

## Group 2 - THIRUMURAIHAL

Thirumuraihal are songs that have come from holy people who have loved and lived for Lord Shiva, without any thought of self. So, their source is pure and they are as powerful as mantras. We sing them in God's praise. We also sing them when we ask God for help for ourselves or for others. Unfortunately, they had not been properly stored or documented. Some othuvars knew some songs and sang them in their temples. But no one knew where the whole set of songs were.

In the 10th century, there lived King Rajarajacholan, who loved these songs and wanted to discover them all. He wanted to bring them back into daily use. He heard about a little Brahmin boy called Nambi, who talked to Lord Pillaiyar regularly. He asked Nambi to ask Pillaiyar the whereabouts of these divine songs. Pillaiyar told Nambi that they were all locked up in a room at the Chidambaram Temple!

So Nambi and King Rajarajacholan went to Chidambaram and, with the help of the temple Brahmins, they opened the door of the particular room. Inside, they found, to their horror, that most of the manuscripts had been damaged by white ants! Then a heavenly voice was heard, "Only those that are suitable for the present day are intact!" So they carefully collected the remaining Ola leaves.

The king asked Nambi to compile them, and all the other holy songs that were existing in that period. This compilation of holy songs are what is known as Thirumuraihal.

The Thirumuraihal has 12 parts;  
the first 3 parts are the Thevarams of Sampanthar,  
the next 3 are the Thevarams by Thirunavukarasar,  
the 7th is the Thevarams of Sundarar,  
the 8th is the Thiruvagasam and Thirukovaiyar of Saint Maanikavaasakar,  
The Thiruvisaippa and Thirupallandu are the 9th  
TheThirumoolar Thirumanthiram is the 10th and  
the 11th are the songs of 12 holy people.  
The 12<sup>th</sup>, called The Periyapuram, tells the life stories of the 63 Naiyanmars, who lived only to serve Lord Shiva and His devotees.

There are, all together, 18326 songs in the Thirumuraihal. These are our treasures and religious heritage. We must honour them and preserve them and sing them in our temples and houses so that their light will continue to shine forever.