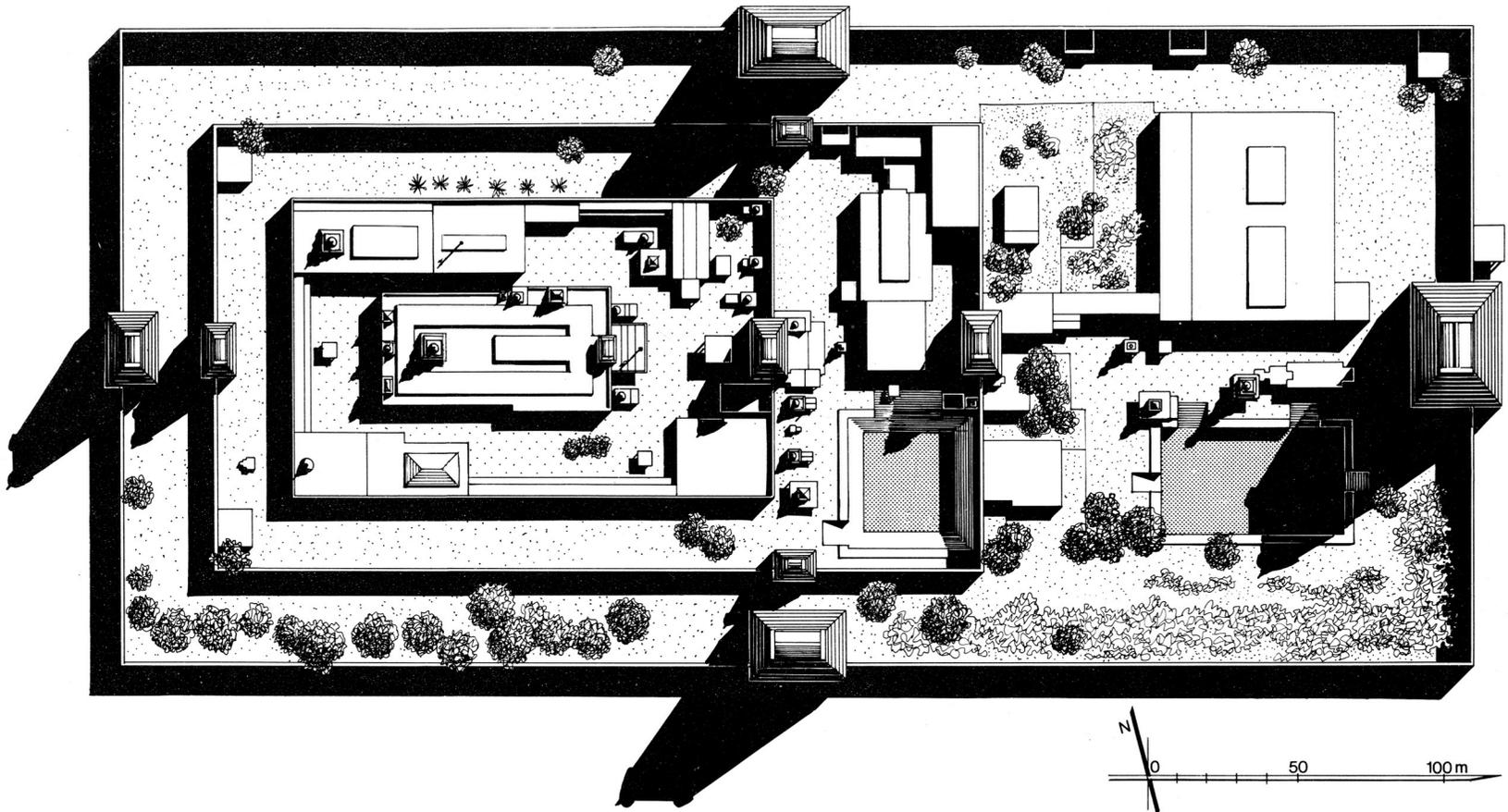
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Sri Arunachaleswara Temple



Isometric drawing from the book 'Tiruvannamalai', one of a set of five published by the 'Institut Française, Pondicherry'.

The great Temple at Tiruvannamalai houses the self-created Lingam called Sri Arunachaleswarar, after which the Temple is named. This Siva Lingam is one of the five Sthalams known as 'Pancha Bootha Lingams' (the five elements comprising the Universe), which stretch across southern India; it is known as 'Theyu Lingam' (Lingam of fire), and intense heat is felt emanating from it.

