

Pronunciation of Common Sanskrit and Tamil Words

SWAMI SHANTANANDA

Sri Vidya Havan	Sunday	05-02-2006
Chinna Swamigal Aradhana	Saturday	12-02-2006
Maha Shivaratri	Saturday	26-02-2006
Telugu New Year Day	Thursday	30-03-2006
Sri Rama Navami	Friday	06-04-2006
Tamil New Year Day	Friday	14-04-2006
Bhagavan's Aradhana	Tuesday	25-04-2006
Maha Puja (Mother's Aradhana)	Sunday	21-05-2006
Guru Poornima (Vyasa Puja)	Monday	10-07-2006
Krishna Jayanti (Gokulashrami)	Monday	16-08-2006
Sri Bhagavan's Advent Day	Friday	01-09-2006
Navaratri Festival commences	Saturday	23-09-2006
Saraswati Puja	Sunday	01-10-2006
Vijayadasami	Monday	02-10-2006
Deepavali	Saturday	21-10-2006
Karthigai Festival commences	Friday	24-11-2006
Karthigai Deepam	Sunday	03-12-2006
Sri Bhagavan's 127th Jayanti	Thursday	04-01-2007

Arunachala

अरुणाचला

English	ARUNĀCALĀ that is A-RU-NĀA-CHAL-AA
Sanskrit	ARUNĀCALĀH
Tamil	ARUNĀCALAM
Hindi	ARUNĀCAL

The second 'a' of arunAchala and last 'a' of arunachala are pronounced like 'a' in car. The last 'A' is pronounced long like 'a' in car in the following two cases:

- i) When addressing or calling on Arunachala in prayers or song: 'Oh Arunachala!'
- ii) Where Arunachala is used as an independent subject (i.e. in the third person, for example, 'Arunāchalā is a mountain').

Swami Shantananda is an eminent Sanskrit scholar with a deep knowledge of Vedic and Puranic texts. He is a much respected *sabha* and sometime resident of the ashram.

When Arunachala functions as an adjective modifying another noun i.e. in 'Arunachala Siva' or 'Arunachala Ramana', the last 'a' is pronounced short as in 'o' in *come* or 'u' in *cut*.

In Tamil either 'm' or 'n' is added to all nouns ending in A for example:

English	Tamil
RĀMA that is RAA-MA	RĀMAN
SIVĀ that is SI-VAA	SIVAN
RAMANĀ that is RA-MAN-AA	RAMANAN

In Tamil while addressing, personally or in prayer, the 'm' or 'n' suffixation in 'Raman', 'Sivan', 'Ramanan', and 'Arunachalam' is dropped and they become 'Rama', 'Siva', 'Ramana', and 'Arunachala', etc., the final 'a' being pronounced long as in 'cāt'.

Normally 'n' is added to nouns denoting masculine gender while 'm' is added to nouns to denoting neuter gender. As Arunachala is a mountain, it is written in Tamil as Arunachalam. (But no doubt there may be some exceptions to this rule).

The first and the third 'a' in Arunachala is pronounced short like 'o' in *come* or 'u' in *cut*. The syllable 'n' in aruNachala is pronounced heavily in a cerebral mode like 'n' in the words *ground* or *bouzd*.

Ramana	रमणा
English	RAMANĀ that is RA-MAN-
AA	Sanskrit
Tamil	RAMANAN
Hindi	RAMAN

The last 'a' in RamanA is pronounced long like 'a' in *cār* but it should not drag. In Telugu, the word tends to be extended beyond the normal range of Tamil. Elongation applies when addressing 'Ramana' or while using it as a subject (in third person).

Like Arunachala, when Ramana is used as an adjectival prefix qualifying another succeeding noun, e.g. in 'Ramana Sadguru' or 'Ramana Maharshi',

all the 'a' s including the last 'a' are pronounced short like 'o' in *come* or 'u' in *cut*. It becomes RamanA and not RamanAA.

