

Gurutirtha and Gurusmrti Inauguration

By the grace of Pujya Swamiji and Sri Medha Dakshinamurthi, Swami Dayananda Memorial projects saw their completion with the grand inauguration of Gurutirtha – Swamiji's kutiya transformed into a monument and Gurusmrti – the newly laid out Picture Gallery depicting Swamiji's life and contribution, on 20th Nov 2016, coinciding with the Gurukulam's Silver Jubilee celebration.

We thank all the donors for their generous contributions and everyone who participated and enabled the successful completion of the projects. The deep devotion to Pujya Swamiji could be seen in the various ways in which contributions were made.

Gurutirtha

Pujya Swamiji had expressed his wish for the Kutiya to be made into a monument after his time. The Kutiya has now been transformed into a Tirtha.

Gurutirtha was inaugurated by Swami Veditamananda Saraswati, a respected senior disciple of Pujya Swamiji and Sri Ramasubrahmaneya Rajha, Chairman, Ramco group.

Sri Sriram, the architect of this project explained how he conceptualized and actualized the project. Punyahavacanam was performed by Sri Jambunatha Ghanapatigal in the presence of Swami Veditatmananda, Swami Paramarthananda, Swami Omkarananda and other dignitaries.

Swami Sadatmananda explained the significance of the word Gurutirtha: Guru is a Tirtha, one who purifies and the building blessed by him is also a Tirtha.

Appreciating the thought process that is behind the Gurutirtha will help one appreciate this monument:

The task at hand was to make a monument out of the simple residence of Pujya Swamiji – it had to be done retaining the building and its inner accommodation, as it was, when Swamiji lived, but yet it had to be distinguished from everything else around it. It had to stand out. Also, the building would have to get a facelift to make it a befitting memorial to inspire people for generations to come. This was mainly accomplished by keeping the building mostly unchanged except replacing existing windows with large picture windows to allow the best views in to Swamiji's life, and adding stone walls and landscaping around the building which would constitute the parikrama.



Architect Sri Sriram



Inaguration by SwamiVeditatmanandaji

The initial visualization of the Gurutirtha by the Architect, Sriram, was enhanced with inputs from the archiving team led by Sri Pramod and several others. The implementation was very well executed with untiring effort by the Project Director, Sri Subramaniyan, with the help of a huge team. The final result is there for one to see - One can feel the presence in the physical absence....

Gurutirtha is a fitting tribute to the great master, a towering personality with a great vision.

Architect's visualisation of Gurutirtha in his own words

Gurutirtha is a journey - a yatra in the memory of one of the greatest teachers, Poojya Swami Dayananda Saraswati. It is a journey where one experiences the transformation of his dwelling into a place of worship. The design rationale was to provide serenity to this place of worship and a contemplative quality to the experience. Just as one visiting a temple goes through various prakaras and dwaras to reach the garbh griha, here too one walks through different vistas. The



Inaguration Sri Ramasubrahmaneya Rajha

vistas are modulated by tall walls and the available trees and landscape. Granite stone as a material is timeless - it is in many ways synonymous with our temples. It is the main building material used in Gurutirtha -- in the walls, the pathways, the trellises, the seats and the floors.

The Pradakshina Marga is a walk around Swamiji's kutiya - "Ganga" with views into his home at designated pause points, where we look into the rooms where the Swamiji lived. One begins and ends the journey from the same place thus mirroring the 'cycle of life'.

Just as a seeker of knowledge who takes a path unknown to him or her, one embarks on the yatra - on a gently rising walkway, alongside a stone wall. One reaches an entrance court, which marks the starting point. A story wall greets one here which talks about Poojya Swamiji. A small office with an information window has been provided. The journey continues along the path with views of the wondrous landscape all around.



Puja

The path wraps around a stone wall leading up to the first pause point - a stone trellis covered platform that overlooks the study of Poojya Swamiji. Here one gets a glimpse of the room where Poojya Swamiji interacted with his disciples. A stone bench is provided for those who might wish to stay longer.

