

TURIYANANDA DIVYASMRIPTI



A rare collection of articles used by
Swami Turiyananda & Swami Subodhananda

Ramakrishna Kutir
Vivekananda Corner, Almora



Swami Turiyananda



Swami Subodhananda

*M*any personal belongings of Swami Turiyananda had long been cherished at the Almora Ashrama, evoking sacred memories of the pious days Hari Maharaj spent here. After his passing, Ram Maharaj lovingly preserved his room—along with his bed and all the objects he had used—which now form an integral part of the main temple.

A couple of years ago, additional artefacts were discovered, including a rare photo album from 1937-38 and a few clothing items of Swami Subodhananda.

Over time, however, several of these precious articles had deteriorated and required urgent conservation. Thanks to the efforts of the Delhi-based organisation **INTACH** (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage), the first step was taken in 2024 when a meditation mat (āsana) once used by Hari Maharaj was carefully restored. Impressed by the team’s expertise and sensitivity, the Ashrama entrusted them with the conservation of other fragile articles.

The Director of INTACH, along with his team, visited the Ashrama to examine the relics. During this inspection, the idea arose: why not create a small museum to preserve these articles which shall also allow devotees and monks to view the sacred artefacts of **Swamis Turiyananda and Subodhananda**, and feel their holy presence?

A section of the hall beneath the temple was selected for the museum. The INTACH team set up a temporary conservation laboratory in Almora in March 2025, and within two months the museum was completed. Most of the preserved articles belonged to Swami Turiyananda, though a few—old and rare—may be from a slightly later period. Detailed descriptions and photographs are provided in the following pages to help visitors understand their use, as many of these items are no longer in production or in common use.

The museum, named “**Turiyananda Divyasmriti**”, was inaugurated on Wednesday, **19 May 2025**, by **Revered Swami Divyanandaji Maharaj**, Vice-President, Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math.

Artefacts of Swami Turiyananda

(1) Swamiji as a Wandering Monk Engraved on Crystal



This statuette of Swamiji as a wandering monk was designed by the world-famous French jeweller and glassmaker **René Lalique**, at the request of Miss Josephine MacLeod. This particular piece was gifted to Swami Turiyananda by Ms. MacLeod during his final days when he was in Varanasi. On this crystal, Swamiji is engraved along with Nandi, symbolically representing Swamiji as Lord Shiva. Only a few such pieces were ever

manufactured by Lalique, making this one of the rare and precious artefacts.

René Lalique (1860-1945) was a French master glassmaker & designer. He was one of the greatest Art Nouveau artists. A pioneer of modern decorative Crystal Sculpture, he transformed crystal into a medium for modern artistic sculpture



(2) Iron Idol of the Crucified Jesus Christ

This iron idol of the crucified Jesus Christ was one of the possessions of Swami Turiyananda. It was most likely presented to him by one of his Western disciples, possibly during his stay in the United States. Swami Turiyananda had great regard for Jesus Christ and would often quote him in his letters and talks.



(3) Small Tin Box



This small tin box, originally of *Capstan Navy Cut Cigarettes*—a premium brand in those days—was used by Swami Turiyananda to keep ***Mahaprasada*** of Lord Jagannath.

(4) One Round Tin Box in a Red Sac



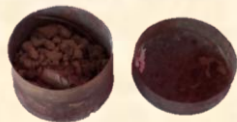
This round tin box, originally containing *Parle's Toffees*, was likely used by Swami Turiyananda Maharaj to keep some small items.

In those days, many toffees and biscuits were sold in tin boxes since plastic packaging had not yet been invented. Tin boxes also gave a premium feel to the product.

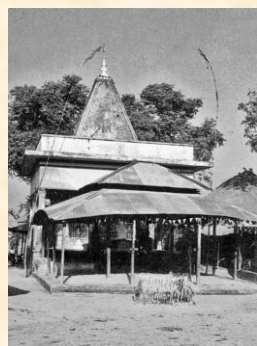


(5) Small Box with (Possibly) Devi Singhabahini's Soil

Swami Turiyananda possibly used this small box to keep soil from *Sri Singhabahini Devi's Temple*. The soil from this temple was believed to have protective and curative powers.



The Singhabahini Temple is located near the Sri Sri Matri Mandir Jairambati. Once, when Holy Mother was suffering from severe dysentery, she took a vow of fasting and prayer at this temple. During this time, the Goddess appeared to her and her mother as a young girl, suggesting the medicines that resulted in her full recovery. Following this miraculous recovery, the earth from the temple premises became renowned for its curative power. Holy Mother preserved and partook of this consecrated earth daily throughout her life.



(6) Three Wooden Pieces

These three wooden sticks were used for striking brass gongs, known as *kashor ghanta*.



