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## Tamil calendar evokes interest

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Chennai: A software entrepreneur with a deep interest in Tamil has launched a calendar that seeks to celebrate the traditions of the ancient language. Be it months of the year, auspicious occasions, days of celebrations or names of the Tamil year, all traces of Sanskrit are absent in the calendar published by *Dheivamurasu* in Chennai.

The publisher of *Dheivamurasu*, a spiritual magazine, B. Shrinivas, has been striving to discern the true origins of words that are currently used as Tamil.

For instance, the full moon is not *Pournami*, but *Niraimathi*, according to the calendar. Similarly, the new moon is not *Amavasai*, but *Maraimathi*. This may come as a surprise to even lyricists who have been penning songs in Tamil apparently not in the chaste linguistic tradition, extolling the lovely glow of *Pournami*.

Tamil names have been ascribed to 60 Tamil Years, changing the tradition of using Sanskrit terms. Sanskrit terminology for celestial phenomena too are replaced by Tamil equivalents.

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Festivals and celebrations are sought to be made popular using their true Tamil names, rather than the present names, although the latter may be better known. The special dates pertaining to the legends of Nayanmars and Tamil savants are recorded in chaste language.

There is Tamil everywhere in this calendar — in the words and in the numerals.

So much so, the Tamil calendar has evoked interest among some academicians in the United States as a possible teaching tool. One member from the South Asian Studies Programme of the Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, wrote in to enquire whether it is available as a digital download or as a printed calendar for 2009. His purpose: To use the Calendar in Tamil classes.

The younger generation, which is unaware of Tamil numerals, can discover them through the calendar. Using the calendar, the sequence of Tamil numerals is conveyed effectively. The features of this effort can be read at <http://dheivamurasu.org/tamilcal.htm>

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