The syllable 'n' is to be pronounced in a cerebral manner like 'n' in *under*, *ground* or *bouzd*. In the word, RAmAna, the first and second 'a' are pronounced short like 'o' in *come*.

In Tamil, as per tradition, an 'n' is added, hence rAmAnaN. 'Ramana' means the one who revels (in the Self).

Arunachala Ramana अरुणाचल रमणा

As elaborated above, Arunachala is used here to qualify a subsequent noun, in this case, 'Ramana'. The last 'a', in arunachalA is short and pronounced like 'o' in *come* or 'u' in *cut*, so are the first and third 'a's. The second 'a' (arunAchala) is long like 'a' in *fall*. The word means 'Ramana of Arunachala'.

Similarly, in 'arunachala Siva', the last 'a' in 'Arunachala' is pronounced short like 'o' in *come*. In Tamil, it becomes ArunAchala RamanaN.

Maharshi	महर्षि
English	MAHARSHI that is MA-HAR-SHI.
Sanskrit	MAHARṢIḤ that is MA-HAR-SHIH.
Tamil	MAHARISHI that is MA-HA-RI-SHI
Hindi	MAHARSHI

All 'a's are pronounced short like 'o' in *come* or 'u' in *but*. 'r' is pronounced like the last 'r' in *Indiā* or the final 'r' in *Hindī*.

'Maharshi' is one compound word formed by joining two separate words *Mahān* ('great') and *Rshi*, meaning 'sage'. 'R' in Sanskrit lies somewhere between 'ru' (as pronounced in *rupee*) and 'ri' (as in *ridiculous*). This process of compounding words is complex and involves the details of Sanskrit grammar (*vyākaraṇa*) pertaining to what is called *saṃasa*. So when Mahān and Rshi are joined, they become 'Maharshi', whereas the second 'a' in MahAn becomes short like 'o' in *come*. The 'r' resembles the English post-vocalic 'r' such as in 'carr' or 'art'. The 'n' in MahāN is omitted.

The alphabet sounds equivalent to the English 'h' or 'r' do not exist in Tamil. So in pure Tamil, 'k' (pronounced as Ka) instead of 'h' is used. Some communities have borrowed the letter 'h' from a hybrid script called *grantham* devised for use by Tamilians not conversant with the Devanagari script.

Instead of 'r', Ri (as in *rīng*) is used. So, in Tamil the word becomes Makarishi.

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Bhagavan भगवान्

English BHAGAVĀN that is BHAG-A-VAAN
Sanskrit BHAGAVĀN
Tamil BAGAVĀN¹
Hindi BHAGVĀN

'Bh' is pronounced as in the word *bhang* or *abhor*. The first two *ā*s are pronounced short like 'o' in *come* while the last 'a' is long as in *car*. While in Sanskrit 'g' is pronounced as Ga, in Hindi, it is pronounced as in 'bug' or 'rug'. Hence it is 'Bhagvan' in Hindi, Bengali, Marathi and other north Indian languages.

Bhagavan in Sanskrit means the one who possesses six characteristics of excellence called 'Bhaga' in Sanskrit. The six qualities are:

- i. All Powerful (which includes omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence) (*Aisuarya*);
- ii. Righteous (full of *Dharma*), though some replace it with valour (*Vērya*);
- iii. Fame (*Yasas*);
- iv. Wealth (*Sri*);
- v. Knowledge (*Jnana*);
- vi. Detachment and dispassion (*Vairagya*).

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¹ Though the phonemes (sounds) B, Bh, G, Ga do not exist in Tamil, many pronounce it as Bhagavan which is correct in any language.