(7) Leather Belts



These leather belts were used by Swami Turiyananda, not as waist belts, but to tie his suitcases. Vintage suitcases were often made of rigid materials such as wood and leather, and their locks were not always reliable. Due to the rough travel conditions of those days, belts were used as additional straps for extra safety.

(8) Double-Fold Spectacles

These double-fold spectacles belonged to Swami Turiyananda and were likely gifted to him. He may have used them during his stay in the West and afterward. These Victorian-era “double D” glasses, also known as railway or carriage spectacles, feature four tinted glass lenses—two in front and two on the sides—designed to shield the eyes from glare, wind, and dust during travel.



(9) False Teeth of Swami Turiyananda



These are the dentures of the upper and lower jaws used by Swami Turiyananda. He was approximately 52–53 years old at that time and had lost most of his natural teeth.

(10) Bell Metal Bowl

This bell-metal (*kansa*) bowl was possibly used by Swami Turiyananda. When it was discovered, his set of false teeth was found kept inside it.



Kansa is a traditional term for a specific type of bronze, composed of approximately 78% copper and 22% tin.

(11) Three Teeth of Swami Turiyananda and a Small Box

These three teeth are the original teeth of Swami Turiyananda, likely lost during his lifetime — probably during his stay in Almora in 1915–16.



(12) Glass Bottle with Chemical



This bottle contains *calcium chloride* (CaCl_2), an excellent agent for controlling moisture and humidity. Small bags of calcium chloride were often placed inside wardrobes, clothing chests, and trunks to prevent dampness.

During winter, calcium chloride was also sprinkled on icy surfaces such as doorsteps, entryways, and porches to reduce slips and falls.

(13) Glass Bottle with Saffron Dye



This glass bottle originally belonged to the *COBRA Boot Polish* brand. It was used to store saffron dye, possibly for dyeing Swami Turiyananda's clothes.

The COBRA shoe polish brand originated in Australia in 1909.



(14) Benzene Bottle

This bottle contains *para-dichlorobenzene* ($C_6H_4Cl_2$). It was used as a toilet and urinal deodorizer, and also as a deodorizer for basements and storage areas. It was sometimes used as a fumigant or pesticide.

Its use later declined because its vapors can cause respiratory and liver toxicity.



(15) Glass Bottle with Glycothymoline

This glass bottle contained the chemical *Glycothymoline*, used as an antiseptic mouthwash in those days. Swami Turiyananda may have used for gargles and so on.



(16) Powder Box with Baby Powder



This is a tin bottle of Colgate's baby talc powder made by the *Colgate and Co*. It is believed that someone from the West presented it to Swami Turiyananda.

Colgate launched this product between 1908–1912 in the United States.

(17) Thermometer with Cover

A mercury thermometer, which was probably used by Swami Turiyananda.



(18) Wooden Incense Stick Holder and Iron Cover



The **pink-colored object** is a

wooden
incense



stick holder used in the temple. The **cylindrical object** below is an iron incense cover used to store incense sticks. The company name marked on it is *Haridas and Madhvas Sugandhi*.

Haridas Madhvas Sugandhi (HMS) is a family-owned incense company founded in 1860 by two brothers in Pune. It continues to operate successfully today, renowned for its premium-quality incense products.

(19) Handkerchief

Displayed here are three handkerchiefs bearing a knitted 'S' mark, possibly denoting "Swami's." They are believed to have been used by Swami Turiyananda during his stay in America.



(20) Small Saffron Robes



These three clothes which are displayed here belong to Swami Turiyananda. The large saffron piece of cloth could have been a part of Swami Turiyananda's cloth. The other two clothes must be used by Maharaj for some special purpose such as keeping some holy books or articles on them.

(21) Small Towel

This is the small Towel (or *Gamcha*) used by Swami Turiyananda.



(22) Small Satranchi Cushion (Asana)



This was Swami Turiyananda's personal *asana*, likely used by him for *japa* and meditation. Found in a tattered condition, it was the first object to be restored by INTACH—an effort that eventually led to the establishment of this entire museum.

(23) Old Coins

This collection spans from mid-19th century French coins to early post-Independence Indian coins.



First Row: 4 coins

Four coins. Two feature King Edward VII (1903–1910), one is unidentified, and one shows King George V (1911). The George V coin is a bronze one-quarter Anna.



Second Row: 4 coins

- 1st, 2nd & 4th coins are one-quarter Anna bronze coins. The 1st is from 1908 bearing Kind Edward VII's portrait, whereas the 2nd and 4th has the King George V.
- The 3rd coin bears Queen Victoria's crowned portrait (1862–1901).



Third Row: 2 foreign coins

One appears to be from British East Africa. The other, showing a kangaroo, emu, and a star, is likely Australian (1910–1936, George V era).