One turns left and moves onward in this journey. The pathway wraps around the building and takes one to Poojya Swamiji's bedroom. The stone trellis above shades the window and the pathway from the overhead sun. As one moves ahead from here one could catch a glimpse of the Dakshinamurthy temple that was so dear to Poojya Swamiji.

The journey now moves to the north of the house, to a third stone-trellis-covered pavilion under the shade of trees. This is the dining room - where Poojya Swamiji had often dined with many disciples. From here one moves down a slight ramp and arrives at the entrance veranda of "Ganga". Only here does one enter the kutiya, into the memorial room of Poojya Swamiji. After paying homage to him, one moves on - alongside the stone walls that encompass the kutiya and lead you along the path back to the court where one started the journey.

This is Guru Tirtha - our homage to Pujya Swami Dayanand Saraswati.

The Archiving team's view of Gurutirtha

Gurutirtha is unique in many ways in the landscape of museum/memorials in the country. The site commemorates the residence of a teacher whose legacy cannot be captured merely by bricks and mortar. His true influence can only be seen by the innumerable minds and thoughts he influenced. Towards that effect, the site is a pilgrimage for older devotees of Swamiji and a place to imbibe from, for newer adherents. The site moves away from textbook formats of museum captions and embraces newer means of pure visual connect with varied audiences. The preference is on viewing and understanding as against enforced contexts.

Swamiji's kutiya is the abode of simplicity and his meagre belongings are a reflection of his life's work in the intellectual space as against in the materialistic realm. Three large bay windows allow a visitor a glimpse into every part of Swamiji's humble abode. This methodology was adopted to ensure that the house could be preserved for posterity and newer generations could come and reflect on his life's work.

The space is finally a tribute to a towering personality and we hope the memorial befits his legacy.

Gurusmrti – Swami Dayananda Gallery

The Gurukulam has hosted a picture Gallery for many years. Pujya Swamiji had expressed his wish that this Gallery could be maintained well. The Gallery – now named 'Gurusmrti' has been restructured, repainted and enhanced with new panels including fresh pictures of Swamiji.

The Gallery was inaugurated by Swami Paramarthananda. The viewers were delighted to see old and rare pictures of Pujya Swamiji in the panels and also to be able to have a view into Swamiji's life through the range of visually appealing pictures and thought provoking quotations.

The Gallery takes the viewer on a journey into Swami Dayananda's life starting from his early years, as a brahmachari, the various significant points in his life to his Sannyasa diskha and early life as a sadhu in Rishikesh and as a teacher. The viewers are then led to the four Gurukulams that Swamiji established with various pictures of the premises, the acaryas and the activities.



Inaguration by SwamiParamarthanandaji

The journey then moves on to showcase Swamiji's significant contributions in revitalizing Sanatana Dharma through his initiatives to protect the dharmi. It also follows with the inspiring story of how the Swamiji's birthplace - Manjakuddi village has been transformed into a model for rural development.

Cherished moments from Swamiji's Sashtyabdapurti and Satabhishekam functions greet the viewers which are followed by pictures of Swamiji's meeting with the some of the important Mahatmas.

The viewers are then treated with a whole long stretch containing pictures of Swamiji in various moods and activities ending with a section of striking portraits where one can pause and enjoy the benevolent gaze of Pujya Swamiji.



Gallarie



Gallarie



Lighting of Lamp

The Gallery then gives the viewers glimpses of the early years of Anaikatti Gurukulam, followed by a tribute to Swamiji's contribution in reviving the Arsha Vidya Parampara and finally concluding with large grand portrait of Swamiji with his parting message alongside the Padma Bhushan Award.

An LCD TV playing a slideshow of many captivating pictures is also where once can sit and enjoy being with Swamiji through his pictures captured at various phases of his inspiring life.

There is also a plan to add more multimedia content at a later point in time.