Ramanasramam

English RAMAṆĀŚRAMAM

that is RAMANA-ASHRA-MAM

Sanskrit RAMAṆĀŚRAMAH
Tamil RAMAṆĀŚRAMAM
Hindi RAMAṆĀŚRAM that is RAMANAAA-ASHRAAM

The third 'a' is pronounced long as in *car* while the other 'ā's are pronounced short like 'o' in *come*, 'u' in *cut* or *but*. 'S' is pronounced something like 's' in 'sure', 'asure' or 'ship' but no letter in English has an exact equivalent. The ending in 'Ramanasramam' has been adopted from Tamil where nouns of neuter gender have 'm' added at the end.

'Ramanasramam' is also one compound word formed by joining two separate words, 'Ramaṇa' and 'Asramam'. As per the rules in Sanskrit, the *samasa* (the conjoining into compound words) has been adopted to some extent in Tamil too, where in joining the end syllable 'a' of the first word Ramaṇa and the first syllable 'ā' of the second word, Asramam, the two 'ā's are replaced by one long 'ā' as in *car*.

'Ramanasramam' means a monastery or sanctuary dedicated to Ramaṇa.

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Tiruvannamalai

English TIRU-VANṆĀA-MALAI

ṢŪYIṠŪŪṬĀṬ

This word is purely Tamil in origin while all the previous words are of Sanskrit origin. There is no corresponding equivalent in English. Here the 'r' is pronounced soft as in *think* or *through*.

The second 'ā' is pronounced long as in *car* while the other 'ā's are short like 'o' in *come* or 'u' in *but*.

Both n's are to be pronounced heavily as in the word *annoyed*, *bound*, *ground* or *bond*.

'Tiru' is a short term of respect used before the names of holy or respectable persons or places – e.g., 'Tiru Ramaṇa Maharshi'. It is the equivalent of Sri, a Sanskrit term adopted by the Government of India and in all states except Tamil Nadu, which uses 'Tiru' instead.

In 'Tiruvannamalai', two words 'Tiru' and 'Annamalai' have been joined as per the *sandhi* rules of Tamil grammar. According to these rules, when the two vowels, 'u' (pronounced as in *fu*ll) of 'Tiru', and the first vowel 'a' of 'Annamalai', are joined, then a semi-vowel 'v' is introduced in the middle to seam them. ▶

Guru Vachaka Kovai: Collection of the Guru's Sayings

GVK is the most comprehensive collection of Maharshi Sayings composed and stung together artistically by the poet Muruganar. In the massive work of 1282 stanzas (1254 being Muruganar's handiwork and 28 the Maharshi's), each stanza presents a finely polished setting, a pearl that fell from the Master's lips. Most of them were seen and approved by the Master, who has supplied some links and restatement of His own to emphasise or clarify the argument.

The Collection equals the *Talks* in comprehensiveness and authenticity. The *Talks* are informal and present the Maharshi's Teachings against the background of the questions posed by enquirers. This book focuses the light on what the Maharshi said regardless of when or why he said it.

Sri Sadhu Om finalised the arrangement of stanza giving this final form during the second edition of the Book in Tamil.

This book now in English (translation & commentary by Sri Sadhu Om) will shed more light and help to clear many misconceptions and confusions that aspirants may face in their journey to enlightenment.

The book is now available for sale at Sri Ramanasramam. Price: Rs120, pp. 443.

Eco-sense on Arunachala

The Annamalai Reforestation Society's Vision

P. R. SURYANANDAN & J. JAYARAMAN

The year 1979 was the year of celebrations commemorating the birth Centenary of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, and the year when the Forest Department initiated a tree-planting project on sacred Arunachala's south-eastern slopes. This, and the issuance of a postage stamp and so on were the nation's tribute to an Upanishadic Maharshi's appearance in modern times.

Afforestation of the holy hill had been a pet dream of Prof. K. Swaminathan, the Chief Editor of *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* and well known in Ramana circles. C. Subramaniam, then Finance Minister at the Centre and an architect of the Green Revolution, at the behest of Prof. 'KS' his mentor, got the 'greening' going at Arunachala. Much of the Government's one-time effort has since been lost to the ravages of encroachments due to urbanisation,