Fourth Row: 3 coins

- The middle one is a rare French coin of 1855 with poleon III's portrait, possibly from French India.
- Out of the other two, one is unidentified and the other is a 50 paise coin of Nepal, engraved with a sword.



Fifth Row: 5 coins

These are one-pice bronze coins with a hole in the center, minted between 1943 and 1947 during the reign of King George VI. The hole was introduced during WWII to save metal.



Sixth Row: 7 coins.

- Made of copper-nickel, the 2nd, 4th & 6th are one-anna coins bearing the portrait of King George V, with "Ek Anna" inscribed in four Indian languages (1912–36).
- The remaining 4 are one-pice bronze coins (1950–1955, post-Independence) featuring the Ashoka Lion Capital and a prancing horse.



(24) Kerosene Lamp



This lamp was manufactured by *Aladdin Industries Ltd., Greenford, England*—a subsidiary of the original American company active in the U.K. from the 1920s to the 1960s. Since Swami Turiyananda left Almora toward the end of 1916, it was likely used by the later monks of Ramakrishna Kutir.

The base is made of nickel-plated brass, giving it a silvery finish. The chimney and lampshade were missing from the original piece and were later added during restoration.



(25) Bucket

This nickle-plated brass bucket with an engraved floral handle was likely used in the temple for ceremonial purposes. It surely belonged to the colonial era and may have been used by Swami Turiyananda.

The floral engraving on the handle reflects the style of Indian brasswork from Moradabad or Banaras, or Anglo-Indian decorative metalwork, while the tall, slightly conical form shows European influence.



(26) Small Long knife



This long knife, dating from around 1900–1930, is a typical example of British Indian manufacture. Such knives were commonly included in a craftsman's utility kit and used for applying polish, putty, or paste, and for smoothing wood or leather. It likely belonged to Swami Turiyananda as part of his own utility set.

The handle is wooden, hand-fitted with a brass ferrule—a characteristic feature of tools from that period.

(27) Boroline Tube



This is a tube of *Boroline*, an antiseptic cream invented by Gourmohan Dutta in 1929 in



Kolkata. Since Swami Turiyananda passed away in 1922, it was likely used by a later monk of Ramakrishna Kutir. A proud *swadeshi* brand, Boroline continues to be produced and trusted to this day.

(28) Knife

These are folding knives of the that era, used for cutting ropes, sharpening pencils, or soft materials like wood, leather, or wax.



(29) Toothbrush



This toothbrush belonged to Swami Turiyananda. Its large head and stiff, coarse bristles are characteristic of early 20th-century brushes made before the invention of nylon (pre-1938). The bristles were most likely boar hair, fitted into a bone or wooden handle.

(30) Cork Opener

This is a cork opener. Corks were the standard closure for bottles like of medicines, tonic, ink etc., because they don't react with chemicals. So, cork opener was a necessity in those days.



(31) Sealing Lac



This sealing lac might have been used by Swami Turiyananda for sealing his letters.

In those days, specific etiquettes were followed in using sealing wax—red lac was most commonly used for general letters, while black lac was reserved for letters of condolence or mourning.



32) Plastic Glass



This cup is made of *celluloid*, an early form of plastic made from nitrocellulose and camphor. It bears the stamp “*Odol*,” a popular mouthwash brand introduced in Germany around 1892.

Odol was one of the first antiseptic mouthwashes to be marketed globally, produced by Lingner-Werke, Dresden, Germany.

(33) Plastic Soap Case

This soap case is from the same time and is made up of *celluloid*.



(34) Big and Small Teaspoons



These are four silver teaspoons (*silverware*). Before the invention of stainless steel in 1913, utensils were

commonly made of silver, brass, or *kansa*. These spoons were likely presented by a devotee for Swami Turiyananda’s use.

(35) Mirror in Wooden Frame

This is a mercury mirror from that period.

Mercury-coated mirrors were common until the early 1900s, even though the safer silver-nitrate process had been invented in 1835. Mercury mirrors were much more reflective than modern aluminum-coated mirrors. The use of mercury was highly toxic and often led to the death of many mirror-making workers and hence, was ultimately discontinued.



(36) Shaving Razor Set



This is an unused *Gillette* safety razor set, likely presented to Swami Turiyananda by a Western disciple, as it was a premium product. The set is silver-plated, with its price marked in *Guineas*—a sign of exclusivity and elite manufacture. Given Swami Turiyananda's deeply simple and austere way of life, he probably felt reluctant to use such a luxurious item.

The Gillette Safety Razor Company was founded by King C. Gillette in 1901, with production beginning in 1903—introducing the world's first disposable-blade razor.

(37) Shaving Cream Stick with Razor

This is a nickel-plated shaving cream stick stamped "*Colgate & Co. Shaving Stick, New York, U.S.A.*"

In 1912, William Mennen introduced the first American shaving cream in a tube, marking a shift from traditional shaving sticks like this one.