The Temple covers an area of 24 acres; it has 9 gopurams (towers), the largest of which is 135 feet by 98 feet at the base and is 217 feet high, it has eleven tiers - this tower is called Raja Gopuram and forms the main entrance to the Temple compound (above right). The other three outer gopurams have, 10, 9 and 8 tiers, whilst the inner three facing east-west have six tiers each, and the two smallest facing north-south have four tiers each.

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Sri Arunachaleswara Temple



Above: The Temple from Arunachala Hill.

Below: Raja Gopuram photographed from the market square in front of the Temple.



Above: The entrance to the Temple through Raja Gopuram.

Below: Inside the Temple looking back towards Raja Gopuram. The 1000 Pillared Hall is to the left.



Sri Arunachaleswara Temple



Above: Another view looking back towards Raja Gopuram. The biggest Nandi in the Temple is to the immediate right.

Below: From Raja Gopuram - Kambattuilaiyanar Shrine is directly to the front and the 1000 Pillared Hall is to the right.

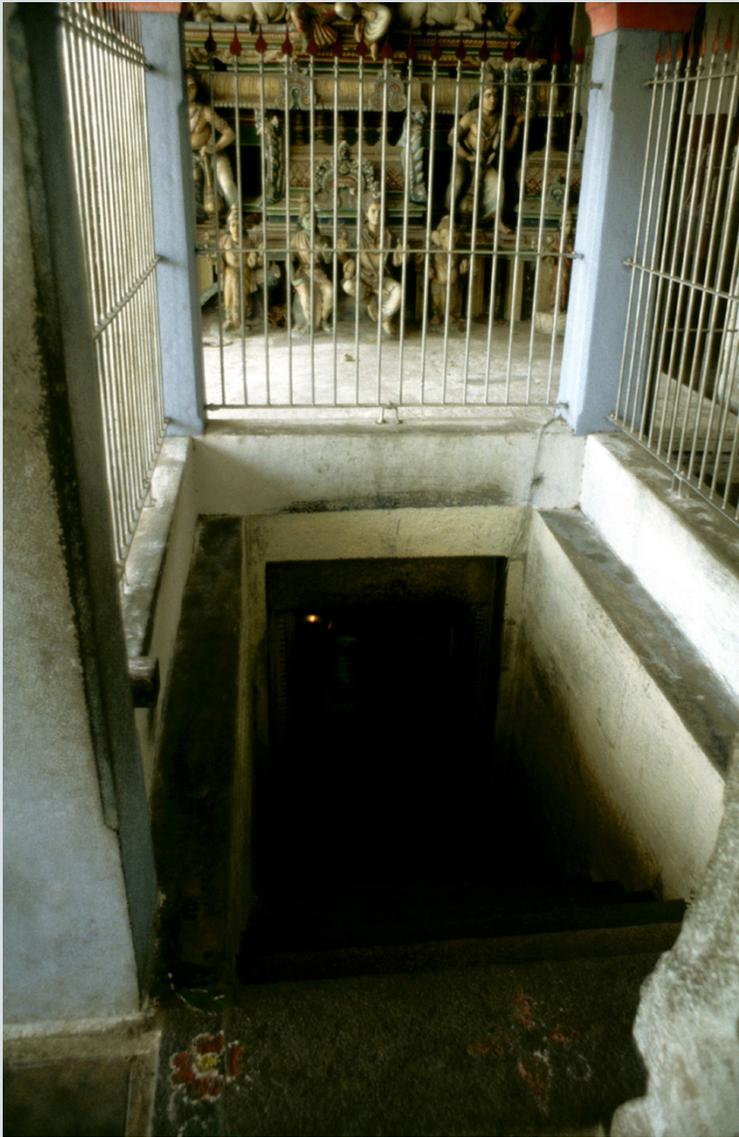


Above: Inside the part of the 1000 pillared hall that leads to Patalalingam where Bhagavan spent many months after His arrival in Tiruvannamalai.

Below: The highly decorative gopuram over the underground Patalalingam shrine.



Sri Arunachaleswara Temple



Above: The entrance to Patalalingam - down the steps.



Above: Inside the shrine itself. This is a very small space with little or no ventilation.

Sri Arunachaleswara Temple



Above: Rudraksa Mandapam, Periyandi Mandapam and King Vallala Gopuram in the centre of the picture, the 1000 Pillared Hall is to the right.

Below: As above, but this was taken from beside Sivaganga Tirtham. The Ganesh shrine is to the left on the bank of the Tirtham.



Above: Foreground, Periyandi Mandapam (the biggest Nandi) and the Temple Vehicle Mandapam behind it - the 1000 Pillared Hall is to the right.

