

## ASIAN REVIEW OF BOOKS

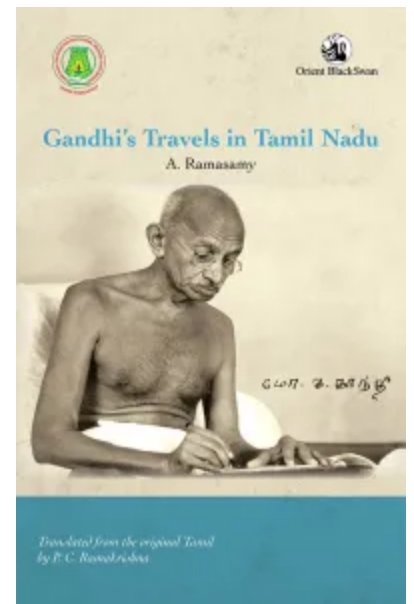
BOOKS, ARTS &amp; CULTURE

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# New Book Announcement: "Gandhi's Travels in Tamil Nadu" by A Ramasamy

*Gandhi's Travels in Tamil Nadu* highlights the deep and abiding connection and friendship Gandhi had with Tamil Nadu and its people, from the time that he, as a young lawyer, led the struggle of Indian contractual labourers, many of them Tamilians, against the colonial government in South Africa, to when he returned to India to lead the Congress and the freedom movement. It covers the period from his very first visit to (what was then) Madras State/Province in 1896, to his last visit to the state in 1946, a year before Independence.

Painstakingly retracing Gandhi's footsteps in the land of Valluvar, A Ramasamy travelled across the country, met and corresponded with people associated with Gandhi, pored through government archives, letters, books and newspapers of the period, collecting important and interesting details. We learn it was in Tamil Nadu that the British Parliamentary delegation held discussions recognising that India's freedom was inevitable. We learn about fearless young martyrs like Valliammal, and of the publicized argument between Annie Besant and Gandhi over his 1916 speech



*Gandhi's Travels in Tamil Nadu*, A Ramasamy, PC Ramakrishna (trans) (Orient BlackSwan, March 2023)

in Benares. It was also the Tamil student fraternity that first gave Gandhi the title 'Father of the Nation'.

As evident from Gandhi's numerous speeches included herein, the volume also underscores the vital contribution of the Tamil people to the Indian freedom struggle, and draws our attention to the many Tamilian heirs to the Gandhian legacy who continued his work well after him. Rich in anecdotal and historical detail, carefully compiled, this book would interest anyone who wishes to know about Gandhi's evolution as a leader, his unique relationship with Tamil Nadu, and the larger history of the freedom movement.

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