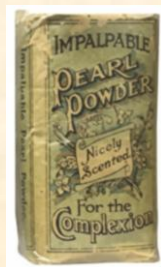
(38) Sharpen Black Stone



This is a *whetstone* (a sharpening stone) used for sharpening razors or pocket knives. It was a very common part of people's field utility kit.

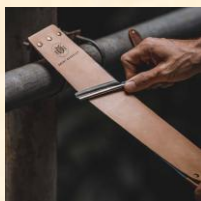
(39) Pearl Powder

This packet contains 'Pearl Powder', a substance used for thousands of years in Chinese and Ayurvedic medicine to treat various skin ailments. This particular packet was imported and was likely presented as a gift to Swami Turiyananda.



(40) Big Leather Belt to Sharpen Razors, Knives, Scissors, etc.

This is a leather razor strop, which was quite popular for sharpening razors and other blades in early 20th century, before replaceable razor blades became popular.



This particular belt has two different ends. The hooked end was used to hang the strop, usually on a wall hook. The handle end, which is narrow, was held firmly in the hand. Razors or knives were then drawn back & forth along the strop to restore the fine edge of the blade.

(41) Leather Shoes

These leather shoes belonged to Swami Turiyananda and were likely used by him during his stay in Almora.



(42) Canvas Shoes



These canvas (cloth) shoes were likely used by Swami Turiyananda indoors, as Almora's climate was naturally quite cold, and such shoes would have provided light warmth and comfort within the ashrama.

43) Wooden Brush

These two wooden brushes (with possibly boar or horsehair bristles) were found along with the other artefacts. They were likely used by Swami Turiyananda.



(44) Plastic Pad for Ankle Rubbing



This rubber ankle pad was used for cleaning the heel and ankle portions of boots, not the human ankle.

Such pads were common components of shoe-cleaning kits in the early 1900s and were found in British, German, and Indian kits from around 1895–1920.

(45) Shoe Polish Cream Box

Two shoe polish tins are displayed here. The **Billy Shoe Polish** tin—an Indian brand from early 1900s based in New Delhi featuring a cat logo—was likely used by Swami Turiyananda.



*The left one is from the **Cherry Blossom Company**, marked “Cherry Blossom Made in India.” Cherry Blossom shoe polish was first produced in India in 1943, and this particular tin was manufactured on Chowringhee Road, Kolkata (renamed Jawaharlal Nehru Road in 1964). Hence, it dates between 1943–1964 and likely belonged to one of the later Swamis of Ramakrishna Kutir.*

(46) Horn Plate for Wearing Shoe

This is a shoehorn, another implement used to help slide the foot easily into the shoe without bending its back part. Back in those days leather shoes were more common. The horn plates used to save shoes' heel counters from getting crushed.



(47) Foot Rubbing Stone

This foot-rubbing stone is made of **pumice**, a lightweight, porous volcanic rock. It's rough, foamy texture made it ideal for cleaning feet, removing dead skin, and softening calluses.



Artefacts of Swami Subodhananda

(48) Coat



This grey-coloured woollen coat belonged to Swami Subodhananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and brother disciple of Swami Turiyananda, who visited Almora at least twice (in 1899 and 1905).

Style of coat: straight cut, high collar, buttoned front. It is a single-breasted jacket with a simple collar and breast pockets.

(49) Bundi (Half Jacket)

This is a sleeveless waistcoat (*sadri* or *bundi*) belonging to Swami Subodhananda. The half-jacket features a band collar, one breast pocket, and two side pockets.



(50) Sandal



These are the sandals of Swami Subodhananda. Made of leather and jute, they resemble the traditional slip-on style known as *pulla* in northern India.

(51) Asana



This *asana* belonged to Swami Subodhananda. It appears to be made from the skin of a mountain goat (locally called *khaddu*). In the early 20th century, such animal-skin asanas were commonly used by sadhakas for meditation.

(52) Footprint

This unlabeled footprint was discovered in the pocket of the Bundi. We surmise that it is most likely the footprint of Swami Subodhananda. The foot imprint has been made on a piece of *malmal* (very fine and light cotton fabric) done with *alta*, a lac-based pigment used extensively for adornment in western India.



*Swami Parabrahmananda (Abhay Maharaj), a disciple of Swami Subodhananda (Khoka Maharaj), served at Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora, in the 1940s when Br. Ram Maharaj was the Adhyaksha. For certain reasons, he later left the Ramakrishna Order and founded **Ramakrishna Dham** in Almora in 1947, which eventually opened a branch in Haldwani.*

*These relics of **Swami Subodhananda (Nos. 48 to 52)** were in Abhay Maharaj's possession and were later passed on to a devotee after his passing. They were finally handed over to Ramakrishna Kutir in 2002 and are now displayed here.*