Below: The Periyandi decorated during Kartikai Deepam.



Sri Arunachaleswara Temple



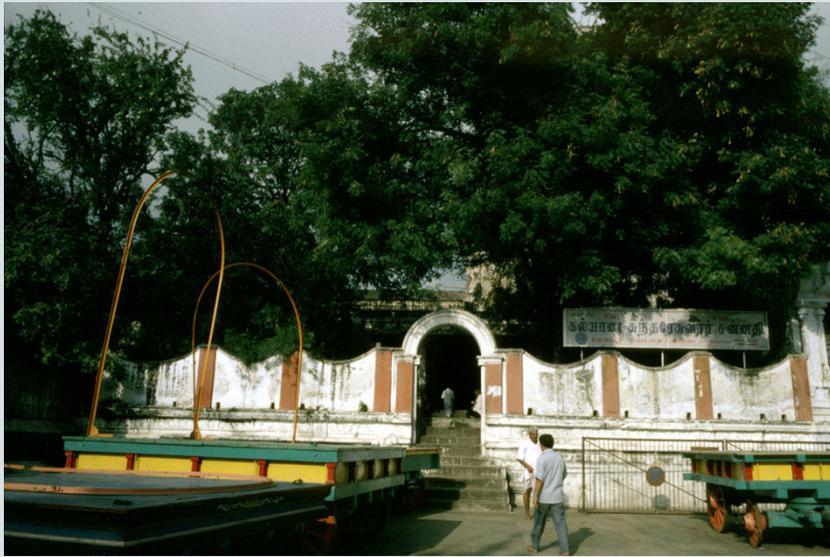
Above and Below: Two views taken across Sivaganga Tirtham. Raja Gopuram is behind the photographer. The first shrine to the right in the lower picture is Nanambal Mandapa, the Ganesh shrine is on the far corner of the Tank. Behind the Ganesh shrine, are King Vallala Gopuram, followed by Kili Gopuram, Pey Gopuram and Ammani Ammal Gopuram is to the right.



Above and Below: Two more views of the Ganesh shrine on the bank of Sivaganga Tirtham. These two photographs taken in February 2000 show the scaffolding and palm leaf covering placed over the towers as they are thoroughly cleaned for the forthcoming Kumbabhishekam.



Sri Arunachaleswara Temple



Top: Entrance to Kalyana Sundarswara Shrine, to the left of King Vallala Gopuram.

Bottom: The wide steps visible to the right lead up to the Arunagirinathar Mandapam shrine; the steps to King Vallala Gopuram are to the left of those.



Above: The steps leading up to King Vallala Gopuram and into the fourth Prakaram of the Temple. The Arunagirinathar Shrine is to the right.

Sri Arunachaleswara Temple



These three photographs are of Bhrahma Tirtham which is situated inside the fourth Prakaram of the Temple. The left and top right photographs are taken from in front of King Vallala Gopuram looking south towards the 157 foot high Thirumanjana Gopuram. The 171 foot high Ammani Ammal Gopuram is behind the photographer. The bottom right photograph shows the view looking back towards King Vallala Gopuram; the Bhairava Temple is to the right of the tower and the building just visible to the left behind the mantapam is the elephant house.

Sri Arunachaleswara Temple



Left: Two views of Kili Gopuram and Nandi taken from in front of the elephant house. Access to the inner sanctum of the Temple is through Kili Gopuram.



Above: View taken through one of the gates.

Sri Arunachaleswara Temple



These two photographs taken within the third Prakaram, show the Stala Vriksha (the sacred Makizha tree), and the inner sanctum of Sri Arunachaleswara wherein the sacred Lingam is housed.



Above: Stala Vriksha and Kalyana Mandapam (wedding hall) .

Below: Looking north from Stala Vriksha towards the Ammani Ammal Gopuram. Sampantha Vinayagar Shrine is to the front left; the entrance to the inner shrine is just beyond that.



Sri Arunachaleswara Temple



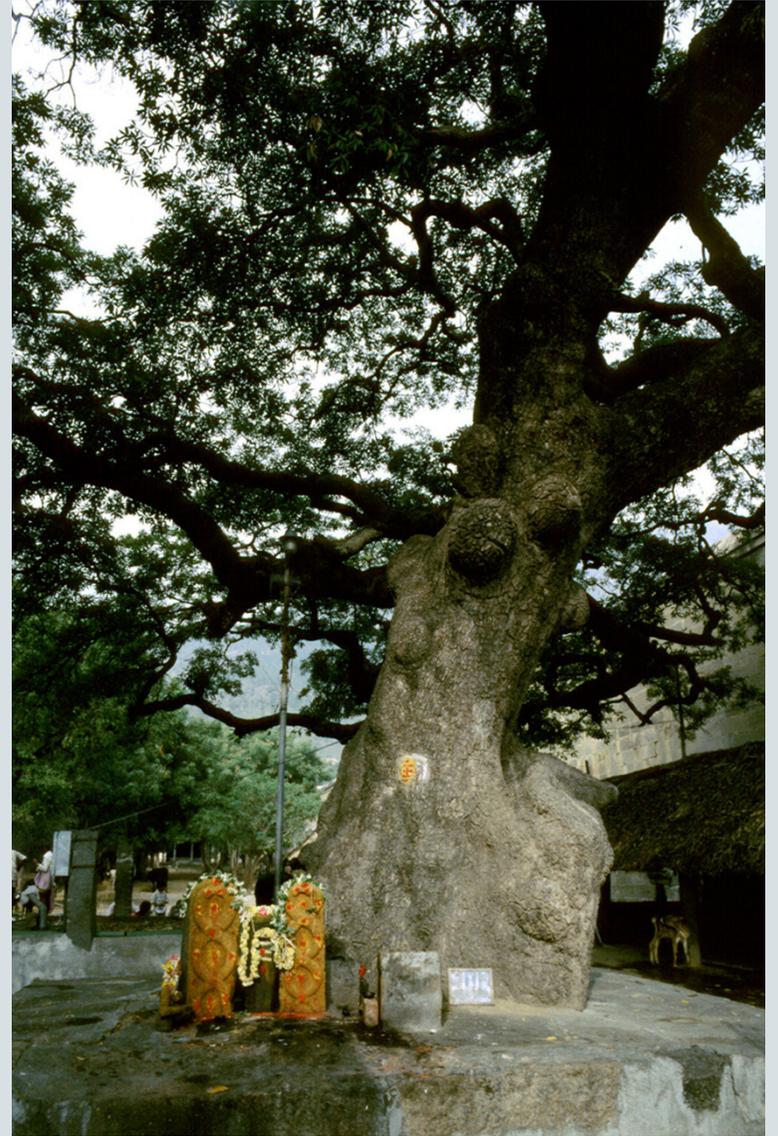
Top: Unnamulaiyamma, the Mother's Temple.

Bottom: The Temple offices located in the Vasantha Mandapam.



Above: Shrines dedicated to the Pancha-Buta Stala (the five basic elements).

Sri Arunachaleswara Temple



Above: The Temple Goshala entrance and the Shrine inside.

Sri Arunachaleswara Temple



Left: The Temple Elephant outside Sri Ramanasramam

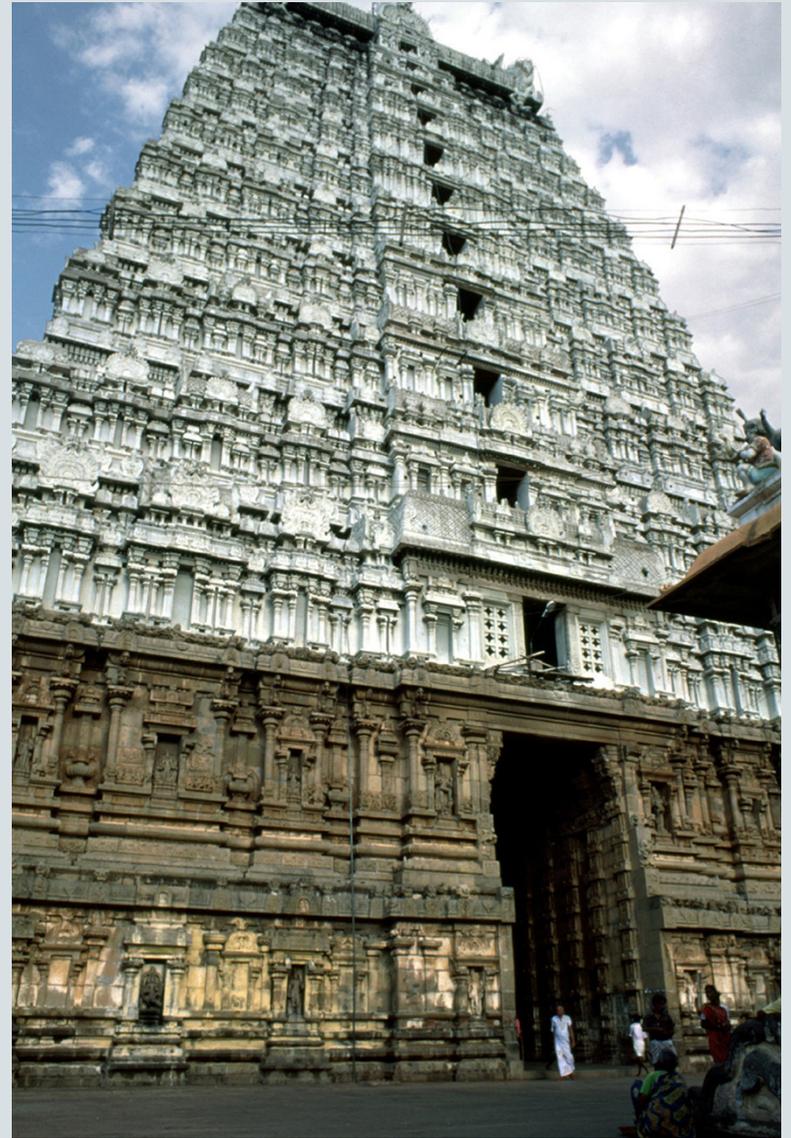


Above: The Elephant in the Elephant House inside the Temple and on its way to the House. It is trained to touch people on the head after they give it a coin, which it collects with its trunk.

Sri Arunachaleswara Temple



Lingodbhava - one of the Temple idols



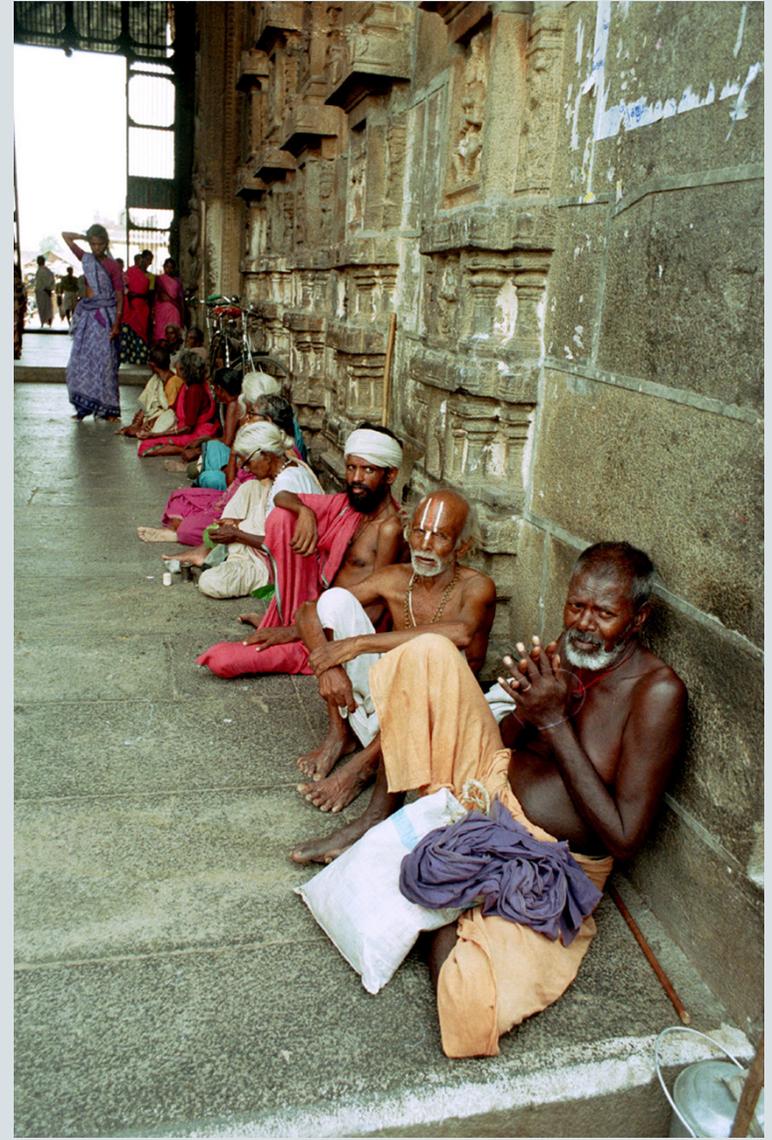
Raja Gopuram from inside the Temple

Sri Arunachaleswara Temple & Tiruvannamalai



Top: Sadhus on the steps of one of the Mandapams in the early morning.

Bottom: Car Street in Tiruvannamalai, where the huge Temple Cars that are used for carrying the idols during festival time are kept.



Sadhus and beggars inside the Raja Gopuram gateway

Tiruvannamalai



Some street scenes from the town.

